

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community!

It's About Time

Do you ever feel like there is just not enough hours in the day to do everything on your list? This is a daily occurrence for me. There is so much more that I wanted to do today and the hour is late. There are many sayings about time like "there is never enough time" or "it is about time" that capture some of our frustrations and challenges with the clock.



Yet, people aren't wearing time on their wrists like they once did, although Apple is working hard to con-

vince us to wear time plus other apps. In a Wall Street Journal article this past March, Swiss watchmaking executive Jean-Claude Biver laments that "It's the first time we have young people not buying watches. Time is everywhere. Why should these kids buy something for the wrists that tells them the same thing they get everywhere?" Its not that time is no longer important its that time is pervasive.¹

There are two words for time in the New Testament. The first is *chronos* which refers to clock or calendar time. Our English word "chronology" derives from this Greek word for time. *Chronos* time is sequential and moves in one direction.

Chronos time is expressed as past, present or future. *Chronos* time was a human construct in order to measure time.

There is another word for time in the New Testament called *kairos*. Rather than a linear measure, *Kairos* time refers to the "opportune" time. It is the opposite of trying to dig a post hole after the ground is frozen. Instead we choose *kairos* time when the ground is soft and more easily penetrated with a post hole digger.

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Volume 18 Issue 28
October 28, 2018

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.



Open Doors

According to Wikipedia "circumstantial evidence" is evidence that relies mostly on an inference for the evidence to be connected to a conclusion of fact. An example is a person's fingerprint at the scene of a crime. While the fingerprint strongly suggests that the person touched the place where the fingerprint was found it does

not directly prove that they were the perpetrator of the crime. "Objection, your honor, my client's fingerprint is circumstantial" the defense attorney shouts out after the prosecutor tells the jury that the fingerprint *proves* guilt.

When it comes to divine "sign language" we may be eager to accept circumstantial evidence of God's will when



it points to something that we want, but we are much less eager if the sign suggests something we would rather not do or give up. Yet, faith is oftentimes a willingness to believe that circumstantial evidence is sufficient. But how do we know when circumstantial evidence is sufficient?

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Open Doors ...cont. from Page 1

Consistency with scripture is both the starting and ending point. And it is much easier to choose between right and wrong than it is to choose between two choices that are both consistent with scripture. It can be even harder when the evidence for each option is supported by different scripture. Mark Batterson, in his book *Whisper*, reminds us that “we don’t interpret Scripture via signs; we interpret signs via Scripture.” Well, this is mostly the case although I suspect that God often uses signs to help us correct a prior erroneous interpretation of scripture passed down from prior generations.

In our previous message, Signs and signals, we focused on direct evidence. Gideon used a wool cloth to further verify that he had properly discerned God’s will and instructions. The stakes were high and the choice of Gideon to lead the revolt seemed too “out of the box” at least for Gideon. And God responded to Gideon’s request for direct evidence. When the stakes are high, clarity is important. But attitude is everything and Gideon clearly recognized that he was hearing from God, but he wanted to be sure he hadn’t let either his own ego or his fear interfere with his understanding. Batterson also reminds us that it is faith that helps us to take the first step before God reveals the next step.

One metaphor that is often used for circumstantial evidence are doors. When an opportunity that we are pursuing is no longer viable we may

say that “God closed the door” to keep us from going forward. When a new opportunity arises we might say that “God has opened a door” to a better possibility. Of course, many of us will try to go through closed doors and I suspect that even more of us will avoid going through an open door, particularly when we are not so sure what is on the other side. Again, it can take a lot of faith to take that first step, to pass through the open door, before God reveals what is on the other side.

The open or closed door is circumstantial because the presence of whatever forces we are describing using the door metaphor are most often unclear. Particularly, when people are involved with the opening and closing. We are rightfully suspicious as to God’s role in the situation when we suspect the motives of others who have some control over the opening and closing.

People may try to bolt doors closed for reasons that are far from divine will and open doors for self-serving reasons.

People may try to bolt doors closed for reasons

that are far from divine will and open doors for self-serving reasons. Fortunate for us, with God ultimately in control, attempts by others to thwart divine plans will often have the opposite affect than what the misled person had in mind.

As with most efforts to discern divine will it is best to include others in your discernment.

While spiritual maturity is highly subjective we generally have a good idea of which persons are more likely to be helpful by their fruit. Spiritually mature persons bring love and a sense of peace into a situation rather than judgment and anxiety. We may be anxious enough when decisions are life changing. What we need most is non-anxious, clarity.

God spoke through the Book of Revelation to followers dealing with choosing a door opened by divine will. *I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut* (Revelation 3:8a). We are reminded first that God already knows us. The real truth and not just what we tell others and we tell ourselves. Scholars seem to agree that the faith community identified in this revelation is in the ancient city of Philadelphia, which was located in modern-day Turkey. The city was named by a former king who “loved his brother” and named this city in his honor.

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:8 GNT

But what was the “open door” in this case? This church was under attack by traditionalists who believed in the God of Abraham but

refused to recognize Jesus Christ as Lord. But the people, as confirmed by scripture, remained faithful even in the face of struggle. Perhaps the door was an affirmation that while their current struggles created doubt about their future God was not done with them and a door that God had opened, people could not close.

God did not deny their struggle. This verse goes on to say *I know that you have little strength* (Revelation 3:8b). But God was also aware of their faithfulness.

(Revelation 3:8c). The text goes on to remind the people of the church that Christ will someday return and therefore they can continue their worship in the confidence that God is ultimately in charge.

Does this bring comfort to you? For those who have faithfully held onto visions of a transformed church and community, this text may be words of comfort and assurance. Knowing that God has opened a door for the faithful than cannot be closed should be sufficient. The details will follow. Page 3

It’s About Time...cont. from page 1

Kairos time is important when we want to ask a favor or convince someone to do something that they may not want to do.

Most important, *Kairos* time is

...a furious wind that split the hills and shattered the rocks-but the Lord was not in the wind... there was an earthquake-but the Lord was not the earthquake...there was a fire-but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the soft whisper of a voice.

1 Kings 19:11-12 GNT

God’s timing. Always on time. Never too early. Never too late. God is on the mark and God is on time, *Kairos* time that is. Which quite often

does not line up with our *Chronos* time. So while we patiently wait, or at least try to be patient, we worry and fret over God’s *Kairos* time because we do not live close enough to Jesus Christ to see his Apple watch or at least to ask Him about the timing.

Oh I think that the vast majority of us pray. You bet we pray when the stakes are high. This is a time when we go back to the Scripture where Jesus promised that if we ask we will receive. But often left out of our interpretation of Jesus’ promise is that we receive that which we need on *Kairos* time.

Open Doors ...cont. from page 2

For others, it may be a warning—a reminder—a call to repentance. It is not too late. God has a plan for us and its a plan for our wellbeing...but first what are the doors that have opened that you are not sure you want to walk through?

Doors open and close as one way that God reveals divine will. Quite often doors close so that we can avoid a train wreck that awaits us if we continue headed the way that we are going. But we may not realize what God has done for us until we see another door opened. Join us each Sunday and be a part of God’s vision to transform our community.

Pastor Tommy

It’s About Time ...cont. from page 2

And we not only pray but we look for signs and wonders of the sorts that we talked about over the past two weeks. We want to know 1) Is God listening? and 2) Did God understand the specifics of our prayer enough to deliver on our specification?

Expecting God to meet our specifications can be a lot like trying to tell a master pottered specifically how we want our bowl to be shaped, down to the techniques we expect the master to use in His craft. Our best outcome would happen if the master craftsman

doesn’t listen to us. If the result is not exactly what we thought we wanted. Its only after we express our disappointment that we realize that we now have a blessing that can only come by the one who knows us and pottery making flawlessly.

There was a time when the prophet Elijah was on the run, hiding from Queen Jazabel who had threatened to have him executed. Elijah was no stranger to God’s voice having learned to faithfully rely on God in the most difficult of circumstances. But in 1 Kings chapter 19 Elijah is waiting for a Word from God. For me, one of the precious questions that God asks Elijah is “What are you doing here?” I get that question a lot from God. The difficult part is knowing whether the implication is that I am not where I am supposed to be or I am where I belong but God wants me to know for sure.

As the story in scripture goes Elijah waited to hear from God anticipating God would speak through a natural phenomena. Elijah listens for God in the midst of a wind storm, an earthquake, and a fire. But no Word from God. But God is present with Elijah and once the prophet stills his soul, putting his ear close enough to God’s voice to hear a whisper, Elijah hears from God. “What are you doing here Elijah?”

“What are you doing here,” the Lord asks.

How about you? Are you waiting for a Word from God on a matter of importance? How is your patience holding out? Are you where you should be or have you specified to God how you expect life to be and are simply waiting for delivery of your order? God has a plan for us and it a plan for our good. But first, we need to be close enough to God to hear a gentle whisper.

Pastor Tommy

**CHARITY/FAITH UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
ANNUAL WOMEN’S DAY SERVICE
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2018**

YOU ARE INVITED!

Message: “In Spite of the Turmoil, God is still God?”

**Speakers: Rev. Dr. Joy Moore, Senior Pastor
Bethel United Methodist Church
Mrs. Nancy Cline, Confernce UMW
Education & Interpretation Coordinator**

**Logistics: Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 3:00pm
Charity UMC
4601 Clio Rd, Flint**

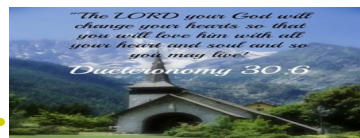
ALL ARE WELCOME

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 | Richard Oram |
| Austin & Mary Suffle | Merle Supernaw |

**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

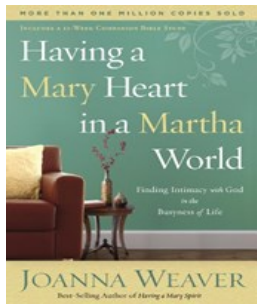
As we come to the end of the 2nd series in our trilogy where we focused on listening and discernment, we move into practical illustrations from scripture of real people either avoiding disaster or recovering from disaster by being obedient. Our 3rd series has a subtitle: *Recovery and*

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

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

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



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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.

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.

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Coming up this week

- Oct 29 Mon** 6:00pm Worship Design
- Oct 30 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Oct 31 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6:00PM Beginners Bible Study
- Nov 1 Thu** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Nov 2 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
- Nov 3 Sat**
- Nov 4 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 20 Offering \$ 427**

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

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

Our Asbury church directory has been printed. If you would like one, please leave me a note in my mailbox or leave me a message and I will make sure you get one.

Connie

**** 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.

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.

POETRY

By Tommy McDoniel

LIKE A FATHER DOES FOR HIS SON

As I began to make a list
Of all that I did wrong
I started with the smaller sins
The list grew painfully long.

Slow at first the words came
But speed followed soon
And as the list grew longer
The tears began to form.

A man sins so many times
Though he knows what not to do
He cannot face a list of all
He hides his list from view.

But when he comes to judgment
And his list is being read
Will he join the Saints and Angels
Or be sentenced with the dead?

Will his list be read by judges
And will his acts be praised or cursed
Beginning with the little lies
And ending with the worst?

I dreaded with sincerity
The day I faced my God
To account for all the sins I did
Searching for hope before I fall.

At some point in my writing
before my list was done
a hand touched my shoulder
like a father touches His son.

It was not a touch of anger
for the touch I barely knew
like feathers brushing against me
and the softness of a dove.

He stopped my hand from writing
so that I could see His face
and the burden that I carried
was lifted on that day.

The Angels sang a chorus
all heaven heard their sound
that a sinner had been saved
and salvation had been found.

Some days I turn to look
for a touch I surely felt
like a father touches His son
to tell him of his love.

My list was growing longer
and the sins were piling on
but my Lord has stopped my writing
like a father does for His son.

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.

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