

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

The Cave

"Do not be afraid" appears frequently in scripture. When the divine presence is certain we have a tendency to be afraid. God speaking through the prophet Isaiah reminds the people of the Exodus that they have been called by name and their ransom paid. God owns them and this is a very good thing. There is nothing to fear for God will be with them through deep waters, rivers of difficulty and oppressive fires. We can hang onto our hats for God has the rest of us. We will not be swept away, we will not be drawn and the heat will not consume us.

Every time I read this scripture it moves me; it comforts me because I believe that God is speak-

ing to me through this ancient text, reminding me that I am precious in God's sight. Not only precious, but worth God's effort.

But what if we have done things that clearly put us into a category of not deserving such care? The cave is a place of seclusion. We go there to escape the judgment of others only to find out that we are our own worst critics. We beat ourselves up and the enemy's voice sharpens, reminding us that we are where we deserve to be. Alone in our sin and powerless to leave the cave. "God may love a lot of people but God is disgusted with you," the enemy whispers in our

Invented Science, argues that the ancient philosopher, Aristotle, first discovered the scientific method as he combined his love for nature with his ability to reason, documenting life in a lagoon. On Aristotle's island home of *Lesbos*, he carefully observed and documented what he saw in the lagoon located on this island.

Another book called simply, *The Lagoon*, is a fictional

head. "How can God love me?" we wonder.

"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you".

Isaiah 43:2

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book of intrigue, drama and love, written by Joseph Conrad. His book brings drama to life as his main character, *Arsat*, must choose when he sees his brother fall in battle, and is faced with a choice to go back to help his brother, which could end in death or live on to be with the love of his life, *Diamelen*. He must therefore choose between love and honor, fidelity and betrayal. In effect, he can carry off his love only at the price of cowardice. In choosing love, that noblest attribute of man, he has paradoxically chosen dishonor.

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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.
- > **Cooking Classes:** Nutritional classes/cooking for company/lead abatement regarding meal preparation and also, tips on gardening offered by master gardeners. Each Thursday starting April 12th from 1:00-2:30pm at Asbury UMC. For more info call Kevin Croom at 810-625-6115.

FREE, FUN, EDUCATIONAL,
ENJOYABLE, NUTRITIONAL!!

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The Lagoon

A lagoon is a shallow body of water separated from the sea by some barrier and immersed in the sounds and dark shadows of the tropical wilderness. The water is still and dark and full of predators waiting for their next meal. Armand Marie Leroi in her non-fiction book, *The Lagoon: How Aristotle*

The Lagoon ...continued from Page 1

It can be said, hence the title of the book, that Arsat is in a lagoon. In this regard the lagoon is a metaphor for the human condition, a symbol of the dark uncertainty of motive. The lagoon is a psychological state of confusion. It is dark and you are surrounded by predators, most of which you cannot see. The way out is obscured by heavy vegetation. If you stay in the lagoon long enough you will surely look for isolation in the cave that can be found behind the waterfall.



The literary website eNotes.com describes the ending of the book where the book gets its title:

At the very end of the story, Arsat is motionless, staring beyond the sunlight "into the darkness of a world of illusions." What is illusory is not love or courage or cowardice, but human beings' ability to act purely, to conduct their lives without contradictory emotions or damnable choices. Significantly, Arsat's love of Diamelen allows him to see nothing but

her face, hear nothing but her voice, and after her death he tells the white man that he can see nothing. "There is nothing," the white man responds—nothing but illusion, uncertainty, and the darkness of an impenetrable lagoon.

The analysis of the book continues with a discussion of the importance of the lagoon as a metaphor.

The setting of the lagoon is the perfect embodiment of the illusory world of man's actions...It is a place immersed in the sounds and dark shadows of the tropical wilderness...the lagoon is a symbol of evil, a malign force, aggressive and alive, like a predator. It is not a personal malignity...but a menace that exists independently of human beings' actions.

The lagoon is a metaphor for the human condition, a symbol of the dark uncertainty of motive. It is a psychological entity, suggestive of a confused state of mind. We enter the lagoon when we choose to step off a cliff—we make a choice that becomes habitual that we will surely regret and we find ourselves in a place that we want to leave, and we try our

best, but our best isn't enough. We feel trapped in our own lack of will power.

The lagoon is the "failure place" where we all make promises to God. Have you found yourself in a lagoon? What are some of your "lagoon promises" to God? How do you try to earn your way back into God's favor? A lagoon experience will always be messy and never resolves without pain. And making sincere promises won't eliminate the consequences of bad choices.

Repentance becomes the most beautiful word you can find. But your repentance cannot be one that requires more self-effort or one that beats you up. Repentance isn't doing something about our sin; it is admitting that we can't do anything about our sin. True repentance is fully dependent upon God.

Repentance fully trusts in God's power to erase your shame and self-disgust. It is tapping into greatest power in the universe and believing that this power can cleanse you of the results of your choices, redeem you and give you power to no longer stay in the lagoon. It is powerful enough to break the spell of this madness.

God is good—all the time and lived among people so that we might know the depths of His love. Salvation is a gift that we can never earn. Accept the gift of Jesus Christ in your life.

Pastor Tommy

*Armand Marie Leroi. *The Lagoon: How Aristotle Invented Science*. New York: Penguin Books, 2014.

The Cave ... continued from page 1

Paul tackled this thorny question in his letter to the church in Rome reminding us that nothing can separate us from God's love. God has ransomed us from whatever forces that seduced us and led us to the forbidden fruit of disobedience.

We are now free from the grasp of the enemy and safely in God's hands. But will we accept God's grace? Will we surrender our will to God's will? Will we leave whatever we are holding onto so tightly that we cannot move away and follow the One

who calls us by name? Will we give our life to Jesus Christ and faithfully follow only Him?

"No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:39

The idea of chaos, random events occurring that impact us in significant ways, frightens us. We prefer predictions that we can count on. Yet we know that much in life is out of our control, from weather to the stock market, and we learn to live with a large amount of uncertainty.

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The Cave ... *continued from page 2*

Perhaps our best selves find a sort of rhythm that is life itself; we respond rather than try to control, trusting God is present in all.

Come out of whatever cave the enemy has led you into—not by your own power but through the power of the One who gave His life for you. Celebrate Easter. Celebrate the freedom that God gives you. There is no need to wait. No matter how hard you try to clean yourself up the enemy will try and

convince you that you are not enough. That you will never be enough. The enemy is a liar.

Come to the table. All are welcomed here. Christ has already paid the price of your ticket. May God silence the enemy for you and lead you to a new beginning.

Pastor Tommy



*William Paul Young, Jackie Hill Perry, Dr. Dan Allender, Jay Stringer, John and Stasi Eldredge *Heart of Man Participant's Guide*, October 9, 2017.

LENT²⁰¹⁸

THE FLINT AREA UMC'S ARE HOSTING ROTATING LENTEN SERVICES. SERVICES ARE AT 5:00PM WITH 6:00PM LIGHT MEAL SERVED. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE.

DATE:	CHURCH:		PREACHING:
March 25 (Passion/Palm Sunday)	Asbury UMC	1653 Davison Rd, Flint	Pastor Brian Willingham
March 30 (Good Friday - 12N Service)	Hope UMC	4467 Beecher Rd, Flint	TBD
April 1 Easter Sunday—Easter Breakfast at 9:00am followed by Worship Service at 10:30am	Asbury UMC	1653 Davison Rd, Flint	Pastor Tommy McDoniel



In Our Prayers

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

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

Book Club News

Our group finished 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 are in 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.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium, Christine
Children's Time	Rev Tommy
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Jim
Nursery	Norma
Worship Leaders	Michele
Coffee Hour	

Asbury Staff

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

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 relation-

We hope that you will join us on Tuesdays at Noon. On March 6, we will discuss what we learned about the Hip Hop culture and how what we learned might help us to reach more youth and young adults with the good news of Jesus Christ. We begin a new study the following Tuesday, March 13. Our next topic will be a book recommended by Israel Unger, *The Last Hunger Season*.

In western Kenya, the *Luhya* people customarily name their children for the time of year in which they are born. Francis Mamati, a smallholder farmer shares this about his birth month: "I think it must be May or June...because my mother gave me a third name: *Wanjala*,...our word for hunger, for the time of year when we run low on food. The hunger season. And that is usually May and June."

Wanjala, or hunger, is real in many parts of the world. Many of us heard references to "starving children in Africa" as children when we refused to eat our peas or whatever food item we were offered but preferred not to eat. Africa's smallholder farmers, most of whom are women, know misery. They toil in a time warp, living and working essentially as their ancestors did a century ago. With tired seeds, meager soil nutrition, primitive storage facilities, wretched roads, and no capital or

ship 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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credit, they harvest less than one-quarter the yields of Western farmers.

The small family farms that award-winning author and world hunger activist Roger Thurow witnessed in Kenya was a horror scene of malnourished children, backbreaking manual work, and profound hopelessness. For these families, growing food is their driving preoccupation, and still they don't have enough to feed their families throughout the year. The *wanjala*—the annual hunger season that can stretch from one month to as many as eight or nine—comes out of a lack of possibilities.

But in January 2011, a woman named *Leonida* and her neighbors came together and took the enormous risk of trying to change their lives. Roger Thurow spent a year with four of them—*Leonida Wanyama*, *Rasoa Wasike*, *Francis Mamati*, and *Zipporah Biketi*—to both witness and to share their stories. In *The Last Hunger Season*, we read about the profound challenges these farmers and their families faced, and follow their stories through the seasons to see whether, with a little bit of help from a new social enterprise organization called *One Acre Fund*, they might transcend lives of severe poverty and hunger.

The daily dramas of the farmers' lives unfold against the backdrop of a looming global challenge: to feed a growing population, world food production must nearly double by 2050. If these farmers succeed, so might we all.

We encourage you 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. And we are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Pastor Tommy

* Thurow, Roger. *The Last Hunger Season: A Year in an African Farm Community on the Brink of Change*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2012.

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.

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Mar 26 Mon 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog

Mar 27 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club

Mar 28 Wed 4-8pm Neighborhood
Engagement Hub

4:30pm StandUp Education Prog

6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

6:30pm Asbury Youth

Mar 30 Fri 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog

Mar 31 Sat 1-4pm StandUp Education Prog

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

Apr 1 Easter Sunday

9:30am Café Opens

10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship

Attendance 30 Offering \$ 514

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.

with offering practical advice on steps that we can take to strengthen our relationship with Christ.

Mar 4 The Boat
searching, isolation

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

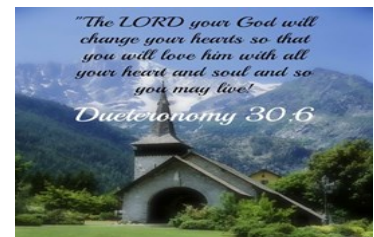
Mar 18 The Lagoon
failed attempts

Mar 25 The Cave
hiding, secluded, isolated

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

"If we claim we have no sin we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

1 John 1:8-9



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Flint, MI 48506



Phone: 810-235-0016
Fax: 810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)
E-mail: FlintAsbury@gmail.com

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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.



WELCOME PASTOR BRIAN WILLINGHAM!

Pastor Willingham wears a lot of hats these days and their styles are situated in two, similar vocations: pastor and police officer. In a New York Times article Pastor Willingham offered these insights into his role as a Flint Police Officer:

“...the police officer who becomes a counselor. When children go astray, the police officer becomes a surrogate parent. When the economy fails, police officers help

feed families. When neighborhoods break down, police officers help facilitate understanding. When citizens can't reach local politicians, it's the police officer who must answer their questions.”

Pastor of both Faith UMC and Charity UMC, Rev Willingham has many opportunities to do all of these and more. We are honored to have him bring the message on Sunday evening for our special worship service at

5 PM in celebration of Palm Sunday. A soup and salad dinner will follow...

Pastor Willingham's message and scripture for this Sunday will be:

“Hungred” Matt 4:1-2.

PLEASE JOIN US!