

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

Decisions by Mission Doers

During our Annual Church Conference a decision was made to “table” the recommendations of the Lay Leadership Nominations Team to give more time for our members to understand the recommendation to restructure our church leadership. This decision requires that we hold a Special Church Conference for the purpose of ratifying this recommendation sometime before the end of the year. The recommendation was made to hold a town hall meeting so that relevant questions can be asked about how the new leadership structure will function. This article is intended to offer some basic context as the Lay Leadership Team discerns where we go from here.

First, the new leadership structure is based on the assumption that decisions should be made by leaders directly involved in our ministries. In other words, the decision-makers are the doers, and doers are the decision-makers. Asbury has become a flurry of missional activity and there are a relatively small number of our church leaders who are

actively involved in this mission work. It only makes sense that this group be able to make key decisions regarding mission.

Second, the decision to restructure leadership was already made and ratified as part of our Special Church Conference held in August of this year to go forward with our Strategic Plan.

The specific approval reads as follows:

Select and empower a transformative leadership team with a track record of spiritual maturity, forward looking and an ability to make and implement substantial change.

Our Strategic Plan includes a background narrative that helps with clarifying the thinking of the team that developed our strategic plan. While not intended to be as specific as the actions that take place as a result of the plan they are clarifying statements. The narrative that helps to clarify what the planning team intended by the

above goal reads as follows:

The churches that have gone before us in implementing their VCI prescriptions have realigned leadership in more effective ways to ensure both accountability and efficiency.

In particular, the merging of multiple teams including Trustees, Church Council, Staff-Parish Relations and Finance into a single group of leaders who are empowered by the Church members to do the necessary work of the church. Leaders are selected based upon a number of factors including spiritual maturity and their willingness and ability to lead transformative change. In this way decisions for change can be made in a timely manner and leaders can be empowered to make decisions without the fear of undue criticism and second guessing.

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That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?”

Numbers 14:1-3

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Special points of interest:

- > Neighborhood Connection is delivering bottled water. Call the City of Flint at 810-410-1138 for information. This service is for persons who are disabled and/or unable to receive water in any other way.
- > Food or nutrition concerns? Want to learn how to prepare better tasting & ore nutritional meals? Call Kevin at 810-625-6115 or the church office for information, 235-0016
- > Beginners Bible Study meets every Wednesdays at 6:00pm in the Library. Any questions, please see Richard Oram.

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Things That Go Bump in the Night

Monsters and things that go bump in the night is a universal description of things that cause us to be afraid. I came across an old Scottish prayer as I searched the internet:

*From ghoulies and ghosties
And long-legged beasties
And things that go bump in
the night,
Good Lord, deliver us!*

Let’s be honest. We often use our memories of the past to interpret the present. Perceived reality, valid or not, is our reality. Nevertheless, discipleship requires us to answer this question: *Are we willing, in the face of great obstacles, to trust God enough to risk everything?*

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Things That Go Bump in the Night ...continued from Page 1

Of course, one problem is disagreement over what the promised land of discipleship looks like. If I like, or I prefer to settle for, what I have, the land that I am already standing on, why risk it all for a land that I perceive to already be forsaken? What if I am too tired and outnumbered and I believe that I am incapable?

Here are a few of the giants that face us here at Asbury?

- We are struggling to make ends meet - to balance our budget.
- Our neighborhood continues to decline physically, economically, and in terms of the number of residents.
- We are divided in our willingness to make the changes necessary to flourish and even on whether it is possible.

How we respond to these giants will determine our relevancy to the people that we are called to be witnesses of God's love in Jesus Christ. To respond in faith, we must be able to center ourselves on the love of God in Christ, and His vision for us, such that we

can envision the reality that Christ has for us. We must first move beyond our fear of our perceived reality. That is, the reality that there are giants standing in our way that we cannot possibly overcome.

These obstacles are giant in our perception of the difficulty they represent, relative to our capacity and ability to overcome them. Instead of living in fear, or in complacency, another giant, we must live as a "sent" people. We are sent out through the power of God's love and provision.

Instead of living individually or as a group living for our own collective self-interest, we must find unity through a common, envisioned reality. Otherwise, how can we give effective witness?

We can choose, individually or collectively, to stand at the edge of the Promised Land, but we cannot stand at the edge for long. Our time on this earth is short. We are here only for a little while. Eternal life and joy in this life are ours in the Promised Land for Jesus' disciples, but we must cross into this land, acknowledging our inadequacies, vulnerabili-

ties, and fears, but not giving into them. We must trust God with our lives and our resources. In one case, we are focused on ourselves, with the other, we are focused on God.

Pastor Tommy

Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us...the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid..."

Numbers 14:5-9

Decisions by Mission Doers...continued from Page 1

Our strategic plan expects leaders to be nominated based on all three of the traits originally approved:

- *A track record of spiritual maturity*
- *Forward looking*
- *An ability to make and implement substantial change*

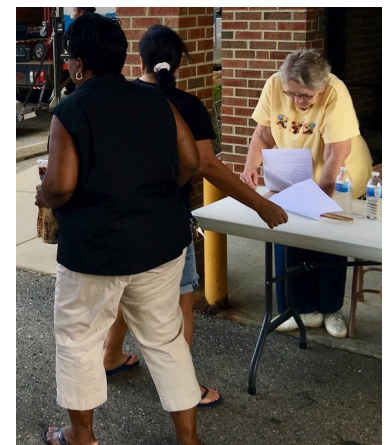
The objections that were raised during our Annual Church Conference that this narrative is "not a part of the plan" are not based in fact. Also, the decision to adopt our strategic plan was ratified by an overwhelming majority. The clarifying narrative was used by the Lay Leadership Team in developing their recommendations for restructuring our leadership as mandated. And the strategic goal, as it was approved, was used in selecting church leaders. Our strategic plan expects this team to nominate persons who possess all

three of the traits listed.

It is important to consider in what ways potential candidates for leadership are both demonstrating and pursuing the gifts associated with spiritual maturity. Paul addresses this subject in his letter to the Church in Galatia by listing the "fruits of the Spirit." We are reminded of these fruits each Sunday by our Worship Leader in order to focus our attention on what should be the desire of our hearts and prayers. Paul writes:

...the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

While the members of the Lay Leadership/Nominations Team were quick to offer grace it was important to consider in what ways potential candidates for leadership are both



demonstrating and pursuing these gifts through examples of behavior, study and participation in small groups who engage in the study of Scripture and/or prayer. The list of possible candidates based on this criteria was quite long. This speaks well for our church.

Decisions by Mission Doers...continued from Page 2



The other two criteria resulted in far fewer potential nominees. There is no doubt that many of our existing church leaders dwell in the past hoping that in some way we can keep the past alive by making as few changes as possible. Individuals who are "forward looking" are just that: forward looking. Their language and their proposals look forward to a new beginning - a new Asbury.

Last, but just as important as the first two traits that we agreed as a church was critical to our success was to affirm leaders who have demonstrated "an ability to make and implement substantial change." Note the qualifier

"**substantial**" that appears in front of the word change. The demonstration of this trait is very easy to discern. The team asked questions like:

Who appears to be leading change rather than fighting change?

Which persons are supporting our vision rather than attacking our vision?

Which persons demonstrate the courage to stand up to the bullies who criticize anyone and everyone who is supporting substantial change?

"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?'"

"And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

Matthew 25:37-40

The lay leadership team prayerfully discerned the nominations that are before us. Our team members believe that the church members who have been nominated are called to this work to provide both spiritual and practical leadership into the future. I encourage you to plan to attend our Special Church Conference and vote in favor of approval should this proposal come before you.

May each of us prayerfully consider how we may grow in the love of Christ in ways that the fruits of the Spirit are seen by all who we encounter.

Pastor Tommy

ASBURY UMW FAMILY CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON!

UMW will be hosting a family Christmas luncheon at Asbury UMC on Saturday, December 9th at 12Noon. It will be potluck style. You may call in your items to Norma Natrass at 810-235-1116 by Wednesday, December 6th. Please also indicate the number of people that will be coming with you. Hope to see a lot of you here!!



In Our Prayers

Curtis Young	Austin & Mary Suffle
Rachel Bastine	Shirley Craig
Norma Buzzard	Christopher Lewis
Merle Supernaw	Sarah Tanner
Barbara McIvor	Elizabeth Wright
Jonathon Misner	Judy Tanner
Nancy Auger	Mary Lyons
Pam Brotemarkle	

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Sharon George	Shirley Moose
Elaine Lamoreaux	Carman Misner
Mary Nations	Mary Russell



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Thankfulness & Love

The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving. Psalm 28.7

Thomas Merton in his book of reflections titled Thoughts in Solitude writes about the topic of gratitude, calling out our hypocrisy and superficiality. It is crystal clear that most of our criticism of each other is veiled projections of past hurt. But there is good news indeed. The Holy Spirit is waiting for us to sur-

render our hurt and be healed so that we can know the love that is Jesus Christ our Savior.

As you read these excerpts from one of Merton's reflections consider the question, "What are you grateful for?"

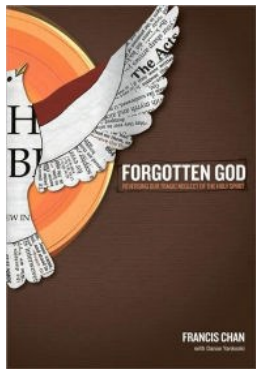
Our knowledge of God is perfected by gratitude; we are thankful and rejoice in the experience of the truth that He is love. There is no neutrality between gratitude and ingratitude. Those who are not grateful soon begin to complain of everything. Those who do not

love, hate. In the spiritual life there is no such thing as an indifference to love or hate. That is why tepidity (which seems to be indifferent) is so detestable. It is hate disguised as love.

Tepidity, in which the soul is neither "hot or cold" - neither frankly loves nor frankly hates—is a state in which one rejects God and rejects the will of God while maintaining an exterior pretense of loving Him in order to keep out of trouble and save one's supposed self-respect. It is the condition that is soon arrived at by those who are habitually ungratefully for the graces of God.

Book Club News

Our next book will take us on a journey of a different nature as we focus our attention on the Holy Spirit. Our guide will be pastor, author and church planter Francis Chan, founder of Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, California.



He is also the founder of Eternity Bible College and sits on the board of Children's Hunger Fund. Recently, Francis is planting churches in the San Francisco area and recently launched a country-wide discipleship movement called Multiply with David

Platt. Francis and his wife Lisa live in Northern California with their five children.

Francis writes "as Jesus ascended into

heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit—the Helper—so that we could be true and living witnesses for Christ. Unfortunately, today's church has admired the gift but neglected to open it." Pastor Chan contends that we've ignored the Spirit for far too long, and we are reaping the disastrous results.

You do not have to read the book to attend, but it does help with the discussion and what you receive back from it. Used copies of this book are available from the office for \$7.

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.

Leadership in Worship & Service

- Welcome Team: Tony, Mirium, Christine
- Children's Time: Pastor Tommy
- Candle Lighting: Karen
- Ushers: Kathy, Richard, Jim
- Production Team: Jim
- Nursery: Norma
- Worship Leaders: Michele & Cyndi

- Jim Craig: Leadership Chair
- Connie Portillo: Office Secretary
- Kathy Howe: Choir Director
- Rebekah Britton: Piano & Organ
- Kevin Croom: Farm to Table
- Israel Unger: Business Development

Asbury Café

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 2nd service.

Asbury Staff

- Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel: Pastor
- Mark Vorenkamp: Children & Youth

How can you think of saying, "Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye," when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

Luke 6:42



We will be filling Thanksgiving baskets for families from Potter School and our neighborhood on Monday, November 20th and passing them out on Tuesday, November 21st from 10am-12Noon. If anyone can help, please call Kevin at 810-625-6115. A **BIG** thank you to those that donated turkeys!!!



Culture Shock - A New Worship Series

This 2-week series for the Sundays before and after Thanksgiving acknowledges the unfortunate reality that we live in a culture of conflict. Depending on your definition of conflict we can conclude that not all conflict is bad but it can feel this way to a lot of us. Particularly if we feel like we are the victims of the conflict or even if we simply do not have a disposition for conflict. Biblically, it seems that good conflict would result in *shalom*.

A goal of *shalom* depends on both sides of conflict agreeing that *shalom* is desirable. If one side seeks to do harm to the other for punitive reasons *shalom* seems like an unreachable goal unless the other side is willing

to admit fault and agree that penance is due and reasonable.

The more subtle form of conflict is when there is either no agreement on harm or that whatever harm is done is justifiable. If my problem with another person is that I believe that their actions are bringing harm to myself or others that I have concern for, then resolution of our conflict will be difficult. *Shalom* is distant when there is disagreement on harm taking place or that whatever harm I am experiencing is justified. Such conflict, if based on ideological differences, can be difficult to navigate.

Again, if the goal of both sides of conflict is *shalom* there is hope of resolution. If we believe that *shalom* is the goal that God has in mind for us then all attempts to continue conflict, justified or not, is ultimately in vain.

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3b-4

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food
Nov 20 Mon Fill Thanksgiving Baskets between 10:00am-12Noon
 6:30pm Church Council

Nov 21 Tues Give out Thanksgiving Baskets between 10:00am-12Noon

No Pastor Book Club today—See everyone Tuesday, November 28th

Nov 22 Wed 6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

Nov 23 Thurs HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Nov 24 Fri

Nov 26 Sun 9:00am Traditional Worship
 10:00am Connect Break
 10:30am Contemporary Worship
 12:00 N Café Closes

Last Week for Worship Attendance 50 Offering \$ 1,174

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

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

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE A CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH AT 6:30PM IN THE ASBURY LIBRARY ...

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

1653 Davison Road
Flint, MI 48506



Phone: 810-235-0016
Fax: 810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)
E-mail: FlintAsbury@gmail.com

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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

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.

Thankfulness & Lovea new worship series *cont ... from page 4*

True gratitude and hypocrisy cannot exist together. They are totally incompatible.

Gratitude of itself makes us sincere—or if it does not, then it is not true gratitude.

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us—and He has given us everything. Every breath

we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to newwonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful man knows that God is good, not by

hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.

Rev Tommy

Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*. 1956, 1958 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1st eBook Edition, 2011. Originally published in 1958. Relection VIII.

CALLING ALL MUSICIANS

Do you play an instrument such as drums, guitar, violin or keyboard? Do you play a trumpet or saxophone? Our New Beginnings team of artists are looking to expand to include a variety of instruments and vocalists.

See our Worship Leader Cyndi if this sounds like you.