

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

(Hand) Picked—Giving in to God’s Plan

I suspect that most of us have a story or two about a time when we weren’t picked to be part of a group that we really wanted to join. For a lot of us we didn’t get picked to be on a team, or we got picked last when it came to picking sides. For others, we didn’t get a part in a play. Perhaps for you it was a club. Rejection is among the worse fates imaginable.

And there are a few situations where not being picked is preferable. I’ll



never forget the relief I felt when my number didn’t come up for the draft. The need for more soldiers to send to the war in Vietnam was greatly reduced just in time for me to finish college rather than leave for basic training. My older brother was drafted and served a few years before I was old enough for the draft.

Life is full of choices. Whether to go to college or look for a job that doesn’t require a post-high school education; getting married and who to marry; whether to have children and how to raise them when and if we do have children; what to prepare for supper; which movie to see. The list is endless. It can be difficult, at times, to remember that having choices is a blessing.

Page 6

First (Letting go of fakes)



So far, 2021 seems to be a continuation of last year. While this may ordinarily be the case, it is not what I hoped would

happen. The attack on our capital is undoubtedly a low point for our nation. An uglier reality is that our out-going

president inspired and promoted the insurrection. For me, the worse part is the consistent

Page 2

Volume 20 Issue 10

January 10, 2021



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!

Inside this issue:

(Hand) picked	1
First (Letting go of fakes)	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
(Hand) picked	6
Asbury Veggie Boxes	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
January Food Giveaways—SFSK	9
(Hand) Picked	10
First (Letting go of fakes)	11
First (Letting go of fakes)	12

First (Letting go of fakes) ..cont from page 1

lack of accountability for criminal acts perpetrated by an elected official.

And this isn't the worse of it. We've witnessed a complete breakdown of national leadership, resulting in the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. But there is hope amid so much instability. The world has been in such a place before. God is still in charge even when we forget that we don't ultimately answer to a president, congress, or the judicial system.

We each stand naked before God, who knows everything there is to know about us. And we are judged by our intentions, our actions, and our lack of acting. God sees through the political rhetoric, excuses, pretension,

My hope for 2021 is that we return to addressing the issues that matter most to God. I'm not interested in merely returning to 2019. I hope that the people who claim to follow Jesus Christ can focus on finding creative ways to live the ways that Jesus illustrated for us. The blind support by self-proclaimed evangelical Christians for reversing decades of progress towards actually living out our beliefs demonstrated just how far we could fall away from living out the ideas we claim.

There is no doubt that Jesus took sides in political debates. And there is no doubt that the revolution that He led would address the issues set aside in the past and made evident during the pandemic. Issues such as injustice come to mind, given the most recent events. Reversing the trend towards the destruction of our planet is another. The list is frightening.

Jesus promoted the disenfranchised and stood against money and power concentrated in the hands of the few. His priorities are in perfect alignment with divine will. God comes first, and everything else is a distant second. With God first in our lives, the issues have more clarity as we can let go of the misaligned perceptions that keep us from addressing the issues that matter.

I can't imagine that anyone reading this article isn't somewhat familiar with the Ten Commandments. Most of us can't name them all, but I'm guessing we all recognize that they hold substantial authority for our nation. If not in name only.





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

★ **Coming up this week** ★

- Jan 11 Mon
- Jan 12 Tues 10am-2pm
Water / Food Distribution
- Jan 13 Wed Pastor Book Club
(Via Zoom until further notice)
- Jan 14 Thu
- Jan 15 Fri
- Jan 16 Sat
- Jan 17 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship


(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 continues to rise.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO WEAR YOUR MASKS WHEN COMING INTO THE ASBURY BUILDING.

Pastor Tommy

Join worship online
Sunday, January 10th -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 Hope in an Unstable World

There are many ways of characterizing the year 2020, but the word stability doesn't belong in the final cut. The words uncertainty and unstable are more accurate choices.



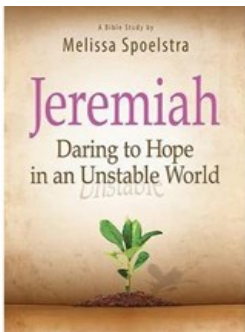
Another word that kept try-

ing to emerge, like the sun peeking through a cloudy and rainy day, was hope. As the coronavirus spread last spring, we all hoped that our precautions would help us recover quickly. And they did — or at least they did in the places where safeguards were implemented.

Page 5

Book Club News

We complete our discussion of the book and videos by Adam



Hamilton, *Incarnation*. Our group utilized the study group videos available on a new resource that is available

to all of us called Amplify. This library of study materials is accessible online. More information will be coming if you want to start your own study group or do some learning on your own.

This month our attention turns to Hope. But we realize that hope can be harder to hold onto when there is so much turmoil. The availability of a vaccine offers hope that life will eventually return to some form of normal. But there continues to be a lot of reasons to feel dismayed.

In January our group will take a deeper dive into the Book of Jeremiah. We plan to use a book written by the wife of an Ohio pastor, Melissa Spoelstra. The title of her book is *Daring to Hope in an Unstable World*.

Each week we watch a video featuring the author as she takes us through Jeremiah, not page by page, but theme by theme. Join our meeting via Zoom if possible so that you are able to watch the video. If you call in by phone, you should be able to hear the audio well enough to participate in the discussion that follows.

I encourage you to join online for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others are saying by calling (929) 436-2866, and entering the meeting ID, 282 039 5568#.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony, Mirium	Welcome Team
Anthony, Jim	Ushers
Jonathon, Terrance	Production Team
Miriam	Children
Cyndi	Worship Leader
Christine & Norma	Cafe

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel	Pastor
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Dir. Operations

Matt DePalma	Farm Manager
Kevin Croom	Farm Operations
Israel Unger	Function to Funding
Kim Sims	Connections
Karl Collyer	Production
Katelin Maylum	
South Flint Soup Kitchen/Production	

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.

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

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

Pastor Tommy

Hope in an Unstable World... Asbury Worship Series

But by the fall, just in time for Thanksgiving, the numbers began to surge, just as healthcare experts warned they would without cooperation lead by stable, consistent, and competent leadership. By Christmas, my hope focused on what it means when I tell people that Jesus saves, in light of so much instability.

On January 20, our country will witness the swearing in of our 46th President. His administration faces the daunting task of reuniting our divided nation together. Yet tens of millions of voters are worried that their aspirations for our country will fall by the wayside. And depending on the outcome of Senate races in Georgia, we could see a prolonged stalemate in congress.

So how do we find hope in an unstable world? For me, I look for stories in scripture that reflect the issues of our present time. My experience is that I can find assurances that God isn't sitting on the sidelines, waiting to see what happens in any particular election. I believe that God continues to move us toward reconciliation with each other and with God, regardless of who we elect. The question is whether we are open to divine guidance or want to go it on our own. Talk about instability.

As we move into 2021, we begin the New Year with a series that opens our minds to the ideas found in the Book of the Prophet, Jeremiah. This book tells about God's urging the people of his time to have hope amid instability. Jeremiah was known as the "weeping prophet" because of his role in sharing God's divine warnings to a people distracted by materialism, economic crisis, and politics. Yet, we find great hope in God's love for humankind.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. 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://www.FlintAsbury.org). And especially, I look forward to being with you, wherever you are, on Christmas Eve at 6 pm.

Pastor Tommy

¹Melissa Spoelstra. *Jeremiah: Daring to Hope in an Unstable World*. © 2014. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

(Hand) Picked—Giving in to God’s Plan ... *cont. from pg 1*

A lot of us turn to God when it comes to our more difficult choices. The hurdle for whether we look for God’s input on a decision varies. Some of us figure God is too busy except for the most life-changing decisions. Others go to God before they head out of the house each day. Most of us grow impatient when we aren’t sure if God plans to offer a divine perspective on a particular matter of importance to us.

Where do you fit? What decisions are you hoping God will help you make?

The heaviness of any particular decision is influenced most by the consequences of the decision. Whenever I’m having difficulty deciding what to have for supper I try to remember that I eat meals everyday. But decisions like whether to move to another state have considerably higher stakes. My children live in Michigan because this is where they grew up. Michigan is home for them. Yet, I chose to move to Michigan as a young adult. My choice had consequences spanning generations.

Our series for January focuses on the stories of the prophet Jeremiah. He lived during a time of economic, political, and religious instability. During his lifetime, the country where Jeremiah lived was invaded by a world power and most of the people taken into exile. It’s no wonder that Jeremiah was known as the “weeping” prophet.

During this series we learn from Jeremiah by examining several themes that characterize the stories of his time. Our first episode of this month’s series deals with life-changing, big consequential decisions that we hope God will weigh in on. Jeremiah, decided to let God choose his career for him. And at times, he regretted his decision, got angry with God, and threatened to quit.

Jeremiah’s story begins with his first encounter with God on the subject of his career. Jeremiah was young — likely a teenager when God asked him to take on a high-risk assignment. Jeremiah would face criticism, rejection, death-threats, and risk dying in prison or worse. This is not the sort of job that most of us aspire to when we plan our careers.

First, you may find it helpful to know that God doesn’t speak to us in an audible voice very often. At times, I wonder whether this ever really happens at all. I know that when I say “God spoke to me” I’m not referring to a voice coming out of the clouds, or a burning bush, or that I heard an audible voice at all. But when I realize that God is speaking I’m overwhelmed with emotion and awestruck.

Jeremiah’s assignment was to tell the people in his community that God’s patience had run out. The economic, political, and religious instability that prevailed were consequences of ignoring God’s expectations.

And if they were too thick-headed to stop, bad things were going to happen. It’s frightening to compare what is going on in our country with the situation of Jeremiah’s time. The parallels are close enough that we can learn a great deal from their mistakes.



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

They [Idols] are worthless and should be despised; they will be destroyed when the Lord comes to deal with them.

Jeremiah 10:15 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Jeremiah 10:15. Idols are anything that we choose to substitute for God. Addictions may be the hardest idols to resist. But idols can also include things we gain satisfaction from if we allow our affection to move us away from keeping God as first in our lives? What idols do you have in your life? How might you deal with your idols?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *First*. What are your hopes for 2021? What are some of our national idols that take attention away from our devotion to God? What are some of the priorities that you believe God has in mind for 2021? What might be your role in God's priority list?
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.

**JANUARY FOOD GIVEAWAYS
SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN**

Page 9

Dates: January 13th and
January 27, 2021

Times: 11am—12Noon (both days)



**SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN WILL BE HOSTING THEIR
FOOD GIVEAWAYS FOR JANUARY THE 13TH AND
27TH, 11AM-12NOON. NO NEED TO SIGN UP, JUST COME
TO THE VERMILY A SIDE OF THE BUILDING WHERE
LUNCHESS ARE HANDED OUT AND SAY YOU'D LIKE
SOME FOOD FROM THE PANTRY!**

AS ALWAYS, ALL ARE WELCOME!

**WE CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE ONE PERSON AT
A TIME, AND ONE MEAL AT A
TIME.**

South Flint Soup Kitchen

**3410 Fenton Road
Flint, MI 48507
810-239-3427**

3 blocks North of Atherton

southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

(Hand) Picked—Giving in to God’s Plan ... *cont from pg 6*

I need to take a few sentences to talk about free-will. I chose to use language that suggests choice for a reason. We do have a choice whether we accept God’s input, considering it to be advice, or we recognize that while God’s input is “technically” advice, ignoring God comes with dire consequences.

It’s a good idea not to walk out in front of a truck, but we have a choice. We can live another day or end our life as roadkill. God’s will is more than just “advice” because God actually knows which choice is good for us. Ignoring God’s will is like walking out in front of a truck.

God said to Jeremiah, “I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you.” And Jeremiah responded, “Well, when You put it that way, of course I’ll do what You ask.” Of course not! Jeremiah was a teenager. He had his own idea of what he wanted to do. God was intervening into his well planned life. Jeremiah, using logic to prove his point, replied, “I don’t know how to speak; I am too young.”

Jeremiah, like so many since him, was blessed to learn quickly that each of us have a choice. We can do things our way, and accept the consequences of a less satisfying life; or we can surrender our will to God’s plan. The plan that came with our “user manual”. And this choice lets us live knowing that

whatever life gives us, we are much better off than had we chose to ignore God.

**I chose you before I gave you life,
and before you were born I select-
ed you. *Jeremiah 1:5***

By the way, God knows our ready-made excuses before they leave our lips. As Jeremiah pondered his next response, God touched Jeremiah’s lips and said this, “Listen, I am giving you the words you must speak.”

The reason that God’s plans for our lives suit us so well is that God blesses us with all that we need to do what we’re asked to do. Sometimes these are abilities that come natural to us. Other times, God intervenes when we are confronted with resistance from persons who chose their own path. Melissa Spoelstra, in her book, *Jeremiah: Daring to Hope in an Unstable World*, writes that making a decision to seek and follow God’s plan for us is “not a ‘one-time’ salvation experience.” Rather, each day we are faced with decisions that can derail our faithfulness to God’s plan.¹

Our nation is ideologically divided. The extremists on both sides insist that we choose sides and fight against the others who chose the other side of any particular arguments. God takes sides also. Just as God did when Babylon attacked Jeremiah’s country. God took the side of allowing Jeremiah’s community to suffer the consequences of their

choices.

Scripture isn’t silent on the political, economic, and religious issues of our time. And many of the arguments that we hear come out of individuals reading what they want to read because it confirms what they choose to believe. This doesn’t make it God’s will or God’s choice. It’s their choice, but it’s God’s truck. And Jeremiah’s job was to warn them that they were about to get run over.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday at 10:30 am as we learn together from the successes and mistakes of Jeremiah’s community. We have a new button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later in the week. We’re also live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). 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

The first five commandments focus on our relationship with God, with the fifth commandment acting as a transition from God as the parent of creation and respecting the role of those that shaped us growing up. And perhaps we show our greatest respect when we recognize that those that came before us made plenty of mistakes and miscalculations. Our job is to do better while realizing that we'll make different mistakes and miscalculations left for our children to overcome.

There is a sense of priority among the items in this list. But there is a better sense that this list sets apart from all other notions of right versus wrong—a starting point for living according to our Creator God's intentions. Whatever rules, laws, expectations, and requirements we may choose to follow, build on, and carries out this list — only with more specificity.

The Ten Commandments begin with our total allegiance to God. Allowing any person, object, or desire to take our attention away from God is the starting point for destruction. It's all downhill and out of control from there—a subtle but powerful realization. There are no other people, places, or things that are more important than God. Sounds simple enough, but we fail in these first two commandments time after time.

We live in a "have it my way" era where distractions are everywhere. I don't know about you, but my experience is that I don't always choose wisely when I can have it my way. I fall prey to the advertised outcomes that turn out to be false. And I eventually fail to recognize that my desires get in the way of my devotion to God. I settle for cheap substitutes that I'm unwilling to give up for the real thing.

The stories of the liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt include an illustration of the people turning to an imitation. The people created a golden calf and gave it an importance that displaced their allegiance to God (Exodus 32).

Do you think that my Temple is a hiding place for robbers?

Jeremiah 7:11

History repeated itself during the generation when the prophet Jeremiah lived. Only this time, it wasn't a golden calf that displaced God. This time the people would tell lies when it was advantageous, steal from one another, and give allegiance to a power contrary to God. But then they would go to church and act like they were faithful followers. Sound familiar?

Many of us will grab hold of promises that prove to be counterfeit. We try to appease a yearning deep inside of us with substitutes. We buy a new toy, eat more than we need, drink or smoke to relieve anxiety, or worse. And we're never satisfied. But our addictions argue that if we buy more, eat more, drink more, or whatever our substitute of choice might be, we eventually will find satisfaction.

But this yearning can never be satisfied by human-made objects, regardless of their empirical value. The genuine article is the love we feel for Christ when we surrender our life to God entirely. Our human-made objects are tools that we can use in service the One True God. But how we respond to God's love illustrates whether our loyalty is itself counterfeit.

God, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah asked this powerful question. "Do you think that my Temple is a hiding place for robbers?" (Jeremiah 7:11). The prophet went to the entrance of the local church to share

God's warning with the people. Stop what you're doing. Stop lying, cheating each other, and allowing the killing of innocent people.

My hope for 2021 is that the messages that played out in the streets of cities around the world will move us to action. We saw the way that law enforcement and the National Guard dispersed the crowd that stormed the U.S. Capital building. We saw how this differed in how law enforcement and militia dispersed protesters that carried the message that black lives matter.

We see the reactions with lethal force towards black and brown bodies in situation after situation. And we see people gather in churches afterward looking to find safety from an angry God.

Throughout the Book of Jeremiah, God reminded the people then, and God reminds us today, that it's not too late. God is as merciful as God is powerful. And God is calling us today to turn away from whatever is keeping us from carrying God's love to the world.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday at 10:30 am as we learn together from the successes and mistakes of Jeremiah's community. Invite your friends to join us online or in-person.

We have a new button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to a viewer to allow you to join live or watch later in the week. We're also live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). 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