

# 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 hal-low 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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## Dusty the Donkey

The highlight of my Christmas season was our Christmas Eve musical here at Asbury, *Dusty the Donkey Seeking His Destiny*. God was in the house at Asbury on Christmas Eve. The Holy Spirit was impacting lives and re-centering our attention on the reason that we



celebrate this holiday. While I am grateful for the coversalls that I unwrapped Christmas Day and I anticipate a

lot of use over the months to come, but hearing Cyndi and Morgan sing *Hallelueh, Light has Come*, accompanied by Gabriella on flute and Sylvia on piano, was an even greater gift. The gift-giving on Christmas Eve was divinely abundant.

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## 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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## Dusty the Donkey ...cont. from Page 1

Mary (played by Emily) singing her song of thanksgiving and praise along with Elizabeth (played by Sylvia) was beautiful. Joseph (played by Daniel Lopez) in both his character and his singing of *Noel* was inspiring. Line after line, song after song, the Holy Spirit was on the move and my heart was strangely warmed. From the goats played by Chasity and Felecia to Dusty (played by Terrance) and his momma donkey (played by Virginia) to the sheep (Amaree'a, Olivia and Nakita), each person on the stage contributed immensely to the spirit of our worship. We even had camels played by Josh Childers and Gale Reyna, along with Gabriel Reyna who played a baby camel.

The darker characters like King Herod and the Innkeeper (both played by Michele) presented a special reverence

## 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

to the presence of God. Shepherds (that included Gilbert Reyna, Louis and Tony), Wisemen (Tony Craig, Tom and Ron) added to the richness of the story. Mary's argument with her mom (Gale Deleon) and dad (Jim Craig) was precious as was the presence of Gabriel (Dennis Sykes) with the holy couple and the shepherds.

We had fun but it was the sort of fun that lasts much longer than a ride at Cedar Point. Perhaps the word "joy" is a good word for the fun we had. Joy is often used to express the feelings that come with the presence of the divine. And one thing for sure, God was present during our time of worship on Christmas Eve. And the only possible response to joy is worship. The sort of worship that we find in Psalm 148: *Let them all praise the name of the Lord! His name is greater*

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.

*than all others; his glory is above earth and heaven* (Psalm 148:13). Every part of creation is called to praise God — to worship the Lamb. And we did.

Thank you to all that participated, particularly Mark who provided the technical support on the sound board and elsewhere and Jermaine Davis on lighting and John Solano handled video. A special thanks to Gabriella for make-up and for Norma who worked on costumes with Terrance, Gale and Sylvia. And of course, we are all grateful to Terrance for his creative writing, his passion for excellence and his dedication to ensuring that every word had meaning.

Assisting Terrance with writing and directing was Sylvia Pittman, Asbury's Director of Empowerment Arts. Sylvia's creativity, teaching abilities and patience were present at all times. Most important, Sylvia's love for Jesus Christ and passion for empowering others to utilize the gifts and passions given to each of us for worship inspired us all.

Thank You Lord for everyone who came to Asbury on Christmas Eve and for blessing us with Your presence.

Pastor Tommy

COMMUNITY HELP CENTER

Our Community Help Center at Asbury UMC will be  
Closed during the week of December 24th.  
But will re-open on Wednesday, January 2, 2019  
with distribution of water from 10am-2pm

From Pastor Tommy McDoniel and the  
Asbury staff to you...



HAVE A SAFE AND THE BEST OF THE NEW  
YEAR TO COME!!

**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  
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE**

Sharon George	Mary Russell
Elaine Lamoreaux	Mary Nations



**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, *In-sight*, begins appropriately on the day we Christians call "Epiphany" Sunday (January 6). While most

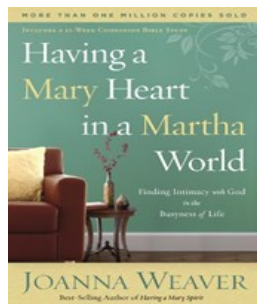
of our manger scenes include the astrologers from the East, commonly called the Wise-man, the reality is that they likely arrived afterwards.



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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 one 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**

**Dec 31 Mon**

**Jan 1 Tues**

**Jan 2 Wed 10am-2pm Water Distribution**

2Noon Pastor Book Club

6pm Beginners Bible Study

**Jan 3 Thu 6pm Worship Band Practice**

**Jan 4 Fri 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open**

**Jan 5 Sat**

**Jan 6 SUNDAY**

9:30am Café Opens

10:30am New Beginnings

Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship:**

**Attendance 31 Offering \$ 5,703**

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FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE ...

OUR VERY OWN TOM ALLEN WAS QUOTED IN AN ARTICLE TITLED,  
"EARTHKEEPERS BRING JOY TO THE WORLD" PUT OUT BY THE  
MICHIGAN CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER.



IF ANY ONE IS INTERESTED IN READING THIS ARTICLE,  
THERE ARE COPIES IN THE ASBURY CAFÉ!

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**WE WILL HAVE  
WATER DISTRIBUTION  
ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2ND,  
FROM 10AM TO 2PM  
AT ASBURY PARKING LOT...**

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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 MyFlintStones 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





# 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.

## 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.