

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

The Asbury Farm

Asbury began our adventure into community gardening as a partner with Calvary Lutheran Church on Franklin Ave. Our role, thanks to the expertise of our local Master Gardener, Cathy Hatch, was to help with maintenance and for teaching. Participants from our Family Center pitched in and gained first hand knowledge about growing vegetables. The next year we ventured out on our own, planting gardens on both Broadway and Bennett Avenues. Our annual mission day event called Taking it to the Streets provided money for supplies and a large number of volunteers to make it possible for a small, aging congregation to make a big impact. Community gardens help build community.

Utilizing community gardens as a means to connect neighbors is not unique to Asbury. In our current book selection



Grapes ripening at the Asbury Farm

for our Tuesday study group, Soil and Sacrament, the author's home church also sees this connection. Their mission statement for their gardening ministry, that they named Anathoth, is: *Cultivating peace by using good food and sustainable agriculture to connect people with their neighbors, the land, and God.** Our journey

through this book is offering our group several examples of faith communities who have utilized the growing of food as the core of how they share the good news that God is active in our world.

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Center for Connections

Asbury is located in the midst of a "disconnected neighborhood." This declaration can apply to churches in a privileged community as well. In our online society persons are more likely to connect with someone on Facebook than on

their front porch. This modern-day way of life does not bode well for struggling communities. The inability of so many to escape economic poverty is a result of broken relationships that simply do not work well within our economic, political,

social and religious systems, which favor the well-off. Therefore, solutions which simply respond to a shortage, such as money, food, shelter, clothing, literacy and so on, are like putting a Band-Aid on an infected puncture wound.

Volume 17 Issue 33

August 13, 2017

Special points of interest:

- Town Hall Meeting between worship services today at 11 am in the worship center (Sanctuary).
- Special Church Conference on Sunday, August 20 at 1 pm to approve the Asbury Strategic Plan
- Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 5 for Asbury's 90th Anniversary celebration
- Neighborhood Connection is delivering food and bottled water. Call Kevin at 810-625-6115 or the church office for information.

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Center for Connections...continued

Such solutions simply cover up the source of the problem temporarily only to be rendered ineffective as the infection resurfaces with the next shortage. A cycle of multi-generational poverty can only be broken by healing the broken relationships that are the core of the infection.

Dan Wunderlich writes in a reflection that: "Broken relationships and broken systems continue to compound themselves in our world today. Poisons like prejudice, greed, and violence lead to injustices like poverty, hunger, and human trafficking. It would be charitable to call these injustices uncomfortable. These injustices are, more accurately, sinful and destructive."

The connections that are reflected in God's plan for Asbury addresses connections in four directions: Our connections with God, each other, creation, and ourselves. This declaration of strategic intent should add clarity to why the other strategic directions are also critical. A Center for Worship and Spiritual Growth makes it plausible to be a Center for Connections which in turn makes it plausible to become a Center of Health and Wellness. We are truly the people of the Exodus, the people of the exile and the people of the cross. The stories from scripture are our stories when we choose to be faithful and obedient.

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Asbury's Neighborhood Connection team loading bottled water for home delivery

Asbury Farm...continued

When the challenges that we face as a result of the water crisis began to surface Asbury's role in the long term recovery became more visible. Our community gardens had already become the responsibility of our sister, non-profit organization, Asbury CDC. In 2016, Asbury CDC applied for and was approved through the Genesee County Conservation office to receive a large grant from the US Department of Agriculture to construct what is sometimes called a "high tunnel" or "hoop house." In our case, this is a 96' by 30' structure with heavy poly stretched over steel hoops. This structure allows us to extend our growing season into the winter months and to began planting in late winter and early spring for the summer growing season. The United Way and the Urban Ministry Committee both provided large grants to ensure that Asbury would have what we needed for this project to be a success. While we continue to learn from mistakes we also have had great successes.

This program became transitional as the Asbury Community Gardens became the Asbury Farm. Thanks to Michigan Works,

the State of Michigan and a US Department of Labor grant that allows for the hiring of local residents to assist in programs that address the water crisis, Asbury received support in the form of full-time workers focused on ensuring that we are able to get the farm up and running. While we were late in getting our summer crops planted the gardens are producing enough to supply our kitchen, to give away, and to sell. Our goal is to produce enough produce to build a sustainable operation that can continue to employ farmers after the grant programs come to an end. As with all business start-up's this is not a certainty, but God is faithful and we take these risks in faith.

Asbury was awarded another grant through the local Conservation office to construct a second hoop house this year. The site for this structure is on the north side of Jane Avenue between Iowa and Minnesota. In this case, Asbury is supporting other community residents in launching a farming cooperative.

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Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness... You will be like a well-watered garden... Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes.

Isaiah 58:10-12 (NLT)



A "High Tunnel" or "Hoop House" is constructed with heavy poly over steel hoops to extend the growing seasons

Center for Connections...continued

In a “disconnected” community residents often do not know their neighbors and there is a lack of trust. Social service events offered through local churches have become the places that neighbors see and interact with each other. The two best known in our neighborhood are the Eastside Mission and St Andrews Episcopal Church. Over the past couple of years the Franklin Avenue Mission, formerly Calvary Lutheran Church which closed a couple years ago, has emerged as one of the most visible local ministries. This partnership of over 20 Lutheran churches serves hundreds of free meals each week. Utilizing free meals and other social service offerings have been a part of our neighborhood since the economic crisis began. There does not seem to be a long term solution in site. The focus has been almost entirely on emergency relief.

Wouldn't it be better to offer a “hand-up” and not just a handout? Our neighbors are accustomed to churches, nonprofits, and the city “driving by” with the latest idea of how to help them and know where services are available to fulfill on-going needs. From food giveaways, to clothes, to help with bills, outside organizations have spent thousands in what should be “emergency” assistance to help our neighbors. While such aid is life-saving when a family is hun-

gry or without heat or water, it is hardly “live-giving” in the sense of investing in their future. Instead, the “emergency” has lasted for decades with little offered to help raise residents out of their situation.

The foundational method that Asbury has utilized in our strategy to become a center for connections is known as “Asset Based Community Development.” This is a term coined in part by Dr. John McKnight while he was Professor of Public Policy at Northwestern University. The premise of this approach is that vibrant neighborhoods require capacities that reside within the neighborhood boundaries. This is possible because each person has gifts and passions that they are willing to use to help others since this is a basic human need. The difficulty is connecting gifts with need, particularly in neighborhoods that have gone through decades of decay resulting in distrust and isolation .

As a Center for Connections Asbury is a visible and trusted partner in the rebuilding of Flint. We do not come to the “aid of our neighbors” to save them, for salvation is not ours to offer. Instead, we come humbly as any neighbor should reach out to another, to walk beside and in solidarity with our community towards a future that is made certain by our Lord Jesus Christ. We come broken and seeking help for our-



Resident turning in their Connecting Neighbors Assessments to be entered into a community

selves. Help that can be found through our relationships with God, each other and our neighbor that will be made visible in our mutual transformation.

Wouldn't it be better to offer a “hand-up” and not just a handout?

Bus Rides for Breakfast and Lunch for families in the neighborhood that are without transportation to come to our Meet UP and Eat Up Summer food program. There is a sign up sheet downstairs and upstairs on bulletin board. Any questions, just call the church office 235-0016 or Kevin 810-625-6115.

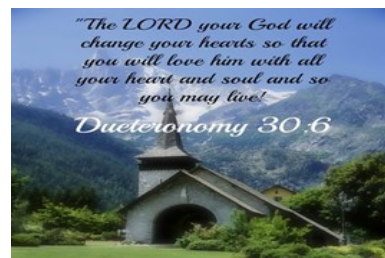
In Our Prayers

Curtis Young
Rachel Bastine
Norma Buzzard
Merle Supernaw
Barbara McIvor
Jonathon Misner
Nancy Auger

Austin & Mary Suffle
Shirley Craig
Mary Armstrong
Sarah Tanner
Elizabeth Wright
Judy Tanner
Mary Lyons

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Sharon George
Elaine Lamoreaux
Mary Nations
Mary Russell
Shirley Moose
Charlayne Oram
Carmen Misner
Phyllis Roberts



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Asbury Farm...continued

The Asbury farm is an opportunity to help persons connect with God, each other, themselves and creation. Our goal is to become a popular destination for youth groups and other organizations and persons seeking a more intimate relationship with God through spiritual disciplines and manual labor that allows us to become co-

creators with God. We have been blessed by a thousand volunteers over the past several years looking to lend a hand to our efforts. Each time a volunteer visits we hope that they will have an opportunity to experience God's presence in our midst. Does this sound a lot like worship? It should.

Pastor Tommy



The summer crops are coming in at the Asbury Farm Hoop House on Bennett Ave

Book Club News

.We are in the midst of a discussion of a book titled *Soil and Sacrament*. Parker J. Palmer writes this about our book: "Fred Bahnson believes that faith is expressed in the work of our hands as well as our minds and hearts, and that in community we can meet the needs of a hungry world. After reading his beautifully written book, I believe these things, too, and see new ways to put my beliefs into action. *Soil and Sacrament* is about new life—for ourselves, our descendants, and the earth on which we all depend."

A couple words of caution as we work our way through this book. First, you do not have to read the book to attend, but it does

help with the discussion and what you receive back from it.

Our goal is to continue to "widen our circle" and so we hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Tuesday at Noon. Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share. We are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

* Bahnson, Fred. *Soil and Sacarament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Church Council will be meeting on Monday, August 21st at 6:30pm.

Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 4:30 (NLT)

Leadership in Worship & Service

Greeter
Children's Time
Candle Lighting
Usher
Media Support
Nursery

Christine
Pastor Tommy
Karen
Jim, Tony, JoAn
Mark & Jim
Norma

Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kathy Howe Choir Director
Rebekah Britton Piano & Organ

Coffee Break

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday after the first service for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for New Beginnings.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
Jim Craig Church Council Chair
Asbury CDC Board Chair



I am creating a new directory so look over your information & let me know if you have any changes or need to add a new number, address, a family member or you want to add an email.

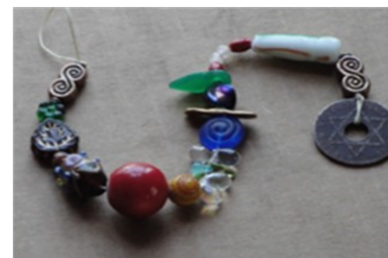
Coming up in Worship

All Our Days

A New Worship Series on the Power of Prayer
The tradition of using a string of beads or rope knot is an ancient tradition shared by many faith traditions around the globe. The common connection is the ability to give structure to personal prayer. Prayer beads offer a way to remind us of those things we want to talk to God about in our prayers. They can help shape our habits. This summer, we are invited to pray "All My Days" and to make a habit of prayer wherever you are. Each Sunday in worship we will focus on one of the steps of the prayer beads but you are encouraged to pray these all summer long.

Teaching Schedule

Aug 13	Neighbors	Luke 10:25-29
Aug 20	World	Matthew 5:16
Aug 27	Holy Spirit	Luke 24:49
Sept 3	Jesus	Matthew 28:16-20



The tradition of using a string of beads or rope knot is an ancient tradition shared by many faith traditions around the globe.

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries /water-food

Meet Up and Eat Up: Breakfast & Lunch -
Mon-Fri 8:00-9:30am & 12Noon-1:00pm

Aug 15	Tues	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
Aug 18	Fri	10am-2pm	
Aug 19	Sat		
Aug 20	Sun	10:00am	Bible Study
		10:00am	Traditional Worship
		11:00am	Coffee Break
		11:30am	New Beginnings

Look for announcements scrolling on our screen prior to the start of worship.

Email announcements by the Friday before to:
FlintAsbury@gmail.com

Traditional Worship team
meets Monday,
September 18th at
5:30pm

Meet-up and Eat-up is a partnership between Asbury and the Food Bank that replaces the school meal program during the summer months...

Ways to Connect

Donate -You can give online at FlintAsbury.org/donate

Music Ministry -We are looking for vocalists and musicians.

Community Gardening - The Asbury Farm needs volunteers.

Pantry - We need food items, including meats, paper products; personal items diapers, and financial support.

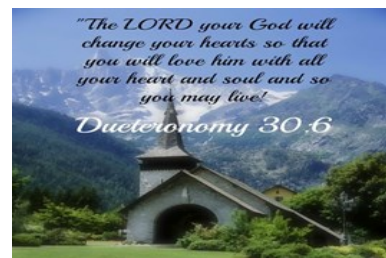
Social Media allows us to tell others about the work that God is doing. All of us can

help enhance our presence in the social media by posting on our Facebook and utilizing our website for blogging.

Housing - the Asbury House offers local college students a way to use their gifts and passions together with their faith in building a better neighborhood.

Women's Circles - The women of Asbury meet regularly in small groups.

Pastor's Book Club meets each Tuesday at 12Noon for fellowship, food and learning.



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Flint, MI 48506

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E-mail: FlintAsbury@gmail.com



Neighborhood Connection



We envision a community in love with God, each other, and our neighbors evidenced by the transformation of ourselves and our neighborhood. We are a center for worship & spiritual growth, a center for connections and a center for health & wellness.

Our goal is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into citizens who contribute to building and maintaining a vibrant neighborhood, and all residents are able to enjoy safety, good health, a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives.

We believe that such an ambitious goal can never be attained without God's grace and abundance and Christ calls each of us to be disciples willing to share our witness through words and acts.

Core Values



Volunteers & NCCC Staff prepare the site of Asbury's first orchard for planting

This summer our worship theme is prayer. This Sunday our teaching will focus on praying for others. Three green beads in our set of prayer beads that are guiding our series topics stand as reminders for us to pray for at least three

other persons or perhaps groups of persons depending upon our circumstances. Our discernment of where God is leading us that we call our strategic plan list four core values. There are of course other val-

ues but these are four that we can safely say we all have, or should have, in common. Our values are listed as:

- We are sinners saved only by Grace
- Love is the basis for all that we are & do
- Jesus Christ is the center of our lives
- All are welcomed

Our focus on helping others through opportunities to heal broken relationships is a manifestation of our core values. As a Center for Connections we recognize that we also have broken and unhealthy relationships. Whether we struggle with prejudices against others, an unhealthy attachment to material things, like our church building or struggle to love ourselves, we too are in need of healing. We believe that God is the

author of grace just as God is the author of love, and that God calls us to offer grace in the same way that we receive it: without cost for grace can never be earned. This is the meaning of grace.

God loves us even while we are sinners and commands us to love one another. We believe that we are saved by our faith in a God who saves us, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. True faith, however, can be seen in the fruits of what we do for others.