

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Diverse Taste (Pecans, maple, apple and peanut butter)

Writing an article about Father's Day is much easier than writing an article about Mother's Day. I have personal experience with fathering. And I was blessed to have a father in my life that I remember fondly.

Theologically, the word "Father" is loaded with meaning. Which means the word is loaded with preconceptions. We don't all agree on what this word means. Although, biologically, we all have a father, for a lot of us, when we think of father, we are not thinking about the person who contributed to our DNA.

Throughout history, children have been raised by a single parent or guardian. This person filled both ambiguous roles of father and mother. Yet

Yet they are only one person. And remarkably, the children they rear are often remarkable themselves. How do they do it? How does one person, male or female, manage to combine the necessary ingredients to accomplish two, often opposing roles?



Created by a Master Chef

We are like a soup made up of available ingredients. The starter is our DNA, which is made up of tiny pieces of organic building blocks. The ingredients are

then combined in our mother's womb by a Master Chef, the God who created us. Referring to God as Father confuses the subject all the more.

But God, the Master Chef, also invites amateurs into the kitchen. These amateurs chefs, you and I, are the caregivers who not only stir the pot but season this concoction that may someday be a starter for their own soup. The result is a creative explosion of culinary experiences. The result is a child who becomes an adult, and often an amateur chef.

We are also cocktails of hormones with various degrees and levels of each ingredient. The hormones that we usually associate with

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Special points of interest:

*** All meetings have been cancelled until further notice

Flies, Camels and Lemonade (Claiming the moral high ground)

I might as well get this out at the beginning since it's bound to come up at some point. I'm a hypocrite. I try hard not to be a hypocrite, but the truth is that I fail to do what I claim I want to do. Sometimes my actions don't reconcile with my beliefs.

I bought a used red truck a couple of years ago from an individual who

claimed that it belonged to his dad. I say "claimed" to suggest that I'm not convinced that what he said is a complete truth. Our relationship didn't start that way.



It is my nature in business transactions to prefer dealing with individuals and organizations I trust. I don't know a lot about trucks, except that some owners take good care of their vehicles and other owners, not so much. My rule of thumb generally is that if I don't trust the seller, I'm more likely to walk away regardless of my opinion of the truck.

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Flies, Camels and Lemonade (Claiming the moral high ground) ...cont from page 1

Trust is highly subjective. For me, you don't really earn my trust as much as you choose to break it. I prefer trusting people and do so when I really shouldn't. I suppose that rebuilding trust takes more time for folks like me.

That day that I looked at the red truck, I struck up a conversation with the seller. I explained that we needed a truck for our community. He also asked questions. And then he offered a commentary, telling me that he couldn't imagine how any pastor could vote for a candidate running as a democrat. When I asked why he felt this way, he responded, "Democrats are baby killers."

I assured him that I knew a lot of people who vote for Democrats, and none of them kill babies. This man self-identifies as a Christian. This bothers me. I don't want someone to think that I agree with this man because I also self-identify as a Christian. I feel the same way about our president and a lot of his supporters.

If they are Christians, then I must be something else.

The moral high ground is a space that we hope to occupy when we use arguments based on what we claim are universally accepted ideals for justice. Perhaps most of us associate these ideals with God's will for humanity. This is the way I prefer to interpret the moral high ground when I hang out there.



I purchased the red truck despite the person's misguided comments about people who vote for certain candidates. Several of the man's claims about the red truck turned out to be lies. Apparently, his religious beliefs don't include truth in business dealings. More likely, this man

suffers from a share humane condition that we call hypocrisy.

to believe. And the recipe that turned us into who we are is the lens that we use to observe and interpret.

Father's Day, traditionally, honored men. This is an issue for persons whose only parent or guardian is a woman. Yet, as a father myself, I refuse to minimize my role to the point that the part of a father is optional.



Again, I turn back to the common attributes that we associate with maleness while realizing that living examples of these attributes are found in all genders. This is one of the most significant drawbacks of equating God with the characteristics of a father. And this helps to explain why, in scripture, God has the attributes of all genders.

For example, we traditionally think of defending the family as a male attribute. Yet, throughout nature, a mother who gives birth to young, often protect their offspring, sacrificing their own life if necessary. Defending the family is not wholly the domain of the male gender. A desire to protect the people we love is shared by all genders.

Diverse Tastecont. from page 1

male attributes is called testosterone. The hormone that offers more feminine traits is called estrogen. Although these hormones are more closely linked to the two primary roles of the reproductive process, each of us has a combination of both ingredients.

This information suggests an interesting interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis. The appearance of "and" means that what comes before and after the conjunction is a part of the recipe. If the recipe tells us to add salt and pepper, we combine both ingredients.

Verse 27 reads, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them."

So did God create each human using both "male and female" ingredients. Or did God create male humans and female humans? The more common interpretation, theologically, is the second idea. But our experience, backed up by science, points to the first interpretation. Since none of us really know the mind of God, we choose to believe what we want





In our Prayers

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

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Elaine Lamoreaux Mary Nations

THANK YOU!!



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to provide 2 million masks for Flint ...

The foundation intends to grant 2 million masks to the Food Bank, the City of Flint and the Help Centers. They will work together to get the masks into the community.

“When we mask up, we save lives,” Mayor Sheldon Neeley said. “We appreciate C.S Mott Foundation’s support and commitment being shown once again to the residents of Flint. These face masks will be vital tool for our community to be able to reactivate fully and safety.”

“We want to help all members of the community stay healthy,” said Ridgway White, president and CEO of the C. S. Mott Foundation.

“Keep Flint moving forward safely“

Coming up this week

June 22	Mon	
June 23	Tues	10am-2pm Water / Food Distribution
June 24	Wed	No Pastor Book Club
June 25	Thu	
June 26	Fri	
June 27	Sat	
June 28	Sun	



JOIN WORSHIP ONLINE

SUNDAY, JUNE 21ST, 10:30 AM

FACEBOOK LIVE ([FLINT ASBURY](#))

OR

WEBINAR



JOIN BY PHONE

+1 929 436 2866

MEETING ID: 324 841 204

JOIN ONLINE


[HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/324841204](https://zoom.us/j/324841204)

Asbury Worship Series Live

What does life look like in the new normal? Forgetting for a moment that life is a constant sea of change and doesn't go backward, will we ever feel like life is back to normal again?

We come to the end of our series, *Risen*, on May 24, and begin a new

series titled simply, *Live*. Our pronunciation and emphasis differ depending on whether you read this title as a verb or an adjective. It's both in this case.



Will simple "open" signs become a nostalgic memory that we share with our grandchildren? "I remember when there was a time that people greeted each other with a hug." "Really," granddad, "Weren't they afraid of getting sick?"

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Book Club News

If you are staying away from Asbury's Book Club because of zoom fatigue or you don't like participating without video, I hope you will get over it. While we are anxious to return to our building, we may find social distancing to be just as cumbersome as online meetings. Meanwhile, don't miss out on our conversations.

to represent the beliefs of other faiths. We each should speak for ourselves.



We finished our study of Revelations. Our conversations moved towards gaining a better idea of how the beliefs of people in other communities of faith differ from our own. If you suspect that your beliefs differ from ours, or you know someone who may be willing to share their beliefs, invite them to our conversation. None of us should attempt

With so much division over the basics in life, like getting our hair cut or going to a restaurant, public attention moved away from how others view God. Differences among religions seem less important when both groups want to

know when tickets for Tiger's games will be available.

Yet, even in the midst of protests over whether the church should invite the public to get cozy together in the same space, our existential questions remain. Where is God in all of this? Where do you see God showing up? How do you know? Is God going to save us? How? When?

I encourage you to join us online for our Wednesday gatherings. We chose not to go on Facebook live since this is intended to be an interactive discussion. You can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others are saying by calling (929) 436-2866, and entering the meeting ID, 482458815#.

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

- Kevin Croom Dir. Operations
- Blair Neifert Farm Manager
- Matt Dee Farm Operations
- Israel Unger Function to Funding
- Kim Sims Connections
- Karl Collyer Production
- Katelin Maylum Production

We are a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion. We usually meet each Wednesday at Noon, but during the COVID-19 crisis we are meeting online at 12:30 pm.

- #### Asbury Staff
- Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
 - Connie Portillo Office Secretary
 - Sylvia Pittman Empowerment Arts
 - Jim Craig Leadership Chair

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.

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

Pastor Tommy

Live ...Cont. from page 4

For most of us, there was always an idea of personal space around us. Persons coming too close crossed a line that set off alarms of an invasion of this space. Has this buffer zone increased to at least six feet, except for persons living under the same roof? Is this life in the new normal?

And then there is the protest. Persons standing up for individual freedoms using firearms to intimidate onlookers. Are they really suggesting that they will take another person's life over a disagreement on how far away I want them to stand? How about a million miles? Otherwise, my individual freedom to feel safe is under attack.

God sent me to the Gospel of Matthew for our theme where Jesus described what it means to live in the kingdom of God. Answering what the kingdom of heaven is like, Jesus tells a story. Didn't He always tell a story to answer our questions?



Detroit Free Press. Photo by Paul Sancya, AP.

What if we rephrase the question of how to reopen our country, our bars, and our shopping malls with a different question? What is it like to live in the kingdom of heaven? What should the new normal look like? How do we get there?

If you miss signing on for our conversation on Sunday, May 24, be sure to check out the video on our Facebook page. We end our series, titled *Risen*, with this story told by Jesus to answer this question. What is it like to live in the kingdom of heaven?

While we are working on answering the question of reopening, why not include the new normal that Jesus shared with His followers. Leave the weapons at home. While you are invited you have the freedom to choose not to come.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We plan to be live via [webinar](#), through [Facebook](#) live, or you can call (929) 436-2866 and enter the meeting number — 324 841 204. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

Pastor Tommy

Diverse Taste (Pecans, maple, apple and peanut butter) ...cont. from page 2

For example, we traditionally think of defending the family as a male attribute. Yet, throughout nature, a mother who gives birth to young, often protect their offspring, sacrificing their own life if necessary. Defending the family is not wholly the domain of the male gender. A desire to protect the people we love is shared by all genders.

Another example is the traditional role of the male to provide for their family. This tradition belongs more to the genre of fairytales than reality. The same can be said about hunter versus gatherer. The various roles of rearing children are functional and not gender-specific.

There are two distinct genders when it comes to reproduction. But these are functional roles that should not be confused with the participants' gender.

Every Mother's Day, I make sure that I recognize persons of all genders who participate in raising children and perform the roles traditionally associated with motherhood. But I don't try to name those roles. Although I often point to examples of men whose families recognize and celebrate them for taking on roles that they consider mothering.

Likewise, for Father's Day, I celebrate all persons who take on whatever roles we associate with fathering children. Whether they are best in class or just doing what they can. Whether their function was biological or more of an amateur in the kitchen.

I celebrate my own father's memory, who I often compare to the aggregate of the fictional characters played by the late John Wayne. Yet some of my fondest memories of my father have little to do with traditional roles of fathering. For example, I recall my father shelling pecans and cutting up fruit for a family dinner. I still enjoy pecans with fruit and remember my father's fruit salad.

So much as been written, said, and demonstrated about the strengths of diversity that diversity should be a given. Sadly, pushback and biases that restrict diversity in the workplace and even in houses of worship continue.

Speaking of soup, one of my favorite metaphors from scripture is the table. A table is a place where people come together to share in a practice that we all share in common. And we each come with our own preferences and different experiences.

When Cyndi and I married, we hosted a potluck after the wedding. Instead of traditional wedding gifts, we encouraged our guests to bring a dish to pass. Not enough for everyone coming. Just enough for a few people. The result was a culinary delight, not because there was enough of any particular dish. Instead, the diversity of dishes meant that the serving table reflected how much our tastes vary.

As in life, we didn't all experience every dish. We each chose as we filled our plates, based on the selections in front of us, and our aptitude for adventure in selecting dishes that we wanted to know better. The feedback from our guests was consistent. The food was better than catered meals. The diversity of selection won the day.

The table is a metaphor for the coming together of diverse people. God sets the table, but we are each a unique dish created in different kitchens. The table is a potluck of variety. The selections depend upon who is invited and who shows up.

Like potluck, few of us enjoy every dish. Different ingredients mix well with other ingredients differently. But we are invited to experience new combinations of ingredients and be delighted.

My recent discovery for an evening snack was only possible because I was blessed to experience diversity in new combinations.

I am a father, and in my role as a father, I add to the recipe that is my children. And to a lesser extent, their children. It is my hope that my children remember my softer side

after I am gone. I'm not known for my fruit salad. But I love color, and texture, and movies with good endings that make me cry. And I love words.

The sweetness of the maple counters the lack of sugar in the peanut butter that we choose for our pantry. The crunchiness of the pecans and my memories of my dad's fruit salad, embellish my snack. The flavor of apple combines well with the taste of peanuts. The salt is optional.

Happy Father's Day to all amateur chefs who have a role in rearing children. Whether you are a model dad or missed out on an opportunity to be one, I celebrate fathers everywhere.

Different ingredients mix well with other ingredients differently, but we are invited to experience new combinations of ingredients and be delighted.

We often refer to God as Father. For a few of us, we may lean upon God's power to protect us from harm. But I suspect in times when we are most vulnerable, we consider the softer, perhaps more feminine attributes of God the Father. For me, I love God's creativity with colors, flavors, and textures.

This month, our focus is on claiming a new normal for ourselves. We aren't interested in going back to the way things were with systems of injustice and segregation. For more information our series, *Live*, see the article, [Coming up in worship](#) on our [website](#).

I invite you to join us each Sunday. We plan to be live via [webinar](#), through [Facebook](#) live, or you can call (929) 436-2866 and enter the meeting number — 324 841 204. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

Pastor Tommy

Risen

Join in on the conversation

Indebtedness is as much an economic issue in scripture as it is about forgiveness. Jesus lived among and advocated for the poor and marginalized. In this series, we explore current examples of indebtedness, and our role as followers of Jesus’ teachings. What issues matter most to you.

For example, one member of our community noted that a person with a gender identity that differs from their biological identity are often marginalized. And it is not enough to avoid persons unwilling to consider that God created them with their identity. Some have been denied essential services during the Covid pandemic.

The pandemic is also shining a bright light on systemic racism. African Americans are disproportionately affected, exposing systemic racism. We serve a diverse community and a God that delights in diversity. What experiences or insights do you have that the rest of us need to hear about?

The people in jobs that help keep the rest of us safe are among the lowest paid. The pandemic is also shining a light on the inequalities of our economic and political systems. The economic separation between the small number of people with most of the wealth and those keeping us safe is large in the U.S. than it is in the rest of the world.

The pandemic is exposing the inadequacies in our healthcare system. Often touted as “world class” healthcare access and quality in the United States is based on economics. Yet fighting a pandemic effectively requires access to healthcare for everyone. Is this an issue that stirs your passion?

Minimum wage and compensation equity	Human dignity
Climate change	Voting
Incarceration	Clean and healthy water
Access to healthcare	LGBTQ
Quality and access to education	Other

Be sure to take a couple minutes to complete our [survey](#). You can find a link on our website’s [home page](#). The first question asked which topics are of interest that you are willing to research. This is the list of potential topics:

Several have already responded. If you haven’t completed our survey go to [Risen Survey](#) now and take our survey. This will really help us figure out which topics are important to our participants and who is willing to do and share their research.

For more information this series, *Risen*, see the article, [Coming up in worship](#).

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Life groups question & notes

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the first creation story found in the first chapter of Genesis, paying close attention to verse 27. How do you read the use of the conjunction “and” between the two genders of reproduction, male and female? If you identify as a male, think about which feminine characteristics you possess. If you identify as a female, consider which male characteristics you have. Celebrate who you are.
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Diverse taste*. What do you enjoy about potluck meals? How do you decide on which dish you try? How different are the people that you know from yourself? What experiences have you had working with people different than you? What are some of the benefits of working together with people who have different strengths from your own?
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? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.

Hypocrisy is very much a part of the human condition. We say we believe a certain way and don't support what we say with our actions. For some, our problem is that we really don't understand what we say, or we lie about our beliefs. But most of us simply fail to act in ways that come out of our beliefs. Hypocrisy is not okay. We all should strive to do better.

More critical, hypocrisy is dangerous when leaders act in ways that are contrary to their stated beliefs. Hypocritical laws are also dangerous. Interpreting the intent of laws is the responsibility of our legal system. And we count on law enforcement to act in ways that represent the intent and letter of our laws.

The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution begins with five objectives. These objectives help clarify the intentions behind our laws. The first of these five objectives is justice. But how is justice determined? Many argue that justice is served when our actions are consistent with the law. Of course, this argument presumes that the laws are just and that the enforcement of the law is just. This is a dangerous assumption that clearly isn't the case today.

It's clear that the majority of us realize that the objective of justice inferred by our Constitution is elusive. Something is wrong with our laws and our systems. The moral high ground, in this case, doesn't really matter so much as the reality that people with darker skin are dying in confrontations with law enforcement. The deafening cry is to stop the killing.

Any attempt at occupying the moral high ground that defends unjust actions is hypocritical. And frankly, insulting, when said by a person self-identifying as a person who follows the teachings of Jesus. It's no wonder that the vast majority of youth and younger adults believe that most Christians are hypocrites. We earned this judgment by straining flies and eating camels.

Jesus was speaking to the crowds one day about the importance of our actions representing what we say we believe. He encouraged the crowd to be law-abiding. But He emphasized understanding the intentions behind the law as critical. And actions speak louder than words.

Calling out the hypocrisy of the leaders of His day, Jesus said, "You strain a fly out of your drink, but swallow a camel!" Who wants flies in their lemonade? No one, of course. Were the

leaders really swallowing whole camels?

The laws that Jesus referred to allow people to eat certain foods and avoid others. Flies and camels were on the "do not eat" list. The leaders claimed adherence to the letter of the law in formality and words only. Just before His statement about flies and camels, Jesus captures the real problem. He accuses the leaders of claiming the moral high ground by pointing to minor legal points.

What if the intent of the law is just, but the implementation doesn't work out to be just, at least for all of us? We are straining flies and eating camels. Jesus accused the leaders of neglecting the more important points of law, including justice, mercy, and honesty. The moral high ground claimed by the leaders was infested with flies, and no amount of straining would yield lemonade worth drinking.

You strain a fly out of your drink, but swallow a camel!

Matthew 23:24

Divine justice does not consider the color of our skin. God's moral high ground does not place a

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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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.

Flies, Camels and Lemonade (Claiming the moral high ground) ...cont from page 9

higher value on human life based on economics, gender, or any other differentiation. Jesus consistently sided with victims of systems that treated persons differently and invited them to the front of the line. His actions included both corrective action and reparation.

Our nation is at a point where the moral high ground lies far outside our actions. The moral high ground cannot be claimed by leaders holding onto ideals that, in practice, discriminate against persons with darker skin.

Wherever our new normal may take us, our actions speak louder than our words. And whenever we lay any claim to the moral high ground, our metrics must include justice, mercy, and honesty.

Our journey towards the moral high ground begins with honesty. Once we admit our own hypocrisy, we are more likely to see where we fall short. And less likely to follow dishonest leaders and blindly follow laws without regard to justice.

For more information our series, [Live](#), see the article, [Coming up in worship](#) on our [website](#).

Any claim to the moral high ground include justice, mercy, and honesty...

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A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to info@FlintAsbury.org or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy