



Make a splash. Look before you leap. Don't jump to conclusions. Enjoy a good swim. Stretch your legs often. Spend time at your pad. Hop to it! (Author Unknown)

The Lily Pad

A NEW SPIRITUAL SEASON



To God be the glory! I start this new conference year and blessed appointment as Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church humble servant-leader Pastor with a great deal of excitement and hope. I believe the year ahead holds a lot of exciting developments for us as a church. I really believe and sense the Lord's presence is with us and that we have a divine momentum generated by the Holy Spirit!

I discern my primary ministry gifts are in the areas of the preached Word, teaching, wisdom, leadership, and a passion for small group discipleship and evangelism. My style of leadership is collaborative and relational. I value people's gifts, experiences, and perspectives. I build strong teams and seek to inspire the best in others. As an adaptive leader who envisions and enables, I executes strategies and decisions with integrity and excellence. My belief is that effective leadership is secured by open-communication and transparency, while providing and welcoming constructive feedback. Energy, joy, enthusiasm, and passion for serving God and humanity are the hallmarks of my leadership. *"Whatever work you do, do it with all your heart. Do it for the Lord and not for humanity."* Colossians 3:23 I continually pray and strive for the wisdom, clarity, and patience to be a Christ-like servant leader.

What will this new thrilling season bring to the front door of your heart? What joys and challenges await you? Will this be a pivotal season with exciting landscapes to explore? Or will this be just another annual conference year of sameness and obscurity? Will you meet a new lifelong friend or lose one? Will investments succeed beyond your wildest dreams or will meager fortune be ravished by hard economic times? Will you discover a hidden strength that propels you into a new direction or will you experience lessons of failure that will temper your heart? The answers to these and many more stirring questions remain a mystery still to be unraveled in the scroll of God's plan for your life and our lives as Disciples of Christ. Yet, Jesus provides some great advice for us:

*"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?**"*

The worry-free life Jesus spoke of does not remove our responsibility to work hard, volunteer, serve, share our abundance, or value ingenuity. What Jesus tells us is that we are "more important" and "more valuable" to God than any thing that could possibly worry us.

Don't let the silent thief of worry claim this season of newness – a new Pastor, Christian Education, Sunday School, Music Ministries, Bible Study, book readings, faith gathering opportunities, and a variety of ecumenical partnership opportunities. WOW! As I look forward to this awesome season – *I smile*, place my faith and hope in God who considers each of us more valuable and more important than anything we could ever imagine or worry about.

Let us be forward thinkers who are filled with hope because we know the secret of Romans 8:28: *We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*

Let's pray and be expecting of a glorious harvest season! Martin and I thank you for your kindness, hospitality, support, prayers, and the awesome newness to serve as your Pastor and 1st Mate of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church. May God's richest blessing be bestowed unto all of you as we go forward to serve the Beloved Community.

PASTOR CLARISSA & MARTIN

"It takes more than a busy church, a friendly church, or even an evangelical church to impact a community for Christ. It must be a church ablaze, led by leaders who are ablaze for God." Wesley L. Duwel