

# The Vision

Volume 16, Issue 12

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

December 2023

## Food for the Body and Soul: The Unifying Message of Christ By Pastor Ann

AS WE EMBARK on the journey of Advent, a season filled with anticipation and preparation, we find ourselves surrounded by the warmth of the Christmas spirit. This is a time of reflection and renewal, as we seek to draw closer to the true essence of Christmas and rediscover the profound message it holds for each and every one of us.

In the midst of holiday hustle and bustle, it's easy to become overwhelmed and lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas. However, the good news of Jesus reminds us that God is with us now, urging us to be present in the moment and find solace in His loving embrace. This year, let us embrace the spirit of being present and mindful, allowing it to permeate every aspect of our lives, both spiritual and daily.

In a world that often feels divided, it is no secret that we are a diverse group, even as we are one congregation. The unifying message of Christ's birth transcends all differences and calls us to extend tolerance, understanding, and love to one another. Let our Velda Rose UMC community be a beacon of hope and fellowship, offering a safe space for dialogue and mutual appreciation.

Like our members, our faith community itself carries a sense of tradition and cherished values. This Advent, let us treasure these traditions while welcoming the opportunity to embrace new ideas and perspectives that can enrich our faith journey.

As we come together in worship and fellowship, let's remember that we are united by a common purpose – to share the message of God's love with the world.

Speaking of sharing, I have a recipe on page 2 to accompany this newsletter article, inspired by our theme of finding peace and presence during Advent. This simple and comforting recipe for Cinnamon Apple Crisp is a delightful treat that embodies the warmth of the season. The inviting aroma of cinnamon will

fill your home while you prepare this dessert, providing a lovely backdrop for meaningful conversations with loved ones.

Throughout this Advent season, let us actively seek the presence of God in our lives and share His love with those around us. Together, may we create a welcoming community, rooted in the everlasting message of hope, peace, joy, and love.

May God's blessings be upon each and every one of you during this sacred season and every day to come.



# Cinnamon Apple Crisp

## Ingredients

- 4-5 medium-sized apples, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour (can substitute gluten-free flour)
- 1/2 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup cold butter, cubed

## Method

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F. Grease a baking dish.
2. In a bowl, toss the apple slices with lemon juice and vanilla extract. Place them evenly in the greased baking dish.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, oats, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Cut in the cold butter using a fork or pastry cutter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
4. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the apples in the baking dish.
5. Bake for about 30-35 minutes or until the apples are tender and the topping is golden brown.
6. Serve warm with a dollop of whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Enjoy!



May this recipe not only delight your taste buds but also serve as a reminder to savor the present moment, finding nourishment for both your body and soul.

I WOULD LIKE TO introduce an experience shared by Dr. Ihn Namkoong, an emergency medicine specialist, during his time at a hospital in Korea, as quoted directly from his Facebook.

"This is a story from five years ago, when I was working as an intern in Jinju. A young man, 26 years old, arrived at the emergency room early in the morning with a brain injury from a fall at a construction site. His face and head were severely damaged, making it impossible to recognize his original appearance, and he had lost consciousness completely. I quickly administered emergency measures, but the chances of survival seemed slim. In a condition similar to being in a vegetative state, he lay in the intensive care unit with a breathing apparatus. That morning, as I anxiously watched him, his Electrocardiogram (ECG) suddenly changed from a regular and normal heartbeat to a ventricular tachycardia (V-tach) wave. The ECG curve, which had shown rhythmic and normal human heartbeats, suddenly indicated weakening and loss of strength, a sign that death was imminent. I had never seen someone survive more than 10 minutes after such a change in the ECG curve.

Feeling the impending fate, I went out of the intensive care unit and told the waiting family that it was time to come and watch over the patient as he approached death. The family had already given up on any measures (such as CPR) for the patient and accepted his death as inevitable. Some relatives, presumably the young man's parents, were tearfully saying their final goodbyes, treating him as if he were already a lifeless body. With a heavy heart, I left the intensive care unit. I instructed the nurse to transfer the patient to the morgue as soon as the ECG waves stopped. As the evening passed, occupied with caring for numerous emergency patients, I did not think much more about him. The emergency room was almost like a battlefield hospital every day, with exhausted bodies dealing with various cases. That night, I spent the night with a tired body, not thinking much more about him. The next morning, for some reason, I felt compelled to visit the intensive care unit

again. Although it was a natural assumption that there would be no one there or another patient would be lying in the now-empty bed, I couldn't shake the thought of him from my mind.

Upon entering the room, I couldn't believe my eyes once again. He was still there. Despite his extremely fragile state, his ECG continued to draw a faint but persistent waveform, indicating that his soul had not completely left his body. Witnessing this, I felt something indescribable. I sensed the presence of something beyond scientific and medical understanding. I had detected an existence that went beyond what medical knowledge could explain. I had never witnessed such a phenomenon before or after that day. As two more days passed with his ECG drawing slow waveforms, indicating life, I visited the intensive care unit again the next morning. His body seemed lifeless, but for some unknown reason, his soul still lingered faintly in this world. The monitor screen displaying the ECG waves confirmed the situation, and my unusual feeling supported it.

Suddenly, a young woman entered the intensive care unit. She had not been among the guardians before, and it seemed as if she had hurriedly come after receiving some unexpected news from afar. The young man's lover, it turned out. She looked as if she might collapse to the floor at any moment, with a pale face and tears silently streaming down her cheeks. I moved aside to allow her to come close to the bed. Without saying a word, the young woman stood beside the bed, shedding tears. At that moment, his ECG waveform suddenly stopped. The continuous wave that had been appearing on the monitor disappeared in an instant, replaced by a straight line, as if the power had been switched off. His heart, which had been weakly beating for the past two days, had stopped at that very moment. My chest chilled instantly, and I felt a tremendous, inexplicable emotion.

Now, he had truly left this world, leaving behind the young woman beside him. I left the intensive care unit, conveyed the news of (continued on page 13)



# Blue Christmas Service Thursday, December 21



THE HOLIDAYS CAN BE a difficult time for many people. Whether it's the first Christmas after a loved one's passing, spending Christmas alone, financial worries, or any one of a dozen reasons, many people find the holidays difficult.

If you do not feel like celebrating, or you know someone who feels that way, the Blue Christmas Service may provide the comfort needed. This service acknowledges that Christmas is not always "holly, jolly." But God is with you, Emmanuel, even in difficult times.

We will gather on 12/21 as the sun drops low to support each other, and to be present in the midst of grief and difficulty.



## VRUMC 2023



### Reverse Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
11/26 Baby diapers size 3	11/27 Canned Vegetables	11/28 Spaghetti Sauce	11/29 Baby Lotion	11/30 Canned Chicken	12/1 Sample Size Shampoo	12/2 Baby Toys (safe under age 3)
12/3 Baby Diapers size 4	12/4 Canned Soup	12/5 Boxed pasta/rice	12/6 Baby Shampoo	12/7 Canned Tuna	12/8 Sample Size Body Wash	12/9 Baby Blanket
12/10 Baby Diapers size 2	12/11 Canned Fruit	12/12 Mac & Cheese (boxed)	12/13 Baby Body Wash	12/14 Spam	12/15 Sample Size Lotion	12/16 Stacking Cups or Blocks
12/17 Baby Wipes	12/18 Canned Beans	12/19 Instant Mashed Potatoes	12/20 Diaper Rash Ointment	12/21 Vienna Sausages	12/22 Sample Size Toothpaste	12/23 Stuffed Animal
12/24 Baby Diapers any size	Put this calendar some place convenient, like a refrigerator. Collect the items listed throughout Advent, either from things you already have or as you go shopping. Bring your Advent collections to the church at 5540 E. Main Street, Mesa AZ and put them in the "present" boxes in the sanctuary or bring them to the church up to January 7, 2024, and we will make sure everything gets to the food pantry and to Save the Family. Even if you don't collect everything, whatever you collect will be a help.					

Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to download the Reverse Advent Calendar.



# Worship in December

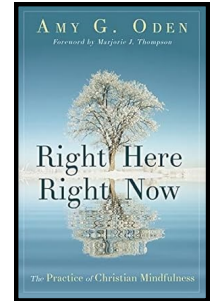


Nov. 29: Hope and Christian Mindfulness

Dec. 6: Peace and Curating Mindfulness

Dec. 13: Joy and Practices and Postures

Dec. 20: Love and Practices and Postures



The class and dinner are free. All are welcome, but please sign up in advance, so we can be sure to have enough books and food. An optional \$15 donation will offset the cost of the book.

A goodwill offering will be taken to help offset the cost of the supplies for the dinner. We are also accepting volunteers to cook.

## WORSHIP SERIES

This Advent/Christmas season we are focusing on being present, to God, to ourselves, and to each other. In this way we will strengthen our witness to a world in need of God's love.

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

This Advent and Christmas we will focus on The Gift of Being Present. Our Advent Study will be a book study using *Right Here, Right Now*, by Amy Oden.

# December Sunday and Wednesday Morning Services

## DECEMBER 3

Advent 2

*Being Present with Peace*

Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a;

Mark 1:1-8

## DECEMBER 10

Advent 3

*Being Present with Joy*

Isaiah 61:1-4,10; Psalm 126:1-3;

Luke 1:41-55

## DECEMBER 17

Advent 4

*Being Present with Love*

2 Samuel 7:1-11; Psalm 89:1-4;

Luke 1:26-38

## BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

### DECEMBER 21

*Being Present in Grief and Difficulty*

Isaiah 40 (selected verses) ;

John 1:1-6

### DECEMBER 24 — 9:30 AM

*Being Present with Light*

Isaiah 9:2-8; Luke 2:1-14

### DECEMBER 24 — 4:00 PM

Traditional Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Service

*The Light is Here*

### DECEMBER 24 — 7:00 PM

Candlelight Christmas Eve  
Service With Communion

*The Light is Here*

## DECEMBER 31

*Being Present with Assurance*

Isaiah 62:1-3; Galatians 4:4-7;

Luke 2:22-40

## **10:00 AM WEDNESDAY ONLINE DEVOTION**

12/6 - *Holy Biodiversity*  
Ps. 104:24-30; Gen. 6:19-20  
Colossians. 1:15-20

12/13 - *Holy Rest*  
Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 25:1-7  
Hebrews 4:9-11

12/20 - *Holy Sustainability*  
Gen. 2:15; 1 Cor. 4:1-2

12/27 - *Holy Renewal*  
Rom. 8:21-23; Is. 65:17-25  
2 Peter 3:13

# United Women in Faith



United Women in Faith

## DECEMBER UNIT MEETING

The UWF December 7 unit meeting at 11:30 in Moore Hall will be a fun event including a Christmas Potluck, the telling of jokes, and a skit in which everyone will participate. All women are welcome to join us in fellowship! Please bring a potluck



dish to this meeting.

## SUCCESSFUL MISSION WARHOUSE RUMMAGE SALE IN OCTOBER!



Joan & Tim Most  
Mission Warehouse  
Managers



Jeanne & David Siedschlag

Our October rummage sale was a great success as we raised \$100,000 since our earlier sale in February! Over 200 workers participated in the three-day event. We thank all of the buyers and sellers. A special thank you to our volunteer Mission Warehouse Managers, Joan & Tim Most, along with their cohorts, Jeanne and David Siedschlag, for their dedication in keeping the building running during the sale and throughout the year. What a great experience it was to raise money for missions here in our own community! Through the recycling of gently used items, we help many women, children, and youth in the local East Valley and beyond. Our next rummage sale will be held on February 22, 23 and 24, 2024. Be a volunteer rummage worker and enjoy the camaraderie with other workers!

## 2024 OFFICERS ELECTED FOR VELDA ROSE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The following officers were elected at the unit's November meeting:

Acting President:	Pat Nixon
Vice President:	Pat Nixon
Secretary and Velda Rose UMC Governance Board Representative:	TBD
Treasurer:	Jeanne Siedschlag
Nominations:	
Spiritual Growth/Ed for Mission:	Kathy Kolbo
Membership:	K Roemmich
Social Action:	Billie Larime
	Tish Roberts

## WESLEY COMMUNITY & HEALTH CENTERS WAS AN INFORMATIVE PROGRAM!



UWF members listened as Blaine Bandi, CEO of Wesley

Community & Health Centers, gave a passionate and informative presentation at our November unit meeting. During the pandemic, Wesley provided many services for its south central Phoenix community: when schools were closed, the gym was used to provide a place for students to participate in online learning, prepared meals were sent home to students and their families as food was difficult to procure during those early days of covid, and covid testing and covid vaccines were given at the health center through a drive-through program. Money raised at our rummage sales help support this important mission.



## RESPONSE (the magazine of women in mission) November/December 2023 edition

"Low-tech and affordable, books remain an incomparable tool in our spiritual toolbox. Reading can offer us solace and adventure, a balm for



## United Women in Faith, continued

the heart, and challenge to the mind, a chance to journey far afield and a chance, ultimately, to come home to our deepest selves. Amid the many changes that life inevitably brings, books remain a powerful companion.” So writes Emily Jones in her article entitled “The 2024 United Women in Faith Reading Program” starting on page 24 of the November/December 2023 Response Magazine. A synopsis of each of the books offered for the 2024 reading program follows on pages 25-39. The 2024 Reading Program Catalog can be found online at <https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program>.

### UWF DESERT SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

On October 28, 2023, our Conference held a Celebration of speakers, communion, and a business meeting to elect their new officers for 2024. In attendance from Velda Rose UWF was Billie Larime, wherein she was elected to her second term as Dean of Mission u for 2024. We thank the women who volunteer to serve United Women in Faith beyond

their local church and district. Keep these women in your prayers as they serve in the coming year.

### OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:

December 7 – Unit Meeting in Moore Hall: 11:30 am  
December Circle Parties

Esther Circle: Gayle O.’s House at Noon (12:00 pm) on December 14. Please meet at the church at 11:30 am to carpool to Gayle's house.

Naomi Circle: Joe’s Farm Grill at 10:30 am on December 14

January 4 – Installation of officers, Susanna Wesley (John Wesley’s mother) Presentation

January 20 – East District UWF Leadership Event

*“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”*

— *Mother Theresa*

*We believe love in action can change the world!*

## United Women in Faith Stocking Project



CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE. Again, we are accumulating items to fill 500 Christmas stockings for children at 4 local schools. As you travel, please save those unused lotions, shampoos, conditioners and soaps. When you go to the

dentist, please ask for extra toothpaste and tooth brushes. McDonald happy meal toys are great for stocking stuffers. We appreciate your support to make less fortunate children have a merrier Christmas.

### Our total list of items needed are as follows:

Toothpaste and tooth brushes  
Small toys for stockings  
Cereal bars  
Crayons

Lotions (travel size)  
Small story books  
Shampoos and conditioners (travel size)  
Stuffed animals  
Soaps (travel size)  
Cash to purchase what we need  
Combs  
Coloring Books  
Individually wrapped Candies (no chocolate)

**Right now we really need** coloring books (450), soaps (150), small stuffed animals (about 200 more), cereal bars (2000), and candy (lots).

If it seems like a lot, we are helped by a the Women of Faith budget, but all you can do helps. Thank you.

If you have questions, please contact Arlene Oisten at 517-256-3747. Items can be left at the rummage building during the week, marked for the Christmas Stocking Project. The donation deadline is 12/4.

## Music Arts Director, JB Brown



CHOIR HAS STARTED with 11 people and possibly more on the way. Rehearsals are 6:30 -8:30pm Wednesdays. We will be performing once or twice per month at the 9:30am services now through Easter. Sunday, December 3rd, we have a

special treat—Sweetwater Strings Quartet (cello, viola, and two violins) will perform at our service.

If you, or anyone you know, has a special music talent that you think the congregation would enjoy, please let me know. This could include such ones as harmonica, mandolin, ukulele, guitar, and banjo, as well as the standard list of strings, brass, and woodwind.

## Blood Drive Sunday, December 17



WE ARE HAVING a blood drive on Sunday, December 17, 2023. The blood you give may well save a life. Sign up today.

To schedule an appointment, go to <https://tinyurl.com/VRUMCBloodDrive> or scan this code.



## VRUMC at FMSC's "Hope Filled Holiday"



ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, twenty volunteers representing VRUMC participated in the Feed My Starving Children "Hope-Filled Holiday" event at the Arizona State University, Tempe campus.

Our group joined another

approximately 180 volunteers from around central Arizona to help FMSC reach their goal of packing 1 million meals over the three-day holiday weekend.

During their two-hour packing sprint, our cohorts packed enough meals to feed 352 people for a whole year.

Overall, FMSC exceeded their 1 million goal by almost 388 thousand meal packs!



Thanks to all who joined in this remarkable endeavor to alleviate world hunger.

Submitted by Jim Price



# City of Mesa & AARP Foundation Experience Corps Seek Volunteers to Help K-3 Students Become Better Readers

(Mesa, Arizona) —  
THE CITY OF MESA is seeking volunteers for [AARP Foundation Experience Corps](#), an intergenerational, community-based program that engages volunteers ages 50 and older as tutors and mentors to help K-3 students become proficient readers by the end of third grade.



Beginning in January 2024, the program and its volunteers will provide a total [average of 180](#)

[hours](#) of support each week at six Mesa Public Schools tutoring and mentoring children who are not yet reading at grade level. Tutoring will continue through May 2024, with plans for continuation of the program in the 2024-2025 school year.

“In Mesa Public Schools we know literacy is a currency that is needed for a healthy and successful life.” said Dr. Andi Furlis, Superintendent of Mesa Public Schools. “We are excited to welcome Experience Corp reading tutors into our elementary schools. Our students have so much to gain from working with trained tutors who will help them strengthen their reading skills and become confident readers.”

**Children who are not able to read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely not to graduate from high school or attend and complete college. They are also likely to earn lower incomes throughout their lives.** Experience Corps makes a lasting difference in the lives of America's most vulnerable children in high-need elementary schools while offering mental and physical health benefits to volunteers.

To qualify, volunteers must be at least 50 years of age, have earned a high school diploma or GED and must undergo a screening process. All Experience Corps volunteers receive extensive training and on-site support.

“Reading skills are a key building block for success, and I’m thrilled that Mesa is launching the Experience Corps program to give our 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders extra support,” said Mesa Mayor John Giles. “Helping children with their literacy skills is both rewarding and a meaningful opportunity to have a lasting impact. I encourage every retiree in Mesa to consider getting involved.”

AARP Foundation Experience Corps Mesa is currently holding informational sessions to learn about the program, fill out an application, and complete an interview with City of Mesa staff members. If interested in volunteering, [sign-up today](#).

Experience Corps has established active programs in over twenty cities across the country, including Phoenix, Tempe, and Pinal County. With the support of Experience Corps and [Read On Arizona](#), a statewide collaboration focused on childhood literacy, Mesa is proud to join in efforts to bring in high quality literacy tutoring to Mesa Public Schools.

To learn more about Experience Corps Mesa, visit [www.mesaaz.gov/residents/education-workforce-office/aarp-experience-corps-mesa](http://www.mesaaz.gov/residents/education-workforce-office/aarp-experience-corps-mesa).

**New Office Hours: Mondays — Thursdays 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

## United Methodist Men



VELDA ROSE UMMM resumed their free produce give-away project in November. This month's give-away will be held on December 23 starting at 8:00 AM in Moore Hall.

We will be offering VRUMC tee shirts for sale in front of the sanctuary each Sunday morning

during December. Shirts may be ordered by design (three styles to choose from), size, and color for \$20 each with delivery in Jan 2024.

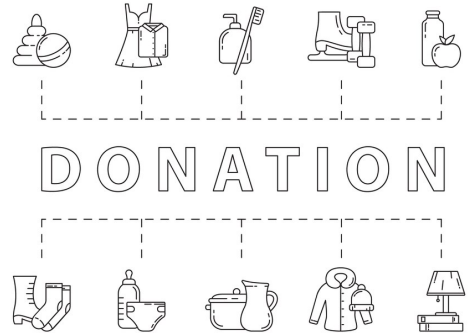
Our next monthly meeting will be held on 4 December, 1130-1300, in Martin Hall. Stop by for some fellowship, enjoy a light lunch, and learn about some of the missions we support.

Lee Nixon, Acting President

## Mission Warehouse Holiday Closures

THE MISSION WAREHOUSE will be closed the week between Christmas and New Years. We will reopen on January 2.

There will be no pickups or deliveries December 18 through New Years. They, too, will resume January 2.



## Calling All Cooks!

FOR A YEAR and a half now, I have been sharing a recipe every month that ties somehow into the monthly newsletter article. But the Thanksgiving potluck showed just how many wonderful cooks are in our congregation. Would you be



willing to share some of your favorite recipes? If so, bring them to the office, or send them to me at [pastorann@veldarose.org](mailto:pastorann@veldarose.org). I look forward to being inspired by the wonderful cooks at Velda Rose UMC.

## Resonance Vocal Ensemble's Christmas Concert December 9



COME JOIN US for our annual Christmas concert. We'll be singing some beautiful songs you may not have heard before, plus many more wonderful favorites that are sure to fill your hearts with the Christmas Spirit on Saturday, December 9

at 7 PM. General Admission is \$7, Senior Admission is \$5, and Family Admission (parents and children) is \$25.

You may purchase tickets online at [http://resonanceve.com/tickets.asp?evt\\_id=699](http://resonanceve.com/tickets.asp?evt_id=699).

## Holidays With Orpheus December 5



ORPHEUS MALE CHORUS presents its annual "Holidays with Orpheus" concert at Velda Rose United Methodist Church on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 7:30

p.m. The first half of our program will feature the music of Dan Forrest and Howard Helvey. Selections will include "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Ding! Dong! Merrily on High" and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and all of the music by these composers will be for four-hand piano. The second half will be a little lighter and will include our traditional sing-a-long, and you might...you might see some reindeer.

Ticket prices for Holidays with Orpheus are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and students and \$10 for



"Silent Night" at Velda Rose United Methodist Church

children 5-11. Children under the age of 5 are admitted free but will need a ticket. Tickets purchased in advance are being sold online only at [www.orpheus.org](http://www.orpheus.org). Tickets purchased at the door receive a \$5 surcharge.

## East Valley Chorale December 10

**DECEMBER 10, 2023 AT 6:00 PM**, Velda Rose United Methodist Church will host the East Valley Chorale and Mesa Regal RV Park Choir, along with a full orchestra, in presenting our annual Christmas Concert.

We hope you and your family will join us for an evening sharing inspirational music that celebrates the birth of Christ. We know this music will touch you with God's love as well enjoying some fun stories and a sing-a-long or two.

The event is free, but if you enjoy the program, a free will offering would be gratefully accepted. (Please make checks out to East Valley Chorale.)

### **ABOUT US:**

The East Valley Chorale was formed in 1999 to share the hope and joy of the Gospel message. We currently have around 100 singers from 50 different Phoenix area churches. The Chorale performs a variety of styles that include traditional Hymns, Light Classical, and Contemporary Christian arrangements.



The East Valley Chorale has a two-part mission.

### **We Sing.**

The East Valley Chorale is a refuge for those who love choral singing. We give former church choir members a place to join their hearts and voices through richly meaningful music that expresses faith, hope, and love.

### **We Serve.**

The East Valley Chorale shares the Gospel message with diverse audiences. We enjoy connecting with believers, seekers, and music lovers at churches, community events, retirement communities, and nursing homes and care facilities. It brings us much joy to see and hear how God uses our music in the lives of our listeners.





**IF YOU HAVE an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and are age seventy (or getting close), you should know about a way you can give to your local church that will strengthen the church’s ministry and produce tax savings for you! Here are some important facts you should know.**

**1. INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS HAVE COME OF AGE (MIDDLE-AGE).** IRAs have been around since 1974, though in the beginning, they were only for folks who didn’t have any other pension coverage. A bill in 1981 made all workers and their spouses eligible for these accounts. That’s a solid forty-plus years that people have been putting money away without having to pay federal taxes on it. (That part is important.)

**2. YOU CAN’T TAKE IT WITH YOU OR LEAVE YOUR MONEY THERE FOREVER.** The understanding was that those folks could access that money without a penalty as early as when they turned fifty-nine and a half, but when they reached seventy and a half, they were required to start taking at least a minimum amount out each year—“required minimum distributions” or RMDs. At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, the age for these

RMDs was raised to seventy-two. Since participants didn’t pay tax on the money when they put it in their IRAs, they are required to pay tax on it when money comes out. RMDs can push some people into a higher tax bracket. That can be avoided...

**3. GIVE IT TO THE CHURCH; AVOID PAYING THE TAXES.** In 2006, pension protection legislation allowed for tax-free use of RMDs for charitable contributions, saving the tax that people would have had to pay when they took this money out of their IRA accounts. These are called “qualified charitable distributions” or QCDs. Here’s an important distinction: these are NOT tax deductions. They do not provide a charitable deduction regardless of whether you itemize deductions. The tax benefit is the ability to exclude the donated distribution from taxable income! Here’s an example: If you were planning to give \$1000 per month to your church, you don’t qualify for more than the standard deduction amount, and you are at the 12% tax bracket—giving that amount from your IRA (as a QCD) will save you \$1440 in taxes! If you are in the 22% tax bracket, the savings will be \$2640!

**4. FROM IRA TO “MY UMC”—NEVER IN MY POCKET!** With a qualified charitable distribution (QCD), a check goes directly from your IRA to your church or the charity you select. Many people who are facing RMDs that will have tax implications could pay all their annual (continued on page 14)



## Save the Date—Leadership Training 2/3/24

### Save the Date: District Leadership Training February 3, 2024

ON SATURDAY, February 3, 2024 (Yes, we are scheduling 2024 already!), East District church leaders will gather with West District church leaders to learn how to be better leaders. This year’s focus is Conflict Management & Building Trust with Rev. April Casperson.

All church leaders should plan on attending. Also, anyone interested in becoming part of church leadership, as well as anyone interested in the topic, are invited to attend. More details to come.

# VRUMC Food Pantry



## HOLIDAY BAGS FOOD DRIVE

The Food Pantry will receive Holiday Food Bag items through Thursday, December 21.

Items needed for the bags are:

- ◆ Pie shells: graham or cookie crusts (not raw nor frozen)
- ◆ Canned pie filling
- ◆ Jiffy cornbread mix

- ◆ Canned yams or sweet potatoes
- ◆ Canned mixed vegetables (green beans, peas or corn)
- ◆ Dry potato boxes or packets (scalloped, mashed potatoes—various flavors)
- ◆ Canned cranberry sauce
- ◆ Stuffing mix

*Thanks to everyone who has already donated. The pantry now has plenty of ham! You may donate directly to the Food Pantry Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM, at the church office during office hours, or on Sundays in the shopping cart in the Sanctuary lobby.*

## The Power of Love, continued

his passing, and asked one of the guardians who had just arrived who she was. She was his wife, who was about to celebrate their three-month marriage anniversary and was pregnant with their child. I, overwhelmed by the astonishment and indescribable emotions, realized what I needed to do at that moment. After waiting for her to come out, I approached her and told her the story — how he had struggled on the brink of life and death for so long, waiting to meet her and their unborn child before leaving this world. It was a poignant and beautiful

farewell message from him to his wife and child — a farewell of love. As I looked into her eyes overflowing with tears, I couldn't help but feel a mix of fear and profound reverence. I believe in the existence of the soul. Not only do I believe, but I have vividly felt and experienced it. The greatest force guiding this existence is love."

In the midst of a busy and hectic year-end season, I find myself contemplating deeply about the great power of love.

## Prayer

NEED PRAYER? To be added to the United Women in Faith prayer chain, call Karen Taylor or contact the church office.

*in loving memory*

Marian Bentz  
11/3/2023  
Lloyd Loftin  
9/27/23

Grace UMC, Mesa

Journey UMF, Maricopa

North Scottsdale UMC



Our LOVE prayer focus:  
North Scottsdale United Methodist Church



## Giving From Your IRA, continued

title or offering at one time, hopefully early in the year, through their QCD and never have to show it as income.

**5. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR 72 TO DO THE QCD!** While Congress recently raised the age for RMDs to seventy-two, QCDs can happen for anyone who has reached the age of seventy and a half. Retirees who are over that age and want to continue to be generous to their local church should consider a qualified charitable distribution.

**6. MOST TAXPAYERS NO LONGER GET A TAX BREAK FOR CHARITABLE GIVING.** The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that went into effect in 2019 and 2020 included an increase in the standard deduction—it nearly doubled. That standard deduction is the threshold that your itemized deductions have to exceed to make itemizing

worthwhile. It left many people better off, but with 90% of taxpayers taking the standard deduction (which does not require any evidence of charitable giving), it eliminated a tax-incentive regarding charitable donations for most of us (not to say that this is the main reason people give to the church). Inviting retirees in the seventy-plus group (who use the standard deduction) to consider using the qualifying charitable distribution may reduce or eliminate the tax that they might have to pay on RMDs. Yet many will not know of this option unless your church makes the invitation!

***We encourage everyone to discuss this with a financial planner, tax consultant, or attorney—and be sure to let your family know! It could be a savings for you and a blessing to your local church!***

## The Green Team



JUST THE FACTS please, Just the facts!!! (Mind boggling)

1. Global plastics has reached an estimated 460 million metric tons in recent years.

2. It is estimated that 75 to 199 million tons of plastic are currently in our Oceans.

3. One million plastic bottles are purchased every minute worldwide, while up to five trillion plastic bags are used in a year.

4. Americans purchase about 50 billion water bottles per year, averaging about 13 bottles per month for every person in the U.S.! That means by using a reusable water bottle, you could save an average of 156 plastic bottles annually.

RE: single use plastics

5.8.3 billion tons (9.1 billion U.S. tons) of plastic has been produced since plastic was introduced in the 1050's.

6. 79% of plastic that has been made still sits in landfills or the natural environment (with the exception of the small amount that has been incinerated or recycled).

7. When plastic ends up in landfills, They are not harmless!!! They break down into tiny toxic particles that contaminate the soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them.

The Green Team is looking for a volunteer that likes to do craft work. Please let Helen Pierce know at [50angelsallaround@cox.net](mailto:50angelsallaround@cox.net).

P.S. I must confess that I am feeling terrible guilt. Since I live in the County Island all of our recycling resources have gone out of business or just plain don't want to recycle anymore. My only hope and prayer is that maybe someone out there will learn something from these lessons, so hopefully I have helped in some small way. At least we as The Green Team are trying. **ARE YOU?**





## Birthdays



Karen Taylor	12/2	Judy Lowum	12/15
Louise Middleton	12/3	Sylvia Morgan	12/15
Sonja Smith	12/4	Al Schubring	12/16
Carrie Carroll	12/7	Geri Edson	12/19
Barbara Murray	12/8	Marilyn Heckman	12/20
Maridel Spiegeler	12/9	Boni Lundin	12/22
Marlene Fuks	12/12	Larry Jackson	12/29
Eunice Tesoriero	12/14	Peg Snowdall	12/31



## Anniversaries



Ray & Brenda Monks	12/10	James & Sherrie Bludorn	12/28
Charles & Ruth Anne White	12/26		



# 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

Stay connected at [veldarose.org](http://veldarose.org)  
or on Facebook at [facebook.com/veldaroseumc](https://facebook.com/veldaroseumc)

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### Staff Leadership

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

## Christmas Eve Services

DECEMBER 24 – 9:30 AM  
*BEING PRESENT WITH LIGHT*

DECEMBER 24 – 4:00 PM  
TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE  
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE  
*THE LIGHT IS HERE*

DECEMBER 24 – 7:00 PM  
CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE  
SERVICE WITH COMMUNION  
*THE LIGHT IS HERE*

## Blue Christmas Service

BEING PRESENT IN  
GRIEF & DIFFICULTY

December 21  
4 pm  
Douglass Chapel

Items considered for the December Vision must be submitted to  
[officeadmin@veldarose.org](mailto:officeadmin@veldarose.org) by **Tuesday, December 12, 2023.**