

# 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.

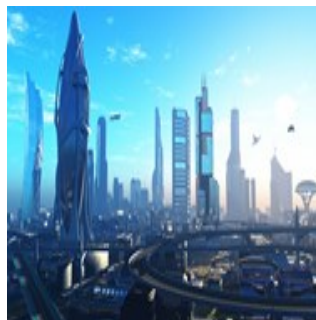
Thank you & Stay safe Everyone!

## Now What? (More is never enough)

Are you worried that the world is headed towards some awful disaster? The tone of much of the political rhetoric continues to throw out frightening "what-ifs" that lead a lot of us in this direction. Our country hasn't faced a president refusing to accept the results of an election. In particular, a president supported by a few members of Congress, a handful of journalists, and groups of armed protesters.

It was a long time ago, but I remember as a child partici-

pating in drills in the unlikely event that the U.S. should come under nuclear attack. This makes the speech given by airline attendants about seat cushions and water landings seem less threatening by comparison.



Dystopia, the opposite of utopia, is a word that tries to capture this sense of the world coming to a terrible end. The term "dystopia" comes from ancient Greek. When we have these terrifying feelings, we share in a feeling also held by our ancestors who lived thousands of years before us.

Yet the world is still spinning—perhaps out of control, or at least our control. And the odds are the

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## Now What? (More is never enough) ...cont from page 1

world will continue to turn, at least for the next hundred years or so. And the world will spin even if democracy, as we know it, is replaced by an authoritarian form of government. Which isn't very likely despite temper tantrums and conspiracy theories.

Granted, there is a lot to be alarmed about—big problems like racial injustice, pandemics, global warming, wild-fires, and destructive weather patterns. Several alarms are going off all at once. And each alarm, if we decide we're going to do something about it, spells change with a capital "C." in other words, the kind of change that most of us fear.

So most of us shut-out the noise when it comes to challenging problems. After all, we have enough worries and fears. Even if somehow we manage to reverse global warming, vaccinations become readily available, racial injustice somehow gets resolved, and power transfers smoothly to a new administration.

Even when all of these big problems get solved without our help or

## 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

worry. Which they won't, by the way, without all of us participating. But let's say they do get solved. We're still left with our personal fears.

For example, how about the fear that we're missing out on something that we really shouldn't miss? Every Facebook post. Every Instagram picture, every share of a friend's escape for a dream vacation, or even a new truck, leaves us feeling just a little bit envious.

And we no more than catch the latest commercials pitching those things we just shouldn't have to live without, and we open a bill that exceeds the money we have to pay it.

Do any of these fears describe you? During these months of isolation and worry about the coronavirus, politics, and social unrest, are you finding yourself vacillating between your personal worries and your fear that the world is about to crash?

You know we actually have quite a bit of control over some of these fears. None of us have the power, on

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

our own, to reverse decisions to sell oil drilling rights in pristine, Alaskan land preserves. But we can choose to ignore the commercial showing the coolest tailgate on a pickup you ever saw.



We can choose to show gratitude that we woke up this morning, almost in our right mind, and we have enough sense to know that there are actually things worth worrying about. We can set aside a little money for the future. We can also choose to set aside a little bit of whatever money we do have as an offering to God for all that we do have going for us. And we can have hope. **Page 9**

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." <sup>1</sup> 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



**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



(Pastor Book Club will be via Zoom until further notice—call the church office for more info 235-0016)

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 23 Mon
- Nov 24 Tues 10am-2pm  
Water / Food Distribution
- Nov 25 Wed Pastor Book Club  
*(Via Zoom until further notice)*
- Nov 26 Thu **HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY!!**
- Nov 27 Fri
- Nov 28 Sat
- Nov 29 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

Join worship online  
Sunday, November 22nd -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.



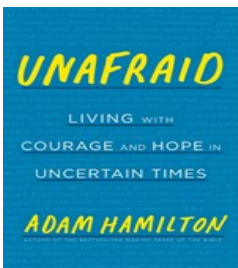
Cyndi and I are hanging out together this Thanksgiving. In past years, we spent time with extended family that we only get to see occasionally.

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](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

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 out 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](http://FlintAsbury.org). And especially, I look forward to being with you, wherever you are, on Christmas Eve at 6 pm.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup>Adam 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](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*

*Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances. This is what God wants from you in your life in union with Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What do you imagine Paul had in mind when he writes that we should pray at all times? What might this look like for you? Consider focusing first on thankfulness. Gratitude has a way of giving us joy and directing us towards prayer. Perhaps an attitude of gratitude may feel like a continuous, joy-filled prayer.
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Now what?* Do you feel like the world is heading towards a terrible ending? What is causing your fear? In what ways do you fear that you may be missing out on something? Are you fearful that you don’t have enough money? How does Jesus’ instructions impact how you view your fears? Consider Adam Hamilton’s advice for dealing with fear — do you find these ideas helpful? If so, share with others how they may help them.
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.



In the book, *Unafraid*, Adam Hamilton writes, "This hope is not meant to lead us to apathy or indifference about the very real problems facing our world. The Bible calls human beings to work to address the world's problems. But we do so as people who have hope that regardless of what happens, ultimately, God will prevail."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus had a way of breaking down the complexities of life into simple ideas that any of us can follow. But, there are times when I find His advice to be too simple. At times, I want to make His instructions more complex. This allows me to rationalize what I want to do instead of taking His advice and living worry-free. I've grown attached to my worries, and I'm quite fond of my ideas. I still want that bigger truck and with that really cool tailgate.

Have you ever found yourself thinking, "Jesus, it's easy for you to say — you didn't drive a truck? You walked everywhere — you didn't have a mortgage or even pay rent. Have you seen the new commercial for that dishwasher with separate top and bottom drawers? A dozen or so monthly payments, and it can be mine." How great could life be if I had these things? But would any of these prevent the world from crashing?

Honestly, I'm blessed that somewhere along this line of thinking, I feel a nudge to step back and wonder, "How much is enough?" Research suggests that the answer to this question eludes all of us. And those of us who have more want even more. Possession is addictive.

The simplicity of Jesus' teachings has a lot of competition from commercials. With every connection I make with companies that demand my email address, my information is added to a dozen more lists. And these lists are managed by marketing companies paid to make sure that I see their ads several times a day. And sometimes, it feels like a request to be removed is accepted as validation that I'm actually reading my emails. Which moves me to their more frequent email list rather than remove me from the list I'm on.

The writer, known as Matthew, shares a story about Jesus, giving what must have been a full-day seminar on better living through doing what God says to do. At one point, Jesus said, "You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24).

Makes sense. Most of us tried this. Sooner or later, we realize that unless we are really clear on our values, we quickly find ourselves making decisions or going

along with the findings of others. This leaves us feeling empty and frankly a bit betrayed. Betrayed by our own failure.

*You cannot serve both  
God and money.*

*Matthew 6:24*

Jesus wanted to get to the heart of the matter for you and me. Like I said, Jesus had a way of simplifying that which we purposely make complex. Jesus goes on to say, "You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24). But what does it mean to "serve" money?

Here's one take on this question. Jesus also says, "This is why I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes?" (Matthew 6:25). Well? Of course, life is more than these, but we need to eat. And without clothes, we get arrested, and our sanity is questioned.

Apparently, Jesus knew what most of us learn the hard way. More is never enough. The problem is not whether we need food and clothing. The problem arises when we can't get enough—even

## Now What? (More is never enough)...cont from pg 9

the basics like food and clothing. Jesus is getting at the heart of the matter. That is, where is our heart in this matter? Which "masters" do we choose to serve?

Adam Hamilton's ***book*** offers a reference guide for dealing with fear:

- F** — Face your fears with faith;
- E** — Examine the facts that are the source of your fears;
- A** — Act on ways that can alleviate or at least reduce your fears; and,
- R** — Release your fears to God after you've done what you can do. <sup>1</sup>

The bottom line is that we can let go of our need to control and trust that God is still in charge. And that God cares about our well-being even more than we do, or at least more than we show that we care.

*Pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:17-18*

There was a time when I paid lip service to Paul's guidance to the church in Thessalonica to "pray at all times."

The steps offered by Pastor Adam are daunting on our own. This is where the idea of incarnation comes to our rescue. While ***Incarnation*** is the subject of our December series, God's persistent presence in our lives makes all of the difference. When fear has us hiding under the table, it is both comforting and wise to call on God. After all, God promises to be nearby.

### 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, ***Incarnation***, 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

<sup>1</sup>Adam Hamilton. *Unafraid: Living with Courage and hope in Uncertain Times*. © 2018. New York: Penguin Random House.

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.**