

# 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

## The Real Thing

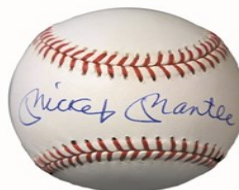
Allow me to let you off the hook so you can concentrate of the rest of this article rather than feel guilty that you fall short: You cannot help everyone. This is a fact. This is true for a lot of reasons, most of which, you have no control over.

So when you read in the letter of James the question

“What good does that do?” the honest answer is something like “none” or “very little.” At the same time, do not let this life-giving lesson from James not make a point with you.

“Authentic” has a number of definitions generally built on the presumption that the facts bear out the claim. For an autographed, Mickey Mantle base

ball to be authentic means that it was actually signed by the player. Our words and actions are authentic when they are based on the real thing.



Volume 18 Issue 21

January 21, 2018

### 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...**

> **Update to Book Club:** Be prepared to discuss Chapters 3 & 4 on January 16th and Chapter 5 the following week, January 23rd.

### Inside this issue:

Living our Faith	1
The Real Thing	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

## The Real Thing

...continued from Page 1

Our faith is authentic when it is real. The letter of James gets at this subject of real versus pretend faith. But how do we get there? Aren't we all to one degree or another a bit fake in our faith? Don't we all say one thing and do another at least part of the time? We can't help everyone.

In some translations of the Gospel of Matthew we read that Jesus used the expression "You have heard that it was said..." followed by a common understanding of what the life of a righteous person should look like. This expression is used in Jesus opening teaching in Matthew that we commonly refer to as the Sermon on the Mount. In His teaching Jesus draws a comparison between following rules out of duty and living as a Disciple out of faith. It can seem as though Jesus is adding an even more difficult standard for us to follow.

You have heard it said that you should not put the cart before the horse...or something like that. First things first. But sometimes we struggle with this very question. What comes first? Another expression involves chickens and eggs. Which came first?

"Walk the talk" is a similar expression particularly in the light of Jesus' teaching that even before we venture out to follow the rules we need to check our attitude. Are we following the rules because this is what we do? The struggle comes from thinking that we can do this on our own power. It is very much a control issue.

We began our January worship series titled *Be the Talk* with the topic of redemption. Jesus redeemed us. All of us. Jesus died for the sin of the world. We sometimes refer to His sacrifice as a ransom. We are being held hostage by a world that does not live according to Kingdom rules.

Jesus pays our ransom to set us free. When we are redeemed we are free to live differently. This means making different choices. But we can't do it on our own.

The 2nd Sunday in January we looked at "changing the talk" but in this case we narrowed our meaning of "the talk" as words which we speak. Words are powerful and if we are really going to "be the talk" we need to pay attention to the words we say. Our hope is that our words will be words that will be as though Jesus is speaking.

Next we consider what it means to "walk the talk." Our use of the word "talk" is again in the broader context of God's Word and whether we are following Jesus authentically. When we say that someone "walks the talk" we credit that person with doing what they say. If what they say is that Jesus Christ is Lord then they are saying a lot and acting as though they really believe what they say to be true.

So to "be the talk" is to become that which we claim to be - disciples of Jesus Christ. This involves both what we believe and what we do or don't do. But as we walk the talk we stumble. We trip over obstacles that the enemy has put in our way. We say things we shouldn't say and fail to speak up when we know that we need to do so. We reject someone who comes to us for help even when we had the means to help.

We fail to walk the talk so does this mean we are not disciples? The Bible is full of stories about people just like us. They followed in faith and stumbled.

**And through it all God is love and God is grace.**

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.

Page 3

## 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. Labels 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 at Swartz Creek United Methodist Church, 7400 Miller Rd, Swartz Creek.

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

### In Our Prayers

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

### 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

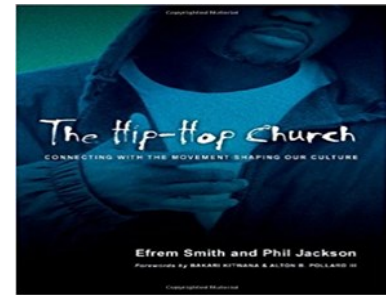
Hip-hop is here and pervasive. Hip-hop beats ring out in our cities. Hip-hop culture is all around us: in the clothes youth wear, in the music they listen to, in the ways they express themselves. It is the language they speak, the rhythm they move to. Hip-hop is a culture familiar with the hard realities 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*.<sup>\*</sup> 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.

<sup>\*</sup> 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 Rev Tommy  
Candle Lighting Karen  
Ushers Richard, Jim  
Production Team Jim  
Nursery Carolyn  
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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 apart. 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

<b>Jan 22</b>	<b>Mon</b>	
<b>Jan 23</b>	<b>Tues</b>	12Noon Pastor Book Club
<b>Jan 24</b>	<b>Wed</b>	6:00pm Beginners Bible Study
<b>Jan 25</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	
<b>Jan 28</b>	<b>Sun</b>	9:00am Traditional Worship
		10:00am Connect Break
		10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship
		12:00 N Café Closes

### Last Week for Worship Attendance 34 Offering \$ 621

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

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

\*\*\*

**\*\*Beginning on Sunday, February 4, 2018 Asbury will no longer offer a traditional worship service. The Café will open at 9:30am where Pastor Tommy will host a Bible discussion on each week’s scripture. The New Beginnings Contemporary Worship Service will begin at 10:30am.**

## 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

**NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**FLINT, MICHIGAN**  
**PERMIT #151**

## 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 Talk ....a 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.

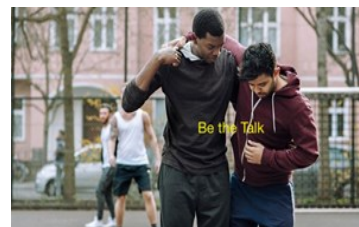
### Jan 28 - Be the Talk

*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