

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## T'is the Season!

Volume 19 Issue 1

December 1, 2019

Matt 2:1-6 / Micah 5:2

What are you searching for this Advent season? Are you celebrating the birth of the Christ child? The Creator King of the universe who took on the form of humble humanity to dwell among us in the flesh. Jesus the gift that keeps on giving generously and extravagantly. The only gift that fits everyone that will receive Him!

By the time I was in middle school I realized that I was a child of privilege. My dad was a

General Motors manufacturing engineer and a member of the Beecher School Board. My mom worked because she wanted to and while most of my friends parents were divorcing. My parents were actually "happy together".

The holidays were filled with family and friends gathering at a designated home. Mom had two sisters in Detroit and one here in Flint so they would take turns hosting Thanksgiving and Christmas. All four

sisters would contribute to the feast and there was always an abundance of "homemade from scratch" everything.

I was in 7th grade when I figured out that I didn't always get what I wanted, but I always had what I needed. This discovery firmly planted my feet on the narrow way that leads to life, light, and love. My parents by their example taught me the importance of seeking the right things for the right reasons.

Sylvia Pittman

### *Special points of interest:*

>>> **Dusty the Donkey,** play will be Christmas Eve. See info on page 2.

>>> **City of Flint—** Neighborhood Planning meeting on Tuesday, December 3rd starting at 5:00pm in the Asbury Fellowship Hall. All are invited to attend.

>>> **UMW will meet on** Thursday, December 5th at 1:00pm.

### *Inside this issue:*

T'is the Season!	1
Abundant Living	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series— Pono	4
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series	5
Kim Gooch Foundation	6
Asbury Farm to Table	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Abundant Living	9
A Holiday Concert	10

## Abundant Living (Replacing diets with abundance)

I really don't like diets. You would be amazed at how many diets I have been on. And most of my experiences proved successful. On the other hand, I have quit doing a lot of things that I knew were not good for me — lots of times. It's time for another diet, but I believe God has a better idea in mind.



How about you? Have you ever tried losing weight, or eating healthier, by cutting out some of

your favorite foods — the foods that you were having too much of? The problem that most of us have is that if we try giving up chocolate, then that's all we can think about. Try to give up ice cream, and we suddenly notice that our favorite brands are on sale. Maybe next week.

Page 2

**Abundant Living (Replacing diets with abundance)...cont. from page 1**

As we come to the end of our current worship series, *Food as medicine*, we transition to our next worship series that begins December 8. Our current series has explored the importance of what we put into our bodies, why awareness is crucial, and practices from scripture that help us to be healthier.

It is essential not to confuse food as medicine with dieting since they are opposites. For food to be medicine is must be taken in and processed by our bodies. Dieting is the opposite. Dieting is more about not eating certain foods. Food as medicine focuses on abundance, while dieting focuses on scarcity. Food as medicine is about enjoying creation. Dieting is about avoiding creation.

Confused? To clarify my claims, I need to first talk about scarcity. When we talk about our neighbor-

hood, it is hard not to think about scarcity. We seem to be lacking in so many things. It's like we are on a grueling diet. There are not enough jobs, not enough safety, not enough money. You get the point. We all get the point.

Scarcity is what we feel when we are dieting, and we long for something we don't have. A quick trip to the store can take care of our scarcity if we have enough money. A 2nd trip to refill our plate just to make sure that we leave a bit over-full. Why not two pieces of chicken rather than one? Why not three? Dieting replaces this sense of "I can have more," with "no you can't". This is scarcity.

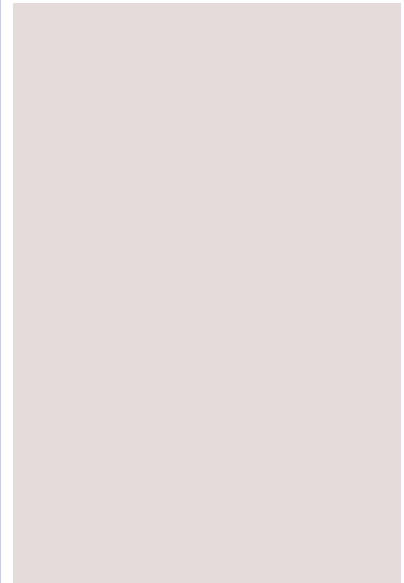
Page 9

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**DUSTY THE DONKEY IS BACK !!**

**CHRISTMAS EVE—  
more info to follow**

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## In our Prayers

Curtis Young	Miriam Watson
Rachel Bastine	Shirley Craig
Norma Buzzard	Christopher Lewis
Mary Lyons	Sarah Tanner
Barbara McIvor	Elizabeth Wright
Austin & Mary Suffle	Judy Tanner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Mary Nations	Mary Russell
Elaine Lamoreaux	

## Coming up this week

Dec 2	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Dec 3	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		4:30-8pm	City of Flint — Neighborhood Planning
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
Dec 4	Wed	12Noon	Book Club
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
Dec 5	Thu	1:00pm	UMW
		6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Dec 6	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Dec 7	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Dec 8	Sun	8am-10am	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
		9:30am	Café Open
		10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship

### Asbury Worship Series Pono Coming December 8, 2019

According to Wikipedia, the word Pono is from the native language of Hawaii. A common English synonym for Pono is "righteousness." For example, the motto of the state is *Ua Mau ke Ea o ka 'Āina i ka Pono*. This motto is

translated as "The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."



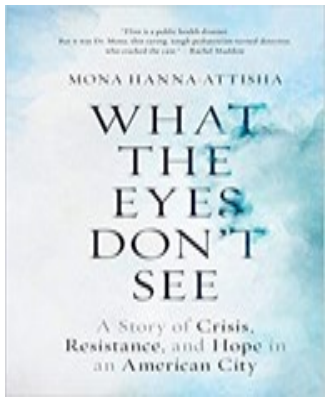
The word righteousness is not used that much anymore. The

word is steeped in religiosity. To be righteous is to be obedient to God's will. To be free of sin, or at least, trying our best not to sin. For that matter, sin is another word that comes out of religious dogma. The word sin is not commonly used, except for describing a particularly tasty dessert that is so good it must be sinful.

Page 5

### Book Club News

On November 13th our group started discussing a book written



by a local hero. Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha is the courageous, children's doctor who risked

her reputation and her career to bring to light that our public water was poisoning us. Being a whistleblower in the midst of desperate people willing to destroy anyone who disagrees with them requires

courage, and other people willing to stand with you. This is Dr. Mona.

What the Eyes Don't See is a story about all of us. It is a personal story. We know the names in the book, or at least most of them. We know a lot that is not in her book. And we can feel the anger, helplessness, disgust, and regrets, that Dr. Mona shares in her testimony. More important, we have an opportunity to learn from the past, and to work together for a stronger Flint. But what does this look like to you?

Dr. Mona's book will challenge you to get involved, just as we challenge each other. And as we

reflect on the events that rocked our community, you can anticipate new ideas and discussions that could shape how you view our circumstances. And what you may feel called to do about it.

I encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group is a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday at Noon. There are a couple of books available. You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org). Please consider making a donation to cover the cost of books.

### Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Jonathon
Children	Patrice & Mirium
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Café	Christine & Norma

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Operations
Blair Neifert	Farm Manager
Israel Unger	Function to Funding

#### Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts

#### 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.

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



## Asbury Worship Series—Pono... Coming December 8th... Cont. from page 4

Our next series takes place during the Christmas season. A time of anticipation, celebration, deep discount sales, generosity, parties, and remembering God's grace. At Asbury, we will be performing the musical, *Dusty*, again this year. I'm sure there will be some tweaks to the lines and the songs, along with some new faces and voices. Think *Dusty 2.0* — even better than version 1.0.

While our series title is a Hawaiian word for righteousness, our subtitle may seem like a different direction — *The intersection of violence and beauty*. I read this phrase, which I believe to be poetry, in a book which inspired this series.<sup>1</sup> Once again, God is working through other people and through art. I was so moved by this line of poetry that I stopped reading immediately and went to prayer. Thank You, Lord, for inspiring me. Your mercy and love never end.

What does this phrase even mean? I instantly felt an urge to explore this poetic line, deeper, before reading on. I didn't want the author to tell me what it meant before I had a chance to reflect on what it meant in prayer. Perhaps a habit I picked up in seminary. I want to know what God has to say to me about essential subjects before the writer tells me what God told them.

The intersection of violence and beauty. This poetry speaks to me because I feel it. It right away. I'm feeling it right now. The intersection of violence and beauty sounds like a title for a play or a book. Perhaps the title of a song or a poem. Maybe the title for a Christmas season worship series? Lord, what do You want us to know about this observation of Your city? Help us to see this intersection through Your eyes, Lord. I see violence when I see the blight in our neighborhood. I see violence

perpetrated by weather, by fire, and by people. I also see beauty. I see potential in the people. I know that God loves them dearly. I know that God has uniquely gifted them for work in the kingdom. But what work? While there is beauty in the gifts of our neighbors, there is violence in the lack of employment. Violence comes out of scarcity. Beauty comes out of gifts. As does abundance.

I once came across a man tearing the siding off of the walls of what was once a home. He was using a snow shovel. I wondered if there was something deeper going on in the ripping off of the siding. Anger, I understand, is a kinetic feeling. We dissipate anger by physical movement. I wonder whether the man was less angry after he had finished taking off the siding.

This is where the word *pono* came from. Well, not directly. I read an article in *Psychology Today* about anger. The article used this word *pono*. But instead

May our barns be filled with crops of every kind. Psalm 144:13

of righteousness, perhaps the more common translation, the writer focused on the results of *pono*. The beauty of finding balance in the community. Hurt and hopelessness finding forgiveness and abundance. Giftedness finding purpose.

The story of Christmas is a tale that offers insight into this poetic line. We imagine the beauty of pregnancy. The miracle of a tiny egg and seed becoming a child carried in the womb of His mother until the time is right for His birth. We imagine the violence of an empire requiring this family to travel from their village, tucked away in the northern highlands. Only to arrive in a place where they would not find shelter other than a stable. It was in that intersection of beauty and violence that a Savior was born.

But the violence wouldn't end. Nor would the violence be replaced by beauty. Not yet. Shortly after the child's birth, after the shepherds went back to tend their flocks, and after the travelers from the far east had returned to their native land, the holy family was in danger. Unimaginable violence was taking place around them. They were not safe. Even the Son of God could not escape the violence of the city.

Dr. Matt James writes, "Pono is when you feel centered and comfortable in your own skin. You feel connected to nature, your community, your friends and family, and yourself. You feel at peace. You feel balanced and a sense that all is well. When you feel *pono*, your decisions and actions are driven by integrity and awareness of what is good for the whole. And when you feel *pono*, you feel energetic, focused, and effective."<sup>1</sup>

May the Christmas season give you feelings of *pono*. May you feel more connected to your community and to the earth. May your decisions and actions be driven by integrity and awareness of what is right for our community.

I pray that you will join us during this season of Christmas each Sunday. And on Christmas Eve, when we will unwrap the gift of Christmas by sharing a unique retelling of this story at the intersection of violence and beauty.

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. *Dusty*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. Auditions are coming very soon, so be sure to get involved. You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU TO KIM GOOCH, GOOCH FOUNDATION!!**



Kim Gooch, along with Edward and Garrett Gooch, Darnell Butler and Mister Wayne were at Asbury on Saturday, November 23rd, to deliver 20 Thanksgiving baskets to families within our surrounding area including Potter School and Way Academy.

Kim also donated 30 extra turkeys to families that showed up and they were given out on a first come first serve basis, along with a 40 count case of water!

Overall the families walked away very happy for the baskets that they received!

Asbury UMC, the families at Potter School and Way Academy thank you SO much!



# 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 11 am to 2 pm and  
Sundays 10am 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

**Like us on Facebook~ under "Asbury Farms"**



## Life Group Questions & Notes

*Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews?"*

Matthew 2:1-6 (GNT)

### NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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### QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Matthew 2:1-6. Did you notice anything different or learn anything new after reading this familiar story again? What is the significance of this story to you?
2. This week's message will tie the prophecy found in Micah to this fulfillment of prophecy. The visitors were searching for the new born King. Are you also searching for Him? What is it like to search for Jesus? Do you know any persons who may be searching for Him at this time? How might you help them find Him?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God?





Abundance. Now we're talking. Abundance knows that even if we don't make that 2nd trip to the buffet, and if we take only one piece of chicken, we can get more the next time we are hungry. We don't have to store it up just in case.

**Abundance requires a lifestyle change that results in a new way of seeing the world.**

Abundance requires a lifestyle change that results in a new way of seeing the world. And our next worship series will focus on how this change is possible. And, beginning with the New Year, we are all invited to experience dramatic, lifestyle, transformation, during our first worship series of 2020. Stay tuned for more information.

I need to be very clear on one fact of body biology that comes with how we were created. When we consume more calories than we utilize, our bodies store the unused calories for later. And some of this excess energy is stored in organs that negatively affect how well our bodies function. In other words, our health is adversely affected. A worship series or a new program cannot change this.

But if like me, you struggle with taking in more calories than your body needs, then you may

be ready for a change. There is good news. We can all change. This is the power of the gospel, and the good news is for all of us. Life does not have to be steeped in scarcity. Our God is a God of abundance.

Perhaps you are one of those "lucky people," well those of us who struggle with carrying too much weight, think that you are lucky. Maybe your struggle is not about consuming more calories than your body can burn. But are you the perfect example of good health? Likely not.

**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**

Food as medicine considers our spiritual well-being as well as our physical bodies. Holistic health affects the mind, body, and spirit. To be healthy is to be integrated and connected. This, my friends, is the language of abundance. This is what it means to live abundantly.

Living abundantly is not about multiple trips to the buffet, eating more chocolate than we should, or filling our plates until they overflow. To live abundantly is to be connected with Christ in such an intimate way that He is our constant

companion. Jesus used the metaphor of a grapevine in explaining the importance of our connection to Him. When we are connected, we produce abundant fruit. This is the essence of abundant living.

And when we live abundantly, we no longer worry about, and seldom think about, getting our fair share, or more than we need. We focus more on how we can be fruitful in a world that is trapped by scarcity. We see the potential for beauty where others see only the results of violence. We live abundantly rather than in scarcity.

Speaking of opportunities for abundant living, auditions are underway for the musical *Dusty 2.0*. This delightful retelling of the story of Christmas through the eyes of Mary's donkey will leave you laughing while reminding you that God is love. Put Christmas Eve at Asbury on your calendar. We start at 6 pm.

Here at Asbury, we worship each Sunday at 10:30 am, and I believe that God is calling you to join us. Come and participate in worship, not as a spectator, but as someone who belongs to God. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

# 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](mailto:FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com)  
[CircuitRider@FlintAsbury.org](mailto: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.

## The Sounds of Gospel Presents "Love at Christmas"

*The Sounds Of Gospel Presents  
Love At Christmas*

*Featuring Shawnda Gaines & Avaunte Waters*

*December 13th 2019 @ 7pm  
Asbury Worship Center  
1653 Davison Rd. Flint Mi.*

*A Holiday Concert*

PIC-COLLAGE