

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

Living Our Faith

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

James 2:1 NLT



When we say that you are a follower of Jesus Christ what does this mean that we are saying about you? The letter of James considers this question asking “How can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you _____?” Fill in the blank. In this letter that we call James the writer fills in the

blanks in multiple ways. In our theme text for this article the writer asks about favoritism. This text is foundational for our faith community here at Asbury because we value inclusion. “All are welcomed here” we claim. Others will believe this statement only if our actions and attitudes back up our words.

By writing about our actions the Letter of James takes on a sometimes controversial topic. Are we saved by our faith or by what we do or don’t do? Isn’t it enough that we claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and accept Him as our personal savior? If so, then why the fuss over doing the right thing and avoiding doing the wrong things? To begin with Jesus often spoke about what is

important to do and to not do and modeled what He expected of His followers using qualifiers like “if you love me then you will _____ (fill in the blank). What we do matters. Our actions are testimony to our faithfulness.

The letter of James begins with the subject of faith and endurance telling us to accept challenges as blessings, and reminding us to pray for whatever we are lacking but also for us to surrender our will to God’s will. We are then reminded that Jesus taught that we cannot follow two masters. If we need to be in charge we will too often go our own way rather than follow God’s way. The writer reminds us that what we do or do not do does

Page 2

Human Thirst—Divine Water

I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared... God’s home is now among his people!...I am making everything new!

Revelation 21:1, 3, 5

What an appropriate text to begin a new year. I began 2018 in the same way as I

have other years. I downloaded this year’s version of the Upper Room’s *Disciplines* - daily devotions that will keep me company and challenged in the weeks ahead. This text from Revelation is the selected text for the first day of the New Year. So I began 2018 with an epiphany shared

through scripture that has been given to prophets and ordinary persons throughout the centuries. God decides when newness overcomes the status quo - not humans.

Our Youth Coordinator, Mark, ended 2017 for us with a message on letting go of the past in preparation for accepting the present. The present arrives whether or not we cling to the past.

Page 2

Volume 18 Issue 14

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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.

> **2017 Local Church Report to Annual Conference is due January 30, 2018.** Please remember that the data is as of December 31, 2017. Any information that you report must reflect any membership changes, participation and financial information from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017. If at all possible, please get information to me **by January 17th...**

> There will be a **Leadership Team Meeting** on Monday, January 15th at 6:00pm in the Asbury Library.

Inside this issue:

Living our Faith	1
Human Thirst—Divine Water	1
New Worship Series	3
In our Prayers	3
Pastor’s Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Coming up this Week	5
Be the Talk	6

Human Thirst—Divine Water *...continued from Page 1*

Eventually, the weight of yesterdays becomes too heavy for us to carry with us. We begin dropping pieces with little control over which ones fall away and which ones stay, oftentimes not recognizing that what we are holding onto is an imposter that we have shaped into a past that never happened the way our brittle memory has shaped it. Eventually it is best to let go and make room for the present.

Only God bares the burden of foresight. God's creation comes along for the ride. But not as uninvolved passengers. God shapes the future through us and at times in spite of us. God occasionally offers insight without the specifics that our imagination shapes. We paint on a canvas in our minds that is hardly paint-by-number so we free-hand using our past as a guide.

God is not constrained by our past and certainly not by our re-creation of the past. Rather, God moves on allowing us to drag whatever we feel we cannot live without offering us ample opportunities to let go and replace our past and be filled with the present. God's invitation is open to all. "To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life."



An invitation to quench a thirst for a dryness that cannot be quenched any other way nor by any other source. Even the most inviting mountain streams of clear, cold water cannot satisfy our deepest yearning for God's presence. But can we let go of our burden and grasp the cup that God sits before us. A cup filling over with blessing. A gift freely given without cost.

Happy New Year. "Look, God's home is now among his people!"

Pastor Tommy

Living Our Faith *... continue from page 1*

does not save us, but what we do and don't do mirrors what we truly believe and testifies to our faith.



Luke Johnson in his comments on James notes that the writer contrasts what God offers versus what the world offers.* For example, we live in a time where people are finding their voice

and speaking out. This is healthy. So many are pushed down and aside and lose their voice. The world is often oppressive and God comes to the assistance of the oppressed.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest fire and a few words can spark a firestorm of response. Resentment that has festered for years may be unleashed in a firestorm of words intended to payback the pain caused by the target of our anger even when our anger is really about something and someone entirely different than the person we are expressing our anger towards. A past hurt, left unresolved and without healing triggers an expression of anger that is unwarranted and undeserved.

Words can have unintended consequences when our words are received differently by others or we receive words differently than the speaker intended. Sometimes when clarity can be added negative affects can be reversed. The toothpaste doesn't go back into the tube but neither is it wasted. Other times, affects may be magnified. Clarity intensifies the initial reaction.

We turn to James for our worship series *Be the Talk* as we consider one step of becoming that which we say we are: Christ Followers.

Living Our Faith ...continued from Page 2

In this case, we think about how we may need to *Change the Talk*. That is, how we talk to one another matters. So how should our commitment to following Christ affect our choices of words that we use?

Words can be used as weapons to inflict harm on others or words can be used to affirm others. Words such as LOVED, BEAUTIFUL, GENIUS, LOVING, VALUABLE lift others up while other words can tear away feelings of being valued and replace them with feelings of rejection.

Words can be used as labels that generalize and categorize into convenient generalities that replace truth with fiction even when the labels could be supported as mostly true. LIAR, WHORE, LAZY, IDIOT, WORTHLESS, ADDICT are only a few of the common ones. La-

bels are shortcuts that can make words even more effective as weapons that do harm.

Words of affirmation may only be truthful in part. I may indeed be LOVED by the speaker and despised by others. I could be VALUABLE to some and WORTHLESS to others. Nevertheless, if I am LOVED only by a single person or by God I am still LOVED. I may only be BEAUTIFUL in the eyes of my mother but I am still BEAUTIFUL.

May the words that you use give testimony to your faithfulness in Jesus Christ.

Pastor Tommy

* Johnson, Luke, "The Letter of James," *The New Interpreters Bible*, Vol XII, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Crossroads District UMC
Board of Laity
presents
TOOLS FOR MINISTRY

Tuesday, February 13, 2018
Swartz Creek UMC
7400 Miller Road
Swartz Creek

Information is on the bulletin board in the Parlor. If you need additional forms, please leave me message in my mailbox, and if you have any questions, please see or call Michele Weston (810) 694-6266 or email her at mweston38@att.net



Shirley Moose

There will be a public celebration for Shirley on Saturday, January 20th at the Reigle Funeral Home Sunset Chapel located at 5501 W Pierson Road in Flushing. Visitation with family will be from 10:00 to 11:00 am and the service will be at 11:00 am. There is an online guest book at ReigleFuneralHome.com and an announcement through ABC Channel 12.

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	Brenda

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Sharon George	Mary Nations
Elaine Lamoreaux	Carmen Misner
Mary Russell	



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Be the Talk

We kickoff the new year by embracing the present. The new year is a time when we make resolutions that we, all too often, give up on before February. God has already made us a new creation through Christ, so all we have to do is embrace that which God has already done. This frees us to let God show us His future for us and His Church.

On January 7 we begin our January worship series titled *Be the Talk*. As God continues to shape our future we continue to see visible signs of God’s presence. God is with us but God is also on the move. God is leading us into a future of abundance. Be sure to join us each Sunday to learn more about how you can get connected.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem... I heard a loud shout saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them...I am making everything new!"

Revelation 21:1-3, 5 (NLT)

Book Club News

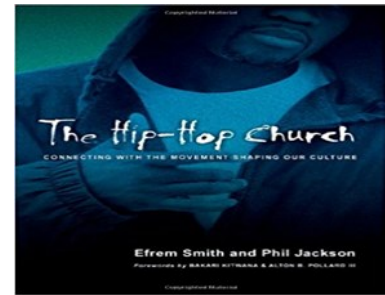
Hip-hop is here and pervasive. Hip-hop beats ring out in our cities. Hip-hop culture is all around us: in the clothes youth wear, in the music they listen to, in the ways they express themselves. It is the language they speak, the rhythm they move to. Hip-hop is a culture familiar with the hard realities of our broken world; the generation raised with rap knows about the pain. They need to know about the hope. One way this happens is known as the "hip-hop church."

Like the culture it rises from, the hip-hop church is relevant and certainly bold. And it speaks to the heart. In this book, pastors Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson show the urgency of connecting hip-hop culture and church to reach a generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They give practical ideas from their urban churches and other hip-hop churches about how to engage and incorporate rap, break dancing, poetry and deejays to worship Jesus and preach his Word.

So hold onto your hoodie and slip on your Air Force One’s. Our current topic for Tuesday’s study group is the mysterious world of hip-hop as we read, study and discuss *The Hip-Hop Church*.^{*} Read the Introduction and Chapter One in preparation for January 9.

The authors argue that Hip-hop culture is shaping the next generation. Ignoring it will not reduce its influence; it will only separate us from the youth moving to its rhythm. How will they hear Christ's message of truth and hope if we don't speak their language? And how can we speak their language if we don't understand and embrace their culture? Hear the beat. Join the beat. Become the beat that brings truth and hope to a hungry, hurting generation.

The authors of our next book are Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson. As President and CEO of World Impact and advocate for urban ministry, Efrem Smith is committed



to church-planting in the city. Phil Jackson is the founder and lead pastor of the House Covenant Church (The House) known for offering Chicago’s first Christ-centered, hip-hop worship service. For more than two decades, Phil has served God full-time on the front lines of urban youth ministry.

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 \$6.

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.

^{*} Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson. *The Hip-Hop Church - Connecting with the Movement Shaping our Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium, Christine
Children’s Time
Candle Lighting Karen
Ushers Bob, Jim
Production Team Bob
Nursery Norma
Worship Leaders Michele
Coffee Hour

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

Be the Talk ... *continued from page 4*

Jan 7 - Redeemed

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17

There is so much anxiety wrapped up in turning ourselves into “better people” when that work has already been done by God. We simply need to embrace Jesus and the change that was made through Him. Sounds easy so what’s the problem. The problem is that in our

anxiety we want to shape the future according to our plans only to discover that we seem to be missing something important.

Jan 14 - Change the Talk

...the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your

whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.

James 3:5-6

We have all heard some version of the statement “Would you talk like that if Jesus was in the room?” Language is powerful. Language has the power to draw us closer together and the power to start wars that tear us a part. In Proverbs we read that “Kind words are like honey— sweet to the soul and healthy for the body” (Proverbs 16:24). And in Genesis we read that

Page 6

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

- Jan 15 Mon** MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
6:00pm Leadership Team Mtg
- Jan 16 Tues** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Jan 17 Wed** 6:00pm Beginners Bible Study
- Jan 18 Thurs**
- Jan 21 Sun** 9:00am Traditional Worship
10:00am Connect Break
10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship
12:00 N Café Closes

Last Week for Worship Attendance 43 Offering \$ 968

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

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

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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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.

Be the Talka new worship series *cont. from page 5*

“At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words” (Genesis 11:1).

Jan 21 - Walk the Talk

What good is it...if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions?...Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?... Unless faith produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

James 2:14-16

The writer of James offers advice on what it means to “walk the talk.” God has redeemed us through Jesus Christ and when we truly believe this to be true we talk differently. Our words are a manifestation

of the love that God has shown us. And our faith is shown in how we spend our time and use our resources. Our response to God's grace tells the world what we truly believe.

Jan 28 - Be the Talk

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem... I heard a loud shout saying, “Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them...I am making everything new!”

Revelation 21:1-3, 5 (NLT)

John Wesley, a founder of Methodism, wrote in his journal about a time when he was strugg-

ling with his faith. This disturbed Wesley, a preacher, who asked his friend and advisor, Peter Bohler, what he should do. His friend responded “Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.” It is widely believed that this was a turning point for Wesley and advice that is widely applicable. How do we become the talk that we refer to as we mature spiritually? We accept redemption, we change how we talk, we walk the talk and eventually we become that which we talk about. We become faithful disciples of the One who redeemed us.



Pastor Tommy