

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

*Welcome to the Asbury Community*

## The Feast

*The Feast* sounds rather old school. Perhaps a better choice of title for the last Sunday of our worship series, *The Heart of Hope*, would use words like party or celebration. But feast is more than that. It is a word that implies abundance. An “all you can eat” and then some. It is all of the above and in our story is from above. Our feast is a celebration with God.

It is appropriate to begin our Easter celebration with breakfast together. While our usual Sunday refreshments are good, a muffin is on-

ly one part of the menu offered by our faithful volunteers who prepared our Easter breakfast. More of a feast than refreshments. Nevertheless, our numbers may not seem like a feast. But given that which we are celebrating *feast* seems an appropriate term.

Fewer people attend Easter worship than when I was a child. I remember attending a sunrise worship service, having a full breakfast at church, and then attending our regular

*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

weekly worship service. The church was full. I no longer wonder why so many stay home week after week and I no longer worry that they are missing out on receiving a life-changing blessing.



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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.

> **Worship Design Team**—will be meeting on Monday, April 9th at 6:30pm in the Asbury Library.

> **Leadership Team Meeting**—will meet on Monday, April 16th at 6:00pm.

> **UMW Monthly Meeting**—will be meeting Wednesday, April 4th at 1:00pm in the Asbury Wesley Room.

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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](http://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

## The Feast ... continued from page 1

I don't worry because I know that God is an assertive party planner who does not give in until we agree to show up. And if we change our mind or think we have something better to do or simply forget, God sends others to find us even as He searches for us until we are found. Jesus told a story about a shepherd leaving his flock to find the lost one. He does the same for all of us whenever we are lost. If you are not showing up - you are lost even if you don't realize it.

In *The Heart of Man* God is described as "the perpetual wave against the rocks" who is relentless in His pursuit of our hearts. God sees things

in us that we barely know about ourselves. Good things. Things that are alive. Jesus didn't just die for our sin. He died to free us from the shame that so often defines our lives.

The feast you're invited to does not begin when you sit down at the table. The feast begins with intimacy and time alone with the God. Like a child going fishing, talking, even laughing with their parent as they prepare for a meal together, God, our Creator Father continues to invest in our relationship together. And God works tirelessly on an intimate relationship with us as we work and play and everything in between.

*"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?"*

Luke 15:4

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## The Feast ... *continued from page 2*

Just as God pursues us, we have a hunger to find God. A problem arises when we mistake our hunger for something else. Something that is easily satisfied, so we think, by that which we see in front of us. So we gorge ourselves with an imitation that seems to satisfy something inside of us for a little while. But our real hunger persists so we try the substitute again and again. And we are never satisfied for long. We are invited to the Lord's table. We are invited to a feast that will satisfy our deepest longing.

C. S. Lewis in a collection of radio broadcasts during WWII offered the following insights into our desire for God:

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water...If I find in myself a

desire, which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world...Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it... I must take care...never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage.

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### CELEBRATE SPRING WITH US!

The United Methodist Women of Asbury UMC invite you and your family and friends to their new Spring Luncheon

Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 12 Noon-2:00pm

Special menu prepared by our own *Chef Kevin!*

Chicken Alfredo, Bread Sticks, Make your own Cobb Salad, Hot and Cold Drinks

Homemade Desserts

Program, Door Prizes and Lots of Fun!!

Price will be \$7.00 (3 and under free) and reservations must be made in advance by calling Norma Nattrass at 810-235-1116 before Wednesday, April 25, 2018.

## 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	



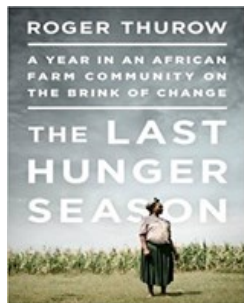
**Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs**

## Asbury Worship Series Love Me Tender ...

We all have a love language according to Gary Chapman, author of numerous books on the topic. The point is that certain things result in us feeling more loved than other things. For example, some of us feel loved when someone does something for us, like open a door or bring us lunch. If acts of service result in my feeling more loved then I am more

## 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	Carolyn
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Coffee Hour	

### Asbury Staff

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

likely to do things for other people when I want to show them love. After all, I know how much it means to me.

But it turns out that we are not all wired the same. While everyone on the planet realizes this fact we go about our lives as though it isn't true. If words that affirm me is my favorite love talk then I am more likely to offer affirming words to others I care about as a way to show them that I love them. Its sort

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

of like if I really enjoy Starbucks dark roast coffee and I want to show Cyndi how much I love her I will pick a coffee up for her and unless I am consciously aware that dark roast is not her thing I am apt to grab two of the same.

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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.

## Love Me Tender ... *continued from page 4*

So I bring Cyndi the coffee, she takes a sip and ugh! Dark roast! Isn't Cyndi just grateful that I brought her the coffee "out of love?" First, if receiving gifts is Cyndi's primary "love language" then it is likely that receiving a gift, even a gift that isn't what she had hoped for, would erase most of the poor choice on my part. However, if my love language is gift receiving my first reaction to the ugh! might be "How ungrateful."

Suppose Cyndi's love language is words of affirmation. My choice of dark roast could potentially trigger feelings of "you don't love me" since ignoring her

preferences could be received as not believing her preferences are important. What? This is getting complicated. Can't we all just get along?

Welcome to our next worship series, *Love me tender*. In an effort to help us all get along better with each other and with new people that we do not know, we will spend some time thinking about what causes us to feel more loved: words, time, gifts, service or touch? Knowing this about ourselves we can be more aware of how we express love - we can call it caring for now - and also be aware

that even people we think we know may not receive what we offer them in the same way that we would.

If you are a member of Asbury Church then you made a promise that you would support our community through your presence, gifts, prayers, service and witness. These promises each relate to sharing the love that we know Christ has for us with others. But how do these promises connect to our love languages? There are five of each? Come learn how this fits together.

Stay tuned! We start the Second Sunday of Easter. Yes - Easter is more than one Sunday. My apologies to those who need words of affirmation. This is intended to be a reminder not a criticism.

I look forward to learning together and growing closer to God and to each of you. On behalf of the worship planning and production teams, I invite you to join us each Sunday as we explore what it means to *Love Me Tender*.

Pastor Tommy

## Coming up this week

### Neighborhood Water Deliveries

- Apr 2 Mon** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Apr 3 Tues** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Apr 4 Wed** 1:00pm UMW  
4:30pm StandUp Education Prog  
6:00pm Beginners Bible Study  
6:30pm Asbury Youth
- Apr 6 Fri** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Apr 7 Sat** 1-4pm StandUp Education Prog

### Apr 8 Sunday

- 9:30am Café Opens
- 10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

### Last Week for Worship Attendance 29 Offering \$1,248

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.

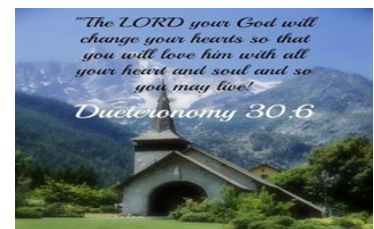
**Social Media** allows us to tell others about the work that God is doing. All of us can

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

1653 Davison Road  
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.*



## The Feast

*...continued from page 3*

How are you dealing with your hunger for God? Are you spending time in prayer, reading scripture, sharing your story with others? God wants you to know that you are loved beyond measure. Nothing can keep God from loving you and God will never stop inviting you to join the feast - the celebration - the freedom of being part of a loving community.

I pray that our worship series has been a blessing to you. Even if you missed every Sunday I pray that someone who was present made a difference in your life simply out of something that affected them. The Holy

Spirit is present each week in our worship and invites you to the table. Come join the feast.

*The Lord ... will spread a wonderful feast for all the people of the world. It will be a delicious banquet with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat.*

Isaiah 25:6

May God's light shine upon you and give you peace. May the love of Jesus Christ free you from all that keeps you bound and may the Holy Spirit guide your steps. God peace and blessing.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> William Paul Young, Jackie Hill Perry, Dr. Dan Allender, Jay Stringer, John and Stasi Eldredge. *Heart of Man Participant's Guide*, October 9, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. Macmillan, 1952.