

The Vision

Volume 18, Issue 1

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

January 2025

A New Year, A New Covenant Heart

By Rev. Ann Lyter

As the New Year dawns, many of us find ourselves reflecting on the past and anticipating what lies ahead. For our beloved congregation here at Velda Rose United Methodist Church, the questions of past and future are especially poignant. We stand at a crossroads, discerning whether to continue as we are or to embrace the possibility of being adopted by another congregation. This decision is not just about our survival—it’s about our faithfulness to God’s call for us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In times of great uncertainty, John Wesley’s Covenant Prayer offers us a profound guide. This prayer, central to Wesleyan tradition, invites us to surrender fully to God’s will:

“I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”

This prayer challenges us to place our trust wholly in God, even when the way forward feels unclear or daunting. It invites us to embrace humility and faith, recognizing that our ultimate purpose is to serve God, not ourselves.

As we discern the future of Velda Rose UMC, another scripture comes to mind: *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11)

This verse assures us that God’s plans are not only for our good but also for the hope of those we are called to serve. It encourages us to ask, “How might God’s plans for our congregation bring hope and a future, not just for us, but for our community and the wider Church?”

The decision before us is not simply about logistics, membership numbers, or finances. It is about living out the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor, the Great Commission to make disciples, and trusting God’s promise of a future filled with hope. It is about asking how we might best serve the “least of these” in our community, even if it means letting go of cherished traditions or familiar structures.

As we step into 2025, I invite you to join me in reflecting on Wesley’s prayer and the promise of Jeremiah 29:11. Let us pray these words and carry their spirit into our meetings, our conversations, and our hearts. Above all, let us trust that God is with us, guiding us, no matter what lies ahead.

The decisions we make in the coming weeks will not be easy. Yet, as Wesley’s prayer and Jeremiah’s words remind us, our ultimate hope is not in buildings or programs but in the glorious and blessed God who claims us as His own.

Let us walk forward with covenant hearts, trusting that wherever God leads, we will find grace and peace.

Blessings, Pastor Ann

New Worship Series Beginning 1/12/2025



If you were to ask a group of Christians what they think about the book of Revelation, you might get a range of responses: confusion, fear, fascination, or perhaps avoidance altogether. For many, Revelation has been portrayed as a cryptic, even frightening roadmap to the end of the world. But what if that's not what Revelation is about at all?

This January and February, we will journey together through a sermon series titled *Revelation: Letter of Hope from Troubled Times*. Over eight weeks, we will explore how this often-misunderstood book of the Bible is not a story of despair, but one of hope. It's not about destruction, but about the victory of a loving and triumphant God. Revelation is a pastoral letter, written to encourage struggling Christians to endure with faith and confidence that God is in control, despite living in a world controlled by an empire of wealth, privilege and power.

Each week, we'll dive into the rich imagery of Revelation, discovering how its message speaks to us today. Grounded in our belief and faith in Christ's ultimate triumph over evil, we will reflect on what it means to live as people of hope, even in the face of life's challenges.

Here's what you can look forward to: Meeting Jesus at the center of it all, the One who walks with us through every trial.

Stepping into the throne room of God to witness the Lamb who is worthy.

Seeing how even in the midst of struggle, God's

grace calls us to persevere.

Reimagining how we understand evil and God's response to it.

Celebrating the ultimate victory of God's goodness, as death and sorrow are no more. Whether you've been a faithful student of the Bible for years or have never truly explored its pages, this series is for you. Revelation is filled with breathtaking imagery and profound truths, but its message is simple: God wins. And because God wins, we are invited to live with courage, peace, and joy.

This series is not just about learning; it's about transformation. Together, we will reflect on how Revelation challenges us to see the world through the lens of God's promises and invites us to live as people of hope who live into those promises. We'll worship, pray, and grow together as we discover the good news that God is making all things new.

Come and be part of this journey. Whether you're looking for answers to life's toughest questions, seeking to deepen your faith, or just curious about what Revelation really has to say, you are welcome. Let's explore this Letter of Hope from Troubled Times together and discover the light that shines in the darkness and across the millennia.

Series begins on January 12. A Bible study to accompany the series will begin on January 8, and meet Wednesdays (except January 15th) at 4 pm. See p. 5 for more details.

January Services

JANUARY 5

Christmas 2:

“Epiphany: Light and Dark— Recognition”

Isaiah 60:1-6;
Matthew 2:1-12

JANUARY 12

Epiphany 1:

“John, the Apocalypse and Jesus at the Center”

Revelation 1-3
(selected verses)

JANUARY 19

Epiphany 2:

“Welcome to the Throne Room”

Revelation 4-5
(selected verses)

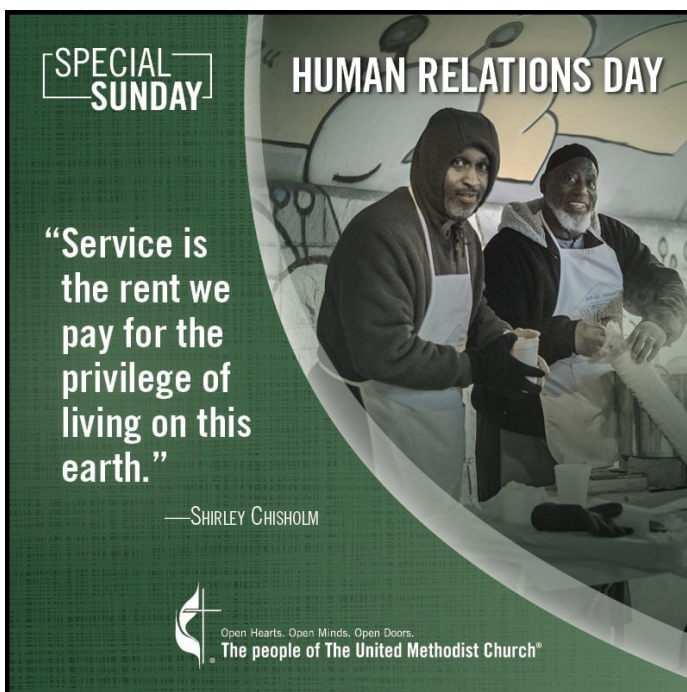
JANUARY 26

Epiphany 3:

“Horses and Angels”

Revelation 6-8:1
(selected verses)

Human Relations Day is January 19



By participating in the Human Relations Day offering, we embrace the power of relationships, the strength of community and the good news that all of God’s children are of sacred value.

Of the funds received, fifty-seven percent supports Community Developers programs, thirty-three percent supports The United Methodist Voluntary Services (UMVS) and ten percent supports Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

In a world that often feels uncertain, embracing God’s love shifts our perspective. Supporting the Human Relations Day offering channels our resources into servant leadership, community building and ministries that embody peace with justice.

How can I give to United Methodist Human Relations Day?

Write a check to VRUMC with “United Methodist Human Relations Day” in the subject line, or you can give online at any time at ResourceUMC.org/SSGive.

To give by mail, send checks to:
GCFA | P.O. Box 340029 | Nashville, TN 37203

Notice of Special Church Conference—January 19, 2025

Our District Superintendent Rev. Melissa Rynders, has authorized and will preside over a Special Church Conference on January 19, 2025, at 10:45 am, following worship that morning. This Special Conference is being called to vote on the recommendation from the study *Choosing the Faithful Path* that Velda Rose UMC seek adoption of VRUMC by another United Methodist Church.

At the Annual Church Conference on October 6, 2024, it was announced that Velda Rose UMC would undertake the study, *Choosing the Faithful Path*. As the State of the Church report stated and was shared at the Annual Church Conference, VRUMC was “facing difficult realities. Membership has declined and financial stability remains a concern. ...Perhaps most concerning is that our vision for the future remains unclear.” Many of our leaders had expressed serious concern over the vision and the future of VRUMC. Specifically, the report stated: “We recognize that many growing churches have a strong vision at the helm, while established churches can have vision in the passenger seat or even the back seat, with programs in the driver’s seat. Unfortunately, many of our leaders have felt that our vision was in the trunk, and the car was likely in the ditch.” (Apologies for mixing the metaphor, it should have said, “growing churches have a strong vision in the **driver’s seat**.”)

Everyone was encouraged to be part of the study, everyone on the Governing Board and indeed every member of the congregation. Of all the people invited, a faithful group of less than a dozen gathered for four weeks to look at our history, the reality of our neighborhood, our aging membership, our engagement in ministry, our finances, and other factors. We considered honestly the costs of our aging, non-accessible, and overly large facility. We learned that turning around a declining congregation takes a dedicated group of a dozen or more people willing to commit 20 hours per week, every week, over and above what they are already doing for the church. We also looked seriously at

our call to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39), the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), our call as a church to care for the “least of these” (Matthew 25:35-50), and our mission as United Methodists to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

In the end, the overwhelming majority of those gathered voted that VRUMC should seek adoption by another United Methodist congregation. This would mean that our church would close, our assets would transfer to the adopting church, and our members would become members of the adopting church.

There will be a time for questions and answers before a vote is taken but we can anticipate some of your questions:

What church would adopt VRUMC? If the vote on January 19 is to seek adoption, a committee will be formed to do due diligence and determine what UMC congregation would be the best fit for our faith community. Both churches will have to hold Church Conferences and vote to confirm the adoption.

How will the committee be formed? The Governing Board will set the committee. If you would like to serve on the committee, please make that known on January 19, or as soon as possible after the vote.

What if I don’t want to be a member of the adopting church? Anyone not wishing to move their membership to the adopting church can transfer their membership elsewhere or withdraw.

What about the columbarium? This will have to be decided but it could move to the adopting church. Should the decision be to move the columbarium, the families will be notified, and the move would be at no cost to the families. Families will also have the option to relocate their loved ones. Those details will be worked out as the process moves forward (cont. on 5).

Notice of Special Church Conference, continued

What will happen to our sanctuary? That will be up to the adopting congregation. It is possible that the property could be sold or rented, both of which generally require a church conference and the vote of the members. Former VRUMC members, as members of the adopting congregation will have the same voice as other members. Alternatively, it is possible that the property could be repurposed in some way, or held for some future purpose—there are many possibilities.

What will happen to the Mission Warehouse, aka Rummage Building? That will be up to the adopting congregation. The Mission Warehouse is being re-parceled as part of the sale of

land to Circle the City. As such, it could be treated separately from the rest of the property.

When will the adoption take place/when will VRUMC stop holding worship services? We don't know. It will depend on the vote on the 19th, the speed with which the committee does its work, and when and if both congregations approve the adoption. At this point, Pastor Ann is working on worship plans through the seasons of Epiphany and Lent, as is her practice.

Oh snap! What about Pastor Ann? Pastor Ann will continue to serve God and will do so as appointed by the Bishop.

Study of the Book of Revelation—Begins 1/8

Pastor Ann will lead a study of the Book of Revelation to accompany our January/February worship series. The study will meet on Wednesdays at 4 pm and finish by 5:30 pm, beginning on January 8 and continuing through February 26th (except for January 15).

We will be using several books and you are encouraged to buy N. T. Wright's *Revelation for Everyone* and/or Jeremy Duncan's *Upside Down Apocalypse: Grounding Revelation in the Gospel of Peace*. You can buy either book, or both, as

you desire. If you would like the office to order books for you, please contact the office before New Years to give us time for delivery. Alternatively, you can purchase the books through a book store or online books seller.

This is a study for anyone interested in learning more about the last book of the Bible. You do not have to have studied the Bible before. But even if you are a long-time Biblical student, and even if you have studied Revelation before, you are welcome.

Revelation-Themed Mission Project: Plastic Caps

Tied to Revelation's vision of a restored creation, the Green Team wants us to think about plastics, our use of plastics and what plastics are doing to the earth. As a warm-up to their Earth Day focus on plastics, the Green Team is asking everyone to collect plastic tops.

The tops need to be "hard" plastic, like on a water bottle, peanut butter jar, and not the flimsy

tops on fast-food sodas. Watch for the barrel in the sanctuary.

The Green Team is partnering with a local school and mehug.org to turn the caps into donations that support children and families fighting cancer. And in the process a little less plastic ends up in landfills.

United Women in Faith



United
Women
in Faith

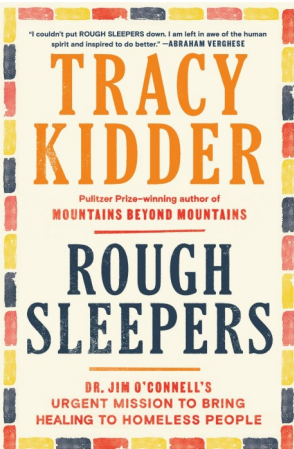
NEW YEARS BLESSINGS
from Velda Rose United
Women in Faith.

Our new year begins with our meeting on Thursday, January 9, at 11:30 AM. We will have a potluck in the Library. We will be learning more about our community in Mesa.

Julie Spillsbury is starting her 2nd term on Mesa City Council. Julie is a public education advocate and is actively seeking innovative solutions to building strong and safe neighborhoods.

We invite all women and men to come and hear her speak.

We are happy to say that we have 20 new books in our Reading Program.



One that we'd like to highlight is *ROUGH SLEEPERS: Dr. Jim O'Connell's Urgent Mission to Break Healing to Homeless People* by Tracy Kidder.

It tells about his creative programs to care for Boston's homeless.

2025 Velda Rose United Women in Faith Officers

President--Pat Nixon

Vice President--Gayle Ottman

Secretary--Joan Most

Treasurer--Jeanne Siedschlag

Chairman of Nominations--Kathy Kolbo

Mission Coordinators

Spiritual Growth--K Roemmich

Membership--Laurie Hewson

Education for Mission--K Roemmich

Social Action--Tish Roberts

Program Resources--Pat Nixon

REPORT FROM REMODEL THE LIBRARY By Billie Larime, Chairperson

A big thank you to all the members of the committee that worked with me to remodel the Velda Rose Library and Workroom. We now have a gorgeous meeting/eating room and a kitchen prep room.



Remodeled kitchen—west side

First, we need to thank the staff members that painted, cleaned and moved everything in both the workroom and the original library area. Russell Burkhammer, Marcus Bentley and Jeff

Childers worked very hard.

Next, I greatly appreciated all the input of my committee members, Joan Most, Tim Most, Doris McMahan, and Russell Burkhammer. Jeanne Siedschlag and Joan Most



Meeting in the "new" Library

packed all the books that had to be removed from the shelves so that all the old carpet could be removed as well as all the shelves and cabinets that existed before the remodel.

To prep for the massive moving of all tables and boxes, Tish Roberts and Billie Larime packed up anything of value before construction could be



Remodeled kitchen—east side

started. Doris McMahan and Billie Larime completely restocked a new Kitchen after all the painting was completed. It took

almost six months of work. If you have not seen the newly remodeled Library and Kitchen, please go look.

United Women in Faith Stocking Project



The Velda Rose United Women in Faith want to thank all of you who helped contribute items and money for the Christmas Stockings. We stuffed and delivered 515 Christmas stockings to 4 Mesa Elementary Schools on

December 10th. There were so many ladies who came to help stuff stockings it didn't take too long and we were done about 11:00 am. Great team. Thank you all. Special thanks to Tim Most who drove us around to the schools for deliveries. The people of Velda Rose and the United Women in Faith came through with items left over this year. Those items will go to the Superstition Kiwanis Club, who will be doing the Christmas Stocking Project next year. Marcus Bentley is their President, so we will be able to support the Project in the future, through the Superstition Kiwanis club.



Stockings to these elementary schools so that Velda Rose UFW were able to touch the hearts of at least 500 little children each year. Bless you all and Happy New Year.

Arlene Oisten,
Chairperson (now retired) for the UFW Christmas Stocking Project



I want to personally thank all of you who have supported this project over the last 10+ years that I have been the Chairperson for the Project. I have been pleased to deliver Christmas



United Methodist Men



PIE NIGHT: It's back! Pie Night will be January 16 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in the Library.

Tickets will go on sale on January 5. Cost of admission is \$5 or a pie.

PRODUCE GIVEAWAY January 18: We will be handing out free bags of fruits & vegetables beginning around 9:00 AM in the covered parking area opposite the church office.

ALUMINUM CAN RECYCLING: The drop-off point is located on the east end of the Mission

Building pods. Thanks for your continued support of this worthwhile community project.



CHOCOLATE NIGHT: Mark your calendars for February 13! See next month's newsletter for more details.



MONTHLY MEETING: Our next monthly business meeting will be held January 6 from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Library.

Christmas at the Pantry

January Office Closure



In the Christmas season, we try at Velda Rose UMC's Food Pantry to give more to the children with gifts.



office
CLOSURE

The church office will be closed Monday, January 20 in observance of Martin Luther King Day. It will reopen Tuesday, January 21.



Arizona Korean UMF, Mesa, AZ
Chandler UMC, Chandler, AZ

Cross in the Desert UMC, Phoenix, AZ
Cross Roads UMC, Phoenix, AZ

**Our LOVE prayer focus:
North Scottsdale United Methodist**



In the Know



online CALENDAR

For up-to-date information about events at Velda Rose UMC, check out the online calendar on our website at <https://www.veldarose.org/calendar.html>.



blood DRIVE

You are somebody's type! According to America's Blood Centers and The Association for Blood Donor Professionals, only 3% of the eligible U.S. population donate blood every year. Of that 3 percent, 12.2% comes from minority donors, 26.3% are from first-time donors, and 54.1% are female.

Join Velda Rose UMC and The American Red Cross Thursday, February 27 from 8 AM to 1 PM in the Library as we strive to make a difference. Your blood donation could be the miracle that transforms hope into survival!

Sign up using the above QR code, or go to <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=veldarose>.



prayer CHAIN

Glenda V. 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.

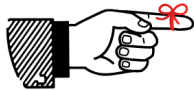
If you have a prayer request you can list it on the Prayer Request sheets at worship, call Glenda, or contact the church office and we will pass your prayer request along to Glenda.



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.



end of year REMINDER

End of Year Reminder about Mandatory Distribution, Qualified Charitable Donations and Tax Benefits As the end of the year approaches, many people start thinking about taxes. If you are subject to a mandatory distribution from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you may be able to reduce your taxes and avoid other negative tax consequences by making a Qualified Charitable Donation directly to Velda Rose UMC. Talk with your financial or tax advisor for more details. **But hurry**, the end of the year is just around the corner. (And, you can also plan for next year.)

The Green Team



Happy New Year from the Green Team! We hope you all has a blessed, happy, and safe Holiday.

We want to start the New Year out right...

So, number 1 is our long-promised picture of our Willow Tree (AKA Willie) for now. He is growing fast and has become quite tall. Marcus has been lovingly taking care of him and he is doing an awesome job. Thank you Marcus and bless you and your green thumb.

Moving forward! Just to remind everyone that we are always looking for new members. We meet at 1:00 in the library meeting room on the second Thursday of the month.

This year our focus will be all about plastics... lots and lots of plastics. Recycle, what to recycle, how to recycle, where to recycle. It is enough to make us all crazy. But... we have a better plan for all those ugly plastics. DON'T BUY THEM!!! (Of course, there will always be a few that are

necessary.)

We plan also this year to dabble a little further into Trees. What kind of trees are good for Arizona? How and when is the best time to buy and plant a tree? How to care for them during those hot summer days.

We will have a lot of new information during our annual Earth Day Celebration, tentatively scheduled for April 6th, 2025. Hope you will all join us.

Then of course there is FOOD WASTE... There is so much food wasted in this Country it will make your head swim. I recently read an article that they predicted that there would be over 330,000 million pounds of food wasted from Thanksgiving alone. Unfortunately... we are still waiting for all of the corporate offices of the local grocery stores to return our survey on what each organization is doing to help eliminate food waste. What are they doing to save the environment? What are they doing about stainability? Well, we will get back to you on that one as soon as we hear back and get some answers.

IN THE MEANTIME, STAY GREEN.

Successful Canned Food Drive



The Green Team was the host of the food drive. The barrel was filled to overflowing. Way to go Velda Rose!!! To our complete surprise, two members each gave the food bank a check for \$500. Wow!!!!

Our next project is plastic caps recycling. We are partnering with a local school and mehug.org to turn the caps into donations that support children and families fighting cancer.



For more information, please see the "Revelation-Themed Mission Project: Plastic Caps" article on page 5.

Thank you for your generosity!



Connie Zimmerman	January 01	Judy Dunn	January 18
Lee Nixon	January 03	Lois Rowe	January 18
Gary Ackerson	January 07	Tom McMahon	January 21
John Burley	January 12	LaVerne Roberg	January 21
Cliff Lowum	January 12	Wes Roose	January 21
Pat Schmitt	January 13	Norma Winslow	January 25
Carol Ball	January 16	Robert Maumatapule	January 26
Suzi Reed	January 16	Deirdre Poyer	January 30
Gayle Ottman	January 17		



Richard & Virginia Williams January 29

In Loving Memory

Scott McVeigh—November 24, 2024



VELDA ROSE

United Methodist Church

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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



Items considered for the February 2025 Vision must be submitted to officeadmin@veldarose.org by **Tuesday, January 14, 2025.**