

The Lily Pad



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



One disadvantage to writing an old-fashioned newsletter is that it throws off a person's inner clock. It means trying to convey certain feelings before you (the reader) have really gotten ready for them in

real life. For example, you have to write about Thanksgiving well before Halloween, before the autumn turns its annual corner from bright yellows and oranges to somber grays and browns. Then you need to write about the extravagant joy of Christmas before you've even had a chance to truly sit with solemn Thanksgiving thoughts. Even today, as I write—having pushed the newsletter deadline to its allowable limit and still days before Christmas—I've got to think and talk about a world I haven't seen yet: **New Year, 2019!** As we look back over the days we've been given or even just the 365 days of the year now ending, we would have to agree, something new is always upon us. ***"Do you not perceive it?"***



As January 2019 beckons and the nonstop festivities of the season draws to a close; a profound problem with welcoming a new year and the departure of the old year ensues - **nothing feels new**. As the angel along with the much-loved and treasured yet tattered Christmas decorations are carefully removed one by one from the wilting, lifeless Christmas tree are box for next year, the tree will be left out in the cold to await its fate. It's enough to bring a tear to one's eye.

The New Year doesn't feel new but thanks to Christmas, we all end the year with new things—new toys for the kids, new clothes (not always the right color or size, but still new), new pounds on our bodies. We start the year off with new things, a new calendar on the wall, new bills, new resolutions for the days ahead.

Winter hasn't even gotten out of the gate at Christmastime. By New Year's Day, winter's iciest, coldest two and a half months are still ahead of us, with precious few holidays to break up their dreariness.

Everybody likes new things, including God - Isaiah 43:18-19 (The Voice)

Eternal One: Don't revel only in the past, or spend all your time recounting the victories of days gone by. Watch closely: I am preparing something new; it's happening now, even as I speak, and you're about to see it. I am preparing a way through the desert; Waters will flow where there had been none.

The prophet Isaiah appeals to a powerful memory: **THE EXODUS**. He reminds God's people—all descendants of slaves in Egypt—how God liberated them from oppression, how God destroyed the powerful army that pursued them in order to take them back to the whip and lash, back to slavery in Egypt. Stories of the exodus have been told time after time for many generations. The prophet evokes these amazing memories to comfort them and assure them that what God is about to do is like what God did do for their ancestors centuries ago.

God yearns for each of us to start fresh- *new grace and new mercy for each new day*- yet, we are held captive by our past. *Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past*, God's promise is for something new, something fresh - we are to live in today. Still, the world is cruel - unforgiving and unforgetting. People don't let us change - a reputation that haunts us; the internet preserves unflattering pictures; damaging reviews of restaurants or hotels. *"Watch, I am doing a new thing."* It's an invitation from the Lord. The next phrase makes it clear, God is already doing something new. *"It's happening now."* God loves doing new things. God does new things. God is making a path through the desert. He is causing the water to flow where there has been none.

Fifth Avenue Family and Friends, let's joyfully, faithfully, and hopefully open our 2019 book! Instead of dwelling in the past demanding that God revive the glory days when you were satisfied and happy. Instead of dwelling in the past reviewing everything that has gone wrong. Instead, ask God to open your eyes to what God **IS** doing, (just because you cannot see God's blessings at work does not mean he is not knitting your life, a masterpiece, together right now.). As your Servant-leader Pastor, I humbly ask God for clarity, to be able to see so I can shepherd us to the glorious bountiful harvest we are called to reap. God loves doing new things. God loves to restore the wandering soul. God loves to create new ways.

I pray without ceasing for Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church - our church. God is already at work doing new things. I love telling your and our story- showing the photographs, sharing the rich heritage and history, but what God is doing and what God is preparing FAUMC for is far more significant and amazing than we can imagine. God loves doing new things. **"Watch"** is an invitation. **"Do you not perceive it?"** is the question.

A familiar phrase: "In order to go where we've never been, we have to do something we've never done." If we want to grow into an ever-increasingly closer walk with God in 2019, we're going to have to allow God to lead us in places we've never been before. God is already at work whether we see it or not. Accept the invitation to **WATCH!** Pray for open eyes, ask God to show his ways and what he requires FAUMC to do as co-creators here in West Bend, Wisconsin. Trust that we shall go deeper and deeper into the water to let down our nets for an abundant catch of souls hungry for the saving salvation of Jesus. The deep is where we will find a whole lot of souls. We won't church family find them near the shore in shallow waters. But we are being called to launch out into the deep, move away from the comfort of the shoreline- our "we've always done it this way," "we've tried that before," "I can't or

won't do that," "I'm too young or older," "I've had my turn, let someone else do it," "I don't like that direction, so I won't participate or support;" -the list can go on and on and on. What if God decided to have a list of sins he would not forgive and forget? *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16) God wants to bless you—God desires to bless FAUMC- **big-time!**

There is a desert, full of people desiring, no thirsting for a drink of the Living Water and God is building a path, preparing a way, for us, FAUMC, **to go** and share the Good News of Jesus and never thirst again! There is a desert, but a stream, an abundance of life-saving water is flowing. God loves doing new things. God loves showing us new places. God loves using new methods. Open our eyes dear Lord; open Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church's hearts to what you are already doing among us and in our lives! Let us enthusiastically go; let us cheerfully give; let us gallantly be who you need us to be.

FAUMC, 2019 is our SEASON! In every season of life, especially now, there is a new thing that God is doing, if we will open our hearts and spirits to its revealing. Whatever time it is in your life, my church family, whatever your age, talents, skills, or willingness to answer, the sweet tender **VOICE** of Jesus is calling out to you again - **"FOLLOW ME!"** Or, as the God of Isaiah declares, **"I am about to do a new thing... Do you not perceive it?"**

We are called to witness these "new things" that the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst and follow where we are being led- *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.* Ponder these two questions as we eagerly move into 2019 - **What new thing am I being called to? What new thing is our church being called to?**

It is my joy and humble privilege to be making new and astounding discoveries with each of you!

**In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Clarissa, Martin, Marissa, Biancha,
Sophia, Nicolas, Cookie, Sadie, & Hachi**



**PILGRIMAGE to KOREA
PRESENTATION
13 JANUARY 2019
8:30 AND 10:45 WORSHIP SERVICES**

**TASTE OF KOREA
13 JANUARY 2018
DURING FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

