



The Lily Pad



"I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys." Solomon 2:1

"Now Things Get Interesting...."

FAUMC Family, as much as we would like to deny it, summer is impatiently making its exit. Even in the lagging sweltering heat, the trees and garden has the look of autumn and the morning air has a snap to it and the school bells ring loudly – welcoming the young and the young at heart back to their course of study. In the midst of all these changes, we gratefully move into a new season of life.

Grateful? Yes! Grateful because we have lived to see this day and this new season. Grateful for the earth's bounty and the hard work of farmers who have allowed us to put up food for winter. Grateful that the changing season teaches us something new and exciting every time.

Grateful that when we as Christians are asked the question, "What did you learn today?" there will be educational opportunities for you to answer that question as Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church begins our multi-generational (nursery to adult) Sunday School on September 18, 2016. In addition, we offer Bible Study Discussion groups, book readings, Confirmation Classes, United Methodist Women Circle, Men's Ministry, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, New Members Classes, and other Christian Education gatherings designed to equip all believers to do their part in the Body of Christ, His Church. Being a Christian requires continual growth in faith, so that we will be fully mature in Christ (Ephesians 4). These vibrant opportunities to learn as well as get involve provide, develop and promote programs that equip individuals for discipleship.

The presence of God in the waning light is different from that of Spring. In the season of Spring, there is a budding, buzzing presence when the earth awakens; the Autumn presence is more peaceful and deep, reflective and surrendering, much like the wisdom of our elderly who have witnessed the glory of God for many seasons. We celebrate our multi-generational church and the awesome gifts that each person brings to worship God in authentic ways.

As we begin this New Season, it is an ideal time to reflect and evaluate how the harvest of the year has been thus far. Assessing what we did right (or not!) in the garden (my life); what produced good crops and what didn't. Am I living into my anointed Fruits of the Spirit? I believe it is a good time to engage in Spiritual assessment as well. It is a good time to ask: what is working to produce peace and kindness in my life? What is not? What needs to "die off" in order for new Life to grow? What is the harvest of my prayer life?

My prayer is that God would now touch us and lead us by His Holy Spirit into discovering just how deep His love is for each of us. I also pray that His revelation of that Love in our lives might become more and more real for us through the coming days and empower us to boldly step outside the walls of "church" and embrace our Great Commission – "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Does my faith lead me to follow the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Does my belief lead me to care for the poor, the homeless, and the sick as Jesus commanded? Does it lead me to compassion and cooperation? And respect and compassion for all, even for those who disagree with us? Without peace in our own hearts, there can be no peace in the world; Christ has told us that we are all many parts but one body.

Our beliefs and our faith bring us closer together and WILL increase the harvest. As the leaves fall, let us surrender the destructive, selfish parts of our lives, which separate us. Let us always and every day give thanks, "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) God bless,

PASTOR CLARISSA

"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. Duewel