

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

The Table



The topic of family dinners is more likely to sound like nostalgia than current reality. Situation comedies use family dinners to expose humorous quirks and interactions between family members only rarely illuminating the positive aspects of families eating together. Nevertheless, I will risk suggesting that there is something very special about being invited to a meal. Something that touches the heart.

Is it the invitation itself, the meal, or the interaction that causes us to want to be invited for a meal? I'm guessing it is all three at times and sadly none of the three at other times. An invitation to eat a meal with persons that rub us the wrong way or to eat a meal that is not satisfying does not sound like an inviting offer at all. More like torture.

These two polar opposite reactions can happen to us with invitations that

come our way even when accepting the invitation would prove to be an awesome experience. We blurt out "Will he or she be there?" potentially removing any sense of positive anticipation if the answer is yes, and taking away from the moment even in the case of a no answer. Our past experiences with invitations affect current invitations in powerful ways.

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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

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.



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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Volume 18 Issue 49
February 18, 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.

> There will be a **Worship Team Meeting** on Monday, February 19th at 6:30 pm 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 information in this Circuit Rider.

> **Church Women United Day of Prayer** will hold a meeting on Friday, March 2nd from 10am-12Noon in our Fellowship Hall. Registration at 9:30am, program starts 10am.

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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 expecta-

tion. 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

The Table ... continued from page 1

With each invitation we search our memory for past experiences that will help us evaluate a gathering that is yet to happen.

An invitation to have dinner at no charge at Davison's newest and most expensive restaurant, the Black Rock, sounds like a "must go" invitation. There is hope in this invitation. A great meal that I otherwise couldn't afford. Perhaps some meaningful conversation.

"The Table" is also a metaphor - a symbol that can mean something much more than a meal. In the song *Come to the Table* the chorus is about an invita-

tion to "Come to the table. Come join the sinners who have been redeemed. Take your place. beside the Savior. Sit down and be set free." We introduced this song a couple months ago on a Sunday when we were having communion. The lyrics really fit. But our table metaphor is bigger than this. This invitation is more than just a meal - even a holy meal.

The table is about an invitation for hope. Not the sort of hope where we anticipate disappointment but hope for something that is certain. While we don't know the details of how our hope will be fulfilled, we know that it will be

awesome. The hope in this invitation stands above all of our attempts to imagine a world with fewer worries, fewer disappointments, less struggle.

The church began with just such an ideal in mind. We catch a glimpse of what is intended in the description of the first church found in Acts 2. The description begins with "*All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*"

The Table ... *continued from page 2*

I have had the blessing of seeing the wonders beneath the ocean surface up front and personal. The beauty is so breath-taking that you really have to remember to breathe. The colors are so vivid they take your breath away. I was awestruck.

I feel this way when I see a sunrise or a sunset. I feel this way when I see a



night sky full of stars. I feel this way when I see children playing in church without holding back for fear of punishment. I feel this way in worship when the Holy Spirit connects with my spirit and reminds me of God's awesome power.

I imagine that "potluck" meals were a fixture in the first church. We read that all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. Now "everything" is more than just food in my understanding of this word. But can't you imagine the awesome meals they had together? We are not all chefs.

They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.

Acts 2:46-47

Not all of us know how to set a table that is breathtaking. But together we can do these things and more - very well.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

1st NURTITION, WELLNESS & HEALTH EXPO

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018

PLACE: ASBURY UMC

TIME: 12NOON—2:00PM

PRESENTED BY:

AMERICORP, 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

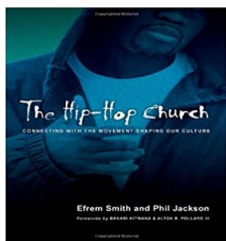
perception of God even in the best of circumstances. For too many, it can take a life time of therapy to undo the damage that this confusion causes. We know that God the Father is ours and everyone else’s Creator but our connection to our biological parents gets in the way.

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

We were given a taste of Hip Hop as we celebrated *Love & Ashes* for our Ash Wednesday worship service. Terry gave us a glimpse of the role of the emcee as he shared a taste of his spoken word poetry written and delivered in the genre of rap. Our background music came from a selection of Christian Hip Hop artists including an arrangement of the popular praise and worship song *Oceans*. Attendance was impressive for an occasional service that is traditionally not well attended. Our Hip Hop party that followed worship featured deejay



Mark. It was only a taste but we had fun and we worshiped God along with several visitors.

Our book club will be finishing up our

study of Hip Hop as we complete our reading and discussion of *The Hip-Hop Church* written by Pastors Efreem Smith and Phil Jackson. Like the culture it rises from, the hip-hop church is relevant and certainly bold. And it speaks to the heart. This book has offered us practical ideas from hip-hop churches about how to engage and incorporate rap, break dancing, poetry and deejays to worship Jesus and preach his Word.

We will take a break on **February 27 - so we will not meet as a group on that Tuesday**. The following week, March 6, we will finish our discussions and begin a new study the following Tuesday. Ash Wednesday was the first day of the Season of Lent. A time of preparation as we look forward to our Easter celebration of Christ’s resurrection.

In our message for Ash Wednesday we learned a little bit about the tradition

of fasting during Lent. That is, giving up something that has become a little too important to us while we focus on our relationship with God, others, ourselves and our planet. These are life-giving connections which help to keep us in harmonious relationships.

What might this season of Lent mean for you? As each day offers a little more sunlight and we look forward to planting gardens and the warmer temperatures of Spring and Summer what changes is God asking you to make? Our worship team has designated the first Sunday of each month as “**Next Step Sunday**.” Each month we will offer ideas and encouragement for each of us to take that next step towards faithfully following Christ. If you are not already meeting in a small group that can support you in your spiritual journey I encourage you to make this your goal for Lent.

One option is to come to our Tuesday gatherings. Our small group hopes 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. or topic.

* Efreem Smith and Phil Jackson. *The Hip-Hop Church - Connecting with the Movement Shaping our Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium, Christine
Children’s Time Rev Tommy
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Jim
Nursery Carolyn
Worship Leaders Cyndi
Coffee Hour

Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kevin Croom Farm to Table
Israel Unger Business Development

Asbury Café

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday before worship for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for worship.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
Mark Vorenkamp Children & Youth
Jim Craig Leadership Chair

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

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Feb 19 Mon 6:00pm Leadership Team Mtg
4:30pm StandUp Education Prog

Feb 20 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6:00pm Washington Neighborhood

Feb 21 Wed 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
6:00pm Beginners Bible Study
6:30pm Asbury Youth

Feb 23 Fri 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog

Feb 24 Sat 1-4pm StandUp Education Prog

Feb 25 Sun 9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship
Attendance 26 Offering \$ 565

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

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

WELCOME REV HORNE!

Sunday February 25, 2018

Scripture: John 6:1-13

Sermon:

The Miracle of Sharing

Flint Mission Zone Minister of Outreach

Rev. Maurice Horne



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

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.

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.

The Table Continued from page 3

One of the things they did in the first church causes wealthy people to squirm in their seats. We read that in the first church "the people sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need." This is where it becomes really important to consider what this means in a culture of private property and the "American dream" to get ahead. If you own your own home it is safe to read on.

This subject deserves much more discussion than a simple, literal reading offers. As does all of scripture. But we should never water scripture down to suit our preferences.

We were created for worship. This is who we are. When we don't worship we have an emptiness that can never be filled with any thing

else. The first church seemed to understand this. We read that the people "worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the

invited by the One who invites us to the table. "Come and see" Jesus says to each of us. "Follow Me" is the essence of His invitation. You are invited.

Pastor Tommy

Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people."

But what if "he or she" is also invited and will be at the same table? Well both he and she are also