

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Come Closer (You are standing on holy ground)

Sometimes when I consider the enormous power behind the love I feel from God, I wonder how we humans can make such a mess of things. Admittedly, it's hard not to make judgments about specific people and actions. Until I realize that I'm also one of those people. I know that I am blessed that I recognize God's presence and that we are failing God, so I really don't have any excuses for my behavior. What about you?

My best friend from high school is artist. I still have an original watercolor painted by Eric when he was in high school hanging in our hallway at the parsonage. Cyndi



And I stopped to visit Eric a couple of years ago at a store that he owns. When I reminded him about the painting, he was happy that I held onto it, but concerned that it was completed when he was very early in his career. I'm holding onto this original work whether his artwork becomes collectible or not.

Eric enjoys sharing what he knows about art, and he taught art in high school for several years after college. I remember when he encouraged me to express myself through drawing. He gave me a sketch pad and pencil and a few suggestions to get started. One of my drawings is a dock stretching out into Lake Erie. While my rendition of the actual dock is a poor version of the real thing, I had at least applied some of the shadowing that Eric taught me to do.

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Satisfied (No Strings Attached)

Many of us are desperate to find solutions to an on-going, nagging feeling that life may never be the way it once was. This feeling of uncertainty causes distress for all of us, and panic attacks for a lot of us. We all find a routine that offers a level of predictability in our lives. And the pandemic has changed everything.

In my search for suggestions that I can share with you

all, I usually start with articles written for most of us. Admittedly, the New York Times is my favorite source. Their professionalism is admirable. But I also click on the links included in their online articles that frequently take me to their sources. These sources validate the conclusions offered by the journalist.

In her article, *How to Cope When Everything is Changing*, Cindy Lamothe tried to answer

The question, "How do you make plans when its impossible to make plans?"

Her article began with the recognition that the ground is shifting so quickly that planning even a week ahead can seem futile.¹ One Trump rally can cause a sudden spike in new coronavirus cases for a city. New cases spiked for the

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You must wear a mask while in the area and to enter church office. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

Thank you & Stay safe Everyone!



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Satisfied (No Strings Attached) ...cont from page 1

State of South Dakota a couple weeks after a parade of mask-less motorcycle riders cruised up and down the streets of Sturgis.

This leaves a trip to the grocery store a potential risk for everyone we meet for the two weeks following our adventure. Eating at a restaurant still raises my anxiety level enough that carry-out seems to be the only sensible choice. While the crew at Fox News tries to explain away why hundreds of thousands of our friends and neighbors died to keep stock prices high, most of our near-term plans go on hold for another year.

After reading Cindy Lamothe's article, I did a deep dive into a concept called "Temporal Distancing."² I couldn't resist the use of a Time Machine metaphor by Dr. Nick Tasler. The time machine is one way to cope with the panic and disappointment that many of us are experiencing.

This happens when change interrupts our daily routines to the point that they require a complete overhaul. His solution to coping with our anxiety is to dial in ten years from now and ask yourself how you hope to tell the story of how you responded to this crisis. Sounds exciting. But what if our time machine is broken?

Nevertheless, many psychologists suggest that focusing on the future rather than the past helps us cope. Not the near-term future, however. One thing that both psychologists and scripture agree on is that fear all but disables our cognitive abilities. This may help explain why the president is doubling down on fear as his party's primary strategy for the upcoming election. Perhaps if enough us quit thinking, we may reelect the leaders who failed to lead when this crisis started.

Another approach to coping is accepting that we really never knew what we thought we knew. This stretches our mental flexibility to the max. Margie Warrell argues in her book, *You've Got This*, that rehashing our losses only undermines our confidence. Rather than holding on to canceled plans, we look forward to new possibilities that would otherwise be missed.

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Come Closer (You are standing on holy ground)

One of the keys to drawing a realistic illustration on paper is to create the illusion of three dimensions on 2-dimensional media. Paper has only height and width. Even thick paper is missing depth. Since our brains turn our field of vision into 3-dimensional images, an artist uses perspective to capture this third dimension, so we see depth as we look at their artwork.

In a drawing, perspective can focus our attention on the horizon,

when the artist draws lines that converge towards a single point on the paper. A city street sketch can look as though we are looking down the road, even though there is no actual depth to the drawing.

Artists use multiple vantage points within the same drawing to create the illusion of looking down on the subject, up at the subject, or from a fishbowl view. Each perspective offers a new look at the subject matter.¹

Nearly everybody knows a little about the story of Moses from the Christian bible. Moses is the one that God asked to lead a bunch of people out of slavery. This story is told in a book called Exodus. We learn a lot about Moses from his birth through death.

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In Our Prayers

Lisa Bohnsack Mirium Watson

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston Elaine Lamoreaux
 Shirley Craig Norma Buzzard
 Mary Nations

★ The COVID-19 pandemic is serious and the numbers of new cases in Genesee County is rising again. If this continues we will suspend our in-person meetings again.

Masks are a requirement while not eating or drinking. If your health conditions prevent wearing a mask plan to stay away for now for your protection and the well-being of others.

We are meeting in person at 12Noon in the upstairs Library conference room. If our numbers increase enough to prevent adequate social distancing we will move downstairs. For now, you must bring your own lunch. We are not having a potluck lunch due to health concerns.

Pastor Tommy

Coming up this week

- Sept 21 Mon The Vent
 (See flyer on page 7)
- Sept 22 Tues 10am-2pm
 Water / Food Distribution
- Sept 23 Wed Pastor Book Club
 (in the Library Conference Room)
- Sept 24 Thu
- Sept 25 Fri
- Sept 26 Sat
- Sept 27 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
 Contemporary Worship

Join worship online

Sunday, September 20th -10:30am

Facebook Live
 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
Serenity
Coming October 4th**

During September, we focused on invitations for how to address our anxiety using suggestions from Psychologists, supported by illustrations from scripture. In October, we turn our attention to the ancient wisdom

offered in the Book of Proverbs and put into practice in a popular prayer.

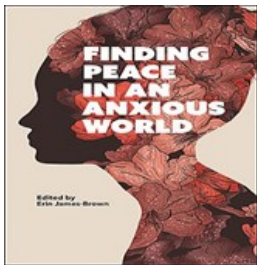


Our series is guided by a recent book that comes to us from the Urban Village Church in Chicago, published with the support of the United Methodist Women. The title of the book is, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*.

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Book Club News

We finish our discussions of *Bridges Out of Poverty* this week. If you haven't read this book you may want to consider reading it at some point.



The authors compare and contrast the hidden rules and attitudes of three economic classes: poverty,

middle-class, and wealthy. But the focus is on understanding how persons facing economic poverty survive despite a lack of support systems.

Our next book is titled, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*. Our study of this book coincides with our October worship series. This book was written by staff of the Urban Village Church in Chicago. It uses the book of Proverbs and

"The Serenity Prayer" as a guide to help us find our way through anxiety, worry, and fear and move towards God's peace. A peace that surpasses all understanding.

The Serenity Prayer" shaped a 2015 four-part sermon series at the Urban Village Church. The series helped the church deal with the tumultuous events of that summer. The book offers a framework for how to approach a God who desires peace for the hearts of God's people in times of anxiety.

Using "The Serenity Prayer" as a scaffold, this book explores ways for us to discover peace through scriptural and spiritual disciplines. The book has only four chapters, each written by a different Urban Village Church leader. Each chapter focuses on different aspects of the prayer—serenity, acceptance, courage, and wisdom—and each concludes with a spiritual practice.

We begin our discussions on September 30. Be sure to reserve a copy now. The cost is \$10 but don't let cost deter your participation. We will make sure each person gets a book that wants a copy.

A few of us meet in person each Wednesday in the upstairs library for lunch and conversation. Check with Pastor Tommy if you plan to attend in person so we can assure social distancing. We're also online for those who cannot meet in person, are not ready to meet in person, or who do not want to wear a face mask.

Unfortunately, the virus is still a threat and in-person gatherings quickly become super-spreaders if precautions are ignored. Bring your own lunch or coordinate with others to purchase carry-out. Potlucks are suspended for now.

I encourage you to join us either in person or online for our Wednesday gatherings. 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#.

We are a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

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

Pastor Tommy

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team Tony, Mirium
Ushers Anthony, Jim
Production Team Jonathon, Terrance
Children 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

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.

Serenity (Coming October 4th)

Each week we plan to dig deeper into each line of the Serenity Prayer, using the Book of Proverbs as a repository of wisdom. I pray that you will join us either in person or online.

We call our new series *Serenity*. This topic is a response to the growing list of persons struggling to hold-on to faith in an anxious world. The pandemic continues to wreak havoc with our plans to return to some version of normalcy. Some families welcome this opportunity for in-person school, while others choose to decline. The invitation and the RSVP are complicated.

I'm usually hesitant to comment on politics since I am infatuated with diversity. A world where we all agree would be dull and less creative than a world of varying opinions. Needless, there comes a time when the church is called to take a stand against

oppression, intolerance and stupidity.



The number of persons dying from the coronavirus as a result of failed leadership is inexcusable. The constant barrage of executive orders dismantling the policies that attempt to offer equality for all persons and protect our earth is an affront to the values we hold sacred in our faith traditions.

October is likely to prove to be an even more anxious month than the present. We can anticipate our airwaves filled with images and hurtful messages coming from a group of people anxious to

hold on to power at any cost, and weaponized by foreign enemies of our nation. I pray that this series and our weekly life group study of this book will indeed, help us to find peace in an anxious world.

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](#).

We spend money on what does not satisfy?

Isaiah 55:2

Pastor Tommy

In one story, Moses sees this bush that's on fire from a distance. It caught his attention. First, it was a bush ablaze in the wilderness. Since Moses didn't start the fire, he was curious who did. But what really got his attention was that the bush wasn't consumed by the blaze. "Bizarre," thought Moses to himself. He wanted a closer look.

This is the idea of curiosity. Something catches our attention, and we want to take a closer look. We want to change our perspective. If we are an artist and want to share what we see with the world, we might draw what we see from more than one perspective. Up close and personal, and from further away.

As Moses got closer to the bush, he heard a voice calling his name. Moses responded to the voice as he drew closer. Then he heard, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals." Like a friend who doesn't want you wearing your shoes in their home, the bush's voice insisted that Moses take off his sandals.



I don't know about Moses, but I think that I would have my shoes off as quickly as possible. Anything that can create this sort of pyrotechnics in the middle of no-where is a force that you may not want to

get impatient with you.

"You are standing on holy ground," came the voice from within a burning bush. That's all the explanation needed by Moses. And when the voice identifies as the God of Moses' ancestors, he knew the reputation of this God.

I found a cartoon drawing by Donald Reilly that features a golfer getting advice from a burning bush on the golf course. This depiction shows a different perspective. An additional point of view. One that resonates with me as a result of my own story. There was a time when I played a lot of golf. I never saw a burning bush, but I encountered God.

Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground.

Exodus 3:5

What if this encounter of Moses is a metaphor? An invitation for you and me to come closer while realizing that the ground we stand on is holy. Whether we are on a golf course, a city street, or sitting in our favorite chair, God invites us to come closer and realize that each moment of our lives is lived on holy ground.

Perhaps it's time for you and me to change our perspective. To move closer towards that idea that has our attention. And to listen for the voice of God calling our name. We are standing on holy ground, even if the ground we stand on is covered with glass and litter.

Coming up

This month's series is called *Invited*. We're looking at some invitations that are helpful during this time of extreme anxiety. If you're feeling stressed from the pandemic or for any other reason, this series is for you. You can read about our series in our [newsletter](#) or [online](#). I pray that you will join us online or in person. Be aware that we follow social distancing practices without exception. Free face masks are available and must be worn in our building.

You can join us online 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](#).

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

¹ David Drazil!. "What type of perspective should you use?," © Sketch like an architect, August 2, 2019.

COMMUNITY ROOTS

FLINT PRESENTS

VEHICLE CITY

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION
ON RACE, RACISM, AND
RADICAL CHANGE.

THE VENT

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

5:00 PM TO 7:00 PM

WHALEY PARK

Sponsored by: Latinx Technology Center, Flint Neighborhoods United, Eastside Franklin Park Neighborhood Association, Asbury Community Development Corporation, Community Foundation of Greater Flint - Truth Racial Healing & Transformation, and United Way of Genesee County



Life groups question & notes

When the Lord saw that Moses was coming closer, he called to him from the middle of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Yes, here I am." God said, "Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground."

Exodus 3:4-5 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Exodus 3:4-5. Think of this story as a metaphor for you and me. We hear God's voice calling our name, we move closer to God, and we learn that we are standing on holy ground. What is holy ground for you? How close do you feel to God at this time? Are you standing on holy ground?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Come closer*. Are you familiar with perspective in art? Look at a picture, painting, print, or photo where the subject matter appears to have height, width, and depth. Can you tell where the subject matter would disappear if your vision extended far enough? Is the artist close-up or far away from the subject? How does moving closer change what we know about a subject? How might your perspective on God change as you move closer to God?
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.

If neither your time machine nor imagining new possibilities work, Dr. Tassler recommends doing something so simple that it sounds almost comical. Do something that you know you can do.

I remember a time years ago when I hit a rough patch. Feeling like my world was not only crumbling, I could not shake the voices in my head telling me that I was to blame for everything bad that was happening to me. My solution at the time was to find something easy to do. No matter how silly or trivial. I reasoned that if I could succeed at something, anything, then I might gain the confidence to try something else. I eventually recovered.

I have put more invitations on the table in a few paragraphs than any of us can accept. And most invitations that come our way have strings attached that we may not recognize until it's too late. We're tempted to hop on whichever bandwagon has the loudest bells. At least we're doing something. Right? Invitations that promise comfort and certainty are tempting.

One of the most famous temptation stories on record involves Jesus alone in the wilderness. As the story goes, Satan tries three times to convince Jesus to set aside His convictions and give in to satisfying His desires. And if you remember the story, Satan began with a relatively innocent invitation before going for the grand one.

First, I want to deal with this notion of Satan, also called the devil in some circles. Admittedly, I'm not fond of humanizing evil. Doing so turns some folks away and trivializes a complicated subject. But it does help to make the story more interesting. And it's important to realize that we humans possess all of the negative tendencies attributed to the devil. Most temptations are about keeping our demonic nature from taking over.

Jesus was hungry and thirsty from fasting — going without food and water for days. It's hard enough for me to miss breakfast. I know from experience that fasting takes a tremendous amount of will power. The devil apparently knew that Jesus was vulnerable and invites Jesus to turn a stone into bread. This invitation does not mean as much to you and me since we don't possess this power. So substitute a power you do have, like a 2nd doughnut when you know that a salad would be better for you.

Jesus turns down the invitation. And what Jesus says is as powerful as it is confusing. Something about not living on bread alone. But hold that thought. Instead, Jesus reminds the devil that it is God's Word that brings life. Maybe so, but when I'm hungry, and bread is all there is — I'm just saying.

The Prophet Isaiah offers another response for propositions that come with unlikely promises and hidden costs. "Why spend money on what does not satisfy." Instead, Isaiah points to God's ultimate solution to our anxiety. Come to me, and you will have life!

Coming up

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Why spend money on what does not satisfy. *Isaiah 55:2*

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Pastor Tommy

¹ Cindy Lamothe. "How to Cope When Every Thing is Changing." © NY Times Sept 7, 2020.

² Emma Bruehlman-Senecal and Ozlem Ayduk University of California, Berkeley. "This Too Shall Pass: Temporal Distance and the Regulation of Emotional Distress." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* © 2015 American Psychological Association 2015, Vol. 108, No. 2.

Welcome to the Asbury Community

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

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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.

