

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Busted (The fears within us)

I suspect that most of us have had one of those crazy dreams where we end up in some embarrassing predicament. Whether we show up at school or work without pants or speak in front of a large group of strangers with our fly open or our blouse unbuttoned in the wrong places, such dreams reveal our fear of shame.

Each Sunday, I stand in front of a group of people to deliver a message that I hope is more God's words than my own. My crazy dreams usually consist of arriving late, misplacing my notes, forgetting content, and others. Each episode confronts my inner fear

of letting you all down along with God and myself. And being embarrassed.



Since we began broadcasting our service live on Facebook, YouTube, and our website, I've noticed my dreams are crazier. It doesn't escape me that the number of views could go viral should a mishap be embarrassing enough to warrant a large

number of shares. I try to consider that this is a small price to pay for getting the good news of the gospel to more people. But I still wake up relieved it was only a dream.

In this week's episode of our series, *Naked and unafraid*, we focus our attention on four very personal fears. We all have these fears in varying degrees. They are the fears of failure, disappointing others, insignificance, and loneliness. When I started researching these topics, my

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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!

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

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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

Busted (The fears within us) ..cont from pg 1

first thought was this is my week. The twin fears of failure and disappointing others are my specialty.

The fear of failure is as basic as it gets. The fear of rejection, being put out by our people, is a primitive survival fear passed down through the centuries. And our very survival depends on not letting others down — or at least it feels that way. Yet this voice in our head tells us we simply aren't who people think we are. We are posers and fakes, and

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

sooner or later, we will be found out — Busted!

These voices sound familiar. They are voices of authority and respect. Sub-consciously we recognize them, although consciously we presume they are simply a voice of reason. This makes them difficult, if not impossible, to ignore. And as we learned over the past couple of weeks, fear does not take unnecessary risks.

In the book, *Unafraid*, Adam Hamilton writes, "Most things are never as

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.

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hard as you fear they will be. And even if you do fail at them, the pain almost never ends up being as painful as you worry it will be."¹ While I want this to be true, my fear puts up a pretty strong argument to the contrary.



Winston Churchill is credited with saying that "Success consists of going from failure to failure without

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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 16 Mon
- Nov 17 Tues 10am-2pm
Water / Food Distribution
- Nov 18 Wed Pastor Book Club
(downstairs in the Wesley Room)
- Nov 19 Thu
- Nov 20 Fri
- Nov 21 Sat
- Nov 22 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

Join worship online

Sunday, November 15th -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 Incarnate (Coming December)

This year has pushed us near our limits of endurance. We need each other now more than ever. And yet we are divided as a nation. Segregated by red and blue, we have allowed ourselves to be manipulated by ideology and selective fear. Some of us fear people who think differently than we do regarding political issues. Some of us

fear giving others coronavirus or getting infected ourselves.



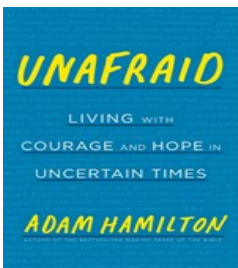
Cyndi and I are hanging out together this Thanksgiving. In past years, we spent time with extended family that we only get to see occasionally.

We haven't hugged our grandchildren in months. We visit with our children wearing masks and sitting outside. The mask that Cyndi made me is holding up much better than I am. I suspect that it saved my life more than once. But I can't know for sure since lack of visibility is the nature of this virus and authoritarian politics.

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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 prejudice and hate.

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

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 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.

Incarnate (Coming in December)...Asbury Worship Series

And now Christmas is only a few weeks away. I never cared for seeing decorations show up on store shelves months in advance, but in some way, this year, their appearance offers hope. Perhaps the number of new cases will be going down by Christmas. But right now, I'm fearful that the virus is spinning out of control, and hospitals are overflowing. Some Christmas this is shaping up to be.

But wait. There's more. There's the good news that comes with Christmas every year. The news that promises to overcome our struggles, our grief, our losses, and our indifference. A lot depends on what you believe Christmas is about. There are at least a few things about Christmas that neither a pandemic nor partisan politics can destroy.

I believe that over two thousand years ago, God gave us the greatest gift imaginable. A gift that does not require batteries, we don't have to put it together, and no one can take this gift away. And this gift goes by many names. This Christmas, I plan to share what I have learned about these names and why despite all that is going on, there are parts of Christmas that are ours forever.

As this Thanksgiving holiday comes to an end, we begin a season leading up to Christmas Day. We buy and wrap gifts, decorate our homes and offices, and we occasionally drop a few coins in a red bucket, beacons by a ringing bell. Let's do this again this year.

During the first week of December, I'm hoping that we can think about Kings and presidents from a different perspective. Who knows what the news will be that week as it comes to world leaders and the office of president. What I know is that there is only One True King.



God chose to live among us. We call this incarnation. To be incarnate with us is to live in our neighborhood. Living incarnate means seeing each other at the store, eating at some of the same places, and suffering many of the same struggles.

And we expect our leaders to sacrifice for our safety and well-being. And they disappoint us, so we elect new leaders. Fortunately, this is not the case when we turn to God as our King. On Sunday, December 6, our theme will be *Kings and Presidents*.

During the second week, preparations for Christmas turns our focus turns towards lifesavers. Both the candy circles and the kind that genuinely saves us. In ancient prophecy, we find the promise of a Messiah — a Savior. A person living among us, capable of doing what human leaders fail to do. Our message on December 13 is titled *Lifesaver*.

In week three, we turn our attention to the more personal side of incarnation. If God lives among us, then where do we look to find God? The promise in scripture is called *Emmanuel*, which means God with us. God will no longer be distant and invisible. Instead, God will be flesh and bone, tears, and laughter.

We end this week on December 20th with our Sunday message, Good company. Sharing in an ancient ritual is given to us to remember that God is near called communion.

In week four, we build to our dramatic conclusion. Even though this is a story told over and over, the excitement we feel is warranted. On Christmas Eve, you are invited to a candlelight service to celebrate the birth of Jesus as the *Light of the World*.

He will be called Emmanuel, which means "God is with us".

Matthew 1:23

We don't know at this point if any of us will actually be in the same location together. So let's plan ahead. Let's plan a candlelight service in home, wherever we may be on Christmas Eve. Each home will light our own candle and share it with our neighborhood by placing a luminary in the front window, on our porch, or in our yard — at the same time.

Over the coming weeks you will learn more about this new season series called *Incarnate*. We have a special gift for every household so that everyone can participate. Supplies are limited, so be sure to sign-up now on our [website](#), so we know where to send your gift.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am this December. We plan to be live on both Facebook and YouTube. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#) at FlintAsbury.org. And especially, I look forward to being with you, wherever you are, on Christmas Eve at 6 pm.

Pastor Tommy

¹Adam Hamilton. *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*. © 2020. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House.

Busted (The fears within us)...cont from page 2

loss of enthusiasm." If this is true, why do we put so much pressure on ourselves to succeed?

I came across these words said by basketball legend Michael Jordan in a Nike commercial from a few years ago — "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life, and that is why I succeed." I really like this commercial.

A close cousin of the fear of failure is the fear of disappointing others. The fear of letting others down. A fear that is justified because sooner or later, this happens. The more we do for others, the more frequent this fear comes true.

Over and over again, we find ourselves at a cross-road — two different paths we can take. One seems more comfortable — less daunting and less likely to lead to failure. The other direction — well, let's just say that it looks to have all of the obstacles and caution signs of an abandoned mountain trail. Which do you take?

Remember that fear is incapable of logic. Fear knows only the necessary responses for survival. The easier path requires less courage, and fear is in total agreement. Why risk it? You're only going to fail and let everyone down. Better to be cautious and to take the road that is crowded with others just like me. Fearful of the road less traveled.

And then there is the fear of insignificance. Afraid that we don't matter, our life is somehow meaningless, can leave us lethargic and a little numb. The fear of insignificance can motivate us to take risks, but we first must overcome our other fears. Otherwise, we might find another fear grasping to take hold and become our reality — the fear of

loneliness.

There is a vast difference between being alone and feeling lonely. While this subject is beyond our scope this week, it is essential to differentiate between these two places of being. Being alone is simply basic math. There is no plus one—just me.

Feeling lonely is a place of despair and regret. A feeling of sadness that there is no one with whom we can share life. When I feel lonely, I worry that my text wasn't answered because they don't like me. Perhaps it was the way I asked the question or something I said earlier.

Fortunately, there is a solution to loneliness, but it takes courage despite our fears. By reaching out, taking a risk that someone might reject us, we can connect with others and come out of our isolation. This takes a little faith that we can find other people who care about us.

Faith is a popular word in scripture and in everyday life. We often talk about having faith, whether it is faith in ourselves, other people, or faith that God will come through. Michael Jordan's teammates and coach had faith in his ability to take the last shot. We each need a bit of faith to take the risks that come with everyday decisions.

We refer to ourselves as people of faith when we state that we believe that there is a God. And for many of us, we believe that this God once lived among people in human form. We say that we are a part of a "faith" community. A group of individuals with enough beliefs in common wants to hang out together regularly.

Faith is a word frequently found in scripture. There is this one story about followers of Jesus, asking Him to

help them increase their faith. More than once, Jesus used faith to describe the power behind healing. And there was this time when one of the followers, named Peter, climbed out of a boat and tried walking on water to meet Jesus. When Peter began to sink, Jesus told him that it was faith that determined success or failure.

Love your neighbors as you love yourself.

Matthew 14:31

So when a couple of them asked Jesus to help them increase their faith, Jesus said something about faith the size of a mustard seed is enough to make all the difference. When I hear this, I think that surely I have at least that much faith. The mustard seeds I'm familiar with are really tiny. This is a compelling illustration of the power of faith.

I believe that God is on our side. I don't mean politically. I suspect that God detests politics and doesn't belong to a political party. I mean that God is on your side and on my side. God is for us and not against any of us, even though bad things happen to good people and not so good people. And good things happen, sooner or later, to all of us. But sometimes good things happen only when we take a risk. Which takes courage to choose the more difficult path despite our fears of failure, disappointing others, insignificance, and loneliness.

But this courage comes out of faith. Not so much faith in ourselves or other people. Instead, the courage to climb out of the safety of the boat requires faith that God is waiting there within reach.

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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

I assure you that if you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this hill, "Go from here to there!" and it will go. You could do anything!

Matthew 17:20 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Matthew 17:20. How much faith do you think Jesus is referring to when he compares the amount of faith the size of a mustard seed? How much faith do you have by comparison? A little less, a little more, or just enough?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Busted*. Of the four fears that we consider this week — the fears of failure, disappointing others, insignificance, and loneliness — which fear affects you the most? What do you think that this fear affects you the way it does? What or whom do you have faith in? How might faith in Jesus Christ affect how you handle your fear(s)?
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 another 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

Take a risk that you may fail. Know that you can never please everyone, and don't be distracted by the voices encouraging you to try.

And know that you mean a lot to the God who created you. A one-of-a-kind miracle that can never be completely alone because there is no place where God isn't already there waiting for you. Just within reach with only a tiny, mustard seed amount of faith.

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Pastor Tommy

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN PRESENTS!



FOOD GIVEAWAY AND ANGEL CLOSET NOVEMBER DATES



We believe that everyone has a right to shop with dignity and have access to quality clothing regardless of their circumstances in life.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please let your friends and family know about our events.

We appreciate you!!

We will be holding our monthly food giveaway and Angel Closet the following dates:

Angel Closet—November 4th and 18th

Food Giveaway—November 25th

The Angel Closet and Food Giveaway is from 11am-noon on dates listed above.

The Angel Closet will allow 3-5 clients in at a time to shop for ten minutes. Clients are required to wear a mask to enter the closet—if you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you.

Teens welcome, please leave children at home.