

The Lily Pad



“I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.”

Solomon 2:1



AMAZING CHANGE!

Wow. What an amazing September it has been!

I'm excited for October, not just because of what God is doing among us, but what he is doing around us. The leaves are beginning to change even as I write this. I look forward to seeing the beautiful changes God brings in the fall. I've been told how beautiful West Bend is in the fall and I am looking forward to seeing it for myself once again! Nature teaches us so much about God. In the fall, I learn that God brings change and change can be beautiful.



I hear that many people don't like change. Yes, change can be a bit scary because we are naturally fearful of the unknown. We know what life is like now, but if life changes, we don't know if we will like it, or if we will be able to survive it! Sometimes we like the way things are currently, yet, I've heard that “for things to stay the same, they must change” as well. Do you think there's truth in that statement?

If you think about it, nothing ever stays the same. Over the past years, every family has experienced change, some subtly, while for others it has been tremendously. All of our children and grandchildren and yes, for some, great-grandchildren have changed. They aren't who they were a few years ago, and I am amazed to see the changes God has brought into their lives. Who would have thought, just ten years ago, that we would carry “smart phones” in our pockets, little rectangles that have more computing power than NASA used to send Neil Armstrong to the moon? How AMAZING! What a blessing to witness each year how these young people become the people God has created them to be. This has been my prayer!

While change can be frightening because we don't know what change will bring, change can also be beautiful. I'm not writing about change for change's sake. I'm referring to purposeful change. When we allow God to bring changes into our lives, he brings beauty as well. Perhaps we shouldn't really be so afraid of change, but rather be intent on allowing God to bring change.

As we continue to journey together, I believe God changes us. He continues to bring us to places of blessing and paths of love. In October, we will be reflecting on God's supernatural and amazing love. We will remember that we have been loved with an amazing love and we are to love others the same way!

The church changes too, and it does so for several reasons. Sometimes the church changes in response to financial and other practical concerns. Sometimes the church changes in response to a changing culture; while the Good News of Christ doesn't change, the way the church shares that news with the world must. And sometimes the church changes because the wind of the Holy Spirit blows through our midst, calling us to new and sometimes scary things.

We have and are going to experience a lot of changes at Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church. Change can be scary, especially when that change feels like a loss of control for us. I want you to know that I have an open-door policy about talking with you about changes, and about anything else at Fifth Avenue United Methodist

Church. I would love to hear your opinions, suggestions, concerns, about any of this. In fact, what's most important to me your Pastor and your Servant –Leader, is not the specific things we do, but how we do it, and how we relate to one another. Please come and talk to me if you have concerns or ideas. Or call or email me. It's easy for misinformation to spread. Please talk to me, I am here to serve.

While things change all around us, the love of God through Christ **NEVER CHANGES**. Whatever we experience, whatever good and bad changes occur in our lives, Christ **NEVER** leaves our side, even if he sometimes seems to be hidden. God can bring good out of anything, and **OUR** God is absolutely with us in every season, every moment, every day, whatever those days may bring.

What night of the year do we see more of our neighbors – Halloween Night observance or October 31! This year, while we pass out candy bars, what if we gave our neighbors something more? Year 2017 has been the Year of Invite, what if we made this Halloween a **Night of Invite!** With each Trick or Treat why not give an INVITE TO FIFTH AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH. What a wonderful and loving TREAT!



Enjoy the leaves changing, buy some pumpkins, or at least a pumpkin spice latte. Make plans now to worship the rest of the year at Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church and bring a neighbor or friend!

God bless you

and

keep you in His loving care,

Pastor Clarissa & Martin