

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community!

Surrender

Its hard to believe it has been a year since Emery and Addilyn, my twin granddaughters, were born. This Sunday is their first birthday and Cyndi and I attended their birthday party on Saturday. I couldn't help but pay a lot of attention to our grandson, Griffin. He just turned three in July. For two years he was the center of attention and a year ago all that changed. I wonder how he will handle this change.

I'm a middle child but more important, like Griffin, I also had a younger sister that was born two years after me. I don't remember anything about that time in my life, but I can imagine that things changed in my world quite suddenly.

When a newborn arrives they are attention grabbers. Even if I had learned to stand on my head when I was two or tell great jokes, I'm guessing that my spotlight was turned off quite decidedly and getting my fair share of attention wasn't going to happen. Psychologists tell us that we experience feelings of rejection. And rejection by people who love you is hard to get over.



But rejection doesn't end there. Life is full of

what often feels like rejection — a replay of a younger sibling or similar version of trauma — even when rejection was not the intention. Getting fired from a job is one of the most degrading events that any of us can experience.

One experience that can be worse than a younger sibling stealing the spotlight or being fired from your job is being dumped. Whether married and being served divorce papers or single and the love of your life tells you that its time to go their own way, this is the adult version of rejection and it stings. Rejection is hard.

Page 2

Night Vision

This week we conclude our current series, *Do you hear what I hear?* and thus end the "lecture" portion of our teachings on discernment. Our next series, *Train wreck*, will take us into the laboratory for hands on learning. We will look at a few illustrations where others, including the prophet Balaam, have sometimes learned the hard way about divine discernment.

Some avoided train wrecks and others had to recover from train wrecks, having missed the divine road signs that were flashing danger ahead but were ignored.

Our last message in this series, *Night vision*, is about our want of clarity. We prefer more than a next step. How about a detailed "trip ticket" like the ones that AAA offered their members for road trips or an itinerary that spells out all of

the side trips, sights and scenes for our journey? But life is more about exploring unknown territory that no one has ever seen before than it is about predictable outcomes.

Several years ago I wrote a poem about my struggle for divine clarity titled *God lights my path*:

*I stood there staring down the Road
My eyes strained against my doubt*

Page 2

Volume 18 Issue 23
September 23, 2018

Special points of interest:

> **Worship Design:** will meet on Monday, September 24th at 6:00pm in the Asbury Library.

> **UMW:** will meet on Tuesday, October 2nd at 1:00pm in the Wesley Room. All are invited to join us! Please mark your calendars.

Inside this issue:

Surrender	1
Night Vision	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
Small Group Questions & Notes	7

Night Vision ...cont. from Page 1

*All I saw were shadows dark
As I tried to make them out.*

*But the distance was too great.
So I squinted so much harder
I imagined what lie ahead
Building images out of shadows.
My imagination did falter
The more I tried to see
Would faith be the stronger
And my courage carry me?*

*But the answer to my questions
Will not be hidden from me
For God will light the shadows
If I will only believe.*

¹ Poem by Rev Dr Tommy McDaniel, © 2018

I used the metaphor of shadows for the lack of clarity that God had given me regarding where He was leading me. I believed the promises of Psalm 23 of green pastures and still waters. But, at the same time, God had put a passion inside of me for working side by side with the marginalized and oppressed. How is this an image of a green pastor and still waters? In the same way, God had put a

Surrender ..cont. from page 1

These three scenarios (being replaced, being fired and being dumped) all have one thing in common: other people. And they are each missing a key consideration: God.

As an infant it is understandable that my instinct for survival is quickly attached to the attention that I receive from caregivers. I can't fill my own bottle or change my own diaper and I create an attachment to those who can. A co-dependency takes shape. My caregivers try to please me so I don't wail and I try to please them so I can get attention when I want it.

But as we "give up our childish ways" we quickly look for replacements. Our caregivers have others to care for and we develop independence which frees us from what would otherwise become an unhealthy relationship. However, our need for attention

sour taste in my mouth for privilege. But the greatest gift of all, in my opinion, was grace.



God gave me grace and made it clear that this grace was not mine to keep. Rather, I had to give it away. And God would give me more grace which I continued to need. And I had to give it away. This became a cycle that helped me to gain clarity. God was lighting the shadows even as I walked forward towards what would be considered an uncertain future by the world. Yet it was a certain path for me based on God's promises.

Darkness is a metaphor for all that is not divine and yet we all spend time in darkness which can hide both danger and opportunity. We are tempted to make images out of shadows — certainty out of uncertainty — and confuse need with want.

shifts and we strive for kudos from friends and bosses to know that we are loved at least to be appreciated for the things we do.

Conditional love is always at risk. Our co-dependency begins to feel as though it is not stable. That it is always at risk. Because it is. What if we are unable to deliver on the goods? What if someone else steals our show? Will the people around us still love us when we are no longer able to hold up our side of the co-dependency?

Through God's grace we have an even greater desire that burns within us. We seek God even when we aren't sure how to find God or what to expect when our search is fulfilled. Sadly, there are still lots of people who don't consciously realize that the

Yet if we will "only believe" in the promise of the Gospel, letting God be God, rather than trying to manipulate God into our own image, our own preferences, God will light our path. Balaam was a prophet back in the time before the Israelites became a settled people. God chose Balaam to reveal to those still living in darkness that God was in the process of a worldwide revival that would begin with the people of the Exodus who had left Egypt as a freed people.

Balaam did not receive the clarity that he would need all at once. He first had to do it his way. Next week we will get into the story of talking donkeys when we go into the laboratory. But this week we focus on being real about our desire for clarity and God's desire for faithful obedience.

Are you waiting for God to light the shadows that you see in front of you? Those obstacles and opportunities that are sufficiently blurry that its not clear which way to go? Are you able to believe that God has a plan for good that includes you?

Let's travel together knowing that like the Israelites, blessed by God and revealed through the prophet Balaam and others, is also blessing us. Do you hear what I hear? I hear the sound of blessings being unwrapped and waiting for us to take our next step.

Pastor Tommy

"thing" that is missing in their life is a relationship with God.

We instinctively lean on our experience with people in our pursuit. It is as though we convince ourselves that if we perform for God in the same way that we perform for the people around us whom we desire to be loved by, God will also love us.

Surrender ... cont. from page 2

But it doesn't work. We hold onto an illusion that we are in control. We convince ourselves that we call the shots while all the time dancing to the desires of the people we want to please.

And we project these desires onto God without allowing God to tell us what is pleasing to God. Unless we listen to God.

Psalm 37:4 tells us to "Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Wait! So is it that we have it backwards? God is not looking for us to "perform" so as to please Him — God just wants to be loved and will give us that which we want most? What does it

mean to "take delight" — to really enjoy God?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed the subject of our needs and urged us to let go of our desire to worry about them. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus

God was our real caregiver all along but God provided this care through others.

says "Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and

he will provide you with all these other things."

God was our real caregiver all along but God provided this care through others. They were not just expressing their love, which can be conditional and usually feels conditional. They were expressing God's love which is unconditional.

This changes everything doesn't it? God is the love of our life not other people. When we express love for others, even those we love the most, like our spouse, partner, children or best friends, God is loving them through us. We are a conduit for God's love which flows through us. In this process we find satisfaction and great joy. Our greatest desire, our desire to be loved, is fulfilled. Everything else is secondary.

Do you hear what I hear? First, you must surrender your need to please others, your fear that if you disappoint others you will not be loved by them, and turn completely to God. You are no longer performing. You are simple loving and being loved by the God who created you and loves you dearly. Then, and only then, can you truly be pleasing to others.

It is when God is showing His love for others through you that they find satisfaction in you. Whether you are a cook, a carpenter, a musician, a teacher or any other way that you utilize the talents given to you by God, use these talents in your worship and God will take care of the rest.

Pastor Tommy

Asbury Café is Open!

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.

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 Train Wreck Third of Three Series

As we come to the end of the 2nd series in our trilogy where we focused on listening and discernment, we move into practical illustrations from scripture of real people either avoiding disaster or recovering from disaster by being obedient. Our 3rd series has a subtitle: *Recovery and*

avoidance. And yet another subtitle: *Overcoming temptation through obedience.*

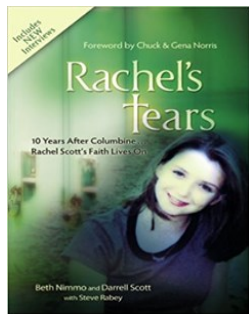
Most of us have felt like we were in a train wreck at some point or another. How do we recover from such a catastrophe? Even better, how can we avoid another train wreck? This series brings our journey into the heart of God's plan for us: Obedience.

Book Club News

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

Has any one ever invited you to watch a movie or read a book with the qualifier "Are you ready for a good cry?" For some of us, this "sweetens" the invitation and the answer is nearly always YES. For some, this qualifier is a disqualifier. Why set myself up to cry on purpose? Then there is the middle ground — the majority. We may dip our toes in emotionally but hold out as long as possible. "There's no crying in baseball!" is a line that comes to mind for me. That's a lie. I've coached hundreds of children in baseball and tears are a part of the game. And a part of life.

As we put our last book selection behind us we turn from analysis to real life. While our last book was non-fiction and full of reporting on life it was mostly at a societal level as we analyzed the



state of our democracy, or lack thereof, from a safe distance. Our next book invites us into the story — into the lives of a family devastated by our inability as a people to provide safety for our children. Not because we aren't trying hard. But perhaps our lack of democracy plays a bigger role than we may care to recognize.

In our study just finished, 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..." The burning question is "What is the world that we want to create together?"

Certainly, our children are at the center of our hopes. As school shootings continue at an increasing rate while politicians huddle in back rooms to find new ways to protect the interest of gun manufacturers and political contributions our youth are rising up and calling them to come out and look into the faces of children who are both afraid and tired of adults unwilling to take action. Our children are using their voices and their votes for change, even as some states try to create new obstacles that discourage them from voting.

Our next book takes us also into the heart of a teenager. A student at Columbine High School who once wrote in her personal journal, "I am not going



Page 5

to apologize for speaking the name of Jesus... If I have to sacrifice everything... I will." While I am not one who readily takes on a book that promises to turn on the tears I was hooked as soon as I began reading. And the tears...well have some tissues close by. Amazon's website describes our next book, *Rachael's Tears*, as follows:

The Columbine tragedy in April 1999 pierced the heart of our country. We later learned that the teenage killers specifically targeted Rachel Scott and mocked her Christian faith on their chilling, homemade videotapes. Rachel Scott died for her faith. Now her parents talk about Rachel's life and how they have found meaning in their daughter's martyrdom in the aftermath of the school shooting.

Rachel's Tears comes from a heartfelt need to celebrate this young girl's life, to work through the grief and the questions of a nation, and to comfort those who have been touched by violence in our schools today. Using excerpts and drawings from Rachel's own journals, her parents offer a spiritual perspective on the Columbine tragedy and provide a vision of hope for preventing youth violence across the nation.



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.

* Nimmo, Beth, and Darrell Scott. *Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000, 2008.

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

Jim Craig Leadership Chair
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kevin Croom Farm to Table
Israel Unger Business Operations

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
Sylvia Pittman Worship Arts

Asbury Worship Series ..Train Wreck *continued from page 4*

Trains were not around during the times of the Old Testament prophets but shorts were. So our theme verse uses a pair of shorts as a metaphor for a train wreck — which is in turn our metaphor for a really bad situation that we all would rather avoid. In Jeremiah 13:11 God reveals to the prophet the divine goal: *“Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people*

and would bring praise and honor to my name.”

But, the people ignored God’s plan for intimacy and obedience, giving into temptations in the same way that the first couple did in Genesis. God’s message to Jeremiah is to the point: *“But they would not obey me.”* God’s threat that follows from this declaration in Jeremiah sounds a bit harsh. But, God is not happy with the people of Judah because they are chasing after other gods. Sound familiar?

A quick word about what is meant by “other gods” so there is no confusion. In the first of the Ten Commandments God spells out a divine insistence on where our focus belongs. On God and God alone. Worship of any other god is forbidden and a train wreck waiting to happen. What are other gods? The most obvious is money, but other gods include cars, other persons, drugs & alcohol, getting our own way, control, power, and more.

Page 8

Coming up this week

- Sept 24 Mon** 6:00pm Worship Design Mtg
- Sept 25 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Pick up
- Sept 26 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Sept 27 Thu** 10am-2pm Water pick up
- Sept 28 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
- Sept 29 Sat**
- Sept 30 SUNDAY**
 - 9:30am Café Opens
 - 10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship Attendance 30 Offering \$ 339

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.

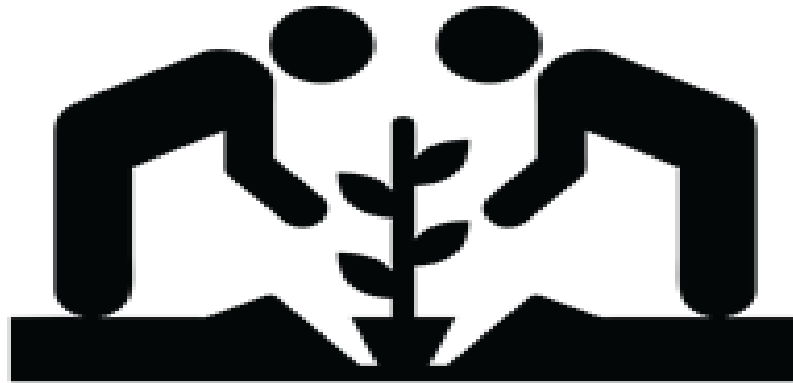
Women’s Circles - The women of Asbury meet regularly in small groups.

Pastor’s Book Club meets each Tuesday at 12Noon for fellowship, food and learning.

**** 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

PRODUCE FROM THE ASBURY FARMS ...



Life Group Questions & Notes

Seek your happiness in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desire.

Psalm 37:4 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

1. Have you ever felt rejected? How did you deal with the feeling of rejection? Have you considered the likelihood that you “perform” for others in order to avoid rejection?
2. What does it mean to you to “surrender” totally to God? Do you feel as though you have done this? What may be holding you back?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week?



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.

Asbury Worship Series ..Train Wreck *cont.. from page 5*

In other words, anything that gets in our way of obedience to God.

We can quickly become so busy chasing after other gods we have little time to hear the voice of the One True God. And God tries to warn us we are either too busy to listen or unwilling to be obedient. God will warn us against doing what we are choosing to do if we are headed for a train wreck. Scripture is full of stories that illustrate the consequences. We are like a pair of underwear that gets hidden in a rock. They soon wear out and no longer fit our body. They are ruined. They are a "train wreck."

Like the pair of linen shorts that God told Jeremiah to put in the rocks, should we pursue other gods long enough, we are ruined. Our life becomes a train wreck.

Many of us come to realize that we are like the prophet Isaiah as he came face to face with God's call on his life: "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among people whose every word is sinful"

(Isaiah 6:5 GNT).

The prophet encounters God and realizes that he had not obeyed God and lived among people who likewise did not obey God. This is all of us. This leads to a train wreck sooner or later.

Discernment involves a community open to the possibility that God is speaking through actions and decisions all around us. For example, why did our weekly book club small group study 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? Or is Jesus calling it like it is?

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. 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.

Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people and would bring praise and honor to my name; but they would not obey me.

Jeremiah 13:11 GNT

God has a plan for Asbury that includes all of us in one way or another. God has a plan for every person and it is a plan for our own good. But unless we are obedient to God's plan we cannot benefit from God's divine favor.

Whether you are recovering from a train wreck or hoping to avoid one, join us each Sunday for a practical message that can help you face your challenges. Pastor Tommy