

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

Who am I anyway?

The topic of how to love our youth is huge and so important that I cannot possibly cover even a brief introduction in one Sunday message or one article in our weekly newsletter. Our first article, *Young, dumb and broke*, offered a few of the reasons why this is such an important subject. Lives depend on us. One thing is for certain, all that is coming out of Washington are desperate tweets spewing hatred and more violence. We are the ones we have been waiting for.

Like children, like adults, teenagers want to be loved. Like children and

adults, teenagers have a primary love language that fills their love tank when the other love languages can't. Unlike children and most adults, teenagers are caught in a space of "not yet" that is uncomfortable and at times overwhelming. "Who am I anyway?" is a question that underlies much of the behavior that comes from our youth.

Two words describe this space where teens live at least until they reach adulthood: **identity** and **independence**. Per-

haps it is only coincidence that both words start with the letter "I" but it is not a coincidence that quite often it seems that a teen believes that the entire world should revolve around their wants and desires.

Greek methodology offers a story that contains an adult lesson which is lost on teens (and some adults). The methodical character, *Narcissus*, was a handsome

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buy their own clothes or pay for all of the things they can't live without, including their phone bill. But this is a statement of independence nonetheless and one that wise parents take seriously.

Most important, our teenagers declaration of independence does not mean they do want us to show love. In fact, love is as important as ever. As children become teenagers moving towards adulthood love is critical to their maturation.

The challenge is to show love unconditionally in ways that they understand. That is, to show love in their specific love language and not just in our own love language.

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Special points of interest:

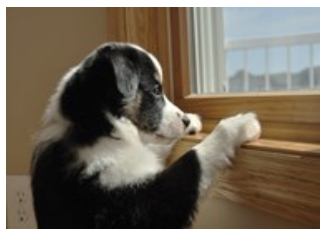
> **Neighborhood Connections:** is delivering bottled water. Call the City of Flint at 810-410-1138 for information. This service is for persons who are disabled and/or unable to receive water in any other way.

> **Worship Design Team:** will meet on Tuesday, May 14, 2018.

> **Leadership Team:** will be meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2018.

Separation Anxieties

"Stop treating me like a child!" is a common declaration of independence made by teenagers the world over and most of us who



have parented teenagers have heard it. Ouch - separation anxiety! Sometimes teenagers may punctuate their displeasure with the slamming of doors and other expressions of anger and desperation. We parents know that such a declaration does not come with a full writ of financial independence. Usually, this does not mean that our child has won the lottery or found a job that pays well enough to get their own place or even that they plan to

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Youth want to be both close and separate at the same time. It is us parents who are more likely to suffer from separation anxiety as the teenager asks us not to hug them when they might be seen by their friends. This is one of the many signs that teenagers need to be confident that they can handle independence while knowing that they are just as loved as when they were tiny and helpless. This creates anxiety for the teenager and in turn anxiety for the witnesses.

Sadly, one of the expressions of independence among teens is to experiment with unhealthy and unlawful substances including tobacco, marijuana and alcohol. Add to these prescription and even non-prescription drugs that were not prescribed for their use and you have covered a road proven to lead to other unwise and dangerous practices. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the harmful affects of substances that teenagers often choose to experiment with should be evidence enough to convince all of them to find other ways to exert independence:

Affect the growth and development of teens, especially brain development.

Occur more frequently with other risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex and dangerous driving.

Contribute to the development of adult health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.²

These risk facts are either not enough, not believed, or very likely, not known, by a large number of teenagers. This same report from the CDC notes that approximately two-thirds of students have tried alcohol by the 12th grade, and around half reported using marijuana on at least one occasion. It is common knowledge that cigarettes end lives early and significantly reduce the quality of life, yet around 40% of high school students reported trying cigarettes. An increasing concern is the practice of some teenagers experimenting with prescription drugs. The CDC reported that around 20% of 12th graders reporting taking medicine without a prescription.

So what is a parent to do? What can we do? One of the most impactful steps if for adults to do is to model abstinence. Children and teens learn from the adults they are closest to and if these adults, particularly older siblings, use marijuana, this will greatly increase the chances that their younger brothers and sisters will follow their lead. I am not debating medical uses of marijuana any

more than any other prescribed drug. This article is about teenagers learning to become adults living satisfied lives, living longer and in better health than what is possible when harmful substances become part of their coming of age.

Psychologist, Dr. Gary Chapman writes that "The teenager who learns to be responsible for his own actions while developing his independence and self-identity will have good self-esteem, accomplish worthwhile objectives, and will make a meaningful contribution to the world around him."¹ This sounds like a worthwhile goal for every parent and frankly every adult who has an opportunity to influence a teenager — which is every adult. People are complex and a lot of teenagers seem to go to extra steps to be complex (spelled d-r-a-m-a). But there are some straightforward suggestions from Dr. Chapman worth trying.

Becoming an adult — a responsible adult — means learning how to be responsible. Which requires recognizing and honoring boundaries (rules) and accepting the consequences of breaking rules. However, warns Chapman, it is important that the teenager participate in setting boundaries. They may not always agree but giving them voice, explaining reasoning that is based on love and their well-being for both the rules and the consequences goes a long way in enforcing boundaries that are honored and a proven approach for preparing teenagers for adulthood.

If you are the parent, grandparent or legal guardian of a teen, Dr. Chapman's book should be required reading (or some similar helpful guide) along with a large dose of scripture and prayer. Actually, this is good advice for everyone of us who may influence teenagers.

Next Sunday we celebrate Mother's Day. Our current worship series, Love me tender, will take us down the age scale a bit to children before the teenage years. What can we do about the "terrible two's" — or least what are some ideas we can try. Join us!

Who am I anyway? ... continued from page 1

teenager who fell in love with his own reflection, so much so, that he couldn't stop staring at his reflection in a lake. *Narcissus* eventually drowns and becomes a flower. *Narcissus* is the namesake for the state of being that we call *narcissism* — an over attraction to one's own being that results in arrogance and an inability to see our own faults (speaking of tweets).

The point of this article is not that we need to save our teenagers

from falling in love with themselves. Likely, most teenagers on the inside are afraid that they don't measure up. Narcissistic behavior is most often a cover-up for an inner child with low self-esteem. As the teen searches for who they are they cope with their unsettledness by appearing overly self-absorbed and self-loving. Perhaps hoping that if they can love themselves enough others might also love them while inside fearing the worst.

Who am I anyways ... *continued from page 2*

My next article will focus on independence which is an even bigger topic because independence also underlies identity. Youth are on their way to becoming adults. But many youth, particularly in our neighborhood, have adult responsibilities long before they reach adulthood. And many step up. But they do so without the preparation that would help them make wise decisions.

As teenagers search for their identity they require intellectual independence. They want to think on their own about important matters such as values, morals and religious beliefs. I think of values as being clear on what is important and morals as answering the question what is right. Religious beliefs is more about what is true.

So if I drag my teen into church won't they learn the "right" answers to these questions? Perhaps, but

they need to learn them without coercion. And they demand the freedom to question our values, morals and religious beliefs without judgment and while feeling loved. This is where dialogue, rather than monologue, can be helpful. This is the tricky and frustrating part — we adults must make a shift from control to influence. Our children are becoming adults who must think for themselves.

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FREE & available to everyone, no income requirements!

Bethel UMC 1309 N. Ballenger Hwy (Mondays 10am-2pm)

Asbury UMC 1653 Davison Rd (Tuesdays 10am-2pm)

Greater Holy Temple COGIC 6702 N Dort Hwy (Thursdays 10am-2pm)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 2-1-1 OR GO to FlintCares.com/HELPcenters

In Our Prayers

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

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

- Sharon George
- Elaine Lamoreaux
- Mary Russell
- Mary Nations
- Carmen Misner



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

We finished with our discussions of chapter 4 of the book, *The Last Hunger Season*. This chapter, titled *wanjala*,



which means "hunger" or the season of hunger covers the time of the year when families are sometimes out of options for what to put on the table for dinner. We began our discussions of a better time, called *wekesa*, or the harvest. A short season of plenty, provided their crops are doing well and their harvest is plentiful.

We hope that you will join us on Tuesdays at Noon. 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

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

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 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,

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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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

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

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

- May 7 Mon** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- May 8 Tues** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- May 9 Wed** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
6:00pm Beginners Bible Study
6:30pm Asbury Youth
- May 10 Thu** 1:00pm Cooking Classes
- May 11 Fri** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- May 12 Sat** 1-4pm StandUp Education Prog

May 13 Sunday

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

Last Week for Worship Attendance 33 Offering \$503

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.

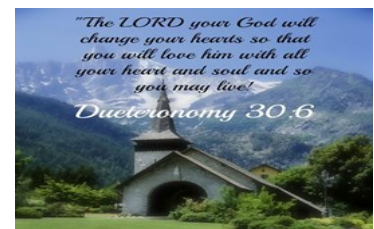
Social Media allows us to tell others about the work that God is doing. All of us can

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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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.

Who am I anyway? ...continued from page 3

But there is good news. Author and Psychologist, Dr. Gary Chapman writes that "Teenagers need and want their parents' input into these important areas of life." But Dr. Chapman goes on to remind us that "they will not receive it if the parent treats them as a child."¹

In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion and a little child will lead them all.

Isaiah 11:6 (NLT)

I will warn you that the vast majority of teens find Christians to be hypocritical. That we claim certain values, morals and truth about God and life, but fail to

live up to our beliefs. Most teens are idealist, not yet broken down by a culture of scarcity and hopelessness (which too many politicians promote in order to get elected and then claim anything good is their doing and anything bad is someone else's fault). Teen believe, rightly so, that if we say that something is valuable or actions should reinforce our beliefs.

As Christian adults, our best foot forward is to admit our faults while not giving up on living out our beliefs. We can ask our teens what they believe and answer their questions about our own beliefs and even our questions. All the time expressing our love for them through the five love languages: quality time, words of encouragement, gifts, service and hugs.

Young Samuel had not yet heard the Lord speak even though he was an assistant to a Priest. But when it was time, the Lord did speak to Samuel. Like Eli, we must encourage our youth to listen for the Word of God in their own context, with their own heart, while also listening ourselves.

I invite you to join us on next Sunday, May 6 as we explore our youth's need for independence and our role in guiding them.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Chapman, Gary. *The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers: The Secret to Loving Teens Effectively*. Moody Publishers.