

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## Hungry

It seems appropriate to end our current series and to end 2018 with Psalm 148. Speaking of weird. Psalm 148 reminds us that all of creation is called to worship and praise the Creator. Writer Pamela Hawkins, in a reflection written for the *Upper Room Disciplines*, notes that praise and worship is in our DNA.\* This explains why it takes so much energy to turn away from God. But we turn away because we are misled by the enemy

Praise Him, Kings and all peoples, princes and all other rulers; young women and young men, old people and children too.

Psalm 128:11-12 GNT

who preys on our fear and our ego.

I often speak to persons with varying ideas about the existence of God. While explanations vary from being "spiritual but not religious" to a lack of belief that there is a God at all, there are com-

mon elements to our conversations.

First, there is a hallow sound to their justification for their lack of belief. Second, there is an undercurrent of questioning that life really has meaning beyond struggle until death. Worse, death for non-believers is so final.

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## Good Intentions

Sometimes our good intentions come with negative consequences. We let someone in line ahead of us who we perceive needs a break and those behind us disagree with our plan. We offer shelter to someone who is desperate and they leave with something that belongs to us.

We help someone with some money and our power gets turned off when we are late with our own payment. Negative consequences that come to us as a result of good deeds can convince us not to help next time. Yet, if we are to model our lives after Jesus we may find that

negative consequences for doing right is part of our journey.



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January 6, 2019

### Special points of interest:

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.



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**Good Intentions ...cont. from Page 1**

Jesus is attending a festival in Jerusalem and while there He observes a man sitting on one of the five porches around a pool. Apparently Jesus realized that the man was lame and had been so for many years. Jesus asked the man a rather invasive question. "Do you want to get well?"

Why did Jesus single out this particular individual? Did Jesus know that the man had been lame for 38 years? What might the Holy Spirit have said or done to get the attention of Jesus? Perhaps the man thought that Jesus had

Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been sick for such a long time; so he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" ... Jesus said to him. "Get up, pick up your mat and walk."

John 5:6, 8 GNT

mistakenly concluded that if he really wanted to get well the man would be in the pool, when he answered "Sir, I don't have anyone here to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am trying to get in, somebody else gets there first."

Jesus tells the man to pick up his mat and walk. That's it. No splitting in the dirt and rubbing

**Hungry... cont from page 1**

I am convinced that trying to hold onto such positions take a great deal of energy. And joy remains just out of reach.

Our next series is titled *Insight*. This title comes from a conversation with Sylvia where she shared that she has learned that "believing is seeing." Until we believe God does not reveal that which we want so desperately to see.

Retracing our path since the First Sunday of Advent, we have covered selfies, weird relatives, breaking news and come backs. These subjects were

mud on the man's legs. No laying on of hands accompanied by a wordy prayer. Jesus' words must have been received with authority behind them because the man obeyed. Perhaps he recognized Jesus as a Rabbi and thought it best to at least try and do what Jesus told him to do. Whatever the thought process the man did as he was told.

This story has a couple of twists as it unfolds. First, it was the Sabbath. When Jesus heals the man who had been lame for 38 years, Jesus was breaking the law. Second, carrying a mat was also breaking the law, which the man did at Jesus' instruction. We can argue that what Jesus did was well intended and I am certain that it was. We can argue that a man just healed after decades of suffering should be allowed to carry their mat with them as they leave the place where they had begged for help day after day, but it doesn't change the law nor the consequences that accompany Jesus and the man's decisions.

Later in this story when the man is stopped by the authorities for carrying his mat on the Sabbath he explains why he was carrying his mat, but Jesus was not around for the man to point him out, and the man did not know it was Jesus by name. Later that same day the

all covered within the context of making Christmas weird again. That is,

Human beings cannot live on bread alone, but need every word that God speaks."

Matthew 4:4 GNT

holding tight to the reason for the season, at least according to believers.

It's like one of the songs that our worship band introduced this season titled, *Jesus at the Center*. The theme of the song is that Jesus is the center of the church and the center of our lives.

man sees Jesus in the temple and tells the authorities that it was Jesus who healed him and told him to carry his mat. Jesus, at this point in John's Gospel becomes a wanted man.

Such relatively minor violations could be overlooked but in the dialogues to follow, Jesus makes it clear who He says He is and what His relationship is with God. The helping

Then the man left and told the Jewish authorities that it was Jesus who had healed him. So they began to persecute Jesus, because he had done this healing on a Sabbath.

John 5:15-16 GNT

of a man who was suffering was not the case that would lead to Jesus' arrest and execution but this incident is an illustration of the consequences that sometime accompany good deeds.

Doing that which God calls us to do will often come with unpleasant consequences in the short term. If this has been your experience then it is quite understandable if you decline to help even in a situation where you feel like you should.

The more important question is whether it is God's intention or your own. Jesus is later arrested because He claimed a special relationship with God that the authorities could not reconcile and most of all Jesus was a threat. In the same way when we speak up in defense of the helpless, when we lend a well-intended hand we may find that there are other consequences that seem unwarranted.

Sometimes our good intentions come with negative consequences.

So we begin our new worship series, *Insight*, with the possibility that receiving divine insight may come with consequences that we would rather not face. Join us each Sunday as we travel along with Jesus in the Gospel of John to learn more about divine insight.

We has a surprise  
Guest Chef on Friday!!



Savannah Coolman,  
2016 Culinary Arts  
Graduate of Mott  
Community College.

She prepared us a wonderful Greek Salad during our Asbury Café lunch hour. A BIG thank you, also to Kelsey for a great Broccoli Cheese Soup!

THANK YOU  
SAVANNAH FOR STOP-  
PING BY AT ASBURY!

### In Our Prayers

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

### FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Sharon George    | Mary Russell |
| Elaine Lamoreaux | Mary Nations |

### "Dusty the Donkey" an "Inspired Success" presented December 24th!!

I am very proud...



The maiden voyage of the "Asbury Community Players" was a success. Which joined the talents of Asbury members and members of the community, in my inspired efforts to tell a story that would touch and remind all of us that we are all "special gifts" created by God. With only three (3) table reads and two (2) full rehearsals we "nailed it".

Just imagine what **"We"** may create in the future as the Asbury Community Players continue to produce "Inspired" original works.

Personally, I am very proud of my sister Gale De Leon. This is her first Play/Production/ Acting endeavor and she brought the role of Mary's mother to life. Additionally, she took over the sewing and creating the costumes for all of the animals.

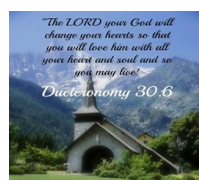


Congratulations to the members of Asbury's family that pulled together to create this marvelous original Christmas drama. Although it didn't always "look" like it, for me, this production was an exciting pleasure and opportunity to collaborate with Pastor Tommy McDoniel, Sylvia Pittman and Mark Vorenkamp to produce and bring to life the "Dusty" in all of us.



Thank you for the opportunity to Enlighten and Empower you.

Terrance Ottis Williams



Prayer is at the heart  
of our beliefs

**Asbury Worship Series  
Insight  
Believing is Seeing**

Stories of people's sight being restored by Jesus are found throughout the Gospels. Blindness is both a lack of physical sight and a lack of divinely inspired insight. We are spiritually blind if we see the world strictly from a human perspective. Divine sight sees

much more. Divine sight is like X-ray vision that can see through hurt and struggle. Divine sight sees healing while human sight sees only brokenness. A person can be physically blind but have insight. A person can have 20/20 vision and have no insight.

Our new worship series, *Insight*, begins appropriately on the day we Christians call "Epiphany" Sunday (January 6). While most

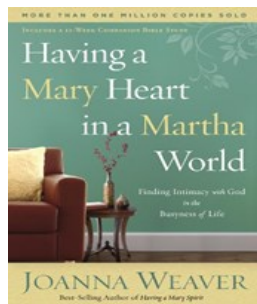
of our manger scenes include the astrologers from the East, commonly called the Wise-man, the reality is that they likely arrived afterwards.



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**Book Club News**

Do you consider yourself a busy person? Are your days generally filled with things to do? Are there some days where



you feel like you are falling further behind? These are questions that according to the author of our next book could be proceeded with "You may be a Martha if..." Perhaps you not a Martha-type. Instead of busyness

that never ends you take time to "smell the roses" and talk to strangers and manage to be the target of rolling eyes and harsh comments about not doing your share of the chores. Well, "You might be a Mary if..."

On Wednesday, October 31, we begin our next book titled *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*. Mary and Martha are named in the Gospels in three places: Luke

10:38-42, John 11:1-44, and John 12:1-11. Scholars suspect that Jesus frequently stayed with the two sisters and their brother Lazarus, but these are the three stories of Jesus visiting them that we find in scripture. One thing is clear in terms of their type-casting, Mary is not Martha and Martha is not Mary. They are two very different people who both want to know and serve Jesus Christ.

This study offers an invitation for everyone of us who feels like we just aren't godly enough... or loving enough... or that we just aren't doing enough. Our lives today really are not all that different from that of Mary and Martha in the New Testament. Like Mary, don't you also long to sit at the Lord's feet... but the daily demands of a busy world just won't leave you alone? Like Martha, don't you love Jesus and really want to serve Him... yet don't you often struggle with weariness, resentment, and feelings of inadequacy?

Just like the story told by Luke, Jesus comes right into the midst of your busy Mary/Martha life and extends the same

invitation He issued long ago to the two sisters of Bethany. Tenderly He invites you to choose "the better part" of life. A joyful life of "living-room" intimacy with Him. An intimacy that flows naturally into serving Him. Come learn how can you make that choice. In this study we will learn how all of us, Marys and Marthas alike, can draw closer to Jesus Christ, deepening our devotion, strengthening our service, and doing both with less stress and greater joy.

Author Joanna Weaver' book has sold over a million copies and her books and Bible studies have been used by hundreds of churches, life groups and individuals. Our time with Joanna's book will be guided using a ten week study guide that she provides along with short video clips from her companion DVD. Joanna is the mother of three children and the wife of a pastor in Montana so she has plenty of experience in the church environment. While this book is written from a woman's perspective the story and lessons are equally applicable to all gender identities.

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

\* Weaver, Joanna. *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World: Finding Intimacy with God in the Busyness of Life*. CO: Crown Publishing Group, 2000.

**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 ... Insight...Believing is Seeing.. Cont. from page 4**

So we set aside a separate day of recognition to celebrate, not so much their arrival, as their departure. It is a miracle that these individuals travelled to find the newborn King. But the miracle began with the insight that they received to know to make the trip. We call this an "epiphany" or divine insight.

Beyond the obvious, these astrologers were not Jewish. In biblical terms we know them as Gentiles. That's the biblical term used for those of us who are likewise not Jewish. We believe in the same God found in our Old Testament who was initially known as the God of what became to be the people of the Exodus and are known as the "Jews". But this God is also the God of Abraham who is claimed by the people of Islam

to be Allah — the God they worship.

What sets us apart as Christians is the epiphany that these astrologers were given that led to their discovery. That this newborn "King of the Jews" was also God who chose to be born human, live as human, die by execution at the hands of the powerful, only to rise from the dead. Human power cannot reduce divine power. Human insight cannot see that which divine insight can see. An epiphany is only a glimpse, but an epiphany can be life changing and affect the world in substantial ways.

By some estimates there are 285 Million people in the world who are visually impaired. Persons who are visually impaired are unable to see better than 20/40 even with corrective lenses. Approximately 39 Million persons are considered blind. According to the CDC, 3%

*"One thing I do know; I was blind, and now I see."*

*John 9:25 (GNT)*

of people living in the U.S. are visually impaired. The CDC doesn't offer estimates of the percentage of people who are spiritually blind, but I'm guessing that we are all visually impaired, spiritually. We all lack divine insight to various degrees.

The tag line for our worship series is *Believing is Seeing*. When

we receive the gift of faith, of belief, we are also given a dose of divine insight. We are able to "see" that God lived among people. That Jesus Christ is also God. This gift of sight, like the epiphany given to the astrologers from the East, is the beginning of our journey to the manger. Our trip to the heart of God. The Bible becomes our corrective lenses. We are still mostly blind spiritually, but we as we grow in our faith we gain more divine insight each day.

During our journey together that begins on Epiphany Sunday, we will consider how doubt and faith are friends, how doubting God is part of our journey. Without doubt there is no need for faith. And sometimes "just believe" is simply not enough. I'm thinking that we ought to spend a little bit of time on why I don't like "church" people. This will take some explanation so stand by. Which comes first, faith or doing? This "chicken and egg" question is a great one for understanding divine insight.

I hope that you will join us each Sunday to talk more about gaining insight. The trip to the manger is filled with amazement and awe. Come and see what God has done for yourself.

Pastor Tommy

**- Coming up this week -**

- Jan 7 Mon** 6pm Worship Design
- Jan 8 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Jan 9 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club  
6pm Beginners Bible Study
- Jan 10 Thu** 8am-11:30am United Way  
6pm Worship Band Practice
- Jan 11 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open  
6pm Asbury Youth Group
- Jan 12 Sat**
- Jan 13 SUNDAY**  
9:30am Café Opens  
10:30am New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship:**

**Attendance 21 Offering \$ 3,974**

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## ADVENT 2018 AT ASBURY UMC

### DECEMBER EVENTS:

Sunday, December 16th—Avaunte Waters, “A Very Gospel Christmas”

Thursday, December 20th—Genesee County Bar Association, Masonic Temple  
Flint Jubilee Chorale and Flint Community Gospel Choir performed

Friday, December 21st, The Longest Night, Celebration of Life & Light with Pastor Mark

Monday, December 24th, “Dusty the Donkey, seeking his Destiny”, Christmas Musical

Friday, December 28th—“We Love you Ashli”, benefit concert

Asbury Empowerment Arts Center participated in and hosted a total of five events during the month of December 2018.

Worship Arts Director/Elder, Sylvia Pittman coordinated and facilitated three concerts and two services. Attendance increased with each presentation. The “We Love you Ashli” benefit concert had 96 people in the audience, approximately 40 musicians and singers on the stage. We raised \$941.00 with donations still coming in.

I’m especially excited about singing at the Genesee County Bar Association Holiday Dinner. We were paid to sing for an hour and the money was divided between Asbury CDC and Divinely Inspired Productions.

January 2019 promises to be equally exciting for Asbury UMC.

Sylvia Pittman

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Christmas is often thought of as the most joyful time of the year, with bells and decorations, gifts and family. But it isn’t joyful for everyone. Friday, December 21st Asbury held a Longest Night service, a reflective and low key service for those who struggle during the holiday season. Whether because of a past trauma during the holiday season, or some more recent struggle, the holidays can be just as painful for some as it is jolly for others. For those people, the pain and the glitter of the season can blind them to the hope inherent in the birth of Jesus Christ. The Longest Night is intended to be a service that can meet people where they’re at, showing them the hope of the season without expecting them to be “jolly.”

Personally, the Longest Night service is something I’ve needed for myself. Because of this, it was an honor to make this service the first special event I’ve run as Asbury Church’s Youth Pastor. The service was attended with people from across the Flint metro area, from various United Methodist congregations and beyond our denomination. The music was provided by Music Director Sylvia Pittman with the vocal talents of Emily Vorenkamp. Despite the intentionally low-key nature of the service, a time of worship was had.

The message I had for them, and the message for anyone reading, is to remember that Jesus Christ is the both the fulfillment of God’s promise to bring a Messiah and the promise that all of God’s people will be brought into forgiveness and grace. My thanks to Sylvia Pittman and Emily Vorenkamp for the music; Reverend Jeremy Peters and Pastor Dr. Tommy McDoniel for the advice and support; and to Terrance Williams, Jim Craig, Michelle Weston, and everyone who helped that evening happen.

Pastor Mark Vorenkamp

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## Asbury Farm to Table



While turning blight into beautiful and productive landscape is good on its own, transforming a food desert into abundance is life giving. But Asbury wants to make sure that produce is available on the tables of our residents. Our culinary arts and nutritional education programs offer residents the know how just as our farms offers nature's bounty. In addition, the Asbury Café is a culinary experience accessible to our neighbors and anyone with an appetite. Our "pay what you can" approach means that no one is turned away. Those who can help either on the farm or in the café are offered special MyFlint-Stones tokens that can be used either in the Asbury Café or in exchange for produce to prepare at home.

We proudly accept MyFlintStones

The Asbury Café is open Fridays 10am to 2pm & Sundays 10 am to 12 Noon

### ASBURY CAFÉ MENU

Open Fridays 10am to 2pm

*Pay what you can*

#### DELI SUBS

Lettuce, onions, tomato plus choice of ham, turkey or beef

#### STIR FRY

Local grown garden vegetables sautéed with love and herbs

#### GARDEN SALAD

Local grown greens & vegetables. Ham, turkey or beef upon request

#### WRAPS

Lettuce, onions, tomato plus choice of ham, turkey or beef

#### MUFFINS

Chef Kevin's special recipe with fruit, love and other delights baked in.

#### SMOOTHIE

Assorted flavors of the day

#### COFFEE

Regular or decaf

## Life Group Questions & Notes

*Jesus saw him lying there, and he knew that the man had been sick for such a long time; so he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" ... Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk."*

John 5:6, 8 GNT

### NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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### QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

1. An "epiphany" refers to some sort of God given insight that comes to you in a miraculous way. Have you ever experienced an epiphany? Share your epiphany with your group.
2. Are epiphanies common? What is our role as the recipient of an epiphany?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you remove obstacles that stand in the way of your witness?



# Welcome to the Asbury Community

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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.

## Hungry... cont. from page 2

It does not take energy to put Jesus at the center of our lives. Such insight gives us back energy from the source of all energy. As Christians, we hold onto the belief that Jesus is our center.

Meanwhile, retailers had their best Christmas season sales year in the past several years. Consumers will spend over \$850 Billion according to early predictions. When you compare aver-



age consumer spending of over \$1,000 each with our offering collections at Asbury it is clear that Amazon is more at the center in the "real" world. For much of the world, Jesus is at best a marketing theme for some lines of Christmas decorations.

I am far from being the Christmas Grinch when it comes to gift-giving. While I claim that Jesus is the center of my holiday focus, the local farm store and a couple of online retailers got more than their fair share of my attention. Our family Christmas tree was adorned with packages with the toys that we purchased for grandchildren taking up a lot of floor space. Gift giving is one of the many ways that we show love for each other. During one worship series earlier this year we learned that giving and receiving gifts is one of the five love languages.

Yet I also know this: Jesus is the only One worthy of our worship and praise. We may spend a little too much trying to impress each other with our generosity but Amazon and Walmart are not praise-worthy. Nor are any of us praise-worthy. Only God is worthy of our worship and praise. And this need to worship is not something that is optional. Rather, it comes natural for all of creation. And it comes natural for each of

us. It takes energy to avoid it, while worship gives us more energy than we can expend.

We end our current worship series, *Weird*, with a message that is titled simply, *Hungry*. The craving that we feel for physical food is only a glimpse of a deeper hunger that we have for spiritual food. We hunger for the word of God like a young calf hungers for his mother's milk. We crave God in the depths of our being and our hunger cannot be satisfied until we truly worship.

**Hungry I come to You for I know You satisfy...I am empty but I know Your love does not run dry.**

Come, let us worship the Holy Lamb of God, Emmanuel, God with us. Let us end 2018 with the hope and resolve that Jesus will be the center of attention for us in the new year and beyond.

Pastor Tommy

\* Pamela Hawkins, *The Upper Room Disciplines*, Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2018.