

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Friends (Working with Kingdom partners)

If Jesus entered Flint in a parade today every church in town would be there to cheer His entry. We are not the only faith community in the Kingdom who hopes that more persons choose to worship with us. God is equipping and resourcing many faith communities to be at work multiplying the Kingdom of God. How can we be a better partner to others with the same mission?



Sylvia's home church is Fairhaven Seventh Day Adventist Church on Flint's north side. Asbury, along with a local Mosque, a local Synagogue and other Christian churches representing different views of God and different Christian denominations were

Christian denominations were recognized during their Saturday worship service for our work in social justice. The representatives from the various faith communities were given a beautiful moment of the celebration that they dedicated to the pursuit of religious liberty. Certainly, this act of reaching out is a good illustration of one way to be a better partner in multiplying God's kingdom.

Cyndi and I attended their worship service which consisted of several rituals that seemed quite familiar with traditional rituals that we have both experienced in faith communities that we have been a part of. I felt like I was part of a much larger movement that was bringing together people who see God differently than I do. Instead of threatening it felt comforting. Instead of challenging my own beliefs I felt like my beliefs were being affirmed. Not because others were agreeing with me but because we all believed that divine

justice would prevail even in our time.

Jesus entered a diverse city on His way into Jerusalem. Although the prominent beliefs of the Holy City was Judaism, the city was occupied by Roman authorities and citizens who shared many of the ideas that were prominent when the Greek Empire was in power. The language of the common people, Aramaic, was a blend of Hebrew and other Middle Eastern languages. Judaism had travelled to numerous other places where local customs, language and rituals had enriched the held beliefs of the masses. The Temple only represented the religion of Jesus' ancestors in its shared history and not as much in the specifics. The religious leaders then, like the religious leaders today, did not agree on the specifics.

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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 14

April 14, 2019

Special points of interest:

>>> **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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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 MyFlintStones.org.

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Friends... cont. from page 1

But Jesus entered Jerusalem with a unique insight that had never been present in the flesh before. His actions would make history in a way that no individual had ever made history. And every recorded word that Jesus spoke would be translated, studied and argued over for centuries to come as would each action that He took. In particular, Jesus choice of transportation has been a part of preached messages shared with faith communities in every part of the world. Why a donkey? Why was a specific donkey chosen?

Here at Asbury we never grow tired of hearing God's Word through fresh perspectives. Scripture only offers us what we have translated into whatever version of Bible that we read. But God created us with imagination and God offers us the Spirit of truth that challenges us to explore

in creative ways these ancient words that we will not only be inspired afresh, but we will learn new insights about God and God's creation.

Our Christmas Eve musical retold the Christmas Story from the vantage point that the donkey that Mary rode on to Bethlehem was chosen specifically for this divine appointment. While there is little in scripture to supports our choice of dialogue we were careful only to interpret what might have been rather than argue what must have been. Most of all, we heard the greatest story ever told in a new way and God's Spirit moved among us. And we all moved a little closer to the God who lives with us.

As we recall the events that lead up to and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus we will "dust off" (pun intended) our script and have a cameo appearance by none other than Dusty

himself. Only this time, it is Jesus who is riding Dusty into the Holy City of Jerusalem. Jesus knows Dusty's whereabouts and sends disciples to find him. The last time Jesus rode on Dusty's back He was in Mary's womb. Once again Dusty will be a metaphor of a humble kingship based entirely on love as Jesus rides on a beast of burden rather than ride into the city on a beast of battle.

"Teacher", they said, "command your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting."

Luke 19:39b-40

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Friends...cont. from page 2

Yet there is a battle raging. The enemy has dreaded this day but has prepared many hearts to fight in opposition to divine truth. The enemy has cleverly infiltrated the inner circle of Jesus even as it has planted its darkness within the very walls of the Holy Temple. This battle scene should sound familiar to you for this battle continues to be waged today. The enemy only retreats to appear at another opportune time (Luke 4:13).

Whenever the enemy can focus our attention on fixing and fighting each other and questioning each other's motives rather than joining together to multiply the Kingdom of God, disharmony spreads rather than unity. When Jesus chooses to ride a donkey He enters as a servant leader. Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save us. But the subtlety of His choice of entry should not get lost in the pageantry that we are accustomed to with leaders who look to raise attention for themselves rather than pointing us to God as the source of their lives and power.

As Jesus enters the Holy City the crowds cheer His entry. There is something about this humble servant that feels right and familiar. Jesus does not enter in a chariot of war and His followers are not dressed to do battle with the Roman soldiers. This is not a show of violent power.

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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

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-or-serve-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

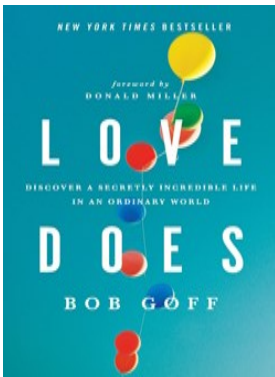
of God. Jesus often used metaphors in His teaching that are found in the multiplication of creation.

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

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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 Miriam & Emily
Worship Leaders Cyndi
Café Christine & Norma

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.

Asbury Staff

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

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 -

- Apr 15 Mon** 5pm Youth Choir
6pm Leadership Team
7pm Flint Jubilee
- Apr 16 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
7pm Community Gospel Choir
- Apr 17 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6pm Beginners Bible Study
6pm Youth Group
- Apr 18 Thu** 4:30-6pm Gaming as Education
6pm Worship Band Practice
- Apr 19 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
6:00pm Asbury Youth Group
- Apr 20 Sat** 10am-12N Japanese Jiu Jitsu
- Apr 21 Sun** 10am-12N Japanese Jiu Jitsu

- Apr 21 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 32 Offering \$ 1,104**

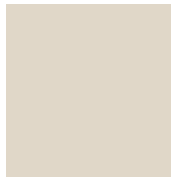


HOLY WEEK

April 14—Palm Sunday



April 18—Holy Thursday



April 19 – Good Friday



April 21 – Easter Sunday



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

Life Group Questions & Notes

Then some of the Pharisees in the crowd spoke to Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "command your disciples to be quiet!" Jesus answered, "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting."

Luke 19:37-40 GNT

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Luke 19:37-40. What images come to mind? In what ways does this text appeal to you? Where do you see yourself in this text?
2. Jesus responds to the request to hush the crowds that the stones would shout out. What are some possible interpretations for this statement by Jesus? Hyperbole is an intentional exaggeration to make a point. This was a common form of speaking during the time of Jesus. Is this hyperbole? Why would Jesus use hyperbole?
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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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.

Friends..Working with Kingdom partners cont. from page 3

Yet the religious leaders ask Jesus to tell the crowds to be silent. This is the voice of the enemy disguised as authority. The voice of the enemy can be recognized because its goal is to silence the voices of a suffering people.

But Jesus knows that their voices cannot be silenced. Jesus remembers how God had redeemed His ancestors from slavery in Egypt because God heard their sighs when they were too beaten down to cry out. "I tell you that if they keep quiet, the stones themselves will start shouting" Jesus responds to the leader's call for silence. Creation does not keep silent even in the face of oppressive force. All of creation conspires to restore justice to the land and its people.

Meanwhile, the enemy had been hard at work on one of Jesus' closest allies. Deceit seldom happens in a loud, visible response. Deceit begins with subtle justification. We look backwards knowing the outcome lead by writers who likewise also knew the outcome when we evaluate the character of Judas. We don't know what Judas' mother knew, or what his classmates knew. We don't know if he was introverted or extroverted. We don't know if he was abused, if he was a bully or if he was bullied. We don't try to justify his actions and scripture allows us to simply dismiss them as his fate.

But we don't have to. We can spend a little time with Judas. Particularly, if we are willing to see ourselves in his reflection.

Ouch, I touched a tender spot. What if Judas is not simply an antagonist in a story that needed one? Someone had to turn Jesus into the authorities in order for the story to play out as it did. Why not Judas? Why not you?

This is the problem with Judas. He is a more extreme version than Thomas whose only flaw was doubt. We can identify with Thomas. Judas is a more extreme version than Peter who denied Jesus when it suited him. We can identify with Peter. But we are talking about degrees of denial, doubt and betrayal. All three of these men are guilty of betrayal and scripture suggests that all of Jesus' followers failed Him on more than one occasion. The problem with the reflection of Judas is that he represents our own failures that we hope to keep hidden away from view.

We read that Judas would help himself to the common purse. Our translations are more apt to cast Judas in the light of condemnation. And perhaps rightfully so. Stealing is forbidden by the fifth commandment. But to Judas, was it stealing, or had Judas justified to himself this his access was warranted. After all, he had given up a lucrative position to follow Jesus. And he had needs. Perhaps it began with the purchase of a new pair of sandals so that he could go out with the others as Jesus had requested. Perhaps new sandals led to a new coat which led to buying gifts for friends. We simply don't know the whole story.

Perhaps Judas, in addition to his starring role as the one who betrays Jesus, has another very important role. Perhaps Judas, like Jesus' other followers who are named in scripture, plays each of us when we betray Jesus.

What if Judas is just as important as a stand-in for you and I? What if Judas is a metaphor for what can happen to us, even when we are close to Jesus, if we are

The problem with the reflection of Judas is that he represents our own failures that we hope to keep hidden away from view.

caught, at a more opportune time, by the enemy in a moment of weakness? Once the cloud lifts, will we go to Jesus with our confession or will we continue as if it never happened?

Jesus, we read in John 3:16 came to save and not to condemn the world. And His examples illustrate a life of humble service that we are to offer to each other. Not simply within our own inner circles, but outwardly, in a show of collaboration, partnership and harmony grounded in love for our neighbors, including those with which we do not have agreement. When we fail, we betray Jesus. Oh its not a betrayal that will make the news or be written about for centuries. But, our betrayal can be an entry into our inner-child by an enemy that seeks to sow seeds of doubt and disharmony. An enemy looking for an opportune time.

April 14 is Palm Sunday. A celebration of Jesus coming into the city to save its people, riding on a donkey that we decided to call Dusty. It is not likely that it was the same donkey that His mother rode on but it could have been. Come join us on Sunday for Dusty II as the journey continues and let us celebrate Easter together with our imaginations, our voices, our worship and our praise for the Messiah — the Savior of the world.

Pastor Tommy