

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

Garden of Hope

Soon it will be time to plant cold crops in the hoop houses for the Spring harvest. It is already time to start germinating seeds that take longer to reach the size to transplant. By April we should be harvesting fresh greens such as mustard and kale. Planting gardens is a very concrete form of hope. We trust that the seeds we place in the soil will produce food that will nourish bodies.

Meanwhile, our neighborhood is not safe for our children. Our schools are falling short. Even the good political leaders seem powerless to make substantive change and most are too busy taking care of themselves and their friends. Surely God will help me find a way out of this place with tainted water, few jobs and trash everywhere? But when?

Sometimes we have to be reminded that God has plans for us right where we are. And sometimes God's plans help us to make the best of a difficult situation.

After the Babylonians carted the people of Judea off to a foreign land, the exiled people of God were pacing the floors of what they presumed was temporary housing. Surely God would smite



their captives any day now and return them to greener pastures and familiar surroundings.

"Where is God when we are in need" they cried out. Sure, much of their circumstance could be traced back to mistakes made by their ancestors and themselves, but God forgives and restores even the most mischievous persons. Right? Had God sent them into exile only to have them wither away?

Scripture tells us that God had not forgotten nor forsaken God's children. Through the prophet Jeremiah God sends words of encouragement that are also words of "Make the best of it. Plant gardens." So the descendants of the Israelites would have to wait a bit longer for freedom from their struggles. But they could prosper right where they are.

Page 2

The Real Thing

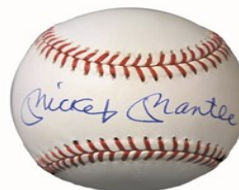
Allow me to let you off the hook so you can concentrate of the rest of this article rather than feel guilty that you fall short: You cannot help everyone. This is a fact. This is true for a lot of reasons, most of which, you have no control over.

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 4

February 4, 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.

>UMW meetings are the 1st Wednesday of each month from September through June at 1:00PM in the Wesley Room. All ladies interested in UMW and their mission projects are welcome and urged to attend. **Next meeting is Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at 1:00PM.**

> The New Beginnings Contemporary Worship Service starts today at 10:30am.

Inside this issue:

Garden of Hope	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

Garden of Hope ... continue from page 1

But there is more to the story. God tells the people through Jeremiah that their well-being is dependent upon the well-being of the city where they are living. Really? Life is not about making sure I get mine and leaving those whom I blame for my situation to fend for themselves? Is my well-being hindered by my neighbor's lacking? Its not "me first?"

The answer is the same today as it was in ancient Babylonia. We not only need each other to survive, but when we work together we can all prosper. Mahatma Gandhi is often quoted as saying "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." This statement is ignored by persons out for

themselves and our planet suffers. We live in a political climate divided by the greed of the privileged.

"Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce ... and work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."

Jeremiah 29:5, 7 (NLT)

Garden of hope is about working for the welfare of our neighborhood and our city. What seeds will you plant this year in the hope of a harvest? I hope that you will

join us in the Sundays to come to worship the One True God who delivered the people of Judah and who will deliver us.

God is the ultimate gardener and we are God's priceless flowers created to bear fruit wherever we find ourselves. Consider what God may be asking you to do what you wait for deliverance from whatever struggles are keeping you from experiencing the joy of God's love and abundance.

Pastor Tommy

A Note of Thanks ...

With our last Sunday of our traditional service it is appropriate to thank all of the persons who have shared their gifts with us over the past several years. From those who lead worship to each member of the choir, our lives have been enriched by their sharing of the gifts with which God so richly blessed them and us.

The church universal has survived and at times thrived in the midst of loss. With each generation the old passes away and the new emerges. While we all should recognize that we either change or die both in our human bodies and as a local church, it is right to celebrate our past even as we embrace our future.

I want to personally thank Kathy Howe for her leadership of the Asbury choir over the past decades. Thousands

have enjoyed her gifts of music and many more will continue to benefit from her sharing. Her faithfulness continues to be an inspiration to all who are blessed to know her.

Accompanying the choir, playing countless pieces before, during and after worship, Rebekah Britton has been a critical part of our weekly worship. I thank her for her service over the past 17+ years. Week after week Becky has accompanied hymns and choral anthems. None of us can predict the future but I suspect that Becky will continue to share her musical gifts for years to come.

To all the members of the Asbury choir who have shared their gifts in worship I offer my sincere gratitude. The

weekly anthems greatly enriched our worship experience.

To the worship leaders, all who prepared the altar and our worship space, the ushers, greeters, audio support, attendance takers, coffee hour hosts and numerous others who made our weekly worship experience a joy to attend, on behalf of the members and guests of Asbury I offer my gratitude.

Our New Beginnings worship service represents to some extent a milestone as we transition into an uncertain future. Whatever the future may hold I am confident of only one certainty.

God is with us.

Pastor Tommy

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.

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

Asbury Worship Series The Heart of Hope ...

We all have a biological father and mother who played a critical role in our coming into existence. Our biological parents are not our creator. Nevertheless, it can be difficult to disconnect the two.

When we pray to "Our Father in heaven" this title that is shared with our earthly father can tarnish the image of our

perception of God even in the best of circumstances. For too many, it can take a life time of therapy to undo the damage that this confusion causes. We know that God the Father is ours and everyone else's Creator but our connection to our biological parents gets in the way.

Welcome to our worship series, *The heart of hope*. During this six week series we will both explore some of the struggles that keep us from a relationship with God that helps us get through the week and explore practical solutions for dealing with our struggles. Whether you find it hard to believe in God or you are a

Page 4

Book Club News

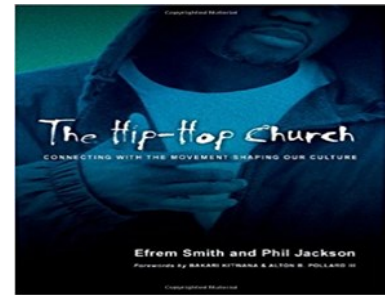
Hip-hop is here and pervasive. Hip-hop beats ring out in our cities. Hip-hop culture is all around us: in the clothes youth wear, in the music they listen to, in the ways they express themselves. It is the language they speak, the rhythm they move to. Hip-hop is a culture familiar with the hard realities 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 Rev Tommy
Candle Lighting Karen
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Jim
Nursery Carolyn
Worship Leaders Michele
Coffee Hour

Jim Craig Leadership Chair
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kathy Howe Choir Director
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

The Heart of Hope ...

continued from page 4

lifetime believer this series will challenge you and offer you hope for a more joyful life. If you don't feel that the church is relevant to you take a chance and come see what *The heart of hope* is all about.

We will begin our series on a Sunday that has been designated by the traditional church as the first Sunday in Lent. The idea of Lent is a season of preparation. Easter is right around the corner and in preparation for this celebration of Christ's victory over death we take a look at where we stand in our relationship with

God and pursue ways to get closer to God.



This series will take us through a process of self-examination along with offering practical advice on steps that we can take to strengthen our relationship with Christ.

Feb 18 The Table invitation, belonging

Mar 4 The Boat searching, isolation

Mar 11 The Cliff at the edge of a decision that is life threatening or life giving

Mar 18 The Lagoon failed attempts

Mar 25 The Cave hiding, secluded, isolated

Apr 1 The Feast Celebration of hope found in the Christ's victory over death

Pastor Tommy

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Feb 5 Mon

Feb 6 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club

Feb 7 Wed 1:00pm UMW

6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

Feb 8 Thurs

Feb 11 Sun 9:30am Café Opens

10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 44 Offering \$ 1,196**

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

Email announcements by the Friday before to:

FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

2017 Local Church Report

The report has been submitted. **Thank you** to all who turned in information to me in a timely matter, which helped to complete the report and turn in on time.

Another year in ...

Connie

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.

Donations and Volunteers are needed ...

South Flint Soup Kitchen

3410 Fenton Rd., Flint MI 48507

South Flint Soup Kitchen Needs List:

Monetary Donations:

To Support the Soup Kitchen make all checks payable to:

General Donation to benefit Soup Kitchen

Crossroads District Board of Missions

(Write on the memo line: "South Flint Soup Kitchen")

1309 N. Ballenger Hwy., Suite 2, Flint MI 48504

Or Specific Purpose: Security at the Soup Kitchen:

Costs: \$50 a day, \$300 a week, \$1200 a month, \$15,600 a year

To support the **Security Cost**, make all checks payable to:

Crossroads District Board of Missions

(Write on the memo line: "Security for South Flint Soup Kitchen")

1309 N. Ballenger Hwy., Suite 2, Flint MI 48504

**Volunteers: Monday – Saturday
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

To serve the food/Plumbing, Electrical, and Carpentry,

Grant Writers/Webmaster

Items:

Paper Plates/Paper Bowls/ Napkins/ Styrofoam cups for coffee

Liquid hand soap/Foam Antibacterial Hand Soap

Paper Towel for Dispenser in bathroom/Food handler gloves all size

Toilet tissue/ Bleach/Coffee/package sugar and package cream

Plastic fork/knives/spoons/Latex Gloves all sizes for washing dishes

Ajax/Fabuloso/OdoBan

For more information you can contact:

Rev. Maurice Horne, Flint Mission Zone Minister of Outreach

Phone: 810-239-3427

Fax: 810-239-6335

Email: southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southflintsoupkitchen or type

South Flint Soup Kitchen in the Search bar on your Facebook page

Website: www.southflintsoupkitchen.org