

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

*Welcome to the Asbury Community!*

## Big Bang Reaction

This article is about conflict. But read on any way. I really don't like conflict. What about you? Conflict means trouble. Sometimes it seems like the world is divided between persons who hate conflict and persons who get their way most of the time. I have noticed that conflict is oftentimes used just for this purpose. If I respond to a request with a sudden show of anger the requestor backs down. Teenagers learn this well and it can be quite effective in avoiding interruptions to their busy, self-indulgent schedule.



Author Frances Moore Lappe is convinced that “Our aversion to conflict pops out in the sentiments of parents who brag about their ‘good kids’ who ‘never give us problems.’ Or school principals whose extra praise is reserved for teachers maintaining the most obedient classrooms. Or bosses who make it

Either you're some kind of strange Dragon dentist or you're there to slay the Dragon. Either way, there's one thing in common. You're in the middle of the story.

The story never starts with someone staring into the Dragon's mouth, there are decisions that are made that put you in that position. Decisions where fear and insecurity had

clear that those who fall in line will be rewarded.” She is convinced, she writes, that “it's not just a bruised ego at stake; it's a primal fear of losing standing in our tribe, of being cast out into the wilderness.”<sup>1</sup>

Is this true? Does our resistance to conflict run even deeper? Is it a primal fear of being tossed out on our own only to die in the wilderness? Is this how trump got elected?

Page 2

every chance to stop you from reaching the Dragon's mouth. But those aren't the fears we're interested in this article. We all know about the fears that keep us from going. The ones we tend to forget about, the ones that catch us most off guard, are the fears that hit us while we're already doing the thing.

How many times do we all find ourselves in those kinds of situations? We walk into a new situation with all the confidence of someone with absolutely no idea what they're doing.

Page 2

Volume 18 Issue 17

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### *Special points of interest:*

> Leadership Team will meet on Monday, June 18th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

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

> Way Academy of Flint will be holding their graduation here on Tuesday, June 19th from 4:00-8:00pm.

> Worship Design Team will meet on Monday, June 25 at 6:30pm in the Asbury Library.

### *Inside this issue:*

Big Bang Reaction	1
The Dragon's Mouth	1
New Worship Series	3
In our Prayers	3
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Coming up this Week	5
The Flint Farming Project	6
Community Help Centers	7

## The Dragon's Mouth

If you're staring into the Dragon's mouth, you're one of two things.



## The Dragon's Mouth ...continued from Page 1

We walk into a new situation with all the confidence of someone with absolutely no idea what they're doing. In fact, there's a scientific principle at play here. It's called the Dunning-Kruger effect. It's been proven in social science that when you have just a tiny bit of knowledge about a subject you tend to be more confident of your abilities and knowledge than even an expert in the field.



According to the Dunning-Kruger effect we begin our journey into a new subject area with very little knowledge and a whole lot of confidence. Let's call this point in our journey "mount stupid." But what happens to us in that moment when we recognize that something is much more difficult than we realize, is that our confidence drops dramatically. This is when we want to give up. We

## Big Bang Reaction ... continued from page 1

Was trump's playground style of bullying anyone who disagrees with him using childish name calling sufficient for us to put a leader in charge with no apparent qualifications other than playground bully?

Burmese Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi her book *Freedom from Fear* argues that it is actually fear that most threatens democracy. Her late husband published her letters that she wrote while under house arrest. In her letters she notes that a lack of confidence and skills in dealing with conflict can erode democracy.

panic. We suddenly realize that it is simply too hard.

It's right there at the intersection of "mount stupid" and the pit of despair that we join Jesus' disciples in the book of Matthew chapter 14. You know the story. Peter gets out of the boat stepping out onto the water in the dark. Why? Because Jesus told him to.

We've all been there, the moment when something easy became just as impossible as walking on water, but how often does this happen in our spiritual lives? In our relationships with people? In those areas where we simply can't choose a different hobby or let that acoustic guitar gather dust in the closet?

The question isn't what caused Peter to be able to walk on the water, because any good churchgoer will have that answer readily at hand. The question is what caused him to STOP walking on water?

There are at least a couple of good explanations. One is doubt. Or perhaps it is because Peter looked away from Jesus. But most of the answers point to the same thing. Fear struck because Peter allowed himself to begin thinking about the situation the way the world does. Peter felt the

"It is not power that corrupts, but fear," she writes, "Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus did not back down from conflict although none of us can love those we disagree with in the same way that Jesus did. At least not on our own power. In Matthew, if we pick out certain verses to support our argument, we can choose the Jesus we want to portray.

wind and he saw the waves that he was walking on top of and it suddenly occurred to him that it was impossible to walk on water, so he sank.

Here's the thing. HE WAS ALREADY DOING IT.

This is one of the ways that fear can hold us back. We have been there before, when doubt got the best of us, and we don't want to go there again. This is one way the world sees it: Get back in the boat! Here's a new way to look at it: *Our worst fears can be our greatest teachers.*<sup>1</sup> Peter's step out into the world of the miraculous by itself does not resolve our fear, but his experience together with our fear can teach us a lot about ourselves and about God.

Serving others can be particularly frightening. Will I be rejected? Will they just take advantage of me? Will I be safe? Yet, once we are underway, it is difficult to turn back. People start to depend on us. We realize how much we enjoy it. And fear rushes in bringing doubt with him. Voices either in our head or from people around us tell us that what we are doing doesn't make sense. Perhaps, we begin to think, we should just stop.

The thing is with these kinds of situations in our own lives is that they don't make logical sense in the way the world wants things to make sense. We believe in a God we can't see; a God who is simultaneously three different people, one of whom died through one of the most agonizing execution methods ever devised by humans and rose three days later. We're told that by praying, we can speak to this God who is powerful enough to create the universe and conquer death itself, but that he'll care about even the tiny details of our lives.

Pastor Mark, Asbury Youth Programs Coordinator

<sup>1</sup> Frances Moore Lappe. *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2004.

## Big Bang Reaction ... *continued from page 2*

The combative debater giving the religious leaders holy heck or the peaceful Jesus telling us that we must forgive anyone who offends us. While it is more challenging to hold all of scripture in tension as we consider how God is guiding our lives it is really critical that we are able to discern a communal direction. Where is God leading us as a people?

It seems to me that the democratic process lies at the heart of

what it takes to faithfully accomplish this whether in a small group or a larger group. We need diversity of voices if we are to arrive at a faithful discernment. This is not to suggest that God does not speak through prophets. But even the prophets are prone to narrow mindedness. We do not know that what we read in scripture from the prophetic voices was not debated before it was captured in the

words that we read. Holy Spirit inspired to me suggests something less than an orderly, single-minded process when I read about Pentecost in the Book of Acts.

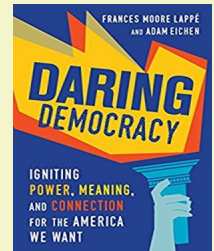
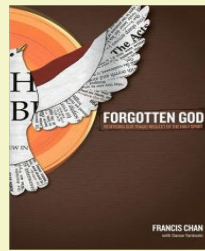
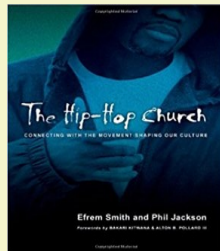
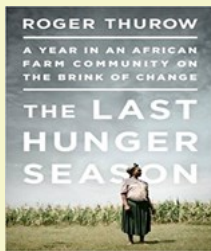
After one of the statements that we seem to have consensus on such as Jesus is Lord, differences of interpretation arise. Even statements that may seem universal such as "Jesus died for our sins" can take us in differing direction.

Page 8

## PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS ...

**Pastor Book Club will be meeting on Wednesdays, instead of Tuesdays at 12Noon during the Summer months, with a potluck, if you are able to bring a dish to pass.**

**When we move back to Tuesdays, we will post in our weekly newsletter and make announcement on Sunday ...**



## 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	

## 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**

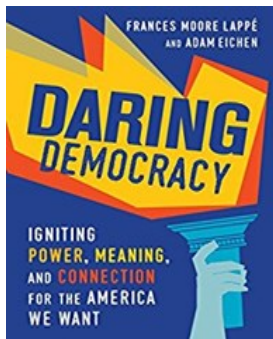
## Asbury Worship Series Fear is a Liar ...

Writer Francis Moore Lappe shares a quote in the book she co-authored, *You Have the Power*, that she recalled being said by a radio interviewer in Missouri, "In today's world, it's impossible to avoid fear. It's everywhere. Since we're going to feel it, we might as well feel it because we're doing something important."<sup>1</sup>

## Book Club News

**NOTE - WE ARE NOW MEETING ON WEDNESDAYS AT 12 NOON.**

On June 13 our group watched the first half of Rob Bell's tour lecture *Everything is Spirit* and we will finish his video on



June 20. In this teaching Rob takes us through the creation and progression of the universe using a narrative that combines other stories that are

told about how we got here and where we may be headed. If you need to catch up Rob's video is available on his website

## Leadership in Worship & Service

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

### Asbury Staff

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

So do we live in a culture of fear? I recall talking to a fellow runner who lives in our neighborhood who shared with me how much effort he feels he has to put into securing his home and property against potential thieves. This is a man who served in the military and is still young and strong enough to carry himself without fear. Nevertheless, his worry about his property is rooted in fear. He fears the potential invasion of his privacy and the loss

[RobBell.com](http://RobBell.com) – we stopped at 1:08 into the video.

When Jesus said "The Kingdom of God is like..." He often used parables – stories about subjects that His listeners were familiar with so that He could tell them and us about a story that is so different we would not be able to understand. Our universe is a fascinating and ever-expanding creation that we know is doing what it does according to God's will. And God saw fit to give humanity an ability to explore and to reflect along with inspiration to do so.

What an introduction to our next topic! Our worship series on fear supported by our conversations on how God is unifying our universe bringing people into relationship with Him – and now democracy. A model for people to live together in harmony where none are silenced because they do not own land or

of his property. Can you blame him?

Do we live in a culture of fear? Our current President is insistent that we build an impenetrable wall on our southern boarder with Mexico so that we can control who comes into our country.

Page 5

have the money to buy influence. We should try it in our county! But it will take courage in the face of fear and it will take people rising up to claim this powerful way of governing in order for us to get there. Are you ready?

Beginning on June 27 we tackle the subject of democracy. Authors Frances Moore Lappe and Adam Eichen argue that "Democracy is not a choice. Creating democracies truly accountable to their citizens is essential to our very survival—to the flourishing of societies supporting human life, and now, because of climate change, to the survival of the Earth..." Be sure to get your copy of their book so that you will be ready to begin a discussion of our roles as a faith community and as individual citizens of this planet in assuring that democracy thrives.

We encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group hopes to widen our circle and so we hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday 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

\* Frances Moore Lappe and Adam Eichen. *Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want*. (p. 4). Beacon Press, 2017.

## Fear is a Liar ... *continued from page 4*

I'm guessing his fear is rooted in economics. He can't admit his fear since an economic argument is hardly solid.

In fact trump claims that "Current immigration policy imposes as much as \$300 billion annually in net fiscal costs on U.S. taxpayers." As is the case with most everything that trump says this statement is only partially true and can be shown to be mostly false. Again, it may be "economic fear" but it is still fear. We are afraid, it seems, that while nearly all of us are immigrants with ancestors who entered the U.S. without formal screening, most of the "good ones" are already here. This is sarcasm by the way.

### Coming up this week

- Jun 18 Mon** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog  
6:00pm Leadership Team Mtg
- Jun 19 Tues** 4-8:00pm Way Academy  
Graduation
- Jun 20 Wed** 12N Pastor Book Club  
4:30pm StandUp Education Prog  
6:00pm Beginners Bible Study  
6:30pm Asbury Youth
- Jun 21 Thur** 1:00pm Cooking Classes
- Jun 22 Fri** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Jun 23 Sat** 1-4pm StandUp Education Prog

A 2008 article in *Psychology Today* makes the following argument: "We live in two minds - fear and joy. Mostly, we live in fear." The article goes on to say that our fear shows up as anxiety as we regret our past or long for a different future. Joy, on the other hand, is about the present. When we feel joy we are able to let go of the past and the future as we experience joy in the moment.<sup>2</sup>

Our next worship series will take us through a transition from thinking about fear as an emotion to dread and even avoid to the idea of embracing our fear as a signpost or progress. While we reserve the need to follow the Spirit's guidance

- June 24 Sunday**  
9:30am Café Opens  
10:30am New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

#### Last Week for Worship Attendance 32 Offering \$ 595

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

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

along the way here is our discernment for now on how this series will play out:

- Week 1 May 27  
Dark Matter
- Week 2 June 3  
Showing Up
- Week 3 June 10  
Big Bang Reaction
- Week 4 June 17  
The Dragon's Mouth
- Week 5 June 24  
Chosen Last
- Week 6 July 1  
A Drip in the Ocean

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 claim that *Fear is a liar*.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Lappe, Frances Moore. *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear*. Penguin Publishing Group.

<sup>2</sup> Formica, Michael J. "Living in Fear versus Living in Joy." *Psychology Today*. October 1, 2008. Retrieved from: [psychologytoday.com/us/blog/enlightened-living/200810/living-in-fear-versus-living-in-joy](http://psychologytoday.com/us/blog/enlightened-living/200810/living-in-fear-versus-living-in-joy).



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

### Ways to Connect

**Donate** –You can give online at [FlintAsbury.org/donate](http://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.



**THE FLINT FARMING PROJECT**





**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)

Food \* Water-Related Supplies \* Education Opportunities On-site Enrollment for Health & Basic-Needs Services \* Employment Resources \* Mental & Physical Health Options Community Resource Information and more...



**COMMUNITY HELP CENTERS**

Sink & Shower Filters, On-site Food Demonstrations

Partnering Organizations: City of Flint, Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, Genesee County Health Dept, Genesee Health Systems, Habitat for Humanity, Hamilton Community Health Network, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Mott Community College, Michigan State University Center for Community & Economic Development, United Way of Genesee County, Valley Area Agency on Aging

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 2-1-1 OR GO to

[FlintCares.com/HELPcenters](http://FlintCares.com/HELPcenters)



# Welcome to the Asbury Community

1653 Davison Rd  
Flint, MI 48506



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
FLINT, MICHIGAN  
PERMIT #151

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

## 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.

## Big Bang Reaction ... continued from page 3

For example, is it "sin" or "sins?" and does this nuance matter? Does this statement suggest exclusion of other statements of interpretation such as *Jesus died because He was rejected by those in power.*

Decisions that we make as a people matter. Even decisions where we had no voice. I believe very much in empowerment and representative government. I can't possibly weigh in on every detail and I would rather not have this expectation put on me. While I may disagree with putting parking meters on Saginaw Street, I put my quarters in when I park because persons who I played a role in empowering made a decision on our collective behalf. Elections come frequently and representative government can and does offer opportuni-

ties to change the way things are done.

Disagreements are certain to happen. How can we disagree in ways that do not result in an explosive reaction? How can I get over my own fear of conflict? One idea is to begin here with admitting that I have this fear and recognize that I'm not alone in having this fear. Another step is in realizing that conflict is simply a part of living in relationship with others, no matter how close. Francis writes "Simply acknowledging that conflict is inevitable can help ease our fear of it. It also helps to remember that no matter how much we think we're drawn to people similar to us, to engage in relationships with others is to engage difference. Relating to difference is what it means to be in a relationship. It's not a side issue; it's at the heart."

Perhaps big bang reactions come out of holding back from voicing our differences to the point where anger has percolated to the edge of explosion. Scripture offers both good and bad examples and step by step instruction on resolving differences. If we can focus more on God's way rather than our own way there is hope that resolution can be both peaceful and life-giving. Meanwhile, the fear that tells us to avoid conflict is once again caught in a lie.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup>Frances Moore Lappe. *You Have the Power: Choosing Courage in a Culture of Fear.* Penguin Publishing Group, 2004.

<sup>2</sup>Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear.* New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 1991, p. 180.