

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community!

Chosen Last

We have all heard the story in Matthew and elsewhere in the Gospel stories of Jesus feeding a crowd with too little to begin with and the “too little” becomes leftovers with everyone satisfied. But have we experienced this story? I don’t just mean when company comes over and the cupboard is bare. Have we experienced times when fear was telling us that there is nothing that we can do and that our actions do not matter? Only to find out that while it

looked bleak the sun would set with mission accomplished?

But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish...Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven and blessed them ... He gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed to the people. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterwards the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers.

Matthew 14:17-20 NLT

The Dragon’s Mouth

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



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

For many, if not most of us, it is more likely that we don’t try at all. Fear gets its way with us by convincing us that whatever we do doesn’t matter any way. This is a side of fear that is subtle and thus really effective, particularly if we can name a dozen reasons why we would rather not go ahead.

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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.

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Special points of interest:

> **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.

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

> **MEET UP AND EAT UP**

(See article on page 3)

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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

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If I am already doubting myself or if I'm not "feeling it" then any argument that suggests that my efforts are futile are powerful. Its like all of the voices in my head are in alignment. We have consensus. We have a plan. Do nothing!

Then the "voice of truth" is heard almost like it was somewhere in the distance. It is telling me a different story. A story like the one we heard last week from

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

Pastor Mark about Peter stepping out of a boat despite the wind and waves because He heard Jesus' voice telling him it was ok. There was no one watching except Peter's friends and Jesus. No one else to witness this miraculous undertaking. Yet here we are thousands of years later still taking about it.

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.*¹ 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

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

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Elsewhere in scripture we read about a young shepherd who steps forward to face a giant clothed in armor the boy couldn't lift because he knew that God was with him. Armed with only a slingshot David puts an end to the threat of war as the giant taunted him. I find it interesting that the New Living Translation reads that David triumphed over the Philistine *with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword*. As I consider the deeper meaning behind this text I can't help but consider the irony that God's

love is mightier than the sword. Perhaps whatever tools God equips us with are sufficient to change the world.

We all hear both voices. The one that tells us that we can't succeed and even if we do it won't matter. This may be the loudest of all voices as it reminds us of other times when we failed. And there is the voice of the Holy Spirit reminding us that God has our back in all things even when we fail. And sometimes our voice, no

matter how faint, no matter how much our voice may be drowned out by the crowds. Our sling shot may be nothing more than our body standing among others in a show of solidarity.

In her article titled, *Acts of Hope: Challenging Empire on the World Stage*, Rebecca Solnit recounts the story of a woman who made the effort of showing up along with several others, standing in the rain in front of the Whitehouse to protest nuclear testing. Rebecca writes:

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FREE SUMMER MEALS

Asbury UMC - 1653 Davison Rd Flint MI (810-235-0016)

“Meet Up and Eat Up”

Free Healthy Meals * Fun and Games * All Youths ages 18 & under are welcome

STARTS JUNE 19, 2018

Breakfast served from 8:00am-9:30am * Lunch from 11am-1:00pm

For more information visit the website at
www.fbem.org/programs/summer-food-service

Food Bank of Eastern Michigan - Michigan Department of Education - USDA

FOOD THAT'S IN, WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT!

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

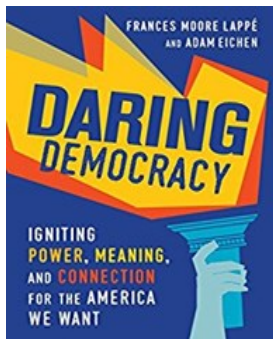
Asbury Worship Series Fear is a Liar ...

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."¹

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 — 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.

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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 25 Mon** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Jun 26 Tues**
- Jun 27 Wed** 12N Pastor Book Club
4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
6:00pm Beginners Bible Study
6:30pm Asbury Youth
- Jun 28 Thur** 1:00pm Cooking Classes
- Jun 29 Fri** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Jun 30 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.²

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

- July 1 Sunday**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship Attendance 34 Offering \$ 531

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

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

² 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.



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.



THE FLINT FARMING PROJECT



Loosely Connected

As a pastor I am painfully aware that the people I serve have lives outside of the church. So do I — sort of. I try not to bring “church” home with me to dinner or to family time or to bed. But honestly this is harder than you might think. Church consumes all of me in one way or another. I am not tangentially connected. The church is my lifeblood it seems.

This connection I’m describing is different than the topic of Sabbath. When I experience Sabbath I am still connected to Asbury — my connection doesn’t unplug so that I can rest alone in my Sabbath experience. I’m still plugged in. I’m still connected and energy flows back and forth even as I shift my focus to God, my family and my self-care. And the energy is oftentimes one-sided, draining me of vital energy that I would rather use in other ways.

So why did I choose the expression “painfully aware” when I started this reflection? First, I am aware. I get it. The rest of you have jobs, families, hobbies and things to do that do not involve the church. It is the ebb and flow of life. This is the way it is. But is this the way God intended it to be?

Most of you at some point have read about the first church in the Book of Acts. The description we read does not offer us a glimpse of life outside of the church for those first followers of Christ. Much like the core group that followed Jesus during His public ministry, eating together, praying together, traveling together—you get the point. Those first evangelist—those who were first called to share the good news were on a combination of boot camp, retreat, intensive study, you name it, that lasted two to three years.

This group was not tangentially connected. They were joined spiritually and otherwise. Jesus turned left and they followed. Jesus climbed in a boat and they followed. Jesus walked to His execution and they watched from behind the bushes.

Jesus also talked about His connection with God saying that God and He were One. The post-resurrection Christians have taken this to mean things like “of the same substance” but not the same “person.” Jesus is distinct from God but of the same substance as God and the same goes for the Holy Spirit and God. Confusing? Very much so. But critical to our understanding of what it means to be connected to Christ and to His church.

I read a reflection this morning written by Bradford Botsworth, a churchgoer living in Smyrna, Georgia. The scripture that he reflected on was from Mark when Jesus calms a storm after the disciples woke Him up in a panic. He writes: “we come to understand that right in the middle of our successes and failures, we find our faith, ourselves, and our peace—when we turn to him and allow him to calm the storms.”¹

Perhaps this is one way for us to better understand what it may mean for us to be connected to Jesus and to each other. Are we in the boat together? Are we experiencing life’s storms together? Or do we take our personal lives elsewhere, in some other boat that is out of sight of our church?

Our Leadership Team adopted a strategic plan for Asbury. The same plan was adopted by both the church, by vote of our members, and by the Board of Directors of Asbury CDC. It is our course—the direction and destination for the boat that we have chosen to be in together. This means that every single person who wants to be a part of Asbury has a role in keeping our boat on track and in good working order.

We are in the same boat, so my metaphor says, and Jesus Christ is with us. Our voyage will face many successes and failures, both personal and as a church. We will face days of fair winds and blue skies and other days of blowing wind and stormy seas. And with each experience Christ will be with us for it is in His boat that we are traveling.

So whenever we are tangentially connected—when we choose to separate the rest of our life from our church family, while we may find Christ in whatever boat we have chosen, it will not be the same voyage, the same course or the same shipmates.

Perhaps this is why church comes home with me in more than just my emails and by computer. It is because I dare not get out of the boat for as long as Jesus is with me until which time He calls me elsewhere. Perhaps our boat, metaphorically speaking, is large enough to accommodate our independent travels, as long as we are connected spiritually and following the same course in harmony.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Bradford Botsworth. Writer who worships and serves at Smyrna First United Methodist Church, Smyrna, Georgia. *The Upper Room Disciplines 2018*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2018

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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

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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.

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It's always too soon to go home. And it's always too soon to calculate effect. I once read an anecdote by someone in Women Strike for Peace, the first great antinuclear movement in the United States, the one that did contribute to a major victory: the 1963 end of above-ground nuclear testing with its radioactive fallout that was showing up in mother's milk and baby teeth. She told of how foolish and futile she felt standing in the rain one morning protesting at the Kennedy White House. Years later she heard Dr. Benjamin Spock — one of the most high-profile activists on the issue then — say that the turning point for him was seeing a small group of women standing in the rain, protesting at the White House. If they were so passionately committed, he thought, he should give the issue more consideration himself.¹

Our president finally caved into pressure after ordering the separation of children from their parents at our southern border. But there is currently

much to raise our voices over and much



calling us to grab our sling shots and run to the front line. We risk being the subject of a hateful tweet. We risk the blowback from our friends who continue to blindly support policies of hatred based on ideological principals over their own moral conscience. We risk facing a bully hiding behind shield bearers and heavy armament while the voice in our head recites a childhood rhyme from the playground of life that begins *Stick and stones...and end with but words can never hurt me.*

Yet they do. Words, whether in our heads, blurted by well-intended friends or used as bullets by not so well-intended antagonists do hurt when we listen to the lies that keep us from using our voice and body to carry the good news of Jesus Christ into a suffering world. Don't be fooled by imposters quoting scripture while yielding swords of hate and fear. These are lies that they tell themselves when they are listening to the voice of fear.

Instead, listen to the voice of truth telling you that you are enough and you have enough. Whatever else you need will be provided to those who are faithful. May you hear the voice of truth so much louder than the lies told you, and may you rise up, grab your sling shot and be present to hear the voice of God calling your name.

Pastor Tommy

¹Rebecca Solnit, "Acts of Hope: Challenging Empire on the World Stage," OrionOnline, 2003. Retrieved from www.oriononline.org.