

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Land of the Lost

"Lost" is one of those words that can have a lot of layers. There are a lot of us who don't want to admit that we are lost and so instead of asking for directions we drive around hopping to see something familiar that will help us to find



where we are going. The more practical among us would say that with the right preparation there is no reason to get lost. The more clever of us, when it comes to preparations, use GPS

which is available on most smart phones.

At home we joke that our dog, Duke, is the only dog in the neighborhood that needs a GPS to find his way home. The truth is that Gabriella put a small tracking device on Duke's collar so we can find him when he gets lost. Whether Duke is simply content with wherever he finds a food dish and a bed or he really does get disoriented when he leaves the yard, some of our neighbors have my cell number on speed dial. Fortunately, Duke is quite lovable.

The problem arises with advanced planning when, like Duke, we aren't really sure either of our destination or how to get there. A GPS

requires coordinates so that it can locate a precise point on the map. But what if we don't know the coordinates? What if all we have is a concept or an image? A vision?

Then there is the route. Which way do we turn out of our present location? Do we head west towards down town or south down Franklin? But for this article we will stick with the likelihood that we are at least know an initial direction. Or think we do. So we head out. And, like Duke, we oftentimes find ourselves in unfamiliar territory. Do we turn left here or right? It should depend on where we are trying to get to. And this can be the start of our problems.

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R U the One?

Our text for this Sunday's message is from Luke chapter 7. In this story, John the Baptizer is asking whether Jesus is the One or



should we expect another. Instead of a physical transfiguration of Jesus' body being the evidence of Jesus' divinity we read a summary of actions. Jesus responds to John's question with "*the blind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean, the deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor*" (Luke 7:22).

There is a joke about a man who was arrested for being a Christian. On the day of his trial the Judge dismissed all charges when the Prosecutor couldn't show a shred of evidence. "Are you the One?" John the Baptizer asked Jesus. The evidence speaks for itself. Jesus is the One that scripture told us would come. The evidence is clear. How about the evidence that your claim to be a Christ follower?

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Volume 19 Issue 10
March 10, 2019

Special points of interest:

>>> **2nd Annual Nutrition/Wellness Health Expo** to be held on Saturday, March 16th from 10am-2pm in the Asbury Fellowship Hall. (see enclosed flyer for more info)

>>> **Worship Design** will meet on Monday, March 11th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

>>> **Leadership Team** will meet on Monday, March 18th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

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R U the One? ...cont. from Page 1

Does the evidence prove without doubt that you follow the One you say that you follow?

It's confusing at times. We know that we are saved by our belief that Jesus Christ is Lord. We pray the sinner's prayer that Jesus will come into our life. We surrender our past mistakes, our faults, our misgivings to the One who died for the sin of the world. And we are saved. We are clean again. We are Christ followers. But now what?

Christ followers do what Christ did. Perhaps not everything Christ did. But at least some of the things He did. We are each gifted differently. Some of us are healers and we have seen miraculous healing take place after prayer. Perhaps we have helped a person come back from a path that would lead to certain death. Perhaps we have preached the good news to those who have not heard about Jesus Christ. Most of all, we love as Christ loved. Or at least we try to.

God sees through insincere prayer for God knows our heart. I wonder how many feel pressured into saying the sinner's prayer and it's like they have their fingers crossed behind their back. Perhaps, in the moment we believe that we are sincere. Perhaps we know that we have a long ways to go but our hope is that Christ will sort of meet us half way. And He does. But do we meet Christ even part way? Or do we conclude now that we are members of the club we can continue living our life as we did before, but guilt free?

When they came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask if you are the one he said was going to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Luke 7:20 GNT

In 1 John we find what it means to know God. We read that *Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love* (1 John 4:7b-8). Easy enough. Right? And when we love it shows. We do what love

does. Or at least we try. And sometimes we fail.

Left to our own power we fail to be that which Christ calls us to be. Turn control over to the Holy Spirit and the miraculous happens through us or even despite us. Try to control the details and we get results that don't look much like a miracle. We get that which we can do on our own, which may be good but falls short of that which we could never do on our own.

Fortunately, our place in the Kingdom of God does not depend on our report card. But our place does depend on our willingness to surrender all that we are holding onto to God. And when we do so we cannot help but love God by loving others. We are guilty of being a Christian and our conviction is certain. There will be a line of witnesses eager to tell all of the ways that our love can be visibly seen.

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Land of the Lost... cont. from page 1

We often think of our spiritual lives as a journey. Our journey usually begins with a grace that some call prevenient. That is, God seeks us out and we recognize that there is this source of power that we hunger to know more about. Sometimes we hear a testimony from a friend who talks in language that is unfamiliar but comforting. "I want what she has?" we say to ourselves. And our spiritual journey begins.

But where does our spiritual journey take us? Where are we headed? At best, we have a vision of a distant place. I like to call this place the Kingdom of God. The word kingdom for me offers some sense of concreteness. But where

is this kingdom? How do we get there? Perhaps someone invites us to a life group or to worship and our journey begins there.

We turned whatever direction our guide turned but at some point we are no longer with our guide. Perhaps they moved away or took a job, got married, or just went on vacation. Now what? For most of us, we start to feel lost. There are decisions to make but which one leads to the Kingdom of God and which one leads further away?

It may help if we first remind ourselves that we are not alone.

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Land of the Lost...cont. from page 2

And that there are a lot of people all around us who are in this state of lost. If we are fortunate, at this point we are reminded that God is always with us, so we may feel lost, but we are not alone. But what if we haven't exactly been hanging out where we believe God hangs out?

Most may not want to admit that they are lost. We hear phrases like "I am spiritual but not religious" or "I don't think that it is necessary to go to church" which are sure signs of a person who is not willing to admit that they are lost. Perhaps the most lost are the philosophers. "I'm not sure I believe in an all powerful deity (God)" citing logical explanations while their soul hungers for someone willing to call them on their bluff. Lost persons tend to stay in one place spiritually. Many have stopped searching for clues that might help them determine where they are and how to get to where they hope to be.

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In Our Prayers

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|----------------------|-------------------|
| 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 |

R U the One?...cont. from page 2

Are you guilty of following the One who loved you so much that He gave Himself so that You can live? Is the evidence clear? For most of us, the case is not so clear. There may be a few witnesses, mostly our closest friends. But there are plenty of witnesses who cast doubt on our sincerity.

In this same letter of 1 John we are reminded that if we are honest with each other we do fall short. And we know it. But we don't give in to the temptation to give up. We pray the sinner's prayer over and over again, and each time our sincerity is a bit more real. A bit more authentic. And we readily confess. We are who we say we are. We are children of God, Christ followers, lovers of all creation. And when our spirit surrenders to the power of God's Holy Spirit, the evidence is clear.

This message brings our worship series, *Love does*, to a close. The Season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. We will meet for worship and celebration on March 6 at 6 PM. Our new series is titled *Multiply*.

Fortunately, our place in the Kingdom of God does not depend on our report card. But our place does depend on our willingness to surrender all that we are holding onto to God.

You won't need to brush up on your math but keep your Bible near by. Christ followers spread the love that Christ offers to all persons. And when we do so, others join us, like a movement that gathers momentum week by week until the numbers seem to multiply. Come join our movement and we will follow Christ together.

Pastor Tommy



→ WATER DISTRIBUTION ←

There will be a water distribution on Friday, March 22nd in the Asbury parking lot from 3:00-7:00pm...We will still have our water distribution on Tuesday March 19th , from 10am-2pm, as usual.



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs



Asbury Worship Series Multiply Be Fruitful and Multiply

We move from our February worship series, Love does, into the Season of Lent. A time when we prepare for our Easter celebration. The Season of Lent is generally a time of reflection. Winter will soon come to an end. The Asbury Farm team is busy germinating

transplants in anticipation of longer and warmer days. The Spring flowers will soon emerge from overwintering as bulbs. We associate the Season of Spring with new birth when creation seems to *Multiply*.

Jesus was a *Multiplier*. He multiplied in his "doing". Jesus equipped His followers to do the same. And then Jesus sent them out to tell others and to multiply the Kingdom

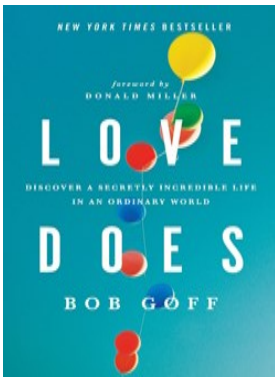
of God. Jesus often used metaphors in His teaching that are found in the multiplication of creation.

I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit.

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Book Club News

Our next book for discussion at our weekly Book Club is *Love Does* by Bob Goff. This book is an easy read and a great joy that is hard to put down. Bob's view of life comes through the pages and his literary skills allow his readers to feel a part of the action. And a part of the life lessons.



See Pastor Tommy, contact the office, or just show up for Book Club to receive a copy. A donation of \$10 is encouraged for each book and we appreciate any help with purchasing books for those unable to pay for

one. Please refrain from taking a copy if you don't intend to read and discuss the book with us. Copies are readily available through Amazon and other sellers.

Bob writes that he keeps his office on Tom Sawyer Island at Disney World. Sporting a season pass he spends time in a place where many people who visit Disney World don't bother. One travel guide listed Tom Sawyer Island as an oasis within the madness of long lines, crowds and the hot sun. But our writer uses this getaway as a metaphor for missing out.

Tom Sawyer Island is no amusement ride. You bring your imagination to the attraction. And apparently it is one of those attractions that most visitors to Disney World leave on their "if I get around to it" list and they are fresh out of "round tuits" and pass — and miss out on an adventure. "Tom Sawyer Island is like most people's lives, I think: they never get around to crossing over to it" writes Bob Goff.

In his assessment of "people" the writer brings the words and stories of Jesus into his analysis as well as his own journey that began with a couple of believers who seemed to live out their faith to a relatively unimpressive high school student. While Jesus told parables and stories to illustrate truth Jesus also spoke plainly about a lot of very important topics. For one, Jesus made

it clear to the people around Him that it isn't enough to just look like you love God. Instead, Jesus pointed out that the way to tell how much we love God is by how well we love people.

Let's face it. People can be hard to love at times. But if we truly believe that God created us and wants what is best for us, this makes God rather easy to love. And I suspect a lot of people — most people stop there. They love God but not so much God's people. And let's face it, church people can be hard to love. But this isn't the point.

Perhaps this is one of the challenges for those who don't believe that God lived among people as Jesus Christ. They may even like Jesus but they don't care much for what Jesus told them they needed to do. In one of the stories Jesus tells a young man with a lot of belongings that he needed to get rid of his stuff. It must have been getting in the way of the young man loving others. He went away sad we read. Most of us go away sad at the thought of giving something up.

Bob takes the Gospel seriously by living whimsically. A contradiction? Not really. We can never quite know what God is up to so even our best laid plans may get interrupted by a God request. Are we willing to drop everything, or sell everything, or just change our mind about what we plan to do tomorrow? This is how love does.

Since God is insistent that we love one another, this state of feelings toward another person we call "love" must move from a noun to a verb. We do because we love. We go because we love. We respond because we love. This all looks quite whimsical to the world outside the Kingdom of God. But this is how love does.

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— Be Fruitful and Multiply ... Cont. from page 4

In John chapter 15, Jesus says "I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will bear much fruit" (John 15:5). Within each seed exists an entire field. An entire orchard. Jesus teaches us to think of multiplying Himself through us into others.

This Seasons of Lent we will prepare for our Easter celebration by reading and studying a few of Jesus' teachings on farming. Our theme scripture begins with Jesus as the vine and each of us branches. We will work along with the Asbury Farm team in sowing seeds that will produce the nutrition that we need to live. And perhaps we will find that we are all farmers who follow Christ. For each of us is an orchard that produces fruit which results in still more fruit.

Join us each Sunday. Easter is right around the corner and our Empowerment Arts team is working on a special presentation for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. More to come. Let's Multiply the Kingdom together. Let's sow seeds of love together. And we will become a movement that continues to multiply and to flourish.

Pastor Tommy

Book Club News.. Cont from page 4

Author Donald Miller, writes this about his friend and colleague, "Bob Goff loves people with a force that is natural, and by natural I mean like nature, like a waterfall or wind or waves on the ocean. He loves effortlessly, as though love packs annually in snow on a mountain, melting and rushing through him in an infinite loop. There's no explanation for a man who can love this well save God. I think Bob Goff knows God, and I think God's love flows through him."

The review on Amazon writes that "When Love Does life gets interesting. Each day turns into a hilarious, whimsical, meaningful chance that makes faith simple and real. Each chapter is a story that forms a book, a life. And this is one life you don't want to miss. Light and fun, unique and profound, the lessons drawn from Bob's life and attitude just might inspire you to be secretly incredible, too."

Jason Russell, Co-founder of Invisible Children writes "If all people loved the way Bob Goff loves all people, the world would change overnight. In this book, he reminds us of the truest virtue the kingdom calls us to practice: Love Does. It's active. The Jesus we serve is surprising and subversive. Bob knows this because he himself is both paradoxically wise as a wizard and as joy-filled as a toddler."

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

* Goff, Bob. *Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012.

- Coming up this week -

- Mar 11 Mon** 6pm Worship Design
- Mar 12 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
- Mar 13 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6pm Beginners Bible Study
- Mar 14 Thu** 6pm Worship Band Practice
- Mar 15 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
6pm Asbury Youth Group
- Mar 16 Sat** 10am-2pm Health Expo
- Mar 17 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship:
Attendance 30 Offering \$ 916

HOLY WEEK

March 6—Ash Wednesday



April 14—Palm Sunday



April 18—Holy Thursday

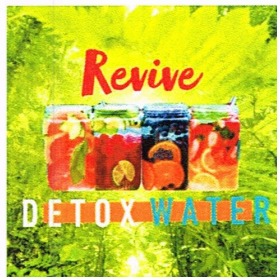
April 19 – Good Friday



April 21 –Easter Sunday







NORTHSIDE SOCCER LEAGUE

2nd Annual



Nutrition, Wellness and Health Expo

Prizes

Saturday, March 16th, 2019

Music

Yoga@11:30

Food

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Mindfulness

Asbury U.M.C., 1653 Davison Rd.



Ask a Dietician



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

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it.

Luke 15:4-7 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the story in Luke about the shepherd leaving the 99 sheep to search for the one that is lost. Have you ever felt lost or at least uncertain where you stand with God? Describe your feelings? Are there similarities in your group's answers?
2. If you have been a churchgoer for a long time how do you feel when you read about Jesus putting so much emphasis on persons who are not in church? Can you see yourself helping to find the lost? Inviting persons who do not attend a church to start coming either to Asbury or attending some other church?
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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E-mail: FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com
CircuitRider@FlintAsbury.org

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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.

Land of the Lost... cont. from page 3

A lot of people who are spiritually lost have been hurt by church people and will try to avoid being found. They want to avoid being hurt again. Who wants to be found by someone who may hurt you all over again. Others are simply disappointed by religion that has proven over and over that it is a human-made institution with all of the shortcomings that keep people away. If this describes you then we need to talk. I can't undo what someone before me has done but I can assure you of one thing. You are welcomed here no matter what your situation.

So what does this mean to us? Those of us who believe that while we may not know our exact location we do not feel lost. We don't feel lost because we believe that we, as followers of Jesus, while we may not know our next turn just yet, we will. And Christ will lead us around the pitfalls and helps us to avoid or eliminate the obstacles in our path. We are not lost, we claim, because we know that the Kingdom of God is where we live.

But when we follow Jesus Christ we are compelled to find the lost and to invite them to be found. Not by us but by our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is a lot like going back to the *Land of the lost*. And who wants to go back there? No one. But we are compelled to do so because we know the way back.

We can help others who are spiritually lost to find their way to the Kingdom of God and Jesus equips us to do just that. We are the search party that is empowered and sent out to find the lost. This is how *Multiply* works at the basic level. Each of us helping someone find their way back to Christ and they in turn helping others.

The Gospels offer stories about lost persons and lost things. From sheep to coins to people. The point of these stories point to the importance of searching out the lost that they can be found and return into relationship with Jesus Christ. Our text this week is from Luke. Jesus tells a story about a keeper of sheep who realizes that one of the sheep are lost.

So a search is conducted until the sheep is found and then there is a party to celebrate.

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it.

Luke 15:4 GNT

Jesus tells us that the Kingdom of God is like that. When one is lost they are searched for until they are found. And there is a great celebration. Likewise, Jesus sends out all of His disciples, that's you and I, out to share the good news that the Kingdom of God is near and the path to find it is not difficult. We are the multipliers who invite those who are living outside of the Kingdom to come home. And there will be great celebration.

Pastor Tommy