

The Vision

Volume 15, Issue 3

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

March 2022

The Power of the Lenten Proclamation!

By Pastor Larry

It is not an underestimation to say that Paul, the great apostle, often had a relationship with believers at Corinth that was a bit fractured. He knows their gifts but he also is aware of their weaknesses. Paul has, to use a more contemporary phrase, been “on their case” about many issues that have brought conflict in their house church. He exhorts them on issues related to class division, immorality, behavior at the Lord’s Table, and the irresponsible use of spiritual gifts, to name only a few! The Corinthian believers had also given it back to Paul, and on occasion challenge his authority and the legitimacy of his apostleship.

Yet in the passage chosen for this month’s *Vision* article, 2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10, I want us to notice how Paul underscores a deep theological point in helping us understand the meaning of Lent. Paul emphasizes that it is not human beings who reach out to God for forgiveness and reconciliation, but rather, it is God who reaches out to us. God initiates the relationship of reconciliation. Compared to all other major world religions, that is a distinct characteristic of the Judeo-Christian faith. We have turned away from God’s gracious love, and Paul, with great force of words and emotions, tells believers that they need to accept God’s invitation and chose reconciliation.

More bluntly, we have sinned, and that is why we don the ashes, not God! The word “reconciled” has

within it the intent to “make right,” “resolve,” and “reunite.” In other words, it is God who takes the lead to correct the problem. This is at the heart of the Lenten message. It is God who seeks to mend the broken relationship between him and us. Our task is not to negotiate our innocence, but to receive God’s unmerited, free grace.

Paul says that there is urgency to the matter. He maintains the time is “at hand” for both the created order and for the Corinthians. The Christ-event makes this appeal urgent. God is the author of reconciliation but it is accomplished “in Christ,” by means of Christ. God made Christ “to be sin who knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This means, for Paul, that Christ was obedient to God and submitted to God’s will. That God “made him to be sin” (consistent with Romans 8:3 and Galatians 3:13) suggests that Christ’s death on the cross had a redemptive significance. Jesus death on the cross makes God’s reconciling act real and distinct.

Further, Paul makes it clear that our discipleship as Christians can only be discerned when we understand the gospel correctly. Paul’s passion was proclaiming God’s intent to be reconciled with human beings! He believed it was his God-given task to invite human beings to accept salvation, to receive the love of God in their lives. He will do anything possible to help others receive that grace.

There is some irony in the fact that Paul speaks of those things that reflected his commitment to Christ, yet these experiences are what most people would desire to avoid. If people see the gospel as a way for



The Power of the Lenten Proclamation! continued

safe deliverance from difficult or challenging situations, Paul does not make being a Christian seem attractive. Yet what Paul is saying is that he is willing to put it all on the line - he is willing to endure anything - for the sake of the gospel, for the opportunity to make God's love in Christ known to human beings.

Lent carries the double image of God's love and humanity's sin. Through the next few weeks, until Easter dawn breaks upon us, we will be reflecting on weekly lessons that both speak of God's abundant mercy and grace, yet also of how we abuse and misuse the good gifts of God. Yet God continues to be in relationship with us. God does not flinch when we waver in tepid indifference.

Why is that the case? A certain speaker started his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. "Who would like this \$20 bill?" he asked.

Hands started going up throughout the audience.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you, but first let me do this." He proceeded to crumple up the bill. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" The same hands went up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" He dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Again, hands went into the air.

"You have all learned a valuable lesson," the speaker said. "No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt

by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. Yet no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God's eyes. Dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are priceless to him. (Citation: Brett and Penny Kays, Brownstown, Michigan).

Paul tells the believers in Corinth to not accept God's grace in vain. He implores them to come back

to God, and be made right with God through Jesus Christ. It is not a decision to postpone into some unknown future. Paul says, "As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it."² For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:1, 2 NLT).

In our lesson, Paul talks about how he and his associates have been

faithful to carry this message to others even in the midst of great personal cost and suffering. He says, "⁴In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind."⁵ We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food." Why this commitment? Paul has endured all of this because he knows that it is only God's love in Christ that can fix a broken world. He does not choose to respond to evil in the world with more evil. How does he respond?

Paul's rejoinder is to live a life that is truly worthy of God's call. He says, "⁶We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our



March's Online Messages & Meditations

Sunday Services

March 6:
In-person & Online at 9:30 AM

Who Is Leading You?
Luke 4:1-13
Pastor Larry

March 13:
In-person & Online at 9:30 AM

Jesus...Get Away From Here
Psalm 27; Luke 13:31-55
Pastor Daniel

March 20:
In-person & Online at 9:30 AM

Will You Accept the Invitation?
Isaiah 55:1-9; Luke 13:1-9
Pastor Larry

March 27: UMCOR Sunday
In-person & Online at 9:30 AM

The Son Who Never Left
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
Pastor Daniel



In-Person & Online
March 2 | 12:00pm & 5:00pm

Have I Counted the Cost?
Psalm 51:1-17; Luke 14:25-33

Watch live on Facebook at facebook.com/VeldaRoseUMC
Services will be available to view later on Veldarose.org

Wednesday Online Meditations

March 9 at 10:00 AM

Is This the First "Fear Not?"
Genesis 15:1-12
Pastors Daniel and Larry

March 16 at 10:00 AM

Where Is the Fruit?
Luke 13:1-9
Pastors Larry and Daniel

March 23 at 10:00 AM

Can You Spare...Any Change?
Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Pastors Daniel and Larry

March 30 at 10:00 AM

Pressing Toward the Goal
Philippians 3:4b-14
Pastors Larry and Daniel

What happened if you weren't able to go to church on Sunday? Do you remember? It wasn't that long ago, perhaps, 4-5 years. You picked up the phone on Monday morning and called the church office to order a copy of a CD, or maybe a DVD. Then, you had to drive to the church office on Tuesday to pick up the CD. Fast forward to now, and almost every church has their messages available on their website. Some churches also have podcasts, and even apps. Last month, in the February 2022 Vision Newsletter, I ended my article with the following: *What led you to visit our church? The question we ask of those that are visiting our church for the first time. About 20 years ago, the answers which were most common were "my neighbor invited me" or my friend at work invited me." Ten years ago, the answer became "We visited the church's website." They saw the church sign driving by and decided to look up the website. Or, they heard a conversation about the church and decided to visit the website. Now, because of the pandemic, many people are asking about our church's online worship services.*



It's now quite obvious that things are changing quickly. Therefore, we must ask difficult questions about doing church differently. What are the online worship experiences doing to the church, and to people's faith? Are they acting as a *front* door to ministry and attracting people, or are they acting as a *back* door for people slowly leaving the church? In other words: is the option of church online moving people closer to Christ, or further away? These are great questions that we need to think through.

In the last 18 months or so, a new trend has emerged that no one really saw coming. A growing number of Christians seem to be watching the local church, rather than being engaged in the local

church. I want to emphasize caution as we read these words... *watching* and *engaged*. I will say more about this in next month's newsletter. My friend Troy, whom I met at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, TX is on staff at a church outside of Dallas. This church (The Potter's House) has an average worship attendance of 17,000 on Saturday & Sunday. Since they opened for in-person worship, Troy says that as many as 3,000 who used to attend in person aren't any more. Instead, they are choosing to worship online. This created major challenges for their leadership team, but after a few months, they were able to convert those challenges into "opportunities". They now have a new team of pastors to specifically shepherd this new online congregation. I'm impressed! Their motive in this is *outward*, not *inward*.

Three years ago, one of our young adult sons moved to a different part of the country. (And no, I won't

disclose his name on the grounds that it might incriminate me.) After his first month in a new city, I asked with curiosity, "Have you visited any churches yet?"

"Yes," was his emphatic response. He then proceeded to share his approach: As he met people, he asked them what church they might suggest.

- Then, he visited the websites of those suggested churches.
- Then, he took in some worship services online, livestreaming, or however they posted their online worship services.
- Then, he looked for other ways to connect, based on opportunities described during their online worship, or mentioned on their website.

(Continued on page 7)

Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday Service
In-Person and Online

March 2
12:00pm & 5:00pm

Have I Counted the Cost?
Psalm 51:1-17; Luke 14:25-33

Placement of the Ashes
and
Holy Communion

Watch live on Facebook at facebook.com/VeldaRoseUMC
Services will be available to view later on Veldarose.org

United Methodist Women



United
Methodist
Women

READING PROGRAM 2022

Our emphasis this year is to read books about Racial Justice. I just finished reading,

REST IN POWER: THE ENDURING LIFE OF TRAYVON MARTIN by Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin. Trayvon's parents take readers beyond the news cycle with an account only they could give. Some of us remember seeing parts of the trial. Now read the book and walk in the parents' shoes. Review by Billie Larime

CONGRATULATIONS TO UMW BOOK CLUB READERS

Seven UMW members received recognition certificates for the number of UMW books they read during 2021. Tish Roberts, Carol Burman, and Kathy Kolbo each read FIVE BOOKS. K Roemmich read TEN BOOKS. Billie Larime and Beverly Loftin read FIFTEEN BOOKS each. Pat Nixon read TWENTY BOOKS.

MISSION BUILDING RUMMAGE SALE HELD IN FEBRUARY

This sale involved many hands and minds under the leadership of Joan and Tim Most. The profits will be held and added to the October 2022 sale. Then comes the fun and challenging job of deciding where to donate our profits according to the budget established in December. There is much need in our local area as well as worldwide. Thank you to all our volunteer workers and our customers for their dedication to mission outreach.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN SHALL BE A COMMUNITY

Our purpose is to know God, and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop supportive community and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church. All women are welcome to participate.

Join us for our Unit Meeting on March 3rd in Moore Hall at 1:00 p.m. for a Mission Speaker and Devotions. The joint Circles of Naomi and Esther will

meet on March 17th at 1:00 p.m. to hold our "Prayer and Self-Denial Service" in Moore Hall.

A part of being in a "community of women" is to attend programs that are prepared by other local UMW groups. We were invited in February to the Gold Canyon UMW facility to learn about an Afghan Resettlement Program that takes place in the Phoenix and Tucson communities. Our CO/ Presidents: K Roemmich and Billie Larime attended the meeting and will give a report in March.

Our Velda Rose Unit has also been invited to a one-day retreat on Saturday, March 5th called **BOTTOMLINE!** at Sun Lakes UMC. Each day there seems to be a new crisis. What we need is to be reminded of love...God's love for each of us. Explore with other UMW members. Call K Roemmich at 701-662-3228 to make a reservation for the retreat. Cost is \$15. Scholarships available. It would be fun to carpool to Sun Lakes and experience a spiritual renewal with other women of faith.

RESPONSE (the magazine of women in mission) by K Roemmich

Tara Barnes, editor of the magazine, wrote on page 3 January/February 2022 issue: "Each year in my hometown church the nativity scene was set-up on the alter. The Magi figurines, however, would be placed in a different part of the sanctuary, far away from the altar, and they would be moved closer to the nativity each Sunday until Jan. 6th which is the beginning of the season of Epiphany. The word epiphany means appearance or manifestation-God is now among us. Are we living as if we believe this? This year will be one of change for us and our church. Let's dare to set out into the world and live it as if we know God is among us."

A RECENT PRAYER FROM THE UPPER ROOM:

Dear Lord, please help us to have faith in you and to let go of fear as we entrust the future to you. Amen .

Submitted by Billie Larime & K Roemmich

The Power of the Lenten Proclamation! continued



sincere love. ⁷We faithfully preach the truth. . . ¹⁰Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything" (2 Corinthians 6:6-7, 10).

Self-sacrifice and love for enemies were hallmarks of Paul's ministry. I am reminded of a story that Watchman Nee, one of the most important indigenous church leaders and thinkers in the history of Chinese Christianity, shared about a Chinese Christian who owned a rice paddy next to one owned by a communist man. The Christian irrigated his paddy by pumping water out of a canal, using one of those leg-operated pumps that make the user appear to be seated on a bicycle. Every day, after the Christian had pumped enough water to fill his field, the communist would come out, remove some boards that kept the water in the Christian's field and let all the water flow down into his own field. That way, he did not have to pump. This continued day after day. Finally, the Christian prayed, "Lord, if this keeps up, I'm going to lose all my rice, maybe even my field. I've got a family to care for. What can I do?"

In answer to his request, the Lord put a thought into his mind. So, the next morning, he arose much

earlier, in the predawn hours of darkness, and started pumping water into the field of his communist neighbor. Then replaced the boards and pumped water into his own rice paddy. In a few weeks, both fields of rice were doing well – and the communist was converted (Citation: Paul Faulkner, *Making Things Right When Things Go Wrong*, Howard, 1996).

This story is a "testimony," a "living example," of God's power meeting us in the "dark night of the soul." It is derived from Paul's theological declaration of God's reconciling grace bursting forth as new life when all seems lost. God is always working to bring new life and hope to individuals and communities. His grace is always transformative and personal. Like dirty and crumpled \$20 bills; like barriers that separate the flow of understanding between very different people, God reaches to us in those moments to redesign and rebuild our lives and restore broken relationships. The question is, "How will we respond?"

This is what Paul would have us proclaim! God is reconciling the world unto himself . . . today! That is the heart of Lent, and we have once again been called to take that journey. We travel to the cross as imperfect human beings who need God's mercy, forgiveness, and grace. Yet we do so in the Spirit of the Living Lord who makes all things new!

I will see you in church!

Is This the Next Gutenberg? continued



Of course, I'm waiting for this sequencing of activities to lead to the ultimate step... in-person worship and participation in a small group for Christian formation. Nope! Never mentioned none of these. Yet, he was able to passionately entertain conversations with us about the sermons and bible studies he was engaged in –

online. I guess I have learned that as important as in-person worship is, it's no longer our primary approach to evangelism (whether it should have been or not). Today, there are so many legitimate, helpful, effective and emerging on-ramps into church engagement. So, let's remember we are a people who value the "renewing of our minds" (Romans 12:2), laying aside self-limiting church practices while updating our perspectives.

New Member Class



more about the United Methodist Church, you are cordially invited to attend a new member orientation in Moore Hall Thursday, March 24th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.

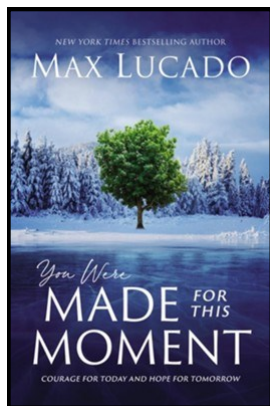
We will discuss aspects of United Methodist history, beliefs, and polity. We will also learn about the history of Velda Rose. There will be plenty of time for questions! Your pastors will lead the class. A light meal will be served.

Please contact the Church Office if you would like more information, and let us know if you will be attending *no later than Monday, March 21st*.

Thursday, March 24
5:00 - 7:00 PM
Moore Hall

If you are interested in becoming a member of Velda Rose United Methodist Church, or want to learn

You Were Made for This Moment: Lenten Bible Study



You Were Made for This Moment
Courage for Today and Hope for Tomorrow

Are you weary from your challenges, wounded by your battles, or worried your world is spinning out of control? Have the struggles pilfered the life out of your life? If so, the book of Esther brings welcome news: *Relief will come!*

Wednesdays
March 9 - April 6
4:00 - 5:00 PM
Moore Hall

Queen Esther concealed her Jewish identity. As far as anyone knew, she was pure Persian. But then came the royal decree that would annihilate her people. She had to make some tough choices. Would she remain silent or would she speak up? Would she blend in or would she stand out? Esther could have refused. She could have cowered in fear. But she spoke up. She stood out. And God used her to save the nation. It's not hyperbole to say that her courage changed the course of history. Nor is it an overstatement to say that God can do the same

with you.

Like Esther, you may be staring down a seemingly impossible situation. And what's true for Esther is true for you: deliverance will come. God will have his victory. He will rescue his people. He will right the wrongs of this world. The question is not, Will God prevail? The question is, *Will you be part of the team?*

In *You Were Made for This Moment*, pastor and New York Times bestselling author Max Lucado will help you

- reclaim your eternal identity as a citizen of heaven,
- put your hope in the God of grand reversals,
- cultivate courage for your challenging times, and
- discover your role in God's story.

You don't need to become undone by tough times, you can become unleashed by our triumphant God. You, friend, were made for this moment.

The class will consist of video presentations, discussion, and the primary resource, *You Were Made for this Moment*. If you wish to purchase the book, the cost is \$14.00.

...hymns have been a powerful instrument of God to draw people closer to His Word and the saving riches therein.

Billy Graham
PICTUREQUOTES.COM

From our Music Ministry...

An essential part of our worship is our Hymns. Even though we read the words off the screens, each of our hymns is in our hymnal. If you haven't looked at our hymnal for awhile, I would encourage you to do so.

We are so grateful to have Rachelle Starr as our new Song Leader. She brings not only great musical gifts to her position... she has a deep love and testimony of the messages of our beautiful hymns.

Here are a few quotations about hymns...

"Good hymns are an immense blessing to the Church. They train people for heaven, where praise is one of the principal occupations."

~ J. C. Ryle

"A few songs with Him might change the way you sing. Forever."

~ Max Lucado

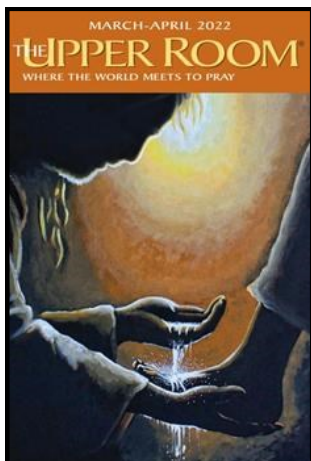
"Paul commands the Church to let the words of Christ dwell in us richly as we meet together, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..."

~ Keith Getty

~ **Mary Ellen Loose**

Director of Music Arts

March-April Upper Room



The March-April 2022 Upper Rooms are available in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings, or in the office during office hours.

If you are homebound and would like to receive the Upper Room by mail, please contact the office to be put on the mailing list.

VRUMC Food Pantry

The Food Pantry at Velda Rose UMC provides non-perishable food to those who come seeking assistance. Items include peanut butter, cereal, canned vegetables, pasta, tuna, and spaghetti sauce. If you can donate some of the following items, we would greatly appreciate it:

- * 16oz jars of peanut butter
- * Spaghetti pasta
- * Spaghetti sauce
- * Cans of tuna
- * Mac & Cheese (boxes)

Donations can be brought to the church office, or put in the Food Pantry Baskets in front of the Sanctuary.

East Valley Chorale



March 6, 2022 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 Spring Concert.

We hope you and your family will join us for an evening sharing inspirational music that we hope will touch you with God’s love as well as 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.

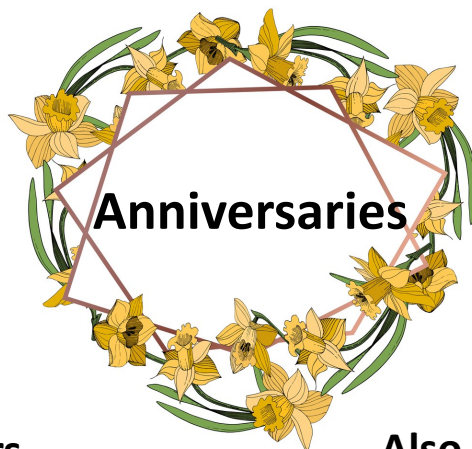
The East Valley Chorale shares the Gospel message with diverse audiences. We enjoy connecting with believers, seekers, and music lovers at churches, community events, retirement communities, and nursing homes and care facilities. It brings us much joy to see and hear how God uses our music in the lives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

*in loving
memory*

Naida Simpson	12/5/21	John Spykerman	1/25/22
Carol Eastwood	1/23/22	Lynnette Dunn	1/31/22



Marty Oldham	3/1	Dana Chaney	3/15
Beccie Reed	3/4	Kay Johnson	3/15
Esther Phillips	3/6	Ron Roberts	3/21
Janet Schiltz	3/7	Nisi Kaipelea	3/23
Bill Corkill	3/8	Lynda Boysen	3/24
Roger Gorman	3/9	Anne Marie Griffiths	3/24
Sulia Kaipelea	3/10	Charles Foust	3/28
Ann Gamertsfelder	3/13	Alyce Christenson	3/30



50+ Years

Also Celebrating

Dick & Jackie Gissel	3/19	David & Mary Killgrove	3/9
Bob & Pat Mayhall	3/20		



VELDA ROSE

United Methodist Church

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Or on Facebook: @veldaroseumc

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Staff Leadership

Rev. Grant J. Hagiya, Resident Bishop
Rev. N. Susan Brims, East District Superintendent
Rev. Dr. Larry R. Norris, Senior Pastor
Rev. Daniel Gómez, Associate Pastor
Ministers, Every Member of the Congregation

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Join us online for our midweek devotion
each Wednesday at 10:00 AM,
and 9:30 AM Sunday morning services in-person
and online at
facebook.com/veldaroseumc/
or on the church website:
veldarose.org/connect/watch/



NEXT ISSUE

Items considered for the
April Vision
must be submitted by
Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Please **e-mail** Jessica at
officeadmin@veldarose.org
with your newsletter articles.