

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.¹ 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.

Page 6

Volume 20 Issue 8

November 8, 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!

Afraid of Others (move away from the edge)

Are you one of us? How we answer this question affects what happens next.

For the last two mornings, Cyndi had the news turned on when I came up stairs. She wanted an update on election results. Still no clear answer. Just a lot of speculation about possibilities. Meanwhile, litigation strategies are underway in the hopes of changing the outcome, should the outcome not meet the desired results. Democracy at work?



I'm afraid of what comes next. Are you not? Notice that I'm not qualifying whether you are one of us. I'm not presuming that your political ideology matches my own. Only that, like me, you have a certain amount of fear about an uncertain future.

I learned some time ago that I prefer to avoid conflict. Perhaps this makes me more vulnerable to fear when there are two sides to an ideological argument. I'm not talking about disagreement here. I cherish opportunities to have an honest debate over answers that matter. Conflict, however, lights up the parts of my brain that signals danger. While

Page 2

Inside this issue:

Afraid (Grateful for fear)	1
Afraid of Others	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series	4
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series	5
Afraid (Grateful for fear)	6
Asbury Veggie Boxes	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Afraid of Others	9
Winter Farming	10
Afraid (Grateful for fear)	11

Afraid of Others (move away from the edge) ... cont from page 1

debate lights up the parts of my brain that turn to logic as the path to solutions.

But debate presumes some common assumptions about how ideas are presented and evaluated. And these assumptions don't include name-calling, bullying, lies, threats, or other tactics that take the attention away from the logic. When this happens, the debate becomes a conflict. And I equate conflict with fear.

Since I'm sharing my own struggle at this point, I'm using this word, "conflict," in a particular way. The prevailing conclusion coming from the newscasters I've heard is that the close election results illustrate how "deeply divided" we are as a nation. Each one of us is the "other" to half of the people, in terms of political ideology.

In his book *Unafraid*, Adam Hamilton writes that "Being right is not the defining mark of the Christian life. We are defined—and ultimately judged—by how we practice love."¹

According to one source published in 2013, 90% of people living in the United States identified themselves as Christian. That was 1963. Today the number is closer to 60%, depending on who you ask. The decline has little to do with people immigrating to the U.S. who aren't Christian. It has more to do with younger persons choosing not to identify as Christian.

The reasons cited for this exodus are numerous. Perhaps the most disturbing is the attitude among younger persons that Christians are hypocrites. Which I suspect is both accurate and obvious. Most, if not all, of us who identify ourselves as Christians resemble that remark. And I guess that fear plays a significant role in both causing and revealing our hypocrisy.

Our nation's history offers numerous examples of how fear leads to decisions that push us away from the values taught by Jesus. Instead of decisions exemplified by courage and compassion, self-preservation leads to conclusions that highlight our hypocrisy. For example, during the last century, communities across the country created neighborhood covenants that restricted who could live there. Boundaries were established to separate us by our ancestry and by the color of our skin. It took decades of conflict before such covenants became unlawful.



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 9 Mon
- Nov 10 Tues 10am-2pm
Water / Food Distribution
- Nov 11 Wed Pastor Book Club
(downstairs in the Wesley Room)
- Nov 12 Thu
- Nov 13 Fri
- Nov 14 Sat
- Nov 15 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Join worship online
Sunday, November 8th -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

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.

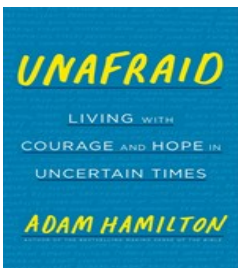


The storyline is straightforward with overtones of the first couple in

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.

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 McDoniel	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

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*."¹ 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.²

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

¹ 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.²

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 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

A teacher of the Law asked Jesus "What must I do to receive eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?" The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind"; and 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'" "You are right," Jesus replied; "do this and you will live." But the teacher of the Law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

Luke 10:25-29 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Luke 10:25-29. How do you read these instructions from Jesus as it regards the election results? What makes it hard to follow these instructions? What can you do beginning now to change how you follow these instructions?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Afraid of others*. Are there groups of other people that cause you to be afraid? What is it about this group that frighten you? What is it about you that may frighten them? Have you ever been afraid of someone but later found out that there was nothing to fear? How has this changed the way you view others that you don't know?
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.

Another example is the prevalence of guns in our country. It is estimated that three hundred million guns are owned by people in the United States. Just over 20% of us actually own guns, although 40% of us live in a household where there is a gun. While a large percentage of gun owners are hunters, the surge in sales that occurred leading up to this year's election was not fueled by persons anticipating a productive deer season. Meanwhile, the fear of losing this legal right is one of many examples of how fear is weaponized by political strategists as a way to create fear and gain an advantage.

Love one another, as I have loved you.

John 13:34

Jesus often debated with leaders. And seemed to differentiate between what is said and how it is practiced in everyday life. Jesus warned the people caught up in what the leaders said to listen and do the right things the leaders encouraged them to do. But not to do what the leaders do.

Jesus' warns us to avoid hypocrisy. To claim that we are doing things that are good while we actually do something else that is not so good.

The word "love" appears in the Good News Translation of scripture 679 times. This gives this very progressive way of being in the world all the electoral votes it needs to lead you and me, lead our nation, and lead the world. Perhaps this is

why Jesus summed up His instructions for you and me with these parting instructions — love each other as I love you.

Showing love towards others is the way that Jesus summed up what it means to live according to God's will. The Ten Commandments begin with loving God. Most of us find this easy when we're not mad at God for not doing what we wanted or afraid of God for what we did do.

The 2nd part of love, however, is where the rubber meets the road. The law itself is found in the Book of Law that we call Leviticus — love your neighbors as you love yourself (Leviticus 19:18). This chapter lists numerous specifics about how this love is carried out, which are violated by numerous Christians on an almost daily basis.

The stories about Jesus include His response when asked if any of God's expectations of us are more important than the rest. Jesus pointed out that it all hinges on loving God and each other. Not just in words, but in how we treat each other. Even when we disagree. Even if our disagreement is seated in profoundly held beliefs.

Love your neighbors as you love yourself.

Leviticus 19:18

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.

After Thanksgiving, our theme moves to God living among us. Our next series, *Incarnate*, 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***.

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

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

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Pastor Tommy

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

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

I DON'T
WANT
MUCH FOR
CHRISTMAS

...
I JUST WANT
THE WHOLE
WORLD
BACK TO
NORMAL,
TO BE
HEALTHY,
HAPPY
AND LOVED.