

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



The Turnaround (Time to change direction¹)



According to an ABC News article from October, Genesee County is studying 3,600 intersections to determine if they are good candidates to become roundabouts. Rowe Professional Services recently constructed Genesee County's first roundabout on Elms Road. According to Michigan officials, roundabouts reduce accidents and save lives.

I'm ambivalent when it comes to roundabouts. I like saving lives and reducing traffic congestion, but roundabouts take some getting used to. Years ago, I got completely turned around while returning to London from Oxford University. I swear there was a roundabout every half-mile or so. I eventually lost my sense of direction and ended up in Wales.

In episode seven of our trilogy, Bridges, we take a look at turning around from decades of denying the existence of racism in this country. Since efforts so far to end systemic racism feels more like

taking a wrong turn out of a roundabout than completing a turnaround. We have work to do as bridge-builders.

For example, bridge-builders call out our political and religious leaders to hold us accountable when racist statements or actions are said or done.

The Prophet Isaiah was called by God to be a bridge-builder. As a bridge-builder, Isaiah became a mouthpiece for God in calling people out.

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Volume 2 Issue 4

April 4, 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!

Happy Easter!

Redemption (God thinks you are worth it¹)



Easter is both wonderful and a bit strange as holidays go. Easter celebrations vary between families, cultures, and religious sects, from bunny rabbits

hiding eggs to ham for dinner. And not everyone views Easter in the same way.

Admittedly, I base my understanding and celebration of Easter on

what I believe to be true about God and Jesus Christ. Well, not entirely. I still like chocolate Easter bunnies, which has a rather weak connection to the story of why Christians celebrate Easter.

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Redemption (God thinks you are worth it¹) ..cont from page 1

Gerald Weston of the Living Church of God shares an article on the church's website titled *Easter: The Untold Story*. In his article, he shares a perspective on the origins of Easter. According to his research, Easter, like Christmas, is a Christian adaptation of non-Christian celebrations. Admittedly, it's fascinating to learn where the idea of rabbits laying eggs originated. And chocolate Easter bunnies.

But what does Easter have to do with building bridges for racial reconciliation? Everything! But first, I want to talk about a man named Zacchaeus.

According to the writer of Luke, Jesus drew a crowd as he walked through the town of Jericho, where Zacchaeus lived and worked. Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in that area and quite wealthy. But not well-liked (Luke 19:1-10).

Tax collectors worked on Rome's behalf and earned their income by charging extra tax and pocketing the difference. It was the Roman Empire's combo of a pyramid scheme and outsourcing. And it worked a lot like outsourcing does today. Zacchaeus had a

vested interest in collecting as much tax as possible and had other tax collectors working for him. This put him at odds with the residents of Jericho.

We don't know a lot about Zacchaeus, but the traditional interpretation of the story suggests that he was height-challenged. Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was in town, and he wanted to catch a glimpse, so he climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road to get a better view.

According to the story, when Jesus walked by the tree, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. And then Jesus invites Himself for supper. Zacchaeus was excited to host Jesus. But the people who witnessed this were not happy that Jesus planned to go home with Zacchaeus.

This is understandable. The wealth that made it possible for Zacchaeus to host Jesus came from the people of his community. But they weren't invited. Why would Jesus choose to hang out with someone who exploited others for his own benefit?

And this brings me to bridge-building. Like Zacchaeus, a lot of us benefited from the exploitation of others. The history of slavery and the treatment of native Americans in this country is a history of exploitation. And our dependence on millions who work for wages that keep them in poverty continues today. As does systemic racism, which benefits white people at a cost to people of color.

The meeting between Jesus and Zacchaeus offers a lesson in bridge-building. We don't know the details of their conversation, but we know the results. Zacchaeus agreed to give half of his wealth to those in need. And Zacchaeus decided to return money that he took in excess to the people he took it from. But not just the extra that he took. Zacchaeus promised to pay reparations of four times the amount taken.

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Shirley Craig

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston Elaine Lamoreaux
 Norma Buzzard Mary Nations



**KINDNESS IS LIKE COFFEE,
 IT AWAKENS YOUR SPIRIT
 AND IMPROVES YOUR DAY.
 FILL YOUR CUP WITH BOTH!**



Pastor Book Club will still be via Zoom until further notice—but will slowly start to meet in person, depending on how the next few weeks/months will go. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016.

Please continue to wear your masks when coming into the Asbury building and use hand sanitizer that is placed throughout the building.

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

★ **Coming up this week** ★

- Apr 5 Mon
- Apr 6 Tues 10am-12:30pm
 Water / Food Distribution
- Apr 7 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
 11AM-12Noon Food Giveaway at
 South Flint Soup Kitchen (pg. 10)
- Apr 8 Thu
- Apr 9 Fri
- Apr 10 Sat
- Apr 11 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
 Contemporary Worship

**EVERYONE HAVE A WONDERFUL
 EASTER SUNDAY!**



(We are 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.)

Asbury Worship Series Bridges Through April 18th



We began our trilogy, *Bridges*, on Valentine's Day with our first episode, *A love story*. Each series in our trilogy takes us on a journey towards reconciliation. In this way, our entire journey is a love story. Each episode is an opportunity to grow closer to God, each other, closer to ourselves, and closer to the planet we call home.

While we won't be where we hope to be by the end of this particular journey, we expect to be much closer to a day when we can celebrate diversity. A time when justice does not depend on skin tone. It is a destination where we respect and enjoy each other's differences—a time when we experience heaven on earth.

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Book Club News

We finished our study of the book and videos by Melissa Spoelstra,



Jeremiah: Daring to Hope in an Unstable World. This often misunderstood book of the bible offered important lessons applicable to our lives together.

We learned just how much we have in common with the people of Jeremiah's time. And this insight can help us make better decisions to help us avoid the exile that they experienced as a result of their turning away from God.

From now until after Easter our attention turns to building bridges. The fact

that the church perpetuated slavery, segregation, and racism is no longer a family secret. Even high school history classes, known for teaching a version of our history that tries to put our past in the best possible light, are beginning to share bits and pieces of truth. There is a rumbling in our core that the universe is demanding change now.

Even though the church is not a very credible witness when it comes to racial reconciliation, we believe that our past doesn't have to determine our future. We can take actions now that will help to change the world. This is the nature of God. To never give up on overcoming darkness with light. And to learn new ways to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. A gospel of reconciliation.

Beginning on February 17, our Book Club participants take a 9-week journey together under the tutorage of Latisha Morrison. Her book, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*, will be our guide. Our plan is to complete one chapter each week. Our study promises to be challenging and fulfilling.

A few of us meet in person each week as long as the number of new coronavirus cases remain in the lower range. We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. We look forward to a return to pot-luck lunches at some point in the future.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away, 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#

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

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 McDoniel	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.

Bridges (Through April 18th) ... Asbury Worship Series

Episode two focused on the freedom that comes from truth. However painful it might be to face the truth, it can set us free. While history is essential to knowing ourselves and knowing what is broken, truth transcends time. For followers of Jesus Christ, we know that God already knows the truth, and so should we.

But the threat from within also includes the church that we hold dear. The domestic terrorists that stormed the U.S. Capital did so, they claim because the violence they perpetrated was God's will. They claim a version of the truth offered to them by false prophets claiming biblical authority. But their truth contradicts the trajectory of the biblical narrative. The threat is from within.

Bridges is a series about "pursuing God's heart for racial reconciliation." But let's be clear. Race is a human construct created for the purpose of creating a social, economic, and religious hierarchy. Reconciliation begins with recognizing the raw truth that humans are fond of creating our own sense of the truth.¹

God is merciful. The stories found in scripture offer testimony that God insists on love. God demands love first and foremost towards the One True God and no others. But loving God requires that we love one another, our planet, and ourselves. So reconciliation is a process that frees us in all four directions.

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. And especially, I look forward to being with you, wherever you are, on Christmas Eve at 6 pm.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House, 2019.

The Turnaround (Time to change direction¹) ... cont. from pg 1

The Book of Isaiah begins with statements that could just as quickly be credited to many spokespersons throughout history that called out leaders and ordinary people. According to Isaiah, God lays it out without sugarcoating. "I hate your celebrations," God says through Isaiah, "I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims" (Isaiah 1:15).

Liberation for the oppressed is arguably the most persistent statement about God's expectation for you and me found in scripture. Jesus states this goal for Himself in His opening remarks in front of a hometown crowd. And to end systemic racism is to liberate tens of millions of victimized persons of color.

But it is difficult for us to liberate people when we are the ones holding them hostage but denying our part in their bondage. Freedom for the oppressed begins with repentance from their oppressors. Beware that God offers a stern warning that the alternative to repentance is never good for the guilty. Sometimes I can hear God saying, "Don't make me come down there!"

God doesn't make empty threats nor false accusations. However, divine charges do come with an offer of grace — undeserved mercy for all who truly repent. But, reconciliation with each other and with God can only happen once we take the turnaround.

A turnaround offers space for a traveler to safely navigate towards the opposite direction. But often, a turnaround is more like a roundabout. It's easy to turn too soon towards a more enticing direction. When this happens, we may go in a different direction, but not the direction God intended.

The abolition of slavery in this country looked like a turnaround, except that oppression continued in different forms, such as the formation of the KKK and the implementation of Jim Crow

laws. Like the Civil Rights Acts, more recent developments put into law in the 1960s looked like a turnaround was finally here, but sadly oppression continued. Often in more subtle ways.

I hear God saying to us the same message Isaiah shared centuries ago. "Give up your evil ways... Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows" (Isaiah 1:16.17). But with more specifics that speak to issues of racism.

Latasha Morrison in *Be the Bridge* writes that "True reconciliation requires that we change our behavior, that we set a new trajectory. This change of trajectory, this about-face, is what we call repentance... This is what repentance looks like... changing course and committing to walking in a new direction."

Jesus didn't sugarcoat His condemnation of oppression when He called out the leaders of Jerusalem. Jesus said, "You are like whitewashed tombs— beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matthew 23:17-28).

I'm reminded of these words when I remember that the KKK was founded by protestant Christians. I hear these words from Jesus as I listen to politicians' soundbites making racist statements as though they were defending the oppressed and seeking justice. I hear these words as I listen to conservative Christian leaders defend their support of racist political leaders.

Latasha Morrison shared her story when she visited Stone Mountain Park in Georgia. On this site, the KKK had its rebirth after losing momentum. This park continues today as a monument to the memory of confederate leaders. And as a constant reminder for

African-Americans of an era of even more intense discrimination. Made possible by legislative action.

You are like whitewashed tombs— beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones.

Matthew 23:17

We are each called by God to end oppression — to be bridge-builders. I hope that you will join us each week as we continue our trilogy, *Bridges*. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to join either in-person or online.

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](#).

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Pastor Tommy

¹ [Most of the content for our series comes from Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House,](#)



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

Salvation has come to this home today... For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost...

Luke 19:1-10 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Luke 19:1-10. Is this a familiar story? What do you remember about Zacchaeus? After reading the story is there anything new that you discovered? Do you relate more with Zacchaeus or more with the crowds? Why?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Redemption*. Do you believe that are redeemed? What gives you confidence in believing that you are redeemed or that you are not yet redeemed? Are there things that you need to confess and repent for? What is your opinion of the call for reparations to people of color and native Americans? What is your opinion based on?
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.

Connecting with New Neighbors and Maintaining Bonds: How Immigrants can do both

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Moving to a new country can be an exciting and potential-filled time in life. However, it can also be terribly lonely. When you're in a whole new place, culture, and environment, it takes a very long time to feel like you're at home. Moreover, you're far away from the people you know and love — and tasked with finding a new community while also continuing to nurture bonds with the family you've left behind.



Fortunately, there are some great ways to manage both. [Asbury](#) is proud to offer a welcoming place where you can connect with your neighbors and find a community that cares. Here's how you can foster connections here and with your loved ones back home:

Offering Financial Support

Many immigrants move in order to find better career prospects, then send money back home to support their loved ones in their home country. When sending money back home, make sure you're using a safe and reliable funds transfer service. For example, if you're sending money to loved ones in The Philippines, [remotely](#) allows you to transfer funds quickly for a small fee [using your debit card](#). This way you know, with confidence, that your money will reach loved ones in a timely manner without a ton of fees or hassle.

If you still have funds to spare, you may also want to consider donating to support local efforts in your new area. For example, [Asbury](#) runs several [community betterment](#) projects that can always use financial support. This is far from the only way to help us reach our goals (more on this in a moment), but if you're able to donate, we deeply appreciate it.

Volunteering

If donating isn't feasible for you, volunteering is a great way to both support community efforts and get to know people. This can be especially [valuable for seniors](#) who aren't working. Volunteering gives you something productive to do that you can be proud of and allows you to meet your neighbors along the way.

You can also look into organizing a fundraiser or goods drive to support your loved ones back home. In addition to the direct impact this will make on your friends and family, it can also help raise global and cultural awareness in your new town. This can make your space more welcoming and understanding for future immigrants and help establish a [global mindset](#).

Staying in Touch

Once you start to build bonds in your new area, focus on nurturing them and turning them into strong, sustainable relationships. Although this is a bit more challenging during the pandemic, it's still possible to do this in a way that keeps you and your new community safe. For example, you can look into outdoor, socially-distanced community gatherings. You can also gather with vaccinated individuals while following the [new CDC guidelines](#).

There are several good ways to stay in touch with people back home, as well. Technology has made us more connected than ever before, and you can use video chat software like [Zoom](#) or Skype, message apps, and even [online gaming](#) to interact with your loved ones in real-time. This makes moving across the world at least a touch less lonely, for you and for them.

However, you might also want to consider [sending letters](#). Pen palling with friends back home — even if you also communicate online — can give you a way to send one another small gifts, stories about your day, and even printed photos. This can be especially useful if you or your loved ones back home aren't tech-savvy.

Moving to a new country is a massive transition, but finding a community will be a monumental help when it comes to adjusting. We hope this article helps you come up with ways to forge new bonds with your neighbors while still honoring the relationships you already have.

Looking for a faith-based community? Visit us at [Sunday service](#), and stick around for fellowship afterward: We'd love to get to know you!

Photo Credit: [Pexels](#)

(Written by Jason Lewis, who is a personal trainer specializing in senior fitness. If you would like to reach out to Jason, you may go on [Strongwell.org](#))



**SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
IMPORTANT APRIL DATES**

Food Giveaways and Angel Closet Dates!

All are welcome! Mask required, if you don't have one, one will be provided for you. Temperature checks taken upon arrival. One person allowed inside at a time.

**APRIL 7TH & 28TH FOOD
GIVEAWAYS • 11 AM -12 PM**

**APRIL 14TH & 28TH ANGEL CLOSET
WALK-INS • 11 AM -12 PM**

**QUESTIONS??? 810-239-3427
SOUTHFLINTSOUPKITCHEN@
GMAIL.COM**

**3410 Fenton Road Flint, MI 48507
3 Blocks North of Atherton Road**

What gain did Zacchaeus receive for his repentance and reparation? Jesus said to those listening and Zacchaeus, "Salvation has come to this home today" (Luke 19:9).

As Christians, we celebrate Easter as a reminder that Jesus died and resurrected. And our joy comes to us because, in His death, Jesus invites himself to supper with us. Not because we earned His invitation. Instead, we're invited despite our unworthiness. And salvation is ours when we choose to accept His invitation.

Salvation has come to
this home today ...

Luke 19:9

Latasha Morrison writes in her book, *Be the Bridge*, that "Reconciliation requires truth-telling and empathy and tears. It requires changed perspectives and changing directions (also known as repentance). But ultimately, that change of direction requires righting the wrongs perpetrated." ¹

Like Zacchaeus, we exploit one another for our own gain. Like Zacchaeus, white men in particular benefit from the exploitation of people of color. Like Zacchaeus, Jesus calls us out by name and invites Himself to our homes in anticipation of our own confession and willingness to make reparations.

I pray that this Easter has special meaning for each and every one of us. And that Jesus will join your special dinner celebration. May it be a celebration of an opportunity to build bridges through repentance and reparations.

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Pastor Tommy

¹ [Most of the content for our series comes from Latasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. Yates & Yates and Penguin Random House, 2019.](#)

FLINT FOOD NOT BOMBS

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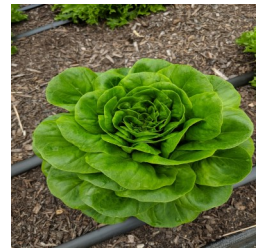
Providing a HOT MEAL and/or local, organic
PRODUCE weekly.

SATURDAYS starting around 12NOON

Asbury United Methodist Church

1653 Davison Rd, Flint (810) 235-0016

Food Not Bombs is a loose-knit group of independent collectives, sharing free vegan and vegetarian food with others. **Flint Food Not Bombs** believes that access of food—among other necessities of life—should be viewed as a right, not a privilege. Yet in a nation with a military budget many times that of other nations, people continue to go hungry. This is immoral and unjust.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

[Facebook.com/flintfoodnotbombs](https://www.facebook.com/flintfoodnotbombs)

[Twitter.com/flintfnb](https://twitter.com/flintfnb)

Email: flintfnb@protonmail.com

Website: foodnotbombsflint.wordpress.com

We're currently looking for volunteers so we can expand. If interested,
send us a message! Solidarity!

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense
than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.—MLK