

The Lily Pad

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



Imagining Our Future

Dear Fifth Ave. Friends and Family,

We can imagine what the future holds, what it will look like."

"And the questions we ask about
the future we suppose,
the future we choose,
the future we compose,
are in so many respects elevated
by the imagination we bring to the task."

"To imagine is to dare."

"To dare a new vision for the future."

"To dare a different path, a different direction."

"To dare a new level of aspiration."

https://www.csuchico.edu/vpaa/_assets/documents/imagining-our-future_6-13-12_final-annotated.pdf

I invite you, members of Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church, (FAUMC), to look backward from 1848 to 2022 to discover our influential DNA and to look forward from 2022 to imagine a future worthy of our best intentions.

Like other faith traditions, FAUMC faces the triple challenge of reduced fiscal resources, increasing community expectations and needs, and radical innovation—especially in discipleship, church growth and hospitality. We are convinced, however, that if we address these challenges purposefully and decisively, we can emerge as an even stronger community of faith; equipped to bring transformation to our community.

The 'good news' of Jesus, properly understood, will change the world. Jesus was clear: Love God, love your neighbor as you love yourself. FAUMC, we continue to occupy a special niche in the changing landscape of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and will do so for years to come.

The challenges we face make it clear that we must create our future in very different ways than those to which we have become accustomed. As a post-pandemic faith community, we can—and must—do more than simply muddle through lack of financial stewardship, volunteerism and mediocre discipleship and outreach programs. Instead of conventional plans that merely lead to incremental growth and change, we must build a transformational agenda that ensures our future viability and vitality. We are forced to bring about radical change more profoundly and more urgently than ever before.

As we celebrated our 174th church anniversary (April 2022), we stand at our inflection point—that special moment of opportunity and potential for transformation.



In a world of flattened stewardship and volunteer streams, we are experiencing great pressures to grow our church as we bring souls to Christ, amidst rising costs to do ministry, we must make choices. Even in the best of circumstances, we cannot be all things to all the people God is calling us to serve. We must choose and sustain a culture of excellence.

The principles that will guide our transformation in the coming years should be grounded in a vision of the Methodist experience and the mission, core values and priorities of our call to be disciples of Christ. As we look forward, we urge all to be mindful of what we have inherited and what we consider worthy of our best purposes.

Yogi Berra once observed “The future is where you’ll spend the rest of your life.” Given our hopes for transformation and living into the mission of the United Methodist Church (make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world), we can now re-imagine our hopeful future. We will begin by evaluating, assessing and understanding our strengths and we can boldly play to them and passionately pursue a new vision and a new direction of radical hospitality and welcoming of all people.

We choose to see the current ‘national crisis’ as an opportunity to re-affirm our Christian and church purposes, re-set our Christian priorities, re-visit how we do and don’t do ministry as we re-define quality Christian Education and discipleship teaching to the followers of Christ and re-establish our public standing in the Beloved Community of West Bend.

We can and we will succeed as the ‘place’ and as the ‘choice’ for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a hurting and broken world. And we have no doubt that this commitment and the obligations and expectations to translate it into concerted action will characterize our Kin-dom building work together for the future of Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church.

So, let’s get on with it. Onward!

You have an open invitation for you and I to connect. I am really excited to meet for lunch or just sit around and talk after church. It has been affirmed that my theology and ministry is *“incarnational.”*

A working definition of incarnational ministry is “the immersion of one’s self into a local culture and ‘becoming Jesus’ to that culture.” Incarnational ministry seeks to dispense with ministry “from a distance” and embrace ministry “up close and personal”—the love of God and the gospel of Christ are “incarnated” or embodied by the person ministering. Just as the Son of God took on human flesh and came into our world, we should adopt the culture to which we are ministering and “become Jesus” within it. The idea that Christians should represent the incarnated gospel is called incarnational theology. A central ideology of the incarnational ministry concept is “live the good news rather than preach the good news.” <https://www.gotquestions.org/incarnational-ministry.html>

May You Be Blessed & Be A Blessing,

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin

At Fifth Ave. UMC, we make no apology for strong preaching, sound doctrine and devotion to the Trinity.

Congratulations to the 2022 Graduates

&

To those who will celebrate other life milestones!

Happy Father’s Day!