

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.

allegiance towards. We are to worship God alone and there is no stand-in for God. The Holy Spirit is everywhere but we are to never confuse God's Spirit with anything material.



"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.

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An "idol" is something that we give allegiance towards because we conclude that there is a special power in this thing. Something is not an idol simply because we give it value. It becomes an idol when we become so attached that we are willing to say and do things that are not so "Christ-like" and thus our idol takes us away from our worship of God.

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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.

> There will be a **Leadership Team Meeting** on Monday, February 19th at 6:00pm in the Asbury Library. Please all involved plan to attend.

> **1st Nutrition, Wellness & Health Expo** coming up Saturday, March 3rd at Asbury UMC. See insert flyer, but look for more information to follow.

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Wooden Idols

The Ten Commandments begins with making it clear that there is only One God and we are to serve this One God only. To further clarify the 2nd commandment forbids the worship of idols - human-made items that we attribute power to and show

Wooden Idols ...continued from Page 1

Sometimes our idol worship is subtle. Many items in a church can become idols. A rule of thumb that I use is does the item have to be present? Am I willing to give it away or sell it or do I attach a meaning that goes beyond the wood, metal, plastic or other materials that our things are usually made from?

The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes. He trusts something that can't help him at all. Yet he cannot bring himself to ask, "Is this idol that I'm holding in my hands a lie?"
Isaiah 44:20

Or instead, does the thought of not having this treasured thing make me angry? What am I willing to do to prevent its loss? Is my treasure more important than my relationship with others? Am I willing to do harm to protect it?

Although it can seem that material things such as a special cross, Bible, picture or the like would never be confused with God this is not the whole point of the expect-

tation. God comes first. And when God comes first other people become significantly more important than things. Our relationship with God presumes relationships with God's people. To love God is to love others is to love God - more than these.

There is more to the story. Things that are not material can become gods (little "g") for us. For example, power, prestige or perhaps simply wanting to be admired can cause us to put our need for having a feeling over living out God commandments. The pursuit of wealth is one of the most alluring gods on the planet as is the pursuit of power

These are indeed powerful forces which can and will expect allegiance. These powers expect the allegiance that belongs to God alone. So how do we guard against turning things and feelings into idols? This is where it gets even more interesting.

We can't on our own power resist the temptation to create little gods that take us away from the One True God. This is in itself a form of grace. We were created to worship the One True God. This is our purpose. When

we pursue other gods we are left empty and wanting.

Convincing ourselves that more money or more things will eventually satisfy us leads to addictions. Behavior that takes us further and further away from God and closer to hopelessness.

The person who made the idol never stops to reflect. "Why its just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a God? Should I bow down to worship a piece of wood?"
Isaiah 44:19

God living among people gave us a concrete model for worship. And Jesus illustrated how the power of the Holy Spirit gives life and brings us closer to God and to each other. It is by our faith in Jesus Christ that we are strengthened to avoid creating idols and grow closer to our Creator and sustainer of life.

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."

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 CALENDARS!

1st NURTITION, WELLNESS & HEALTH EXPO

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018

PLACE: ASBURY UMC

TIME: 12NOON—2:00PM

PRESENTED BY:

AMERICORPS, FLINT RECOVERY CORP & ASBURY UMC

**** ALL OF US LOOK FORWARD IN HELPING THE CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT CITY BECOME MORE AWARE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THEIR HEALTH AND OVERALL WELL-BEING AS WE TRY TO RECOVER AND MOVE FORWARD FROM THE WATER CRISIS.**

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

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Book Club News

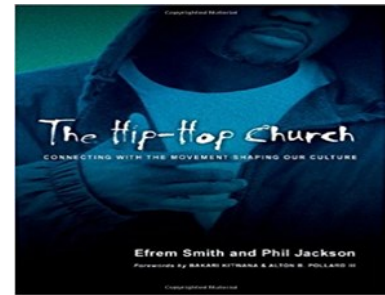
Hip-hop is here and pervasive. Hip-hop beats ring out in our cities. Hip-hop culture is all around us: in the clothes youth wear, in the music they listen to, in the ways they express themselves. It is the language they speak, the rhythm they move to. Hip-hop is a culture familiar with the hard realities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

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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

To the Asbury Church Family -

Thank you for the nice acknowledgment of my years of service to the Lord at Asbury.

Also, thank you for the gift card! I will miss you all.



Becky

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Feb 12 Mon 6:30pm Worship Design Team

Feb 13 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club

Tools for Ministry @ Swartz Creek UMC

Feb 14 Wed 6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

6:00pm Ash Wednesday Service

Feb 15 Thurs

Feb 18 Sun 9:30am Café Opens

10:30am New Beginnings

Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship

Attendance 32

Offering \$ 1,263

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.

Visiting Preachers ...WELCOME!



Rev. Jeremy Peters is a graduate of Albion College and Duke Divinity School, and he currently serves

the Court Street United Methodist Church in downtown Flint, MI. He is a father of two, a husband of one, a follower of Jesus, and a drinker of coffee.



Rev. Maurice Horne served as the Pastor of Lincoln Park United Methodist Church for 9 years, and

on December 31, 2017 the church officially closed the doors and disbanded as a church. I have been reappointed as the Flint Mission Zone Minister of Outreach. I have been in the gospel ministry for 40 years.

In 1977 I received my License to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ while stationed in Okinawa Japan. After returning to the United States I served as a

traveling Evangelist and preached throughout the United States. I preached 3 day Revival, 1 week Revival, 2 week Revival, and I once preach a 30 day Revival. In April 1981 I was ordained in A Non-Denominational Church. I pioneered a church from scratch in December 1981 and served as the Senior Pastor for 9 years. I joined the United Methodist Church in 1991. I graduated as a Local Pastor from the 5 year Course of Study Program at Methesco Theological Methodist Seminary in Delaware Ohio. I have been a member of the United Methodist Church for 27 years.