

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## Tight (As close as underwear)

As we continue our study of the Book of Jeremiah, this week's lesson challenges us with a couple of powerful metaphors — pottery and underwear. Jeremiah has his hands full. His job is to warn the people that they need to make some profound and challenging changes in policies, practices, and personal lives.

And all of this amid growing instability. So God helps Jeremiah to break it down into messages that we can all understand.



First, there is the idea that God is like a potter shaping a piece of art, such as a pitcher or a coffee cup. The Potter works with the clay until a shape emerges. Sometimes the piece of art is brilliant, and the Potter is proud to put their name on the work of their hands. Other times, not so much.

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Volume 20 Issue 17

January 17, 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!**

## 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

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**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 18 Mon
- Jan 19 Tues 10am-2pm  
Water / Food Distribution
- Jan 20 Wed Pastor Book Club  
*(Via Zoom until further notice)*
- Jan 21 Thu
- Jan 22 Fri
- Jan 23 Sat
- Jan 24 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 17th -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.



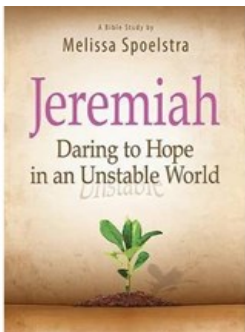
Another word that kept try-

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.

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## 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](http://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

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



**Tight (as close as underwear) ... cont. from pg 1**

The Potter may take the emerging piece and completely redo it. The emerging art isn't coming out as intended.

The Potter is in complete control. The clay is not in control. If God is the Potter, we are the clay that God shapes into the person that God intended us to become. Our primary role is to be pliable and not resist the capable shaping hands of the Potter.

Let's be good clay. But we're not really clay, so how do we learn to be good clay so that God shapes us as intended? How do we emerge as the beautiful work of art that God intended us to become?

This is where underwear comes in as our second metaphor. Underwear is personal. Most of us don't intentionally allow our underwear to show. And underwear is as close as a piece of clothing can get to us. We become good clay by being good underwear. We belong as close to God as our underwear is to us. Our nakedness is exposed, and there is nothing or no one closer to us than we are to God.

And underwear is an everyday thing, just as our closeness to God is an everyday thing. This is how we learn to become good clay.

But it gets confusing. For example, a recent article in the New York Times offered a glimpse into the religious beliefs of some of the persons who attacked our Capital building. They threatened to hang the Vice President because he didn't overturn our election to keep their preferred candidate in office.

During the assault on our capital, five people died. The insurgents were heard chanting hang Mike Pence. A symbolic noose was constructed in front of the capitol building. This same group knelt in prayer on their way to the capitol building.

According to the New York Times article, this group prayed with the confidence that their plans were of divine origin. Their candidate was God's choice, and so he was their choice as well. And they were willing to kill and be killed in pursuit of their divine mission.

Some may claim that they heard directly from God. But most, if not all, heard what they chose to believe from other sources. Their sources included Twitter feeds, Facebook posts, and pastors, who claimed to be speaking on behalf of God. Like the prophet Jeremiah did centuries before, they claimed divine endorsement. However, Jeremiah didn't claim that God wanted people to harm others.

Jeremiah's message was that God wanted people to turn to God. To be as tight with God as underwear. Jeremiah's message was a love song with chords of harmony and words of empathy and grace. Violence is most often the consequence of turning away from God and not the will of God.



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*

*Just as shorts fit tightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me. I did this so that they would be my people and would bring praise and honor to my name.*

Jeremiah 13:11 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Jeremiah 13:11. God wants us to be tight with him. Like underwear God wants nothing to come between God and God’s people. Is this how you feel? Are you as close to God as your underwear is to you? If not, what are some steps to change it? If you are, how can you help others feel as close as you do?
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Tight*. The Potter’s Hand is a popular song among believers that originates out of God Word spoken thorough the prophet Jeremiah. Are you moldable clay or rigid clay? What some ways that God may be trying t reshape you?
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**

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Dates: January 27, 2021

Times: 11am—12Noon



**SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN WILL BE HOSTING THEIR  
FOOD GIVEAWAY ON JANUARY 27TH, FROM  
11AM-12NOON. NO NEED TO SIGN UP, JUST COME TO  
THE VERMILY A SIDE OF THE BUILDING WHERE  
LUNCHESES ARE HANDED OUT AND SAY YOU WOULD 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](mailto:southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com)**

God is well aware that some will claim divine insight while proclaiming a doctrine of exclusion, hate, and violence. So God warned the people through Jeremiah about false prophets. Preachers, priests, and pastors, along with tweets, posts, and mentally unstable leaders who claim to speak for God but with messages that are inconsistent with God's love song.

The key to discernment is to stay as close to God as your underwear is close to you.

Just as shorts fit rightly around the waist, so I intended all the people of Israel and Judah to hold tightly to me.

Jeremiah 13:11

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

[Come of the content for our series comes from Melissa Spoelstra. Jeremiah: Daring to Hope in an Unstable World.](#) © 2014. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

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.

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Pastor Tommy