

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community!

Logical Illusions

Magicians are masters at creating illusions. Our minds are trained on what appears to be the main act — the details that matter — and when the real act is revealed we wonder “How did he do that?” Sometimes we aren’t sure what to expect but what happens isn’t anything we imagined. Other times, we expect one outcome and witness another. What we see creates what we expect to see next. When reality defies logic we are amazed.

God’s actions can appear to be like a magic act to us. We see what is happening and based on our knowledge and experience we expect a certain outcome. And we are surprised. Sometimes it is a pleasant surprise. Other times, we may be disappoint-

ed. But perhaps our disappointments are more often misplaced. Because our logical mind gets in the way of divine will.

Our current worship series is titled *Do you hear what I hear?* Perhaps an alternative title for this week’s message is *Are you expecting what I’m expecting?* From out of our prayers, meditation, observation and other ways that we listen for God’s voice we have certain expectations for the outcomes that we anticipate. And in faith we go about our day with our expectations firmly planted on our brain. And stuff happens.

We expected a raise but we got fired. We expected to get fired but we got promoted. We thought our friend

would be excited but our friend is angry with us. We agreed to offer our testimony during worship but we fell flat.

Whenever we act based on our limited knowledge of the mind of God we risk discovering that we are indeed limited. Our logical mind assessed the landscape and misinterpreted the likely outcomes. We thought there wasn’t going to be enough and there was plenty leftover.



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Now I See

You may sometimes hear this question from evangelist or perhaps a stranger who came your door as part of a church outreach campaign, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” How do you respond? Likely most of would say “Sure I know Jesus Christ.” But this week’s scripture asks a differ-

ent question. “Does Jesus Christ know you?” This week we read a warning that should cause us to pause and reflect.

Our scripture for this week makes it more difficult to live in denial about our personal relationship with God since it gets at the heart of the

gospel. But it is a difficult text to reconcile with other parts of the gospel where Jesus comes across as laid back with an approach that allows for loads of user error. Grace, after all, is found throughout scripture. Even the Apostle Paul admits that we are all guilty of sin (Roman 3:23).

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Special points of interest:

> **Asbury Café is Now Open!**

Remember that the Asbury Café is opened for lunch on Fridays from 10:00am-2:00pm outside the Worship Center on the main floor.



These selections will also be available on Sunday mornings before and after worship.

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Now I See ...cont. from Page 1

But these words from Jesus seem to go beyond this reality. For example, we all struggle from time to time with forgiveness even though forgiveness is necessary to maintain any sort of healthy relationship. We all do things that we should not do and fail to do things we should do. So we ask others to give us break.

A parent forgives a child countless times even when the child knows better. The bond of love is strong and both parent and child are familiar with one another.

But what happens when the child leaves home and loses touch with the parent? Likely, the bond of love is still there. But is the relationship that the two once had still there? No. The child has changed in significant ways. The child has aged. Hopefully, the child has matured. The child is still loved by the parent but the familiarity is gone. And the child has not received direction from the parent during their absence.

When the Judgement Day comes, many will say to me, "Lord, Lord! In the name we spoke God's message, by your name we drove our many demons and performed many miracles!" Then I will say to them, "I never knew you".

Matthew 7:22-23a GNT

When Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem knowing that He will be rejected we read in Luke that He wept. Jesus knew the people would not accept Him for who He is and would crucify Him. Jesus knew that there were many righteous people in the sense of following the laws of Moses. People who lived in obedience to God, or so they thought. For them, God was a strict parent who expected disciplined children who always followed the rules.

But in the Gospel we learn that God wants more than this. God lived

among people to build personal, loving relationships. Parent and child love. A love that is not lost when we lose touch but a love that should keep us from ever wanting to lose touch. A child who leaves home and loses touch is not returning the love that was shown by a truly loving parent. And the parent no longer knows their child.

Have you lost touch with your divine parent? Knowing that Jesus loves you is important but it is just the beginning. Jesus wants you to stay in touch. But this means more than saying your prayers or even declaring healing in the name of Jesus Christ. Relationship requires intimacy both with Jesus and with His other followers.



If you are not active in a local church find one. If you are active in Asbury or some other local church invite someone else to join you. On September 16 we are celebrating "national back to church Sunday" as a way to emphasize that its time for any who have lost touch to return home. Church is not a religion. Church is a community of believers all living in constant relationship with each other and with Christ.

Join us each Sunday as we grow together in love. Invite others to do the same.

Logical Illusions ..cont. from page 1

Does God set us up for surprise like a more clever friend making fun of our lesser ability of reason? Scripture tells us otherwise. God is like a really good parent and teacher who may allow us to believe what we choose knowing in advance that we will soon be surprised. It is our often poorly fabricated assumptions that can lead us in the wrong direction. Take the story of David and Goliath. We all know this story. It comes up when there is an underdog going up against a superior force. Will the underdog prevail against all odds? Or will the giant once again rule the day? Somedays its good to be the underdog but we underdogs often feel a bit anxious about what to expect.

Writer Malcolm Gladwell in his book *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*, speculates that Goliath suffered from a medical condition known as acromegaly. This disorder which manifests as gigantism is caused by a tumor on the pituitary gland. One of the side affects is poor vision.

So here we have a battle about to ensue between a 9-foot "giant" — a man larger than anyone else caused by an overactive gland that puts him at a disadvantage except in hand-to-hand combat.

Logical Illusions ... cont. from page 2

Goliath is a foot soldier. His weapons require very close proximity to his opponent and his defense is heavy metal which impedes mobility to the point that another person carries his shield for him.

Enter David. A shepherd skilled in the warfare tactic known as artillery. Using a sling shot David's advantage comes from distance. He is accustomed to his foes being much larger, more fierce and requiring close physical proximity. Their weapons, like those of Goliath, require that they are close enough to their opponent to strike.

Who is the underdog? If we tend to use what we see to interpret past history

and project future outcomes we likely see giant versus small boy and give the advantage to Goliath. But God knew that a different outcome than the prevailing conclusion would come about. And it did. And a future King was introduced to his future subjects. And the giant was defeated.

Jesus warned us that we too often make presumptions about God's mind that get us into trouble and encouraged us instead to listen for God with an open mind. Ideas like the first shall be last, the weak shall inherit the earth go against conventional logic. We are accustomed to the strong prevailing.

But perhaps this is because we didn't have enough of the facts.

Discernment begins with an open mind. Allowing our past perceptions and bias to be replaced with divine insight and inspiration. Do you hear what I hear? If not, lets go to prayer and to others in our community to discover what God has in mind. And then, lets enjoy the show.

Join us each Sunday as we grow together in love. Invite others to do the same.

Pastor Tommy

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

(MONDAY – FRIDAY) PROGRAM ENDS AUGUST 31ST.

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 Do you hear what I hear? Second of Three Series

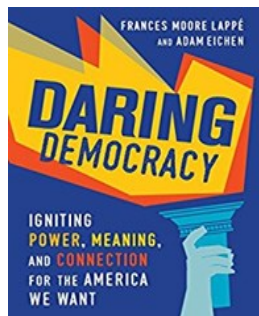
One of the goals for our first series in our trilogy was to shift our focus from the rules of religion to the opportunities for relationship with God and each other. One of the goals of this series is to help us further shift our thinking towards relation-

ship by considering how to listen for the voice of God. Religion calls this “discernment” and talks a lot about God’s Word particularly when criticizing others. Here we will explore what this word means for our community. Our focus in this next series is on how to listen, compare what we hear, and coming to a common understanding.

Book Club News

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

As the people of the Exodus grew in numbers Moses could not longer handle all



of their disputes so he had each of the 12 tribes choose a leader from among their group and a form of representative democracy was born. It was in the wilderness that God worked through Moses

and the other leaders to help the people emerge as a new nation.

be like other nations. They wanted a king to rule over them. God reminded Samuel that it was their God the people were rejecting. So a monarchy emerged among God’s people. Despite God’s warnings and despite a few periods of political and economic success the consequences that God warned the people about happened. Kings exploited the people taking the best for themselves and the people’s voice was silenced. Is this happening again in our country? Are we being exploited by the rich and powerful?

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...” Do we have a democracy in our country? Does our government represent the hopes and dreams of the people that they represent?

Fast forward a bit and young Samuel, the prophet, becomes older Samuel and the people are grumbling that they want to

The separation between the very wealthy and the rest of us has never been

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium,
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Mark
Children	Miriam & Emily
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Café	Christine & Norma

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

Discernment requires a relationship with God and with others. It is best done in community since God seems to offer a little bit of insight to each person in a group — even a group of two — requiring that we compare notes and requiring that we ask each other “Do you hear what I hear?”

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greater and the influence of the very wealthy, and other countries, on our elections has never been greater. In our own beloved Flint, our governor was able to circumvent democracy with the stroke of a pen. The result: economics prevailed over people and we continue to suffer. We have a president who boasts that he is among the super rich and whose decisions favor their economics over ours. How does this happen? Is the voice of the people being heard or are voters and elections manipulated behind the scenes?

This is not about conspiracy theories. Certainly, we do not all agree on who and how policy and laws should come about. But an increasing number of us are ashamed of our country’s policies and embarrassed by our choices to represent us. But what can we do? We can dare to make a difference by standing together and by using both our voice and our vote.

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.

Do you hear what I hear? *continued from page 4*

There is an ancient parable that was constructed into a poem by John Godfrey Saxe, about six blind men who encounter an elephant. Each man has a different understanding of the elephant based on the part of the elephant that they are touching. None of them really know much about the elephant overall since they are each limited to their own experience.

*Six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind...
And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!*

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1 John Godfrey Saxe, The Poems of John Godfrey Saxe. (1873), (pp. 135-136)

Coming up this week

- Aug 20 Mon** 4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Aug 21 Tues** 6:00pm Leadership Team Mtg
- Aug 22 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Aug 23 Thu** 1:00pm Cooking Classes
- Aug 24 Fri** 10am-1pm Asbury Cafe Open
4:30pm StandUp Education Prog
- Aug 25 Sat** 1-4:pm StandUp Education Prog
- Aug 26 Sunday**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 28 Offering \$ 695**

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

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

September 16, 2018 is Back to Church Sunday. Be sure to invite your friends, family and neighbors to join us for worship.

Tuesday, August 21 is Super Service Community Family Day at Asbury. Come for the fun and the help.

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.

**** New Asbury UMC
Coffee Cups**



are available by bringing a friend or neighbor to Sunday Worship with you! Just fill out a Connect Card so we can get to know them too, turn it in to the Café ladies and you and your guest will be given one of these coffee cups.



THE FLINT FARMING PROJECT



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.

Do you hear what I hear? *continued from page 5*

Discernment involves a community open to the possibility that God is speaking through actions and decisions all around us. For example, why is our weekly book club small group studying a book about democracy? Clearly, our situation in Washington has reached an all time low, but some question whether the church should take a position on politics? When Jesus said to give to Caesar (government) that which they claim and give to God what God claims was He making a politically neutral statement?

Here is a possible discernment: What if God is calling Asbury to become more active in making a political statement of inclusion and democratic process? After all the work that we are doing in our community cannot be done in a vacuum.

...anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

Matthew 7:26 GNT

The City's Master Plan affects our community and the people we serve. Decisions about land usage, whether we can combine lots, drill wells, eliminate streets and use buildings are all a part of God's plan for good.



But FIRST ... Do you hear what I hear?

Pastor Tommy