

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## Afraid (Grateful for fear)

My family is divided when it comes to cheering for either Michigan State or the University of Michigan in sporting events. I enjoy the rivalry since I don't have sufficient attachment to either school to solidify my allegiance. I did not grow up in Michigan, and I have taken classes and worked with faculty and staff from both institutions. I find it less stressful to watch these two teams in sporting events than if I had a strong preference.

Some days I wish this was true when it comes to the outcome of the presidential election. The official date of the election comes the week after this newsletter is published, and I can't wait for it to be over. We may not know who our next president will be for a few days after the election. Meanwhile, the effort to



keep as many of us from voting or to disqualify our vote continues. This is strange behavior for citizens living in a democracy. And I am afraid of what may come next.

An article appearing in *The Atlantic*, written by Molly Ball, makes this observation — “Fear is in the air, and fear is surging.<sup>1</sup> Americans are more afraid today than they have been in a long time.” Her article was published a couple of months be-

fore the last presidential election in 2016. Before the pandemic and before the appointment of three Supreme Court justices, each confirmed along partisan lines. Both terrors cause us to worry about our present and future. I suspect that our fear had not peaked four years ago.

Fear is conducive as a protector. But what if fear is given total control of our personal-homeland security? This powerful emotion exerts influence over everything we do. And this makes us miserable.

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Volume 20 Issue 1

November 1, 2020

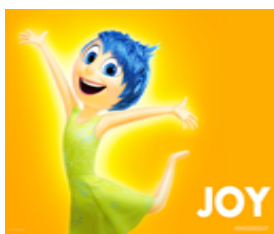


You must wear a mask while in the area and to enter church office. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

Thank you & Stay safe Everyone!

## Courage (The Courage to Change)

In an interview last month with Gayle King on CBS This morning, Dr. Brené Brown shares how her life changed for the better. This interview took place on the 10th anniversary of the release of Dr. Brown's best selling book, *The Gifts of Imperfection*. The provocative title alone should be enough reason to read her book. But the real reason for so much interest may be the same reason that over 50 million viewers watched Dr. Brown's Ted Talk about the power of vulnerability.



Last year, Dr. Brown released a new series on Netflix titled, *The Call to Courage*. Her advice is simple, powerful, and challenging for most of us to follow. “True belonging doesn't require you to change who you are. It requires you to be who you are,” she says in the official trailer for this new series. Why

does it take so much courage for you and me to be who we are?

Last week our focus was on accepting what we can't change. And trying to change other people tops the list of the multitude of things we don't have the power to change. And sometimes, this includes changing who God created us to be so that others will accept us .

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## Courage (The Courage to Change) ... cont from page 1

The problem should be obvious. For one, it's exhausting to be someone we're not. The way to find peace in an anxious world includes settling in with the person we see in the mirror.

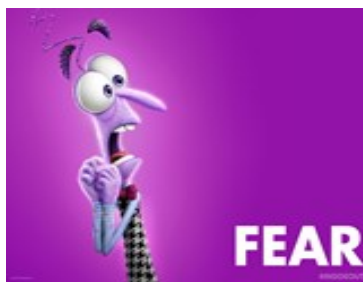
Scientists tell us that our need to be accepted by others comes from a survival instinct that insists that being a part of a community increases our chance for survival. Our connections to others is a vital part of what makes life joyful. And during a pandemic, our relationships are strained but helpful in coping with the stress and strain of isolation.

As humans, we are an emotional cocktail with our mix of emotions changing constantly. One moment we're feeling joyful, and then sadness tries to take over. We move from enthusiastic to pessimistic from just hearing a couple of news headlines. Last week we learned a prayer that encourages us to welcome our feelings and give up the need to control whatever is the source of our distress.

In the Disney-Pixar movie, *Inside Out*, we get an inside look at the emotions of an eleven year

old girl named Riley, stressed out over her family's move to San Francisco. Riley's various emotions are illustrated by characters with appropriate colors. Our theme this week relates most directly with the character that represents fear.

Fear is, most of all, risk-averse. And as a result, Fear is quite anxiety-ridden. Most of Fear's anxiety comes out of his primary role in managing Riley's emotions. Fear's primary job involves whether Riley is well-suited in her current environment. When Riley learns that her family is moving, Fear jumps into action in response to the unknown.



Fear is a beneficial emotion. It helps us to stay alert in the presence of danger. But just because something is unknown doesn't make it dangerous.

Just unknown. Perhaps the greater fear is not the risk associated with what lies beyond the horizon. Instead, our more significant threat is the possibility of failure and rejection.

In the movie, memories are stored away and represented by the color of the emotion associated with each memory. Several memories that resurface over and over are kept in a particular place where they are readily accessible. The emotion that is. The memory itself is secondary. This way, the emotional response can be replayed with new situations that resemble the old memory.

If change itself is enough to drive us to take shelter where we sit in fear, how will we participate in the change that God has in mind for us? The answer is, of course, that we don't make the change on our own. We get help. Which by itself can be an obstacle for a lot of us.



**In Our Prayers**

Lisa Bohnsack

Miriam 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 still serious and the number of new cases in Genesee County is rising again.

We are now meeting for Pastor Book Club in person at 12Noon in the downstairs Wesley Conference Room.

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.

For now, you must bring your own lunch. We are not having a potluck lunch due to health concerns. But, please, do wear your masks.

Pastor Tommy



**Coming up this week**



- Nov 2 Mon
- Nov 3 Tues 10am-2pm  
Water / Food Distribution
- Nov 4 Wed Pastor Book Club  
(downstairs in the Wesley Room)
- Nov 5 Thu
- Nov 6 Fri
- Nov 7 Sat 2:00pm-5:00pm Halloween Sizzle
- Nov 8 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

Join worship online

Sunday, November 1st -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 Naked and Unafraid Coming November 1

The Discovery Channel posted a casting call using Twitter on July 31, 2013, with the dare to "Survive the 21-day challenge." Season one of "Naked and Afraid" aired in 2015. Despite skepticism, the ratings for this reality show set new records for its genre.

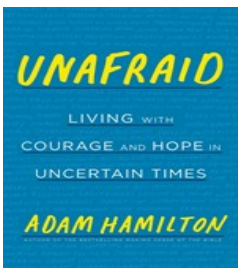


The storyline is straightforward with overtones of the first couple in

the creation story. Except that God doesn't hang out with them. Two people meet in an isolated place with nothing but a satchel and an item of their choice. The audience is invited to witness the couple's anxiety, fear, and eventual success in snippets that compress 21 days of survival into a single episode.

## Book Club News

We finished our discussions of *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* this past Wednesday. If you haven't read this book you may want to consider reading it at some point.



The Serenity Prayer is a reliable source of inspiration for millions. And this book

offers additional spiritual practices to help us cope with our anxiety.

Our next book is titled, *Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*. This book was written by Adam Hamilton, Sr Pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. John Ortberg, senior pastor of Menlo Church in Menlo Park, California, offers these remarks —

"Fear is the great thief. It steals our peace. It quietly deprives us of one present moment after another, without our even knowing. In *Unafraid*, Adam gives us a thoughtful, literate, faith-filled guide to re-claiming our minds and our lives."

Adam Hamilton acknowledges that fear is "the emotion that profoundly shapes us." After all, everyone worries about something, and there is plenty in this world to fear. Dig deeper into the causes of depression and you are likely to discover fear as a root cause. The same holds true for addictions. Fear also drives préjudice and hate.

The reality is that we often fear something that will never happen. It's amazing how much power something that never happens can have over us. Fear can become debilitating, leading to panic attacks or anxiety disorders.

Fear can be helpful in keeping us safe and out of trouble. Some fear is understanding. Such as, the fear that comes out of facing life-threatening illnesses, the likely death of someone close, or money issues.

A few of us meet in person each Wednesday downstairs for lunch and conversation. Be sure to follow social distancing practices. This means wearing a mask when you are not eating or drinking. 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 carryout or share meals. 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](http://FlintAsbury.org).

## Leadership in Worship & Service

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

### Asbury Staff

|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel | Pastor           |
| Connie Portillo         | Office Secretary |
| Sylvia Pittman          | Empowerment Arts |
| Jim Craig               | Leadership Chair |

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 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          |
| South Flint Soup Kitchen |                     |

### 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.

## *Naked and Unafraid ...Asbury Worship Series—Coming November 1*

The truth is that I've never watched a single episode or even part of one. I'm aware of this show from the numerous commercials and the research I did for this article. The provocative title caught my attention as I looked for material for a worship series that considers overcoming fear.

Our new series uses Adam Hamilton's book on the subject of fear titled "*Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times*."<sup>1</sup> His book begins with a declaration that we live in times of high anxiety. And the uncertainty of the current year is even greater than it was when this book was published. It's understandable if we conclude that every one of us is either living in fear or denial.

Leading up to the presidential election of 2016, surveys showed that people living in our country were afraid about becoming a victim of terrorism. This fear prevailed despite lower crime numbers overall. In *The Atlantic*, Molly Ball noted that fear would be the key to a Trump presidency. And her prediction proved accurate. A campaign of fear and anger prevailed at the polls.<sup>2</sup>

In her article, Molly cites the science of fear, noting that fearful persons hold tightly to what they have and eye all that is different with skepticism. Fearful people seek protection.

In the creation story found in Genesis, we read that the first humans hid from God after their loss of innocence. When God confronted them, their response was, "I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked" (Genesis 3:10). This sounds like a different kind of fear than a fear of terrorism. But fear's impact is similar regardless of the source of our fear. To live in fear is to miss out on the joy that life offers.

One of the most frequent responses that God makes to fearful people is, "Do not be afraid." Yet, when Adam Hamilton surveyed people attending his church, he discovered that eighty percent lived with either moderate or significant fear. We all fear something, someone, or some situation. How we choose to respond to our fear matters.

Over the coming month, we will take a deeper dive into both the sources of our fears and learn practical ways to overcome our fears.

I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked.

Genesis 3:10

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

<sup>1</sup> Adam Hamilton. *Unafraid: Living with Courage and hope in Uncertain Times*. ©

**Afraid (Grateful for fear)** ....cont from page 1

Just look behind some of the most life-threatening struggles, including war, depression, addictions, and violence, and you're likely to find fear as the instigator.<sup>2</sup>

Our bodies are awesome creations. Dr. David Zald explained in an interview with Adam Hamilton that even before we are consciously aware of a threat, our body takes protective measures. This protective firmware is located in a part of our brain called the amygdala. This security center makes initial determinations as to whether what your body senses may be a threat.

And if a threat is perceived by the amygdala, your body's early warning system is activated. This results in the release of chemicals like epinephrine (adrenaline) and cortisol. Keep in mind that cortisol is the hormone commonly associated with stress. Suddenly, your heart begins to race, your breathing is more rapid and more shallow, your mouth gets dry, and your muscles tense up.

You may shake and perspire, and your pupils dilate. Why? Your personal homeland security is at DEFCON 2, ready for whatever comes next and anticipating the worse. There is the possibility of immediate and present danger, and you must be prepared to take the next step. Will you attack, retreat, or freeze in place?

A potential problem occurs when one sensory experience or stimulus is mistaken for something else altogether. This can happen even when something desirable is about to happen. A past experience conditions you to react as though something dangerous or frightening is inevitable. We become conditioned to respond out of fear whether or not fear is warranted.

This happens when you had a traumatic experience in the past. Your mind associates the memory with a smell, sight, sound, or taste. Perhaps your experience is associated with a particular feeling, a person, or a place. Your brain becomes conditioned to associate a particular stimulus with the unpleasant, frightening, or painful situation that occurred in your past. And in the present, you respond to a similar stimulus with fear. And your personal homeland security system prepares to respond to a threat that is not.

Humans can manufacture fear in each other. And people who rally around fear look for ways to eliminate whatever threat is creating their collective fear. And while the world can be a dangerous place, most fears are fabrications of an imagination motivated by manipulation. Nevertheless, when we are afraid, our body's homeland security system goes on high alert.

There is a good illustration of how our collective fear conspires against us found in scripture. The backdrop begins with God's intervening to free a people from an oppressive dictator. Moses is appointed as a leader to help guide them through the wilderness to a promised destination that was to be their new home. They were camped across a river from the edge of their new home when Moses sent a dozen forward observers to investigate the area and report back.

**So they spread a false report.**

**Numbers 13:32**

Ten of the spies gave an alarming report about the obstacles they observed, describing the people living there as giants and the wall keeping people out as impenetrable. This group sought to sway public opinion away from any notion of heading this direction. When an opposing perspective was voiced by one of the spies who believed differently, this group mobilized to control the narrative. They did this by lying to the people and downplaying the benefits of going forward. By doing so, they succeeded in spreading panic, dismay, and fear among the people.

Even when fear is a persistent companion, we don't have to be controlled by it. Adam Hamilton writes in his book, *Unafraid*, that "We can learn to address our fears, control them, learn from them, even use them, and we can press through them."

In this past week's Book Club discussion, we began with the question, "Where do you hold your fear?" In other words, when cortisol and adrenaline are rushing into your system, where do you feel the effects of fear the most? Sweaty palms or a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach? In which parts of your body do you feel fear lingering the most?

Fear, even false fear, can keep us from living satisfying lives. Even though we may be very near a breakthrough. For some of us, getting close to the finish line itself brings on fear. As we grow accustomed to the physical manifestations of fear, we develop an addiction to the affects fear has on our body.



Asbury Farms offers fresh produce every week!

Go to our website, [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org) to place your order for a Veggie Box, or sign up for a subscription. You can also call our office at 810-235-0016 to place your order. We accept EBT and Double-up Bucks for a limited time only!!!

Call By Noon on Wednesday for Thursday delivery.

*Life groups question & notes*

*So they spread a false report among the Israelites about the land they had explored. They said, "That land doesn't even produce enough to feed the people who live there. Everyone we saw was very tall, and we even saw giants there...All night long the people cried out in distress.*

Numbers 13:32-14:1a (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Numbers 13:32-14:1a. Moses sent 12 men to explore the promised land and report back. Only two thought it was a good idea to go there. The others spread false rumors. Does this sound familiar? What conspiracy theories are you wondering about? How do you combat being misled?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Afraid*. What has your defenses on alert? Where do you feel fear the most? Can you identify with the people hearing the rumors in our scripture story? Is fear stealing your joy? How can others in your group help you cope with your fears?
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.



The song *Help!* was first released as a single by the Beatles in 1965. It quickly rose to number one. There is something about a cry for help that resonates with nearly every person on the planet. Help is something we all need to make almost any change worth making. Yet many of us go to great lengths to avoid asking for help. Even the help that may offer the courage we need to make changes, despite the anxiety that change causes us.

This week we continue to turn to the Proverbs as a source of help. In Proverbs, we are reminded to "Listen to my words. Never let them get away from you. Remember them and keep them in your heart." (Proverbs 4:20-21). This is good advice, as the writer goes on to offer this pearl of wisdom, "Your life is shaped by your thoughts. Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words" (Proverbs 4:23-24). And this advice itself takes a great deal of courage.

The courage to change most often begins with an act of less celebrated courage. That is, the courage to be vulnerable. To admit that we don't have it all together, and we need help but don't want to ask for it. Brené Brown labels this feat as ordinary courage. Uncelebrated yet, ordinary courage may be the beginning of making the sort of change that is life-altering.

*Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words.*  
*Proverbs 4:23-24*

Jesus reminds us that our life is shaped by our thoughts, and our thoughts are connected to the things we value the most. "Your heart will always be where your riches are" (Matthew 6:21).

This week's chapter from *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* ends with instructions for reflecting on the vastness of God.<sup>1</sup> When we remember that our strength and courage to change comes from the God who created everything, ordinary courage is easier to muster.

Our spiritual practice for this week begins with choosing a name that illustrates the character of God. Names like Father, Rock, or King. Begin by listing some of the ways that God is like the name you choose. For example, God is like a rock because God is solid.

The second step is to consider the characteristics of God that are not like the name you choose. God is not like a rock because God is tender. Last, end this practice considering the double negative. God is not, not like a rock, yet God is so much more than a rock. Rest in the fact that we can never fully contain God, the source of our courage to make the changes that we are called by God to make.

*Your heart will always be where your riches are.*  
*Matthew 6:21*

But how do we know which things God is calling us to change? Next week, Sylvia will share her insight and experience on this question. Be sure to join us.

### Coming up

This month's series is called *Serenity*. If you're feeling stressed from the pandemic, worried about the future, or just anxious for any number of reasons, 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.

Next month our theme moves to dealing with fear. Our new series, *Naked and unafraid*, will explore both what makes us afraid and what we can do about it. Be sure to join us and invite your friends, family, and neighbors.

You can join us online. We ask for your patience as we implement technology changes that promise to substantially improve the quality of our broadcast. We have a new button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This should take you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later. We also plan to be live on [Facebook](#). We start at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

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Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Erin James-Brown, Editor. *Finding peace in an anxious world*. © United Methodist Women, 2020.

## Winter Farming

Who ever heard of harvesting spinach in the middle of winter? I know at least two people with firsthand experience. Matt, Manager of Asbury Farms, and his sidekick, Michael. A new addition, Jennifer, is taking care of watering so that this dynamic-duo can focus on preparations for snow covering the ground and long periods of freezing temperatures.

Meanwhile, Desiree, with the help of her Youth Ambassadors are making sure that our harvest is available to show up on the tables of our neighbors. Tuesday at the Flint Farmer's Market, Wednesday at the South Flint Soup Kitchen, and Thursdays at the Dort Mall.

You can also order a veggie box ***online*** Take advantage of our introductory special. Only \$10 for a box of produce that would easily cost you over \$20 at a big-box, grocery store. And our produce is fresh, locally grown, and we do utilize organic farming techniques.

Pastor Tommy



This week, we begin our new series, *Naked and unafraid*, by examining the role of fear in our lives in the present times. And we turn to scripture for new insights into how others handled their fear. Notably, the hope that scripture offers us as an antidote to fear.

All night long the people cried  
out in distress.

Numbers 14:1

### Coming up

This month's series is called *Naked and unafraid*. If you're fearful about the present or the future, 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 over the next four Sundays. Make it a habit.

Be aware that we follow social distancing practices without exception. Free face masks are available and must be worn in our building.

After Thanksgiving, our theme moves to God living among us. Our next series, *Incarinate*, explores the importance of God among us in the aftermath of an intense election. The Christmas season is guaranteed to be different this year. God's presence is our greatest hope for the future.

Thank you for your patience as we implement technology changes that promise to substantially improve our broadcast quality. We have a new button on the homepage of our *website* - *Click here to watch*. This should take you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later in the week. We're also live on *Facebook*. We start at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at *FlintAsbury.org*.

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Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Molly Ball. "Donald Trump and the Politics of Fear." © September 2, 2016. The Atlantic.

<sup>2</sup> Adam Hamilton. *Unafraid: Living with Courage and hope in Uncertain Times*. © 2018. New York: Penguin Random House.

No matter how  
bad your life  
may seem,  
there are  
millions of  
other people  
who have it ten  
times worse  
than you.  
So thank God  
for all your  
blessings, big  
and small.

Amen.