

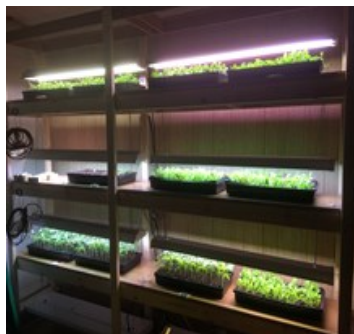
ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Seeds (culturally relevant planting)

The staff and volunteers that tend to the Asbury Farm are busy preparing for planting. Some of the rows to be planted currently have winter crops that either need to be harvested or plowed under before re-planting. Some rows are waiting to be tilled and we will add compost that is rich in nutrients before planting. Some of the rows are ready to go. Preparation is important in order to get a productive harvest. Each row is an investment in soil amendments, seeds and labor. Plants, like people, flourish in healthy environments and do less well in unhealthy environments.

Different families of plants differ from one another in what makes for a healthy environment. They



Asbury Germination Room

may require a different mix of nutrients. . Some plants do better in soil that is alkaline while others, like blueberries, flourish in acidic soil. Some plants require large amounts of nitrogen while others may require more potassium. Different cultivars within plant families also vary in the amount of sunlight, temperature variations and soil conditions.

A few of us in the Asbury family have taken courses and volunteered in our community through our local MSU Extension office and received “Master Gardener” certification. In my case, I discovered how little I know about plants. So in this regard this training was valuable to our farm team since I’m not trying to tell them how to get the best results. In fact, many of our decisions are made in consultation with each other and other experts from our local conservation office and other sources of experience and expertise. Our goal is to provide the most hospitable and relevant environment for our seeds so that they become healthy plants.

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Flight School (Teaching others to fly)

I was a young adult when I first attended flight school. Learning to fly consists of both in the air learning and instruction while safely on the ground. Learning to fly begins with actually experiencing the thrill of taking the controls of an airplane to make sure that this is really something that you can see yourself doing on your own. And to motivate you to say yes to the cost of the instruction. I really appre-

ciated ground school because there was so much variety in the lessons from weather to mechanics and from law to physics.



A pilot needs a well-rounded education on a variety of topics which affect an airplane and the safety of passengers that the pilot can apply in live situations. Most of the training is not needed for a beautiful day when everything is going right. The training is needed for bad days when everything goes wrong.

In my first venture into flying I was blessed to have an instructor who was about the same age as me, and fearless. Nothing seemed to rattle Jack. I remember one lesson when we were working on power

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Volume 19 Issue 24
March 24, 2019

Special points of interest:

>>> **Worship Design** will meet on Monday, March 25th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

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Flight School (Teaching others to fly)...cont. from page 1

stall recovery I managed to put our small t-tail trainer plane into an unstable configuration, flight-wise, and within seconds the nose broke (pointed down abruptly) and we entered a high speed spiral. Jack calmly asked me to let go of the controls, grabbed the controls on his side, hit the pedal on the opposite side of our rotation and with great skill and precision, regained control of the airplane. As we leveled off over Lakes St Clair at a considerably lower altitude than where we started, Jack said in a calm voice "That was fun. Now let's try that again."

Jack taught me how to be a safe pilot by showing me what being a good pilot looked like through what he did, explaining to me how to do the maneuvers that make for safe flying and allowing me to make my own mistakes while in the safety of his reassuring presence. Jack's ability to be the kind of pilot that he was teaching me to be saved my life more than once after I had my own pilot's license and went on to fly over a thousand hours on my own, oftentimes carrying passengers with me. This is what a good teacher does.

Have you ever had to learn something that was difficult and starting out you knew

that you were bound to mess it up even trying? High school chemistry class or even biology comes to mind for me. And more recently transplanting tomato plants or trying to reach a particularly high note in front of a lot of people. We have all found ourselves facing a new experience that we haven't faced before and hoping that we can find a teacher, like Jack, who rather than criticize our attempts, he or she calmly show us, by example, a way to learn and do.

I marvel at the way that Jesus taught His disciples and how He continues to teach us. Discipleship is a combination of ground school and doing. Making mistakes and learning from them. And all the time knowing that Jesus is right next to us, ready to take the controls if we start to spin out of control and teaching us how to save lives as a result of our learning. And the results are worth it. In the process of doing what we learn we save lives including our own.

I like the comparison of flight school with teaching others about the Kingdom of God. First, Jack didn't pick me as a student and I didn't pick him to be my instructor. It

was the "luck of the draw" or at least this is how it appears. I now realize that God had a lot to do with this seemingly chance meeting. And I haven't stayed in touch with Jack. Discipling is oftentimes like this. Someone seems to randomly show up and we are the one who is expected to teach them about discipleship. We didn't choose them and they didn't choose us. It was the "divine luck of the draw" so to speak that brings us together in the same airplane.

When I attended flight school, Jack wasn't my ground school instructor. This job went to another, more experienced person, who knew the FAR's (Federal Aviation Recommendations), laws affecting pilots, weather, and all of the various subjects that make up a comprehensive knowledge of flying. This instructor's goal was to prepare me with the head knowledge to both pass the flight exam and to help me learn what I needed to know to prepare for a flight and to safely pilot the airplane.

Discipleship works the same way. There are ground school courses such as Bible Study, Book Club, and small groups, just to name a few.

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Seeds... cont. from page 1

I realize that my experience and training lies more in matters concerning our faith in God and how this should affect how we live. But there is a powerful connection between horticulture and faith. Jesus was a "Master Gardener" extraordinaire. With so much "insider" information I believe that Jesus was careful to teach practical lessons so that all of us can benefit. Jesus was a *multiplier*. His mission in part was to invite others into the Kingdom of God. A mission that Jesus gives to every believer.

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus uses an example from farming as a way to illustrate a few challenges facing us in multiplying the kingdom of God. And in our

text for this week, Jesus uses seeding as His metaphor for the good news that is the Gospel. That all persons are invited to live and be a part of God's Kingdom. You all are invited.

Jesus tells us about a farmer who went to seed a field of grain. Seeding grain is different than seeding most of the vegetables that we grow on the Asbury Farm. We use rows and vary the number of plants in each row based on how much space the plant needs to flourish. We plant lettuce, such as arugula, a very favorable and popular variety, with 5 to 6 rows within a row and the seeds close together. Grain, such as wheat, may be

planted even closer together and instead of spaces between rows, the seed covers all of the area to be planted. The hope in all cases is for the plants to have the best environment for multiplying the harvest.

Jesus explains that the farmer spread the seed, in this case by hand, the seed landed in different sorts of soil conditions. Not all the seeds fell in good

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Seeds...cont. from page 2

soil and produced an abundant crop including seed for the next season's planting. Jesus explains that some of the seeds actually fell on the path. Perhaps the wind caught the seeds and took them there. Some of the seeds fell among unfriendly terrain where there was more rocks than soil or where there were aggressive plants that prevented the seeds from reaching their potential.

As he scattered the seed in the field, some of it fell along the path, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it up. Some of it fell on rocky ground, and when the plants sprouted, they dried up because the soil had no moisture. Some of the seeds fell among thorn bushes, which grew up with the plants and choked them. And some seeds fell in good soil; the plants grew and bore grain, one hundred grains each.

Jesus goes on to interpret His story for His followers suggesting that this was a very important lesson that we all need to understand. I believe that Jesus wanted to punctuate that the Gospel is so important for humankind that all persons must hear the good news in a way that is relevant for them. And this is where *multiply* comes in — this is where you and I fit into God's plan.

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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

Flight School ...cont. from page 2

Most times there is an experienced instructor who has lived the life of a disciple for a long time. Long enough to realize that they still have a lot to learn and to recognize that being a disciple requires lifelong learning for all of us. The world does not sit still but continues to change day after day. And we find ourselves in new circumstances with new students sometimes when we least expect it.

When a person becomes a pilot they take on the responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. Passengers need instruction too so they will know their role in safely getting to their destination. A pilot is also responsible for persons on the ground who would rather not have an airplane crash into their home or land next to them on the expressway. A pilot is a lifelong learner and teacher.

When we become a disciple we take on the responsibility of teaching others. And most of our teaching is done without being consciously aware that we are being watched. One of the last things that Jesus told His disciples are the same instructions that He gives to us. Jesus tells us that we are to teach others about the Kingdom of God. We might not be a ground instructor. Most of us teach while in the air. That is, we teach in how we live life. We show others how to be a disciple by our worship, how we treat others, how we treat ourselves and how we treat our planet.

“Go, then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20 GNT

While this may sound like a lot of pressure, this is where having the ultimate instructor comes in. Jesus never leaves our side. He is a constant companion. We teach through our actions but we have the ultimate Teacher with us always. This was what Jesus promised. That He will always be with us no matter where we travel to. Even if we fly to the other side of the planet, He is right next to us, ready to take the controls and keeping us from crashing.

It doesn't matter if you are an experienced instructor or never stepped into a church. There is a place waiting for you here at Asbury. Sooner or later we all face circumstances that causes our heart to race. We face loss, we face unpleasant change, we face adventure. Why not be prepared? Why face it alone? Eventually, we face our own death. Why face it unsure if anything happens next?

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is the most rewarding, the most joyful, the most life-changing and life-giving experience available on the planet or anywhere else. Come and join other disciples here at Asbury and learn what it means to be a disciple of Christ. We are all connected in ways that bind us together into a beautiful tapestry that is a community of abundant life.

It doesn't matter if you are an experienced instructor or never stepped into a church. There is a place waiting for you in the Kingdom of God.

Our current worship series here at Asbury is titled *Multiply*. Come and learn how God's Kingdom is unfolding before our very eyes and how God multiplies our blessings. Worship is each Sunday at 10:30 am. Our Café opens at 10 and you are welcome to join us for a short ground school lesson (Bible study) at 9:30 am in the Café.

Pastor Tommy



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

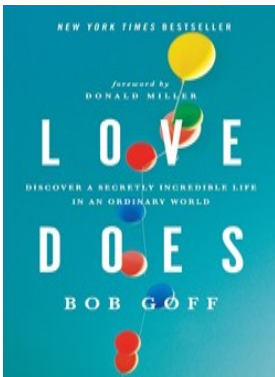
of God. Jesus often used metaphors in His teaching that are found in the multiplication of creation.

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 25 Mon** 5pm Youth Choir
6pm Worship Design
7pm Flint Jubilee
- Mar 26 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
7pm Community Gospel Choir
- Mar 27 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6pm Beginners Bible Study
- Mar 28 Thu** 6pm Worship Band Practice
- Mar 29 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
6pm Asbury Youth Group
- Mar 31 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship
Attendance 33 Offering \$ 609

HOLY WEEK

April 14—Palm Sunday



April 18—Holy Thursday

April 19 – Good Friday



April 21 – Easter Sunrise

Easter Sunday





2019 LENTEN SERVICES

Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate ...”

Joel 2:12-13a



TIME:	<u>4:30PM</u>	HOST CHURCH
DATE:		(REFRESHMENTS AFTER SERVICE)
March 17		Asbury 1653 Davison Rd, Flint MI 48506
March 24		Atherton 4010 Lippincott Blvd, Burton MI 48519
March 31		Calvary 2111 Flushing Rd Flint MI 48504
April 7		Bethel 1309 N Ballenger Hwy, Flint MI 48504

Join us for a time of sacred reflection on Sundays at 4:30pm, to share our faith as we wait, with great expectation, for the Resurrected Jesus the Christ!

Jesus said, “The time has come, The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Mark 1:15

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

Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the instructions that Jesus give us in Matthew 28:19-20. In what ways do Jesus' instructions connect with you? Do you teach others about Jesus? If so, in what ways do you do this? If not, what are some things that are holding you back?
2. Paul writes about spiritual gifts and points out that we are not all teachers. If your gift is not teaching then how does Jesus' instructions apply to you? Consider your story about how you came to know Jesus? Share your story with your group. Can you now imagine sharing your story with others? This is one way that we teach others — through our stories. The other, more effective way is through our actions. When others see how we treat them they learn what we believe following Christ looks like in our daily lives. How might this lesson affect how you treat others in the future?
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

1653 Davison Rd
Flint, MI 48506



Phone: 810-235-0016
Fax: 810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)
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.

Seeds . . . cont. from page 3

The seed, Jesus says, is the Word of God. The good news that God loves all of us and wants us to live as God's beloved. A kingdom of peace and joy that exceeds anything that we could build for ourselves. And God lived among people to deliver this good news in person! But sadly, not everyone hears the good news in the same way. This is where cultural relevant planting comes into the picture.

There is a further complication in farming that our farm team pays attention to when planning where plants will go. If the same crop is planted in the same soil year after year, the yield gets less each year as the nutrients required by the particular plant variety is used up. Large factory farms will use chemical additives to address this — a human made solution to the problem which has proven to be harmful to the planet and to us. We instead, rotate our crops. This adds critical diversity to our farm that strengthens our soil and produces healthier plants.

It is sad when a community of faith stops being fertile soil for people who are not the same as them. It is the opposite of "crop rotation" and the community (the soil) becomes depleted of the nutrients needed for healthier growth. Adding "chemicals" is a metaphor for the various shallow attempts that churches in this situation make that are toxic to the seed. The environment becomes like the pathway, or the rocks or the thorns in Jesus' illustration and

new people are unable to hear the good news and thus are unable to thrive. And the whole kingdom suffers.

To do culturally relevant planting is to open ourselves up to diversity. To recognize that each and every person that we meet is also God's beloved but may need a different mix of nutrients to flourish. One way to begin to prepare our soil (our community) is to forget the idea that our own needs must be met first. For example, a church building that looks like a memorial to those who came before us is not hospitable. While respectful, this is not inviting to someone who doesn't look like the pictures on our walls.

Likewise, our artwork that illustrates how our ancestors viewed Jesus may not be relevant to someone with a different heritage. None of us really know what Jesus looked like but all of us prefer an image of Jesus that makes Him look like a relative. The irony is that none of this is relevant in the Kingdom of God. Each of us already looks like a relative because each of us was created in the image of God. But as long as we look only at the outside we miss the image of God found on the inside and it's what is on the inside that matters.

Cultural relevant planting goes beyond where our grand parents were born or where we grow up. Diversity runs much deeper. For example, while most of us believe that our gender

matches our physical bodies the truth is that we are misinformed. Gender for everyone of us is a mix of male and female. This makes sense when we consider that God is described as both male and female depending on which attributes we reference. God's attributes that suggest power is presented as male, while the attributes of God as wisdom and God as creator are presented in a feminine context.

How is our preparations for planting seeds? That is, how prepared are we for sharing the Word of God — the good news of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God? Are we inviting all persons because they are our neighbors - they reside in our mission field? If so, we are certain to have a healthy farm (community). But if we insist on scattering seed without intention of cultural relevance then we will miss out on all that God has in store for us.

At Asbury we invite all persons to be a part of God's kingdom regardless of how God chose to create you. This means more than just inviting persons who identify with LBGTQ or with any other letters. At Asbury, you are not a letter. You are a child of God. And you are welcomed here.

Join us each Sunday at 10:30 am for Spirit-filled worship. A few of us meet in the Asbury Café at 9:30 to discuss the day's scripture before worship. Come join us.

Pastor Tommy