

# The Lily Pad

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



## ***‘TIS THE SEASON!***



December. Advent and Christmas. Two seasons of the Church Year that fall in this month that speak the truth of God’s Word and reveal the very heart of God: God became human in order to save humanity from condemnation.

It’s just a few days before Thanksgiving, as I sit to write about the coming seasons of Advent and Christmas, the brief and beautiful seasons in which we prepare for the birth of our Savior.

**“What would Jesus like for his birthday?”** A question that seems more urgent each year, as this season of thanks, which competes with Advent and Christmas, goes into high gear. However, this season of thanksgiving has been overshadowed by the new Black Friday which should simply be called **“NOVEMBER.”** Black Friday’ (the Friday after Thanksgiving Day) – so named, because this was the day on which the Christmas Industry used to start operating in the black, financially. Black Friday is now dead, which sounds like good news, except the bad news is that Black Friday has been replaced by Black Friday sales that begin the first day of November but, really kicks into gear on Black Thursday, “the day formerly known as Thanksgiving Day.” I don’t think this is really the way God wants us to celebrate the birth of his Son.

So, my Sisters and Brothers, I’m challenging all of us to be unconventional. To live into our Advent and Christmas seasons in ways that bring us closer to Jesus, as we communicate the love of our Savior to others. I leave it to each of you and the Holy Spirit to determine the specifics of what that means for each of us. But I hope we will pray without ceasing as we listen attentively for the Spirit’s leading.

Advent is a season designed for waiting and preparing for new life, new birth. Waiting and preparing for Jesus. Christmas, God’s sacrificial, unmerited love for each of us, sending His only begotten Son to be our savior from our sinful nature.

Remember, Jesus is not concerned about what’s popular or in style. Therefore, when we wait for Jesus, prepare for Jesus, make ready our hearts and lives for Jesus, we’re often going to be out of step with a lot of what’s going on around us. Jesus has rather different standards for assessing what’s worthwhile. When we choose a new life with Jesus, we’re seldom going to have anything really real to show for our efforts when this year’s Advent and Christmas are over...

**Nothing**, that is, except more peace of mind and contentment of heart and spirit along with a deeper, richer sense of beloved community and God’s graceful presence, making room for Christ to live and grow within us and our families, neighborhoods, and communities. Practicing prayer, bible reading, quiet time with God, time in worship with others, giving of ourselves, giving of our talents and our contributions, are vital to our spiritual growth, till we find ourselves saying **“Yes”** to God more and more readily; Till we can say, with Mary, mother of Jesus, ***“Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me, according to your word.”***

My humble prayer, my Brothers and Sisters, is that we'll not just accompany each other, but that we'll go *together, hand-in-hand faithfully* throughout this Advent and Christmas journey, and really enjoy **ALL** the blessings of Christ's gracious presence.

What a tremendous Autumn! From the end of Summer Picnic, to the welcoming of the new church year, God has called Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church to carry out God's Great Commission – *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*

For a century and seven decades, Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church (FAUMC) has anchored this community as a mighty fortress for serving God. Since 1848, our worship and our outreach ministries have served God's people in this community and made our church a cherished place of refuge for the spiritual and social needs of God's people.

Our **170th Church Anniversary Jamboree- RESET FOR TRANSITION “Making a Commitment to Improvement through Alignment and Involvement” Haggai 2:9** - held on October 20th and October 21st, was an incredible festivity! On Saturday, we remembered our rich and devoted history- past and present, followed by a lip-smacking catered meal from The Braising Pan.

We welcomed Bishop Hee Soo Jung, Wisconsin Presiding Prelate, to our Sunday worship where he encouraged us to live into our glorious future - **God is calling FAUMC to come out of your "stuck" season, out of the shallow end of your faith and step out into the deep, risking drowning to have a deeper Trinitarian experience! You've got to go deeper FAUMC! Go into the deep, submit your heart to God!** We were also honored by the presence of several former pastors and associate pastors. The best for Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church has just begun!

United Methodist Women Sunday, 28 October- **Celebrating the Women of Fifth Avenue United Church – the Unsung Heroines Who Make Our Church and the World a Better Place**- acknowledged the dynamic Fifth Avenue women who quietly go about doing good things for our community and world. Rev. Michele Clark, Bradford Memorial African Methodist Church, preached an inspiring empowering sermon that encourage all of us to become better equipped to make an impact in the world, all the while making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

My sincerest gratitude to Rev. Deborah Thompson for journeying with the Fifth Avenue Family and Friends, as the names of our beloved loved ones were recited on **All Saints Sunday**, 4 November 2018. It was a truly a blessed opportunity to give thanks and remember all those treasured ones who have passed on to their heavenly reward.

**SOUTH KOREA** was awe-inspiring! From the towering skyscrapers across the 600 miles peninsula to the ancient magnificent buddha temples, this was a once in a life time experience. I look forward to sharing this experience in January along with a **Taste of Korea!** Yes, 2018 Autumn Season was extremely demanding but extremely rewarding! What could be the cherry on top of such a blessed and fruitful season? **HOME!**

Bainbridge, Georgia. Even the devastation of Hurricane Michael did not prevent the divine joy and God's personal presence, the Holy Spirit, from hovering over my family during our Harvest/All-Saints Sunday, slowly healing hurt, pain, and loss, moving them towards the day when normality will once again be restored. My sincerest appreciation to you, my Family, my Rock, my Love, for all you do to pray for me, support me, and encourage me. I love you all so very much more!



Uncle Jimmy



Aunt Brenda



Aunt Zealine



Cousin-Aunt Luree

As the **Reign of Christ Sunday** ends our season of ordinary days, the Fifth Avenue Family and Friends give thanks to our loving God for all the persons who are living transformed lives because God has touched them through our church, ministries, outreach, and support. May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each of you every day of this beautiful season and beyond...

***A VERY MERRY  
CHRISTMAS AND  
A JOYOUS NEW YEAR!***

***WE TRULY LOVE EACH OF YOU!***

*Pastor Clarissa, Martin, Marissa, Biancha,  
Sophia, Nicolas, Cookie, Sadie, & Hachi*