

The Vision

Volume 18, Issue 2

“For the VISION is for the days yet to come.” *Daniel 10:14*

February 2025

Will You Be My Valentine? By Rev. Ann Lyter

Valentine’s Day brings thoughts of love, connection, and appreciation for those closest to us. It’s a time for cards, chocolates, and gestures of kindness. But as Christians, we’re called to take the concept of love even further—beyond sentimentality and into the challenging, often uncomfortable realm of loving not only our neighbors but also our enemies.

In today’s polarized climate, this call feels more difficult than ever. Divisions run deep—whether political, social, or personal. But Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:44 challenge us: “*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*” Love, in Jesus’ teaching, is not conditional on agreement or even goodwill from the other person. It’s an active choice, a radical decision to embody God’s grace.

It is the foundation of everything Jesus taught—love. “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:37-39); “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.” (Luke 6:35). Early followers understood that love was of utmost importance and that is reflected in the pastoral letters of the New Testament: “We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.” (1 John 4:19-21). See also Romans 13:8; Colossians 3:12-14.

When we think about love as Jesus demonstrated, it’s not about warm, fuzzy feelings. It is about action. It is about treating others—even those with whom we strongly disagree—with dignity, respect, and compassion. This doesn’t mean we ignore truth or justice, but that we engage with others in ways that reflect the image of Christ within us. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:18, “*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*” What

would it look like for us to take that to heart? Could we commit to listening more, judging less, and showing grace even when it’s hard?

Putting Love Into Action

This Valentine’s Day, let’s not only reflect on Jesus’ call to love but also act on it. Here are some ideas to help bring this teaching to life:

- **Pray for Someone You Disagree With**
Spend a few minutes each day praying for someone with whom you have a difficult relationship. Ask God to bless them, guide them, and soften your heart toward them.
- **Send a Note of Kindness**
Write a card, email, or text to someone who may feel isolated, overlooked, or even adversarial toward you. Let them know they’re in your thoughts.
- **Engage in a Respectful Conversation**
Reach out to someone with a different perspective and commit to listening without debating. Seek to understand their experiences and views.
- **Perform an Unexpected Act of Service**
Do something kind for a neighbor or colleague, especially someone who might be challenging to love. It could be as simple as bringing them a cup of coffee or helping with a task.
- **Advocate for Justice with Love**
Look for opportunities to engage in social justice as a way of expressing Christ-like love, such as supporting initiatives that promote equity, volunteering at the food pantry, or participating in conversations about systemic change.
- **Be a Bridge Builder**
If you witness divisiveness or hostility, take the opportunity to respond with love. This might mean diffusing tension, offering words of peace, or reminding others of our shared humanity.

This February, as we celebrate love, let’s take up the challenge to love as Jesus loved—with open hearts, open hands, and a willingness to embrace even those we struggle to understand.



Will you be someone’s valentine in Christ’s name?

Our Worship Series Continues Through February



In February, we will continue our study of the Book of Revelation. We will see how good God really is and that God doesn't want destruction and tribulations and no matter how much WE think vengeance should be the way forward, it will never lead to God's reign. We will see how God is deeply invested in what it means to repair creation. We will look at the nature of evil and understand that the central claim of Revelation is that Jesus turns our stories upside down, including the myth of redemptive violence. God does not meet evil with opposing malice. God inspires an aikido-like subversion (of love and grace) that leaves evil powerless. We will look at the beasts of Revelation, who John (author of

Revelation) was referring to, how they may be present in our world and how Christians are supposed to respond. We will consider how the peace of Jesus can bring us to increasingly peaceful politics, religion, and economics. Finally, we look at the final "battle" and what it means for God to be victorious, which will lead us to Christ as Victor and King as we close out the season after Epiphany on March 2, in preparation for Lent.

The Bible study on Revelation will continue on Wednesdays at 4 pm in the Library. The class is also available by Zoom, simply let Pastor Ann know and she can send the link.

February Services

FEBRUARY 2

4th Sunday after Epiphany

"Trumpets and the Temple"

Revelation 8-11
(selected verses)

FEBRUARY 9

5th Sunday after Epiphany

"The Nature of Evil"

Revelation 12-14
(selected verses)

FEBRUARY 16

6th Sunday after Epiphany

"Monsters Attack"

Revelation 13, 15, 17
-18 (selected verses)

FEBRUARY 23

7th Sunday after Epiphany

"Ground Zero"

Revelation 16, 19, 20
(selected verses)



Lent Begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025.

We will have two offerings, both in the sanctuary.

10 am-noon: Self-guided meditation with imposition of ashes.

6 pm: Ash Wednesday service

Special Church Conference Update

On January 19, 2025, Rev. Melissa Rynders convened a Special Church Conference to vote on the recommendation that was made by the class, *Choosing the Faithful Path*. The faithful members and leaders who attended that class, after looking at the history of Velda Rose UMC, its current ministries, financial situation, and information about our community, recommended that Velda Rose UMC legally close and seek adoption by another United Methodist Church.

How did we get here? Over 18 months ago, the leaders of Velda Rose UMC began working with Rev. Rachel Gilmore to revitalize Velda Rose. Resources were provided and Rev. Gilmore met with leaders to talk about the life cycle of churches and the importance of having vision drive the ministry of the church. Coming out of those efforts was the realization that Velda Rose UMC needed to consider *Choosing the Faithful Path* to determine if it was time for a faithful completion of the ministry here. The study was announced at the annual church conference in October and everyone was invited and encouraged to attend. Approximately a dozen people participated and they ultimately voted to legally close and seek adoption as a way to continue ministry.

The Church Conference was announced from the pulpit, as well as in the newsletter, the bulletins, and online. Every member of Velda Rose UMC was invited to attend and have vote, including affiliate and associate members (those who have taken membership vows at Velda Rose UMC while maintaining their membership in their home church). In all, 77 people attended the Church Conference.

Those in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments, prior to the vote being taken. We did not have answers for some of those questions, such as:

- Which church will be the adopting church?
- What will happen to the rummage building?
- Do we know if there will be a rummage sale in October?

The answer to each of those questions was: “We don’t know yet.”

After all of the questions had been asked and, if they could be, answered, it was time for the vote. A written ballot was taken. The final vote was 35 to adopt the recommendation and 13 against. (A number of people in attendance did not vote.) Accordingly, Velda Rose UMC will legally close and seek adoption by another

congregation. All of the assets of Velda Rose UMC, as well as the members, will be transferred to the adopting, “Mother” church.

After the vote, we asked for volunteers who would serve on the committee to determine which United Methodist Church to ask to adopt Velda Rose. The Governing Board, at its meeting on Monday, January 20, set the committee as:

Tish Roberts
Tim Most
Rick Crago
Duane Clark
Billie Larime
Jim Kenyon
Nisi Kaipelea

These seven people are charged with determining what Congregation should be asked to adopt Velda Rose UMC. Their purpose is to look at the mission and ministry of different churches (the two most likely being Grace UMC and Red Mountain UMC) and determine what congregation will be the best fit, where Velda Rose UMC members will be able to best fulfill their calling in ministry. If you have an opinion on which should be the Mother church, please seek out a member of the committee. They have been asked to make their decision by early February, after which, the DS will approach the church and see if they are interested in adopting us.

Thereafter, a smaller team from Velda Rose UMC, likely 2 lay people plus Pastor Ann, along with a somewhat bigger team from the Mother church will work on creating an adoption agreement. The Mother church will have a church conference to vote on the adoption.

It will be the Mother church that will determine what will happen to the property that is currently owned by Velda Rose, which includes the rummage building. Velda Rose members, who will automatically become members of the Mother church will have a vote and voice, as members of the Mother church, on the disposition of any property that belongs to Velda Rose UMC at the time of the adoption.

At some point in the near future, perhaps as early as Easter (to celebrate Resurrection and New Life) but absolutely no later than July 1, Velda Rose UMC will stop worship on our campus and will worship with the Mother church as a single, united congregation.

Mission: L.A. Wildfires

We have seen the pictures and the video. The fires that have burned down entire communities in Southern California are almost beyond imagining. The scenes of entire neighborhoods being completely burned to the ground feel like something out of a disaster movie, and indeed it is a disaster. Thousands of people have lost their homes, their photo albums. Mementoes of their children's lives, their source of income and what was for many, their main asset, and too many without insurance to replace even the monetary value of what they have lost when their insurance companies cancelled their policies just days before the fires spread. And it wasn't just homes, but business, churches and schools that form the backbone of communities.

The Velda Rose UMC Governing Board voted to send our undesignated mission funds, approximately \$3300, to Altadena UMC, one of our sister congregations that burned in the wildfire.

Many of us would like to help. You can donate

through Velda Rose UMC by designating your donation for "California Fire Relief" and we will see that it is sent Cal Pac Annual Conference. Or you can give directly to Los Angeles Fires Recovery Fund, set up by Cal Pac by clicking on the link at calpacumc.org/lafires2025. You will also find information on that page about ongoing recovery and relief efforts including calls for



trained volunteers. In addition to the Recovery Fund, Cal Pac is also collecting gift cards to Target for clothing and other immediate needs items. Please send gift cards to the conference:

Denyse Barnes
c/o California-Pacific Annual Conference
PO Box 6006
Pasadena, CA 91102-6006

United Methodist Men



CHOCOLATE NIGHT: Just in time for Valentine's! Satisfy your sweet-tooth cravings by joining us on February 13 (6-8 PM in the Library) for a chocolate extravaganza. Chocolatier Mary Burns has lots of treats in store. Tickets are \$5 and may be purchased at the door.



PRODUCE BAGS GIVEAWAY FEBRUARY 15: We will be handing out free bags of fruit and veggies beginning around 9:00 AM at the covered parking area opposite the church office.

RUMMAGE Sale



100% of the proceeds go to fund our year-round service projects.

Pancake BREAKFAST



the corner! See next month's newsletter for details.

UWF RUMMAGE SALE, FEBRUARY 20-22:

Stop by the food tent (opposite the sale exit) for coffee, pastry, soda, our home-made sloppy joe sandwiches and more!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST:

Our annual pancake breakfast is just around

MONTHLY MEETING: Our next 2 monthly meetings will be 2/3 and 3/3 from 11:30-1:00 in the Library.

United Methodist Women



United Women in Faith

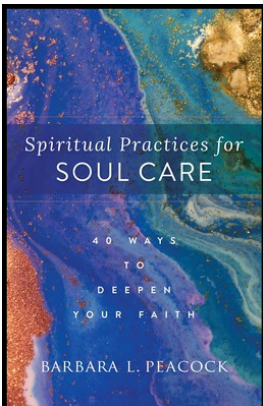
VELDA ROSE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH meet on Thursday, February 6, at 11:30 AM in the Library.

Our program will be an update on the Lura Turner Homes. Max is anxious to tell us about exciting things that are happening in their mission work. They are one of our church-related mission projects that we support yearly. The United Methodist Men have supported them for years.

We invite new members to come as well as the men's group. A potluck lunch begins at 11:30.

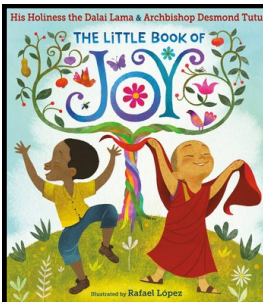
BOOK REVIEWS

Spiritual Practices for Soul Care: 49 Ways to Deepen Your Faith by Barbara Peacock



In this world of frantic activity and constant entertainment, it can be hard to identify and embrace the rhythms that lead to true flourishing. The author offers 49 ways to help us put spiritual disciplines into action into action each day.

The Little Book of Joy by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu



This is a children's book that these two spiritual leaders show how each child has joy inside them, even when it sometimes

hides, and how we find it, keep it close, and grow it by sharing it in the world.

REPORT ON "SAVE THE FAMILY" MISSION PROJECT "BABY DIAPERS 2025"

A big thank you to the Velda Rose UMC



members for providing a significant donation in-kind to "Save the Family" during our Christmas Advent Season giving. Billie Larime delivered the donations with the help of Mitzi Pearce on January 7th. This is the 4th year Velda Rose UMC has participated in this Mesa project. We delivered

1,300 baby diapers, 31 sippy cups and bottles, 3 baby playpens, 12 burp cloths, 6 baby toys, 9 shampoos and lotions, 5 sheets and blankets, 19 packages of baby wipes, and various baby food products. See the pictures of the various baby products that were donated.



"Save the Family" is a Mesa Charitable Homeless institution serving families with children. The organization provides temporary housing for families and Career Development Services, resume building, bus passes plus mock interviews. When the family has secured an income, they are helped to move to permanent housing.



TWO MORE MISSION PROJECTS SPONSORED BY UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH IN 2024.

As reported by Arlene Oisten, mission chairperson for the Christmas Stocking Project. This Velda Rose congregation helped with donations of toys, candy, coloring books, and breakfast bars to fill 500 stockings that were delivered to 4 low-income Elementary Schools in the East Valley. Many women volunteered in December to stuff the hand-decorated Christmas Stockings.

Billie Larime, mission chairperson (cont. on 6),

United Women in Faith

with the help of Mitzi Pearce and Karen Taylor have shopped for the School Nurses of five Mesa Elementary Schools for the past 4 years. United Women in Faith provided funds from the annual Mission Warehouse sales to donate \$500.00 of supplies and gift cards to each of the Mesa schools. The type of supplies that were needed by the School Nurses were a variety of things. Some examples in the past have been water bottles, band-aids, change of clothes, nutrition bars, juice cups, masks, sterile wipes, and other snacks.

CLOTHING DONATION BY MARY BURNS OF ELEVEN BOXES OF NEW CLOTHES ACQUIRED AT A FRY'S SEASONAL CLEARANCE SALE



Billie Larime, Mitzi Pearce and Diana Kilkeary participated in delivering specific types of clothing needed to the following charitable institutions of Mesa.

Three boxes of new small baby clothing were donated to "Save the



Family". Five boxes of children-sized clothing were delivered by Church Women United of Mesa to "Helen's Hope Chest" (help for foster children). And the rest of boxes containing adult clothing were delivered by Mitzi Pearce to the New Hope Community Center.

Many thanks to all our volunteers at the Velda Rose Mission Warehouse. They made most of these donations possible. Many thanks to our Velda Rose UMC members for their participation in buying from our Mission Warehouse and their in-kind donations.

Velda Rose UMC, the United Women in Faith, and The United Methodist Men in Mission continue to raise money through various fund raisers to serve our community with a Food Pantry, a Samaritan Fund, and help to Low-Income Mesa Elementary Schools with "Christmas Stockings" and "School Nurse Supplies".

Submitted by Billie Larime, Mission Coordinator

Free Care for the Caregiver Conference

Cross in the Desert UMC Presents:

Heart Keepers: Care for the Caregiver Conference

Calming the Fire of Burnout—“Five Easy Ways to Integrate Self-Care”

Special Guest Speaker: Michele Thorne, CEO and Co-Founder of Care 4 the Caregiver

Saturday, February 22, 2025

8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Cross in the Desert UMC | 12835 N 32nd ST | Phoenix, AZ 85032

Register for this free event at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/heart-keepers-calming-the-fire-of-burnout-tickets-1128210611309>

United Women in Faith's February Rummage Sale



It is almost here...The Rummage sale is coming February 20-22!

The rummage sale is only a few weeks away. It takes a lot of people to pull this sale off. If you have worked in a department in the past, please contact the department chair and let them know that you can help. It takes a lot of volunteers to pull off this sale. We are going to need people to work in the holding area, people to cashier, people to work at the doors, and people to work at the wrapping stations. Volunteers can be men or women, either Velda Rose members or just friends who might want to help. One of the perks of working is that you get to buy ahead of time and you can come in all during the year to shop.

The **last pick up day** is Friday, February 7. Plan ahead; if you need something picked up, get it scheduled by calling David S. (If you have to leave a message, be sure to leave name and phone number so you can be called back).

Now through January 31 the rummage building is open to worker friends and family for shopping; you must come with the worker. We only allow 6 visitors at a time and visitors must pick up a "visitor" badge in the sorting room. Please enter and exit through the sorting room. Visitors must check out at least 15 minutes early. There will be no friend and family shopping during the month of February, only at the sale.

Here is how the calendar looks for February.

We need people to help now in some departments. Hardware and Furniture need helpers.

Important Dates for February

February 10 (Monday)—Last day to drop off items.

February 12 (Wednesday)—Pre-Sale Meeting, 10 a.m. in the Chapel.

February 14 (Friday)—Last day for worker shopping. Must have your badge on to come shopping. There is no shopping during Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of sale week.

February 17 (Monday)—Tents go up. **Lots of help needed.**

February 18 and 19 (Tuesday and Wednesday)—All items being sold under the tents need to be cleaned and dusted. Here again, we **need lots of help.**

February 22 (Saturday)—Tents have to come down. **Lots of help needed, starting about 2 p.m.**

February 25 (Tuesday)—Small charities day for "gleaning." Charities need to provide their own boxes or bags and people to do the gleaning. Charities wishing to participate need to contact Joan Most. Leave a message with your name, name of charity, and telephone number where you can be reached.

February 27 (Thursday)—After-Action Meeting (Evaluation Time), 10 a.m. in the Church Library.

United Methodist Men will be serving coffee and donuts in the morning and sloppy joes for lunch during sale days.

Velda Rose UMC Food Pantry



VRUMC's Food Pantry Currently Needs:

- ◆ Pancake mix and syrup
- ◆ Hearty soups
- ◆ Canned meals
- ◆ Shelf-stable milk
- ◆ Cereal
- ◆ Spaghetti and sauce
- ◆ Pork and beans
- ◆ Canned tuna
- ◆ Canned chicken

To Donate: Food donations are received at Sunday morning services and at the Food Pantry, Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:30 AM.



Cash donations may be placed with the Sunday offerings, brought or mailed to the church office, or made at veldarose.org. You may also use the QR code.



VRUMC Food Pantry Volunteers:
Standing, L-R: Donna, Teri, Barbara, Mary, & Mikhail

A Fond Farewell to Walter Schott

Walter has been with the Food Pantry for many years. He was always a pleasure to work with. He was very particular about the cans being in line and face out that it has now rubbed off on every one else. His warmth and love touched us all. We wish him a happy retirement.

- The Pantry Staff

YOU WILL BE GREATLY MISSED. 🥰



Desert Mission UMC,
Scottsdale, AZ

East District Korean Ministry

First UMC, Gilbert, AZ

Prayer

Our LOVE prayer focus:
North Scottsdale United Methodist



In the Know



office CLOSURE

The church office will be closed Monday, February 17 in observance of Presidents' Day.



prayer CHAIN

Glenda Veborg has graciously agreed to head up our Prayer Chain. After a brief hiatus, it is good to have a prayer chain again to receive and pray for your prayer requests.

If you have a prayer request you can list it on the Prayer Request sheets at worship, call or email Glenda Veborg.



blood DRIVE

You are somebody's type! People come in all different shapes, sizes and blood types. Most blood types fall into one of the four major groups: A, B, AB, O. However, some people have rare blood types that fall outside the major groups, and for these patients, The American Red Cross needs a more diverse blood supply.

The best blood type match for patients with rare blood types often comes from donors of the same race or similar ethnicity.

Red blood cells carry markers called antigens on their surface that determine one's blood type. There are more than 600 known antigens besides A and B. Certain blood types are unique to specific racial and ethnic groups. Therefore, it is essential that donor diversity match patient diversity.

Join Velda Rose UMC and American Red Cross Thursday, February 27 from 8 AM to 1 PM in the Library as we strive to make a difference.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and use sponsor code: veldarose. You may also sign up using the QR code.



connect WITH US

Share online attendance, sign up for our e-newsletter, or contact the church office regarding Praise, Prayers or Concerns in just a few quick clicks by using our e-form!

Simply go to veldarose.org, click on the Contact Us tab, and enter the relevant information, or go to www.veldarose.org/contact-us.html.



lost AND FOUND

We've accumulated quite a few "lost" items here at the church office over the past year. If you're missing something and think you may have left it on the church campus, please stop by the church office during office hours by Monday, February 10 (and be prepared to describe your lost item). All non-claimed items will be donated to the UWF Rummage building on Tuesday, February 11.

The Green Team

**Happy Valentines Day!
The Greatest Gift that cannot be
Recycled or reclaimed is our waste of time that
God has given us each day!**

LET'S BOYCOTT PLASTICS

First of all we need to get rid of all the plastics we own (or at least as much as possible). Things like storage containers, cooking utensils and so on down the line. You know what you have and what

you can do with and what you can live without. Just close your eyes and put them in a box to be taken to a Recycle center.



The Next step... Replace them all with glass containers. Be creative... I have been using canning jars for years for freezing fruits and vegetables. Soups work great as do casseroles. But yes, I must confess the lids are plastic. However, they were special made for these jars and do work well in the freezer. Guess you could say I am reusing them.

Green Team Plastic Lid Collection Update

The Green Team's plastic lid collection continues! On Friday, 1/24, the lid barrel was moved from the United Women in Faith's Rummage building to the Sanctuary. It's already over half full!

As a warm-up to the Green Team's Earth Day focus on plastics (and tied to Revelation's vision of a restored creation), the Green Team is partnering with a local school and mehug.org to turn plastic caps into donations that



support children and families fighting cancer, while helping eliminate plastic waste.

The tops need to be "hard" plastic, like on water bottles and peanut butter jars—not flimsy tops like on fast-food sodas.

Thank you for joining us in this endeavor!

Looking Ahead: Circle the City & East Valley Chorale



The new East Valley Respite Center to be built on 2.1 acres of vacant Velda Rose UMC property received final approval by the Mesa City Council on January 27. CtC will now be initiating Escrow to complete the \$1.1M purchase from VRUMC. Congrats to the Velda Rose and Circle the City teams working on this project over the last year!



East Valley Chorale will perform at VRUMC Sunday, March 2 at 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary. A free-will offering will be accepted.

Birthdays



| | | | |
|----------------|------|------------------|------|
| Judy Dubois | 2/2 | Richard Williams | 2/23 |
| Dale Smith | 2/2 | Jan Arnold | 2/25 |
| Pat Mayhall | 2/12 | Sheila Waterbury | 2/25 |
| Helen Taylor | 2/14 | Seini Latu | 2/26 |
| Claris Olson | 2/15 | Deonna Larson | 2/29 |
| Judie Thompson | 2/18 | | |

Anniversaries



| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Palei and Melisa Ika | 2/20 |
| Sione and Sulia Kaipelea | 2/28 |

In Loving Memory

Richard Darling—November 13, 2024

Frank Yoder—December 27, 2024



VELDA ROSE

United Methodist Church

5540 East Main Street | Mesa, Arizona 85205-8720
(480) 832-2111
Office Hours: Monday — Thursday 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM
veldarose.org

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Staff Leadership

Rev. Carlo A. Rapanut, Bishop
Rev. Melissa Rynders, East District Superintendent
Rev. Ann Lyter, Senior Pastor
Ministers, Every Member of the Congregation


WORSHIP

SCHEDULE

**Sunday Morning Service at
9:30 AM in the Sanctuary or
livestreamed on:**

 **Facebook** at facebook.com/veldaroseumc

and

 **YouTube** at
youtube.com@veldaroseunitedmethodistchurch/streams

**VRUMC
BLOOD DRIVE
THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 27**



SCAN ME

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and use sponsor code: veldarose. You may also sign up using the QR code.