

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Legends in Black History

As a woman of color and a student of history, I learned that truth plus justice equals peace. Advocates of equity come in every age, race, creed, and gender. So we celebrate the men, women, and children that dared to speak out against unfairness in any form.

Ruby Bridges, born in 1954, became the first African American child to integrate an elementary school in the south.¹ Ruby moved to New Orleans, Louisiana with her parents in search of



better job opportunities when she was two years old. The US Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation must end in public schools in 1954.

However, schools in the South dragged their feet and resisted the ruling, forcing the Federal courts to mandate desegregation.

Page 2

Volume 20 Issue 9

February 9, 2020

Special points of interest:

*** Worship Design will meet in the Asbury Library on Monday, February 10th at 6pm.

*** Leadership Team will meet on Monday, February 17th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

Complicated (Playing the hand you are dealt)

A good friend once told me about a problem he was having with someone close. I won't go into the details here, but what is essential to our topic for this week is my friend's response when I asked a simple question for clarification. My friend said, "It's complicated."



Has this happened to you? You patiently listen to another person's predicament. You try to dig a little

deeper in a sincere effort to help. And the response comes back, "It's complicated."

Well, of course, it is complicated. Life is often complicated, even when we try to simplify the way we

Page 2

Inside this issue:

Legends in Black History	1
Complicated	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series— The Way	4
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series	5
Ginormous	6
The Daniel Plan	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Complicated	9
Ginormous	10

Complicated (Playing the hand you are dealt) ...cont. from page 1

navigate life. Life is complicated because you and I are complicated. For one, we are lots of layers wrapped tightly around an inner child that is afraid. And our fears keep us tightly wrapped.

I wonder if God designed it to be this way? Sometimes I picture God as a sort of "super nerd" who marvels in complexity. Psalm 139 provides confirmation for such an observation. The Good News Translation reads, *Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!* (Psalm 139:14).

The field of theoretical biology makes the idea of complexity even more complicated by first looking at what it means to be complex. In a technical paper titled "The complexity of anatomical systems," Fabio Grizzi and Maurizio Chiriva-

Internati argue that complexity can exist both on a structural level and in terms of behavior.¹ Apparently, the whole area of human anatomy is so complicated, that theoretical scientists see a need to break the subject down into degrees of complexity. My point is that we are complicated.

Scientists estimate that the human body consists of approximately 7 octillion atoms. I don't think anyone actually counted them, but I'll let that slide for now. Despite the huge number, we are mostly empty space. If the atoms compressed, we would be roughly the equivalent of a fly in a large cathedral.² Are you convinced? We are complex beings, created by a super-nerd God, who must marvel at complexity.

And we live day-to-day on a very complex planet. Earth depends on a lot of very complicated relationships that include a star we call the sun, the atmosphere surrounding this planet, and the way the earth itself is structured. Including vast amounts of water, forests, and even golf courses. Just complicated enough that we let our leaders get by with denying that human greed is really destroying our home.

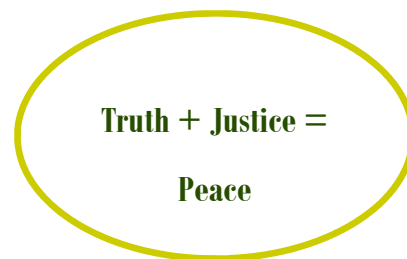
Our relationships with each other are complicated. We say one thing but mean another. We pretend to be someone different from who we are. We think that the people around us will like us better if we can keep them at a distance. And they do the same thing to us. No wonder my friend's response was. "It's complicated!"

Page 9

Legends in Black History....cont. from page 1

In 1960 Ruby Bridges, at the tender age of six, was escorted to the all white William Frantz elementary school by four Federal Marshals, every day. The white parents refused to allow their children to attend school with Ruby. Only one teacher agreed to teach her, so Barbara Henry became Ruby's teacher. Ruby Bridges was in class by herself for an

entire year.



Ruby graduated from a desegregated high school, became a travel agent, married and

raised four sons. Ruby Bridges Hall became a life long activist for racial equality. In 1999 she established the Ruby Bridges foundation to promote tolerance and create change through education.

Sylvia Pittman

¹ For a Tedx Talk given Ruby Bridges, go to YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyRH_LK8v5c. ©



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	

LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

✚ **EAST WINDS DISTRICT** ✚

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

MARCH 2020

This year the East Wind Lay Servant courses will be held at Asbury UMC on Friday, March 6th from 4:30pm-9:00pm and Saturday, March 7th at 9:00am-5:00pm.

Information, along with a list of the courses are on the bulletin board in the Café area, next to the church mailboxes. If you need more copies, just leave me a note in my mailbox and I will get you copies. If you need more information, you may also call Michele Weston at 810-624-1184.

✚ Connie

Coming up this week

Feb 10	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		6:00pm	Worship Design
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Feb 11	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
		7:00pm	Kearsley Park Neighbor- Hood Assoc
Feb 12	Wed	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
		6-8:00pm	Rec Nite
Feb 13	Thu	6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Feb 14	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Feb 15	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Feb 16	Sun	8am-10am	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
		9:30am	Café Open
		10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship

**** Please keep Elaine Lamoreaux in your prayers as she suffered a heart attack earlier this week. She is in McLaren Hospital.**

Asbury Worship Series The Way (Coming February 10)

The Way is our next worship series. The main theme is about the gentle way of the Prince of Peace. This mini-series is a collaborative effort with Court Street Church. It is an opportunity to bring our two communities closer together in spirit.

Of all the difficult teachings of Jesus, perhaps the most difficult to understand and to live out is this: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies." In a world of grudges, violence, and revenge, Jesus teaches us a more creative, more patient, more peaceful way that few are courageous enough to attempt. In this series we will study the nonvi-



Page 5

Book Club News

Want to know more about the *Daniel Plan*? Join us each Wednesday at Noon, downstairs in the large meeting room adjacent to the Asbury Event Center. For the next few weeks we are reading and discussing *The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life*.



Written by a pastor and two medical doctors, this book can be a game changer for anyone willing to try their prov-

en plan for better health. The *Daniel Plan* makes the bold claim to be "God's prescription for your health." Why? Because without God's help

there is no plan. At least there is no plan that works.

The *Daniel Plan* is based on five building blocks: faith, friends, food, fitness, and focus. Each building block is crucial to success. We can imagine these pillars with faith in the center, connecting the other four building blocks.

The *Daniel Plan* is not a diet. Rather, it is a proven approach to achieving a healthy lifestyle. Unlike the thousands of other books on the market, this book is not about a new diet, guilt-driven gym sessions, or shame-driven fasts.

We believe that this book, written by Pastor Rick Warren and fitness and medical experts Dr. Daniel Amen and Dr. Mark Hyman, offers a proven guide to making

healthy choices. Most important, the concepts in this book will encourage you to deepen your relationship with God and develop a community of supportive friends who will encourage you to make smart food and fitness choices each and every day.

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 still books available. While we appreciate donations to help with the cost of purchasing books, your participation is what matters the most. Please accept a copy of this book as a gift.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org.

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.

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Dir. Operations
Blair Neifert	Farm Manager
Matt Dee	Farm Operations
Israel Unger	Function to Funding
Kim Sims	Connections

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
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts

Pastor Tommy

The Way (Coming February 10) ...*Cont. from page 4*

The concept of non-violent protest was center stage during the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The time was overdue for the world to take notice of the racial inequities prevalent in our country. Unfortunately, the past history of non-violence seldom keeps violence silent. Rev King's life ended as a result of violent hatred, brought on out of ignorance, fear, and brokenness.

Yet, giants like Rev King change the world in much more permanent ways than people using power and violence. The world fondly remembers those who seek peace. I hope that you will join us either here at Asbury or at Court Street Church for this three week, mini-series.

Ash Wednesday comes up during the last week of our celebration of Black History month. Ash Wednesday is the first day of a long-time tradition that we call the Season of Lent. It is a time of both renewal brought on by introspection. This year, we plan to offer a second chance for any who missed signing up for the Daniel Plan, for whatever reasons. In my case, I want a second chance at allowing God to help me do a better job of implementing the ideas in the Daniel Plan in my own life .

You have heard that it was said, "You shall hate your enemy."
But I say to you, love your enemies. Matthew 5:44

Here is the game plan, message-wise for our Sunday worship:

The way of gentleness - February 9, 2020

Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus tells the crowds about a different way of responding to the world when the world comes after you. It is the way of gentleness. Rather than revenge, the way of gentleness responds with kindness. We know this happens, but when it does it makes the world news. What if this was the way for all who claim to follow Christ?

The way of patience - February 16, 2020

Matthew 13:24-30

Patience is a virtue. Right? Jesus tells this story about a farmer whose field was compromised by an enemy. His team was anxious to respond immediately. But the way of Jesus requires patience. What does patience look like when our sense of urgency has our blood pressure off the scale?

The way of faith - February 23, 2020

Matthew 27:15-23

Jesus is arrested. But there is still a chance to save Him. What will I do? What would You do? It's clear that the momentum of the crowds is against Him. Going against popular opinion is risky. And what can one person do any way? Yet, Jesus was arrested because He dared to speak truth to power. This is the Way of Jesus. Are you ready? Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors.

Fat Tuesday Celebration - February 25, 2020

Sometimes we just have to be bad to remind us that being bad is not worth it. Join us for a *paczki* and music at 6 pm in the Asbury Event Center in the lower level. While your here be sure to sign up for Daniel Plan 2.0 and take home a personal journal to help guide you through the Season of Lent.

Ash Wednesday - February 26, 2020

Treat your *paczki* hang-over with a meditative service to kick-off your participation in Daniel Plan 2.0. At 6 pm we plan a short worship service that includes the mark of ashes on our forehead as a sign of our commitment to following Christ.

I pray that you will consider joining us each Sunday for worship and during the week as a volunteer. Email us at connect@FlintAsbury.org to learn about volunteer opportunities. I lead a short Bible study each Sunday in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our web site at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

Ginormous (The Way of Gentleness)

I googled “gentleness” and found an article on the seven habits of gentle people.¹ I wondered how this list compared to the seven habits of successful people. Are successful people gentle?

The author made a bold claim in his title. He claims that gentleness is a sign of strength. He begins his article with, “There is nothing that shows your strength better than your gentleness.” Is this right? Are strong people gentle? Are we talking about physical strength or some other measure of strength?



I love words that grab my attention. *Ginormous* is a combo word, made up of giant and enormous. The idea is that some things and some people are giants. They are giants of industry or giants in their field, or a few are just physically larger than the rest of us. Enormous can also connote a relative largeness like an enormous piece of pie or an enormous pumpkin.

One ginormous legend that reminds me of gentleness in the midst of violence is Ruby Bridges. Sylvia shares an article on Ruby elsewhere so I won't say much here. I listened to a TEDx talk by Ruby from 2014. My opinion was reconfirmed. Ruby is a ginormous legend.

Another gentle person of great strength is at Asbury nearly every

day. Kevin Croom looks like a very strong man. Playing Division One, College and Pro football can do this to a person. When conflict arises during our Help Center days, Kevin is most often the person who takes charge. I suspect that the perpetrator's first thought is, “I don't want to mess with this guy!” But Kevin quickly defuses the situation with a gentle response. Anyone who knows Kevin knows that gentleness is a sign of his strength.

No force is more powerful than God. Nothing stronger. When it comes to power, God is ginormous. Those of us who believe that the universe began with a big bang, and credit God with the power behind it all, recognize that the energy that was released when creation began was bigger than ginormous. It was even bigger than super-ginormous.

One day Jesus is speaking to a crowd of people. Years later, someone decides to call this teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. During His talk, Jesus touches on several important subjects, turning conventional wisdom on its head. One statement that is particularly relevant for our conversations this week is this: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44).

Talk about gentleness requiring great strength. Jesus did not list any exceptions. His criteria appear to focus on persons that we are least likely to love. Some of the parents of white children threw tomatoes at Ruby. At six years old, it surely was hard for her to be an adult while the adults were acting like poorly behaved children.

How hard is it for Kevin to show love towards an angry and likely desperate person who wreaks havoc during an already high-pressure situation? I can only speak from observation. I credit Kevin's gentle strength of both

You have heard that it was said, “You shall hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies.

Matthew 5:44

character and physical strength. I also credit the hundreds of Flint residents who patiently wait for their turn. And the numerous volunteers who show up week after week to help things go as smoothly as possible. Most of all, I credit Kevin's faith, as does Kevin.

When the Creator of the universe demonstrates gentleness, it is a compelling argument for gentleness as a way of life for the rest of us. Thank God for gentleness when I wreak havoc out of anger or desperation. I am grateful that instead of giving me what I deserve, God responds with a firm but gentle hand. Grace is the ultimate gentle response.

Over the next three weeks, our worship is featuring a mini-series titled *The Way*. My prayer is that by taking some time to remember a few key lessons from Jesus, we are better equipped for our journey using the Daniel Plan.

THE DANIEL PLAN

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR YOUR HEALTH

STILL HAVE TIME TO SIGN UP TODAY... Why the Daniel Plan is so important ...

I have never met Pastor Steve Willis. But there is something that he said that is haunting me. And I hope that it will haunt you too. Pastor Steve's call to action is powerful, timely, and the shoe surely fits our community. We were poisoned by our public water system. But we can recover. Our children can recover. But the problem, at this point, is not someone else's problem. It is our problem. We have the solution and Pastor Steve's challenge is a call to step up and do something about our health.

The fight for good nutrition was never more real to me than when I watched my kindergarten-aged son struggle with adapting to his physician-prescribed, mind-altering drugs. Lucas had been having discipline problems in school, would frequently struggle with the ability to focus on tasks at hand, and found himself well below grade level in many academic areas...This is more than a health issue; it is a social justice issue. Millions of our children are not reaching their God-given potential because we, as adults, won't take the steps necessary to get them the nutrition they need. For the church, this problem has to be seen as a moral issue. For the sake of our children and our nation's future, we have to do better.¹

I agree. We have to do better. Teachers, healthcare professionals, counselors, clergy, and others are anticipating the first part of Pastor Steve's story to be a common story. Children with higher concentrations of lead in their bodies are prone to exhibiting behaviors that are not conducive to learning, including lower cognition. The only known solution is available to us. But not in a drive-through or at a liquor store.

But how is a community that sits in the middle of one of the least healthy counties in Michigan going to be able to regroup and move forward with the necessary changes to help ourselves and our children?

First, we are going to admit that we are incapable. We are going to stop making excuses for ourselves. We are going to quit pointing to some other power, whether it is the force, the ineffective excuse, "I'm spiritual, but I don't go to church" and the hundreds of other absurd claims that I hear every year as to why I don't see people on Sunday mornings. We are going to repent — that is, we are going to change. Our lives matter. Our children's lives matter.

The Daniel Plan
Faith, Friends, Fitness, Food and Focus

I found myself making a declaration this past week that I have declared before. I wrote and said that responding to God's will for our lives is a human right. And as a human right, we need to treat this right in the same way that we protect other human rights. But it is very difficult to respond to God's purpose for us when our health is less than it needs to be. The Daniel Plan is not the solution on its own, but it is a roadmap that points to and can help us pursue the solution. But the solution begins with God. Without God's power any plan is a non-starter.

By the way, Pastor Steve's son, Lucas, soon was off the drugs and today he is an A student. This story is not a one-of-a-kind, never to be repeated miracle. It is the sort of miracle that God offers every one of us. It is the miracle of making better choices. It is the miracle of taking care of ourselves and each other.

We will begin on Sunday, December 29, by writing down a resolution for 2020. For most of us, our resolution will begin in the same way. "In 2020 I will make my health and well-being a priority by participating in the Daniel Plan." And then we will write down a goal for each of the five areas: faith, food, friends, fitness, and focus. During the first five weeks of 2020, we will learn about each of the pillars of success, possibly modify our goals, and meet regularly with others who have made this same New Year's Resolution.

Make a New Year's Resolution for 2020 to commit to The Daniel Plan.

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 2.0*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. We are praying for a big turnout, and that most of our visitors will return to participate in the Daniel Plan.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Warren, Rick. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan;



Life Group Questions & Notes

Love your enemies and pray for those

who persecute you...

Matthew 5:38-48 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Ginormous*. Do you agree that gentleness is a sign of strength? Why do so many powerful people fail to be gentle? How might our enemies respond to our country if our foreign policy was based on gentleness?
2. Read Matthew 5:38-48. What does this scripture saying to you? Are there people in your life who are difficult to love? How can you love others who want to be your enemies? Do you think that Jesus had some exceptions in mind? Who? Do you really believe this?
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?



Despite the complications, God calls us to experience life as it comes our way. Buried in the section of the Old Testament that we call the wisdom section, we find the Book of Ecclesiastes. The Psalms are also found in the wisdom section along with Proverbs. The Message translation offers a glimpse into God’s view of our role in dealing with life’s challenges. “A person who fears God deals responsibly with all of reality, not just a piece of it” (Ecclesiastes 7:18).

So while my friend is justified in his simplistic response to my question, there is no escape from reality for us who try to be faithful to the God who created us. We are who God created us to be. And despite what the voices in our heads might be shouting at us, despite what other people might claim about us, we are wonderfully made. Complex, yes. But also wonderfully complex.

Pastor Rick Warren addressed this subject in a sermon using a game of

A person who fears God deals responsibly with all of reality, not just a piece of it.
Ecclesiastes 7:18

five-card poker where you receive no other cards. You can only play the hand you are dealt. Naming each card for one of the five factors that make up our identity, adds clarity to the question of “Who am I?”

Imagine that the first card you receive is your body chemistry. Your body chemistry includes your DNA.

It is who you are physically. And you don’t get to choose your chemistry. And as a result of your body chemistry, you have particular issues that others may have as well, but you have your own combination. Our body chemistry affects our physical and mental health. Imagine that you are in a poker game, and God is dealing out the identity cards. Which body chemistry card did you get?

A second card lands in front of you. This card represents the connections in your life. In particular, your relationships in the first few years of your life. Your birth mother. Your birth father. Persons who fed you, changed your diapers, or met your other needs, or not. Your connections that resulted in abuse, feelings of love, abandonment, feelings of security, and others, shaped your identity.

The game is getting interesting as the third card lands face down. You pick up the card. This card represents the voices in your head. The things you say to yourself that no one else can hear. You pick up the fourth card. Your hand is almost complete.

The fourth card represents your circumstances. Car accidents, natural disasters, the elementary school you attended, your teachers, how many times you tried and failed, and more. Most of your circumstances happen without our input. Stuff happens.

The intensity of the game peaks. What sort of hand will you end up playing in this most critical game of life? You only get five cards. You can only play the hand that comes to you. The fifth card lands face up where everyone can see.

This card represents your choices. Wait! This card isn’t like the others.

I get to make my choices. I may feel, at times, that I don’t really have a choice. But I do. This last card is a wild card. I can make choices that can change the effect of my other four cards. But how? What choices do I make?

The Daniel Plan is about making better choices to improve our holistic health. And you are invited to do just that. The choice is yours.

If you haven’t yet signed up for the Daniel Plan, be sure to do so.³ Each person living in our community who signs up receives your very own copy of *The Daniel Plan Journal*.⁴ If you are not a part of the Asbury Community, we still invite you to participate with us, but we ask that you purchase a copy on your own. These journals can be purchased on Amazon or other vendors. You can also go to the DanielPlan.com store to buy this and other resources.

We worship each Sunday at 10:30 am. I hope to see you there. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Fabio Grizzi and Maurizio Chiriva-Internati, “The complexity of anatomical systems,” * 2005 Grizzi and Chiriva-Internati; licensee BioMed Central Ltd. Publicly available. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1180857/>.

² Brian Clegg. “20 amazing facts about the human body,” Jan 2013. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/jan/27/20-human-body-facts-science>.

³ Warren, Rick, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

⁴ Warren, Rick, and the Daniel Plan Team. *The Daniel Plan Journal - 40 Days to a Healthier*

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.

Ginormous (The Way of Gentleness) ...cont. from page 6

On February 26, we kickoff *Daniel Plan 2.0*. This next series is not just for those who haven't yet started using your journal. Winter is a good time for every one of us to recommit ourselves to living as Christ wants us to live. This series will take us right up to Easter when we celebrate our progress as we celebrate the ultimate gift of eternal life.

If you haven't yet signed up for the Daniel Plan, be sure to do so.² Each person living in our community who signs up receives your very own copy of *The Daniel Plan Journal*.³ If you are not a part of the Asbury Community, we still invite you to participate with us, but we ask that you purchase a copy on your own. These journals can

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We worship each Sunday at 10:30 am. I hope to see you there. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Andy Mort, "Gentleness is Strength: The 7 Habits of Highly Gentle People," Retrieved from: <https://www.andymort.com/gentleness-is-strength/>.

² Warren, Rick, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

³ Warren, Rick, and the Daniel Plan Team. *The Daniel Plan Journal - 40 Days to a Healthier Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.