

# The Lily Pad



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



*Then he said, “Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all. Mark 16:15*

Dear Members and Friends,

Church members sometimes ask me what I love about my vocation. Most of them don’t really know what I do aside from what they see on Sunday mornings. Believe me,

there’s much to love about being your Servant-Leader Pastor!



I’ve always believed in the old quote by Confucius... “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” This quote embodies my passion and gratefulness for being called to serve God and country as a Naval Officer and now as a Pastor. I completely agree with this quote whether you are in pastoral ministry, military service, in business, or in whatever you do, if you love it, it will not feel like work.

As your Pastor, it’s mostly the day-to-day things that keep me gratified and engaged. I love working with the power of words and the ancient Scriptural texts; old as they are, their meanings are always renewing and empowering. I love journeying alongside each of you, learning your stories, discovering your passion and talents that will be woven with others to transform lives as we equip people by helping them find their giftedness.

My true passion and joy is the preached Word! I experience a WOW moment watching others receive and accept the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I shed tears of joy thinking of the amazing grace that the Lord showers upon each of us, as I witness the “can I get an AMEN” results of preaching the Gospel. There is nothing better than seeing a new birth (both physical birth and spiritual birth) and knowing that this new believer will be with the Lord forever and ever.

I love baptizing a child and seeing that child grow into a real part of our congregation; witnessing an adult declaring Jesus as their personal Savior and desiring FAUMC to be their church home; both adds one more unique personality, one more distinctive spirit to the rich mix that makes up Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church.

The joy of leading comes in observing the two Holy Sacraments with our church family. It’s incredible to lead our church family and friends in the two rituals Christ gave the church—baptism as a picture of the commitment to follow Christ and the Lord’s Table as a picture to remember His sacrifice.

I love sermon-writing. Writing sermons, litanies, and prayers appeals to the hidden creative writer and poet in me. I could joyfully measure out my life from Sunday to Sunday, Christmas to Christmas, sermon to sermon, baptism to baptism, with communion Sundays once a month to break up the routine.... What an amazingly awesome life!

But alas, a church, like any organization, must be about the additional task of planning for years to come. Many churches are reluctant to prepare for tomorrow until the sun is about to set on their today. They do not plan until the eleventh hour and by then it’s often too late. They end up like Peter, scrambling to admit being a loyal follower of Christ before the cock crows. Such is not the case for us! Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church needs a Holy Spirit injection!

A job in our sharing of our gifts, talents, and monies to stimulate growth in our relationship with the community, visioning new ministries and outreach that will meet the needs of our community, opening our doors and church to build new partnerships; now is the time to prepare for the future that God holds for us, His church, his disciples. The old adage says, "Make hay while the sun shines." As faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us, this is what we must do.

Where do you fit in at FAUMC? What about our church makes you feel a sense of belonging or pride? Are there things that make you feel left out? Where do you see our church headed in the next five years? Ten? If you could describe our church in a single sentence—differentiating it from other churches—what would you say? What strengths define us? And since all strengths have their "shadow sides," what are our weaknesses?

It's not necessarily "change" that we're looking for, but we do need to come together as a congregation and figure out ways to blend our shared hopes, dreams, and desires for our church, praying first and foremost that it's in keeping with God's desire for FAUMC. I pray the outcome will be a clear sense of identity and direction for our future, one that can be expressed in a single, concise declaration of purpose. This statement will tell us and the world who we are and what we are about. It will be used to guide all our efforts in worship, education, fellowship, and evangelism.

Talking about Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church's tomorrow or especially its future is not a favorite thing for most us. It's easier just to drift through today, and the next day, and the next Sunday, and the next Sunday. But Sisters and Brothers, thinking ahead, strategic planning, evaluating our ministries, focusing on building relationships, can also be enjoyable and enlightening. It's an exciting time to be Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church! Our yesterdays have been blessed; our today is snowy, cold yet bright; our tomorrow, oh, yes, our tomorrows, are and will be vibrant, successful, and plentiful with God's promises. It's my joy, yes, my sincerest honor and privilege to make this sacred awe-inspiring journey with each of you. God bless!

### **February, The Month of Love!**

**Remembering love & Emphasizing the importance of love in our lives.**

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



**Happy 104<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday  
Mr. John Roth**

**Thank you Biancha  
for a deliciously incredible  
TASTE OF KOREA!  
I love you,  
Mom**



**HAPPY 36<sup>TH</sup>  
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY  
MARTIN & PASTOR CLARISSA**