ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Fearless (Trusting God enough to do)

Meet Greta Thunberg. Greta describes herself as that introverted girl who sits in the back of the room and never says anything. She simply felt that she was too small and that her voice didn't matter. Greta is quite unusual for a teenager. Actually, Greta is quite unusual for an adult, in terms of the courage that she exhibits.

It's not that Greta didn't have some of the key ingredients that might offer her more confidence than she showed. Greta's mother is an opera singer, and her father is an actor who was coincidently, named after a scientist who is credited for discovering how to measure the greenhouse effect that comes from an increasing level of carbon dioxide in

our atmosphere.



Greta is actually quite smart. Diagnosed with Asperger's four years ago perhaps this explains in part why she sometimes has difficulty with just letting things go. Children diagnosed with this form of autism characteristically exhibit repetitive interest, are intelligent and may exhibit speaking that can be a bit odd. Fortunately for all of us, Greta found her voice and is fearless enough

to speak truth to people substantially more powerful than Greta and all of her friends. At least we believe they are more powerful. Greta thinks that they are cowards.

Greta lives in Sweden and gained international attention when she successfully initiated a school strike among not only her classmates, but a strike that extended even beyond the borders of Sweden to over 70 countries. Greta was a 15 year old High School student when she shocked the world with her United Nations speech calling for environmental justice. What this young teenager did that day was the equivalent of "turning over the tables of the money changers."

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After deciding on a title for this week's message that I hope will ground us in the importance of that which we need to understand. I recalled a movement that began in East Los Angeles with the calling of a Priest named Greg Boyle. This man whom God chose to use could not get past the devastating impact of gang violence on his community. This so called "decade of death" began in the late 1980s and peaked at 1,000 gang-related killings in 1992. Sometimes it takes a "tipping point" before we can hear God's voice clearly.

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Volume 19 Issue 7 April 7, 2019

Special points of interest:

- >>> Worship Design will meet on Monday, April 8th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.
- >>> Leadership Team will meet on Monday April 15th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

Homeboy (Raising up leaders)

When I am feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of what we are attempting to accomplish at Asbury I look for ways to find some perspective that can assure me that we aren't as crazy as it seems. Reading about other movements that have accomplished even more than what we have within our sights is one way that I find comfort. Usually I begin with scripture that reminds me that God is good all the time and before long the Spirit has sent me to a website or a testimony or a book. God has done amazing things wherever faithful people have dared to trust God with their dreams and egos.



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ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER Page 2

Homeboy (Raising up leaders)...cont. from page 1

Father Greg's approach was simple. What began in 1988 as a way of offering gang members an alternative lifestyle in East Los Angeles has today become a blueprint for over 250 organizations and social enterprises around the world, from Alabama and Idaho, to Guatemala and Scotland. The Global Homeboy Network is a group of like-minded organizations committed to impacting the lives of people living in their communities.

Homeboy's recent testimony is from Johnny Gomez whose probation finally ended in 2010. Johnny now serves on the Homeboy Fire Crew while also training to become a welder. "This day feels really good," Johnny shares, "I had always been on and off, in and out of prison. But, not anymore thanks to Homeboy. This place has helped me to stay busy, to stay working, and to stay clean. Following the program has taken me a long way." I don't know about you but the job's "fire crew" and "welder" caught my attention. Remember this is a neighborhood nonprofit just like Asbury. The lesson is that Job creation is not just for companies out to make as much money as they can.

In fact, the term "non-profit" is an unfortunate label for an organization that hopes to make a difference in a community. The distinction between Asbury and "for-profit" com-

panies is that 100% of our income goes back into the neighborhood. We don't have a group of already wealthy shareholders expecting that we will stuff more money into their bank accounts. We still need to ensure that what we do is sufficiently valued by our community that we can create jobs and pay employees. Meanwhile, like Homeboy Industries, Asbury could someday have a global presence. For now, we are quite happy hanging with our local homeboys.

A key focus for Asbury are the youth who live in our neighborhood. During the school year we offer two programs for youth. One is called Identity. This group meets on Wednesday evenings. This is one example of what we call "Life Groups" because through reading and conversations on subjects that matter to our youth they grow in their understanding of how Christ can make a difference in their lives. On Thursday evenings, youth are invited to participate in a Life Group that utilizes popular board and card games as a way to teach soft skills. The youth have fun while learning to utilize skills that will help them in the real world.

These are just two examples of how Asbury is responding to our call to raise up leaders. Frankly, every program that we offer provides opportunities for individuals of all ages to learn and to utilize leadership abilities. This is one of the key building blocks of a strong community. Good leaders know that as leaders we are following, supporting and standing with others as much as we are leading. Leading is not about being in charge. Leading is a way of life that brings our gifts and passions inline with the needs of our community.

Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined houses.

Isaiah 58:12 GNT

Working on the Asbury Farm, the Community Help Center or in the Asbury Café are three other ways that our community can become a part of the Asbury movement. While we currently have only a handful of paid employees we have to begin somewhere. And frankly we have come a long ways. We will need lots of leaders and raising up leaders from within our neighborhood is a priority for us. And remember we offer MyFlintStones tokens to volunteers that can be exchange for a meal in our café or fresh produce. Check it out at MyFlint-Stones.org.

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Fearless... cont. from page 1

But she didn't do this in a church where friends and family would willingly show her love and support. Greta turned over the tables in the assembly of the United Nations. What does it take for us to have the sort of courage that we are willing to risk embarrassment, rejection, humiliation and attacks from people with a lot more power than us?

We say that we trust God but our actions don't verify our claim. We say that we depend on God but we are more selfreliant than God-reliant in what we do. We say that we know that God will take care of us but our anxiety levels suggest otherwise.

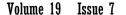
Trusting other people can be easier than trusting God and most of us don't recall trust other people all that much. Yet God requires that we trust our lives to Him alone. And the truth is that we really don't have a choice but we struggle to admit our dependence and live it out.

Trusting other people can be easier than trusting God and most of us don't really trust other people all that much.

We read in Matthew that the whole city

was thrown into an uproar when Jesus arrive in Jerusalem. If something like this happened today the evening news would be interrupting regularly scheduled programming and viewers would be glued to their iPhones wondering whether the militia would be called in to put an end to the disruption. Jesus' picture and soundbites would be used to invite the public to consume more media coverage and of course, to also patronize the advertisers paying for the cost of coverage. If something like this happened today it would a media extravaganza.

Page 3



Fearless..cont. from page 2

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And just when His followers thought that it might be wise to bring it down a notch, Jesus takes the volume to full power. He goes into the Temple courts and seals His fate with those who have benefited from the exploitation of the poor. "This man must be stopped," must have been shouted by anyone caught in the crosshairs of Jesus' drive to restore divine injustice.

We read in Matthew that Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all

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In Our Prayers

Curtis Young Christopher Lewis Rachel Bastine Sarah Tanner Elizabeth Wright Norma Buzzard 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

Homeboy...cont. from page 2

But leaders do not just work during the week. Leaders know that the source of their knowledge and strength is our Creator God. I have found that the best leaders are humble for they realize that they are not their own creation. Rather, they are God's creation. And good leaders know this and respond accordingly.

God, speaking through the Prophet Isaiah, must have had movements like Asbury in mind. We read that: If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry (Isaiah 58:9b-11 GNT).

Today too many of our political leaders have convinced themselves that their capabilities come from their own determination and intelligence. Yet they aren't smart enough to know different or their egos have enslaved them. God didn't give us a specific plan but we have a clear direction. And our guideposts come from the Author of our plans.

God chose to live among people and to live by example. We can learn a lot about leadership from Jesus. Just as important, Jesus continues to teach His followers through the presence of His Holy Spirit. We are never alone and we are never on our own. Good leaders turn first to God as the source of their gifts and inspiration. And scripture offers a library of lessons about leading and about life.

So leading is also setting an example for others in our devotion to the One who we owe everything to. Wherever they choose to worship, leaders will give praise to God and will worship, not because they expect others are watching, but because they truly love God. Leaders know where the source of their life is coming from.

So raising up leaders begins with an invitation to learn more about Jesus Christ. While there is necessarily lots of conversation along the way, before a person can move from mediocrity to excellence they will submit themselves to God's transforming love.

Persons holding onto the idea that they are somehow in control of their lives and outcomes will fail to reach the heights that leaders who follow Christ will achieve.

While I don't know Greg Boyle personally I am certain that he knows Jesus Christ personally. How about you? In an interview with Faith and Leadership, Boyle said "We operate as if there are people out there who don't belong to us. Ask Jesus to identify somebody who doesn't belong to us, you're going to get a big fat zero. Jesus will not be able to come up with a name." Read this quote again and again until you know that all persons really means all persons. There is too much hate language that comes out of the mouths of both believers and non-believers. When this happens I can't tell them a part.

In this same interview when asked how Homeboy Industries got to be such a massive movement Boyle answered humbly that "And the truth is, nobody would have thunk this up. I certainly didn't. But you evolve, and you walk backwards into things, and the next thing you know, 'Oh my God, here we are. How did that happen? How did we get to a place like this?'" When we follow Jesus Christ things happen that are unexplainable and could never have happened without divine provisioning.

Leading, when it comes to our worship, involves numerous jobs from greeting persons upon their arrival to making sure that person new to Asbury are connected with others from our faith community with whom they may share common concerns. Our worship team is looking for at least thirty people to become leaders for our weekly worship service. We have been praying that you will join us.

Worship at Asbury is at 10:30 am each Sunday. The Café opens at 10 and we have a short Bible study in the Café at 9:30. Join us. If you are new to Asbury be sure to grab a *First Time Here* card and a *Connect* card. And check us out on the web at FlintAsbury.org. I look forward to seeing you at worship.

Pastor Tommy

The background on Homeboy Industries and Father Greg Boyle comes from HomeboyIndustries.org and an article from Faith and Leadership found on the web at: https://www.faithandleadership.com/gregory-boyle-save-world-gregory-it

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

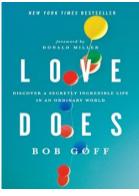
of God. Jesus often used metaphors in His teaching that are found in the multiplication of creation.

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

> > Page 5

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

Christine & Norma

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium,
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Mark
Children Mirium & Emily
Worship Leaders Cyndi

Café

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Mark Vorenkamp Children & Youth

Sylvia Pittman Worship Arts
Jim Craig Leadership Chair
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. Volume 19 Issue 7 Fage 5

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

- Coming up this week -

Mon 5pm Youth Choir Apr 8 7pm Flint Jubilee Tues 10am-2pm Water Distribution Apr 9 7pm Community Gospel Choir Apr 10 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club Beginners Bible Study 6pm 6pm Youth Group Apr 11 Thu 4:30-6pm Gaming as Education 6pm Worship Band Practice Apr 12 Fri 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open Asbury Youth Group 6pm 10am-12N Japanese Jiu Jitsi Apr 13 Sat

Apr 14 Sun 10am-12N Japanese Jiu Jitsi

Apr 14 SUNDAY

9:30am Café Opens 10:30am New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

Last Week for Worship
Attendance 28 Offering \$ 447

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 joyfilled 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.

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



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 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

GARDEN SALAD

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

MUFFINS

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

STIR FRY

Local grown garden vegetables sautéed with love and herbs

WRAPS

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

SMOOTHIE

Assorted flavors of the day

COFFEE

Regular or decaf

Volume 19 Issue 7

Life Group Questions & Notes

"If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry. Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined houses."

Isiah 58:8-12 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP					
					
					

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read Isiah 58:8-12. What images come to mind? In what ways does this text appeal to you? Where do you see yourself in this text?
- 2. The Kingdom of God needs leaders who know the source of the capabilities and inspiration, and leaders who lead by example. Strong leaders worship God regularly. Missing worship creates a void in their life that nothing else can fill. Are you a leader? If not, what is missing that keep you from leading by example? Perhaps you are a leader after all. Let God decide.

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

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID FLINT, MICHIGAN PERMIT #151



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.

Fearless..Trusting God enough to do cont. from

those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the stools of those who sold pigeons (Matthew 21:12 GNT).

Can you imagine the scene that day in the Temple courts? Loose change bouncing along the stone floors? Businessmen getting out of His way, wondering if he is packing heat, whether His the member of His gang are itching for a fight and knowing that they want to go home to their families at the end of the day. Wondering when the Temple police would arrest Jesus. It must have been loud and upsetting to a lot of people. It must have made headlines on all of the news channels particularly given the whole city was in an uproar. No wonder.

Jesus knew that what He was doing would attract attention. A lot of attention and attention that would not end well in terms of His safety. But Jesus knew something else. Jesus knew something that we sort of know, but don't always know it in a way that affects what we do. Jesus trusted in God and He trusted that God is always on the side of divine justice. Jesus had taught His followers about divine justice and how divine justice takes the side of the poor. Jesus taught that benefiting from systems that exploit the poor, or anyone else, is not a part of the Kingdom that Jesus

presides over. So He turned over the tables, both literally and metaphorically.

And Jesus expects us to emulate Him. And when we do turnover tables, those who benefit from unjust systems will take notice. And the tweets will begin but they will be only one weapon in the arsenal of the powerful. And if we really trust God with our lives it will be all out war to stop us. And some of the violence will come from people who claim to know us. The violence will come from people who claim to know us.

Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the stools of those who sold pigeons...

Matthew 21:12 GNT

The powerful do not sit around waiting for us to run out of steam. They respond because their power is dependent upon silencing the voices of divine justice. But our power comes from the God who sides with the poor and oppressed no matter who they are or what they have done or haven't done. They are innocent by benefiting from their suffering is guilty by divine decree.

This does not mean that the poor and oppressed are not also held accountable. God knows our hearts better than we do. And God knows our weaknesses. But when we are comfortable in our own privilege we are less likely to depend on God. We are less likely to trust God. And our attention turns to other gods, particularly other gods who we believe give us our privilege. Whether a lucrative job or retirement, a bank account that makes us independent or just the confidence that we can do it on our own, these other gods compete with the One True God whom is the only God worthy of worship. And the only God that can be trusted.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday for our current worship series titled *Multiply*. Come learn with us how God is making all things new and multiplying our blessings and our movement. We believe that 2019 is the year of a breakthrough here at Asbury and in our neighborhood. Despite a few signs to the contrary God has already accomplished more than any or all of us could accomplish on our own. And God is doing something wonderful right here in Flint.

Join us each Sunday for worship at 10:30 am. I lead a short Bible study at 9:30 am in the Asbury Café where we explore each week's scripture in a little more detail as we prepare our hearts for worship.

Pastor Tommy