



The Lily Pad



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

I LIFT MY HAND AND GIVE THEE PRAISE AND THANKS



It has been a nearly four months since I was appointed to serve Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church. The day of my transfer as an Elder in Full Connection into the United Methodist Denomination is still mostly a blur to me at this moment. My emotions were high; stomach butterflies kept me from eating and I believe that I was running mostly on adrenaline. As I humbly continue to make pastoral steps in this new appointment, I keep ever present in my mind the words of my Episcopal leader in regard to the role of an Elder: *"to render Christ present in all places and at all times."*

Elders are ordained to a lifetime of ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. By the authority given in their ordination, they are authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion and to Order the Life of the Church for service in mission and ministry.

This transfer has also afforded me the continued blessing to live into my call - to be a pastor, servant-leader, passionate child of God, and most rewarding, to serve as the Pastor of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church.

What an awesome blessing that my appointment happened during this very special and meaningful season – Thanksgiving! At this time of the year, we welcome the Autumn Harvest with the celebration of the simple pleasure of sharing a meal with others whether they're family or dear friends. To gather around a table and give thanks for the blessings of our lives is a gift beyond measure. As members of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church, when we gather around the communion table and give thanks for the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, we know that we are part of a large extended family. Our church family is blessed with strength and commitment and a diversity of spiritual gifts to share. In the midst of sharing what we are thankful for, we also remember in prayer and through the sharing of our gifts, those who struggle to find enough food and comfort each day.

Thanksgiving is a special time in the life of Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church and our community partners - we celebrate and re-commit ourselves to living out God's generosity. We have much to be thankful for, the love of family and friends, having enough to share, and the ability to give to others because God gives so graciously to us. We can indeed give thanks for our many blessings, not always understanding the prospect of the future but, being urged on by it.

"Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11-12

November has been designated for Thanksgiving. But we are called to ***"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."*** 1 Thessalonians 5:18

"In everything give thanks", is an act of firm and clear-eyed faith. Anyone can "give thanks" once a year. What's required of a well-grounded and active faith is the giving of thanks ***"in everything and at all times"***. That means giving thanks in sickness and in sorrow. It requires thanksgiving in pain and times of deep trouble. In short, it means that you are to be

giving thanks no matter what is happening around you or in your life and every day of your life. It is that persistent and constant quality that makes a firm faith so essential.

Rejoice in the Lord always! Every morning, no matter what the day ahead might hold, God showers us with blessings. God is actively blessing humanity over and over – new grace and new mercy. So how can we have just one month or just one day of observed “THANKSGIVING”?

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. Duewel

