

The Lily Pad

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



INVITATIONS!

Family & Friends,

As I've been thinking about *invitations* and *inviting* – a topic that surfaced in one of our recent church council meetings – I've been thinking especially about *invitations* that have changed *my* life. In my first year of high school there was an unexpected *invitation* from the drama teacher to come to the after-school Drama Club. I was shy and awkward especially as a high school freshman. The *invitation* came about just because Ms. Antilack, the drama teacher, heard me read a poem I had written for Creative Writing class.

Through her gentle persuasion and encouragement, I found a wonderfully exciting outlet to my creativity and freedom from my crippling shyness. I ultimately became the President of the Drama Club, my junior and senior year of high school! High school Drama Club is a distant memory, but my gratefulness for her belief and mentoring has been priceless in my life successes and accomplishments and got me realizing the difference an *invitation* can make.

I remember receiving an *invitation* to apply for a job with Dr. Charles as his Medical Assistant and an especially the life changing *invitation* from my Navy Recruiter to **“come learn about a job that would be a lifetime adventure!”** Each of these milestones changed my life. Most jobs and military assignments, I've held over my naval career, have come because of someone's personal *invitation*. As I was nearing retirement, I was looking to not just attend church but to be an effective and active lay leader and fully commitment myself to service to God and the Church. As I began looking for a church I learned that a co-worker I worked with was a Christian. I asked her about churches and she *invited* me to her church. I went the next week. The pastor was a good preacher and the church was exceedingly warm and welcoming. I went back the next week and the week after. Within a year, during a spiritual gifts workshop, several members discerned a call to the ministry in my life. The pastor *invited* me to teach Bible Study, Adult Sunday School, and be a spiritual liaison with the YPD (Young People Department).

Shortly thereafter, I answered my call to the ministry, preached my trial sermon, finished seminary, and found a divine joy in my life that has only grown as God has called me to go into the deep, out of my comfort zone, into the deep where He wanted to bless me—big-time!

IT ALL BEGAN WITH A PERSONAL INVITATION!

And nothing has ever been the same since!

I know there have also been many *invitations* over the years that weren't particularly memorable. But these few that were very memorable have been more than enough to let me know that *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me* – as I make myself available, ordinary me, to the will of God who does the extraordinary! Remember, even one well-timed *invitation* can profoundly change someone's life.

This summer I have been praying and thinking about how we can better *invite* others to get to know Jesus and how to be in relationship with our neighbors. I humbly ask that you pray with me as God is calling us to step out in faith and “*launch out into the deep and let down our nets for a great catch!*” This holy *invitation* from God desires for us to have more than what we need, “***a net-breaking, boat-sinking load of lost souls desiring to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.***” His dream for us is bigger than anything we can ever dream of. Sisters and Brothers in Christ, we will be amazed and astonished at our catch when each of us step out of our comfort zones and launch out into the deep with the Jesus!

But here's another **Personal Invitation** for each of you –

You are cordially Invited to the FAUMC Family & Friends Summer Celebration!
19 August 2018 @ 10:00am (worship) 11:00 am Pot-Luck Picnic, Games, Music, & Fun!
Bring your Family! Bring a Friend!

Of course, we always hope and *invite* each of you to join us in finding and moving into a deeper relationship with Jesus here at Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church, 323 South 5th Avenue, West Bend, Wisconsin, 53095, Summer Sunday Worship hour, 9:30 a.m. We hope you will pray and reflect on this sincere personal *invitation* lovingly extended to each of you - come and share Family and Friends Summer Celebration Sunday with us and you are warmly *invited* at any time be in fellowship and relationship with us!

We trust and believe that God is able to work through indirect means as well as direct. Even if you may not know if you're interested in God, please come as we hope to build a relationship with you. Then to your own surprise, you may meet Jesus unexpectedly in the process...

And as I reflect on these *invitations* that have most significantly changed my life, a common theme seems to be humble obedience to God's calling me away from the comfort of the shoreline, away from the shallow waters, **INVITING** His amazing grace and compelling power that results into experiencing miracles and blessings made possible only by the hand of God!

“Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” Luke 15:7

Grace and peace on the journey,

Pastor Clarissa

Family and Friends Potluck Picnic - Sunday, 19 August 2018 @ 10:00 a.m. Bring Your Favorite Dish!

*Certain portions of the Lily Pad were adapted.