

The Lily Pad



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



*FOR GOD GAVE US A SPIRIT
NOT OF FEAR
BUT OF POWER AND LOVE AND SELF-CONTROL.*

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What would you do if you weren't afraid? What would we do as powerful energetic "get-out-of-my-way-God-please-use-ordinary-me to do the extraordinary because I am not going to let FEAR stand in my way believer?

Oh, if we weren't afraid? Oh, if we were to - “Have faith in God! If you have faith in God and don't doubt, you can tell this mountain to get up and jump into the sea, and it will. Everything you ask for in prayer will be yours, if you only have faith. (Mark 11:22-14) It might sound like a cliché but, fear has a way of stopping us dead in our tracks. Fear has a way of keeping us standing still (terrified and scared) because that unknown place is outside of our comfort zone. We might think that the future is unpredictable and scary – so I will just stay where I am paralyzed with all of my fears.

One of the most frequent requests that God and God's messengers have given to us in God's Word is “FEAR NOT.” Fear is one of those things that gets in the way as we travel down this journey of faith. Fear is one of those things that keeps us from experiencing the fullness of who God is, how God is moving in our lives, and who God is calling us to be.

Haman approached King Xerxes and said, “There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else.” Haman, peaking King Xerxes, interest, added Wisconsin Maple Syrup to the request by adding, “my King, if you issue a decree that these people be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks of silver to your government.” Without haste, dispatches were sent into all the provinces giving the order that all Jews—young and old, including women and children—must be killed, slaughtered, and annihilated on a single day - March 7 of the next year. The incentive to kill the Jews was enticed by adding that the property of the Jews would be given to those who killed them.

When Mordecai received the news, he wept and wailed bitterly. He directed Esther to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people not to be killed. Esther responded with unconcealed anxiety and fear! She sent back this message to Mordecai, “All the king's officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.” She knew it would be certain death for her if she barged into the inner court without an invitation!

Esther was being asked to get out of her comfort zone. Her first response was fear: fear of death, fear of failure, fear of not being good enough, fear of how people might react, fear of the unknown. And so, because of her fear, Esther begs Mordecai to please send someone else or find another way to save the Jews (so that Esther can keep living her royal privileged and comfortable life).

But we know what happens – don't we? Mordecai send this message back to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"



Mordecai was calling Esther to live beyond her fears; recognizing that what he was asking her to accomplish was indeed scary but that if she did not answer the call to protect her people, the Jews would for certain be saved by another deliverer.

The Jews were also filled with fear. They did not want to die – but the risk and uncertainty of Esther's ability to touch and soften the heart of King Xerxes was frightening. And so, they sat still – paralyzed because of their fear.

That is just example of the countless stories from the scripture where God's people experienced fear and how God was calling them beyond their fear. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, fear is a reality of life and something that we all have in common. We all meet and experience fear on a daily basis, whether we are aware of it or not. And that fear impacts the way we live out our life of faith (we sit still – or we get up and take the next faithful step). Often our fears impact our actions and our thoughts in unhealthy ways. Our fears can cause us to box ourselves in or keep us standing still. What would you do if you weren't afraid? What would we be able to do as Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church if we weren't afraid? If we lived fully as the Light & Salt of the earth would we be able to love one another passionately and unconditionally?

Would we go boldly into the community of West Bend, Wisconsin and spread the amazingly awesome Good News of Jesus Christ to a hurting and seeking community? If we were not afraid, would we trust God to use our gifts, talents, and tithes to transform broken, unbelieving, hurting, worried, doubting, oppressed, forgiveness-seeking, hopeless lives?

And so, I wonder, maybe through those hundreds of times that God asks us to "FEAR NOT" God may not be asking us to do the impossible and live completely without fears. Do you think that it is possible that God might be asking us to decide what we will do with our fears, to decide if we will let them hold us back or will we be able to hear the call of God to follow Jesus into the unknown, into the deeper waters surrounded by God's loving care? What will we be able to do as a Church as we face our fears head on? Oh, my dearest Church Family & Friends, can you only imagine what walls would crumble at the sound of our united voices? Walls of poverty, hatred, hunger, oppression, racism, intolerance, addiction, neglect, worry, sexism, and unfortunately so many other barriers that keep us from being Christ-like to each other. My prayer is that these questions will help each of us open our hearts to hear how God is sweetly and gently nudging and/or pushing us and calling every last one of us to imagine a world of love and acceptance. Oh, only if we weren't afraid – maybe we would reach out to stranger. If we weren't afraid – maybe we would tell someone about our faith and share with others just how much God has been working in our own lives. If we weren't afraid to share that we were once sinners, but it was grace, ever flowing, freely given grace that saved us. If we weren't afraid – maybe God might call us to do something new in mission or in ministry. If only we weren't afraid, we would tell invite someone to church. If only we weren't afraid, we would see the new Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church – welcoming all, accepting all, ministering to all as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Sisters and Brothers - what would you do if you weren't afraid?

*Strength & Courage in Christ
Pastor Clarissa*

A SUMMER PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we are not good at letting go of the past. There are times when we need to move on in life; to take a step forward in faith if we are to truly grow. We prefer the security of the familiar, the comfort of that which does not strengthen or challenge us, and we are wary of the prospect of change, afraid that it might ask more of us than we are willing to give. We are not good at letting go of the old and putting on the new, at turning away from our former way of life and sharing our uncertainty with the Lord. We are reluctant to abandon old habits, fearful about what other people might think of us, and being unwilling to deny ourselves the pleasures of this world and for the promises of the world to come. Oh, how we consistently try to keep a foot in both camps, to combine the old self with the new. We think we can balance the two, but, of course, we can't. We have learned this time and time again Lord. The result is that we compromise both and embrace neither.

We pray for enlightenment to understand that while the old has its place, there are some areas in life where a complete break is needed, a turning away from what has been, before we are ready to receive what shall be. Lord Jesus, you patiently consistently knock at the door of our heart, desiring to sup with us as you as you labor within us (both individually and as a Church) – empowering us with courage and confidence as you completely refashion our lives to your will and glory. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.



Dominican Republic
Country in the Caribbean

Gordon and Ardell Graner, missionaries in the Dominican Republic.

FAUMC has supported missionaries, Gordon and Ardell Graner, for many, many years. We are excited that they're planning to spend the months of August to November of 2019 visiting their supporting churches.

FAUMC will host the Graner on Tuesday, August 20th @ 2:00 p.m.

The Graners look forward to meeting the Fifth Avenue Family & Friends and providing an update of their mission in the Dominican Republic. They will have a 10-minute power point presentation followed by a Q and A session. But most of all they would like to thank FAUMC for their continued support.

Please join us on August 20th @ 2:00 p.m. when FAUMC welcomes home, Gordon & Ardell Graner!

What is Rally Day?

Webster's Dictionary defines "rally" as:

1) a verb "to draw or call together for a common purpose" 2) a noun meaning "a renewal of energy in joint action"

(continued on next page)

During the summer, our many activities and vacations and events continually draw congregation members away from each other - especially on weekends. Summer can also be a spiritually draining time.

You start the summer with good intentions of sticking to your Bible-reading schedules. Good intentions of developing a consistent prayer life. Good intentions of worshiping regularly. Good intentions of attending Sunday School class. Good intentions of serving the church in its ministries and program. Good intentions of inviting people to your church. But the reality is that summer's hectic schedules can and for most, derail us from those good intentions.

Come the end of summer, we need **"a renewal of energy"** when it comes to spiritual matters. It's hard to renew your energy on your own. But it's much easier in a group. That's why we set aside a Sunday at the end of the summer to **"rally"** - to "draw together for a common purpose" seeking the Holy Spirit's power and courage to **"renew our energy"** for worship, for digging into God's Word, for praying, for serving, and for witnessing.

On Sunday September 8th we will be "drawing together renewing our energy for the common purpose" of growing in trust and obedience to Jesus Christ." We have special "rally" activities planned for both kids and adults starting during our 8:30 am worship. You are invited to come and as always, please bring a family member or friend!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor Clarissa



An Amazing Opportunity to Share the Ministries & People
of 5th Avenue United Methodist Church

On August 8th, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., FAUMC will have a booth at
West Bend Maxwell Street Day.

Theme: "Cultivating A Beloved Community with a Cookie"

United Methodist Women will bake the Cookies. Throughout this Thursday, in 2-hour intervals, we will have the different ministries and programs of FAUMC host the booth. These ministries would include: UMW, Christian Education, United Methodist Men, Fifth Avenue Boys and Girls Scouts, FAUMC Music Ministry, Sewing & Knitting Groups, Sunday School, Senior Dining/Taking Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS), Harvest House, Wonderful Wednesday Ministry, Trustees, etc.

Please Save-the-Date and come out and support this remarkable opportunity to build relationships with the community of West Bend **with a Cookie!**

SAVE~THE~DATE
Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church
Summer Avenue Worship- 9:30am
Potluck Picnic - 10:30am (Meat and Beverages Provided)
Ice Cream Social
18 August 2019

*Drop by whenever you please to our Summer Avenue Event,
stay a little or stay awhile, either way your presence will make us SMILE!*