

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Nurture and Nature (The contradictory role of mothers¹)



Cyndi and I watched an episode of the dramatic series, *The Good Doctor*, which featured two mothers finding love for their sons to be a stronger bond than their

differences. Their lives intersected at a demonstration - on different sides of an argument. The writers were vague on the women's differences except for footage

of a make-believe demonstration about Proposition 266.

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Collateral Damage (Taking care of genes¹)



Students at the Colorado School of Mines performing soil tests, Golden, Colorado. FSA.

I understand that there are still people in the world that question whether COVID-19 is real. I don't have the energy to keep up with the latest bizarre conspiracy theories that support ignoring reality. But stories about some individuals still in denial as this

deadly virus steals their last breath sadden me. Working together, we had the power to keep this virus from killing so many of us, but sadly we did not have the collective will. But COVID-19 isn't the only threat to our well-being.

A week ago, I stood in front of family members to officiate a celebration of life for my brother. My brother's cause of death was cancer. The likely cause of his cancer was exposure to dioxin, a deadly chemical commonly used as a herbicide.

Dioxin was the active ingredient in a substance used by U.S. military forces during the Vietnam War. It was used to eliminate forest cover and crops that fed North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. The U.S program, codenamed Operation Ranch Hand,

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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!



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Collateral Damage (Taking care of genes¹) ..cont from page 1

sprayed more than 20 million gallons of various herbicides over Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The primary chemical, known as Agent Orange, was later proven to cause serious health issues—including cancer, birth defects, rashes, and severe psychological and neurological problems.²

This is not the first time our country has used chemicals to gain an advantage on the battlefield while causing collateral damage to our earth and our soldiers.

It is said that World War II was the first war in history where more soldiers died in actual battle than from collateral damage. Disease traditionally took almost as many lives as the enemy, and sometimes more. According to an article written by Bill Ganzel, DDT was responsible for saving lives during WWII. This is because DDT was applied generously to kill insects, including disease-carrying mosquitos, lice, and houseflies.³

DDT was first patented in 1940 as an insecticide. Its inventor discovered that a small amount was lethal to a wide range of insects. And who doesn't want to rid of the world of pesky insects?

In another story, DDT was used to stop an outbreak of typhoid in Naples, Italy. The city was overrun with refugees as the war in Europe displaced persons seeking safety. The outbreak was subdued in a matter of weeks using DDT, saving thousands of lives.

After the war, farmers soon benefited from the miraculous cure that killed insects effectively. DDT had an immediate effect on-farm production and profits. DDT became the most publicized synthetic compound in history. It seemed like everyone was writing about and praising the

miraculous properties of DDT. Who wouldn't want DDT sprayed everywhere insects might reside?

Meanwhile, stories about the collateral damage sometimes noticed after DDT was applied caught the attention of a biologist and writer by the name of Rachel Carson. One story in particular involved 200 acres of Oak trees located in Pennsylvania. DDT was used to eradicate a problem with gypsy-moths. Within hours after applying DDT, every gypsy-moth caterpillar in the forest died.

But so did every bird—at least 4,000 of them within eight days - along with ladybug beetles which control leaf-devouring aphids — which weren't affected by DDT. The forest was on the way to being completely defoliated when rains finally halted the outbreak.

Is it possible that at least some human-made miracle cures can bring unintended consequences? Is it possible that we shouldn't always do so just because we can do something or build something? Joel Salatin writes in his book, *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, that "Inappropriate human actions created problems that should have never occurred in the first place."

DDT was highly effective in insect warfare because it didn't wash off. Once applied to fruit, it had staying power. Did I mention that it didn't wash off?

There is another problem with chemical warfare against the natural world called evolution. Resistance to threats increases through genetic evolution, potentially resulting in a more hostile environment than before.

And this is where the story comes home to Michigan. A process known as biological magnification was put in process when DDT entered the food chain of birds. Michigan State University utilized DDT to spray elm trees to control the beetle that spreads Dutch elm disease.

After a couple of years, it was observed that there were no robins on campus. Further research discovered that robins fed on earthworms that consumed elm leaves with tiny amounts of DDT. The chemical accumulated in their body fat until a toxic level was reached. The collateral damage continued for a couple years after the use of DDT was halted.

The potential hazards of DDT use appeared in articles as early as 1945 — before the chemical was made available for agricultural use. After Congress stripped the USDA of its power to control the use of chemicals in agriculture, DDT became the go-to compound for farms and household use. Even regulations aimed at food safety allowed for the presence of small amounts of DDT.

Congress later reversed course after the market was flooded with a plethora of potentially deadly compounds to control any nuisance from weeds to rodents. And while the use of DDT was banned in 1972 in the United States, the story isn't over. DDT remains a popular insecticide in many other countries.⁴

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

★ Coming up this week ★



TO ALL THE
WONDERFUL
MOTHERS!!

ENJOY THIS
SPECIAL DAY!

- May 10 Mon
- May 11 Tues 10am-12:30pm
 Water / Food Distribution
- May 12 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
 11am-12Noon
 Food Giveaway at South Flint Soup Kitchen
- May 13 Thu
- May 14 Fri
- May 15 Sat
- May 16 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
 Contemporary Worship

(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 Living Water April 25th-May 30th



Book Club News

We finished our study of *Be the Bridge* by Latasha Morrison and completed our worship series, *Bridges*.



Racial reconciliation is a work in progress that comes with a great sense of urgency for Asbury. Our community superpower is diversity. But equity takes intentional effort, as does reconciliation. My prayer is that each of us continues the work of bridge-building that God called us to do.

Our next book offers us a glimpse into reconciliation with the earth that sustains us. The creation stories in Genesis offer humanity the blessing of earth stewardship. Again, our community is blessed beyond measure. Asbury Farms is within walking distance from our main campus on Davison Road. This offers all of us insight and opportunities to experience the presence of God in new and more profound ways.

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 & Exec Dir
Connie Portillo	Office Manager
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Exec Chef & Dir Opers

Joel Salatin, in his book, *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, compares eggs from Polyface Farm with a typical egg purchased at the local supermarket and coming from a factory farm. The most notable difference was the measure of folate present in the comparison. Approximately 1,200 mcg for eggs from free-range hens and 47 mcg for the factory eggs. So what?

According to the Mayo Clinic, folate (vitamin B-9) is essential in red blood cell formation and healthy cell growth and function, crucial during early pregnancy to reduce the risk of

Joel Salatin is a self-proclaimed member of the Christian community that we more progressive thinkers struggle to cozy up to — the conservative Christian right. Yet Joel writes that when visitors come to his farm that he has the “uncanny ability to irritate both the conservative and the liberal.” How? Let’s discover this together.

The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs challenges us to put belief into action.¹ Racial inequality, global climate change, food insecurity, and a lot of diseases are human-engineered. We too often use our ingenuity and energy in ways that harm our earth which ultimately harms you and me. The solution is to live out our faith rather than just declare our faith. Put our actions in sync with our words.

In his book Joel challenges the pursuit of increased profits by farms that confine pigs in cramped, dark pens, injecting them with antibiotics, and feeding herbicide-saturated food. According to Joel’s interpretation, such practices do not respect pigs as a creation of God. By not allowing pigs to express their *pigness* as God intended, we choose profits and convenience over our claims of faithfulness to God.

Matt DePalma	Farms Manager
Chris Freeman	South Campus Bldg Mgr
Israel Unger	Finance Director
Kim Sims	Connections Suprv
Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
Katelin Maylum	Sr Mgr Local Food
Jose Tiejó	<i>Enlace de Idioma Español</i>

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.

birth defects. Folate (folic acid) is also listed as an essential vitamin for excreting lead from our bodies.

This is not the first time I have come across science that reminds us that healthy bodies are not manufactured in factories. God created us within a complex system of connectedness. And scripture offers insight into how this connectedness brings abundant living when we live out a faith-based on honoring God’s plan for creation.

In his book, we discover some overlooked ethical instructions found in scripture that should guide how we eat, shop, think about how we work together to end food insecurity. Stewardship of God’s creation rather than exploitation offers proven solutions that work.

Joel’s personality comes through in his writing. His warmth and humor help deliver what can be received as piercing criticism of our current food systems. I pray that you join us on this fascinating journey from seed to table.

A few of us meet in person each week. With new cases of the coronavirus raging in Michigan I encourage diligence. Most of our regular attenders are vaccinated. However, each person has an obligation to practice safety to protect others.

We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. We look forward to a return to pot-luck lunches, hopefully by this summer.

Suppose you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away. In that case, I encourage you to join us 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.

¹ Joel Salatin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God’s Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016.

Living Water (April 25th-May 30) ... Asbury Worship Series

We are each connected to each other, to our own identity, to the earth, and we are connected to God. The world is an interwoven tapestry. The pandemic illustrated for us that we suffer when we cannot depend on each other.

Our next series, *Living water*, begins April 25. Our series is based, in large part, on Joel Salatin's book about the connection between scripture and organic farming. Each episode explores topics that make a difference in our lives. God's plan is for you and me to live healthy, happy lives. But we're often misled by profit motives and false promises.

Lest you leave this article thinking that our entire focus is on free-range chickens or enhanced bottled water, allow me to share a little more insight into this 6-episode series.

In John's Gospel, Jesus used grapevines as a metaphor for our connectedness. In His explanation, Jesus emphasized the importance of connectedness and pruning. His analogy is multipurpose and powerful. And grapevines can help us to understand the difference between living water and cheap imitations.

God chose to live among humanity. It's foolish for me to think that I know for certain God's motivation for doing this, but my role as a pastor invites me to speculate. I'll start with the obvious, but in no way do I believe that I know the mind of God.

God is not a distant and symbolic deity far removed from the messiness of everyday life. Jesus was born in a feeding trough for livestock. He walked on country roads and city streets. He felt hunger pangs, cooked fish over a fire, drank from streams and wells, and cried real tears. Yes, Jesus prayed and led a spiritual life. But the concreteness of His faith was evident in what He did.

Jesus called the acts that offer evidence of what we believe our fruit. The fruit of our labor speaks volumes about what we believe to be true about ourselves, about others, and about the world around us. More importantly, what we do tells the story of what we genuinely believe about God.

Living water comes from another metaphor that describes the connection between God and us. We say that Jesus is "living water" based on the story of a conversation at a local well. A woman coming to the well to draw water during the heat of the day discovers that her thirst can only be partially and temporarily satisfied by the water she draws from the well.

Jesus offers us Living Water.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly explores 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](http://www.FlintAsbury.org) at [FlintAsbury.org](http://www.FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

¹ Joel Salatin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God's Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016.

Nurture and Nature (The contradictory role of mothers¹)... *cont. from pg 1*

A tragedy all too familiar interrupted the demonstrations. Their sons were shot during the rally—one in the head and the other in the heart. The brain is known for the source of reasoning and the heart, a metaphor for empathy. Reason calls for accountability, while empathy screams for nurture.

Mothers are often faced with what can feel like contradictory roles.

This story reminded me of how often our minds and heart are on different sides of an argument. We crave equilibrium. When this happens, we either fabricate a logical argument or ignore the warnings of our hearts, leaving us conflicted.

Images of landfills and pictures of hungry children can take me on a journey of contradictions. The images illustrate a paradox of discarded abundance and images of scarcity. In this week's reading from the book, *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, we learn that our landfills contain a large amount of biomass. The substance that turns into healthy soil produces food when handled responsibly.

The earth is the source of food which gives us the physical nourishment that we need to live.

We often refer to earth as mother earth because it offers us nurture. The earth provides oxygen, food, and water — all required to sustain life. The earth also provides nutrients for an abundant life. And the earth offers resources that fuel our creative minds and beauty that inspires us. It's no wonder that we sense God at work when we observe the power and awe of the planet we live on.

One of the moms in *The Good Doctor* episode took her son to the demonstration despite his objections. She wanted her son to learn the importance of voice. Democracy fails when public leaders are not held accountable.

After this mom's son was shot in the back of the head, she wanted to hold the other side accountable. And the only representative from the "other side" was the mom of the boy shot in the heart.

The earth also holds us accountable. We often witness the earth reclaiming lives with

violent storms, severe temperatures, and the process of decay. Individuals living in adverse conditions learn to respect the earth, realizing that while the earth offers nurture, it also holds each of us accountable. Global warming is rapidly changing weather patterns as the earth holds us accountable for our abuse.

Mother earth offers nurture but holds us accountable.



There was a risk in taking their sons to a demonstration. Passionate crowds quickly get out of hand. While most demonstrations are peaceful, competing sides close enough to taunt one another have a way of raising the temperature. There's a reason that fans are separated by the field of play at sporting events. But for these moms, the risk was worth exercising our freedom to be heard.



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

Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you.

Isaiah 49:8-18 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Isaiah 49:8-18. Try reading this text as though God is speaking to you. Substitute Flint for Jerusalem to help you. Can you imagine God speaking to the people of Flint? Can you imagine God saying these words to you? In what ways do you experience God's nurture with accountability?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Nurture and nature*. In what ways do mothers provide both nurture and accountability to children? List some of the ways that earth provides nurture to you? What are some of the ways that earth holds us accountable? What are some ways that our community can respond to this accountability? What are some ways that you can respond to this accountability?
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.

The contradictory responses of nurture and accountability are packed with risk. A farmer that leaves hens unattended in a pasture risks the loss of one or more to predators. The alternative presumes that safety is found in bondage. This is an affront to nature.

As a child, I often played outside and walked barefoot in clover. Given my allergy to bees, this freedom was a risk for me. I'm grateful that my mom didn't keep me caged up for my own safety. The bees held me accountable to stay off their backs, and my mom came to my rescue when I stepped on top of one with unprotected feet.

And the bees risked their lives gathering pollen from the flowers in our yard. They were too busy being bees to search for safer landscapes void of children playing. I'm grateful that bees do what they do. We should all be thankful since bees are vital to our local food chain. Biologists warn us that bees are a bellwether for harm to our planet.

Joel Salatin, the author of *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, argues that allowing chickens the freedom to be chickens, pigs to be pigs, and cows to be cows, comes with risk. But this tradeoff of nurture and accountability is built into the divine order. There is no freedom without risk.

And there is no nurture without accountability.

Joel also encourages us to realize that it is often best to give up short-term gain for longer-term rewards. Moms know that rushing to

aid a child losing his balance as he is learning to walk hinders his progress. Infants need the freedom to explore, fall down, and try again. Nurture offers freedom to be who God created us to be.

The prophecies of the individuals we collectively name Isaiah focus on a time of accountability and nurture for the people of the nation of Judah. Descendants of people God freed from slavery, they turned their back on the agreement God made with humankind. They chose short-term profit over the well-being of God's creation. And God held them accountable.

But God's glory, that which makes God unique, is both nurture and accountability. The people longed to know that God had not abandoned them. Using Isaiah as a mouthpiece, God assured the people that they are loved. God asks, "Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore?" (Isaiah 49:15).

We were created from the same soil that nourishes carrots and squash. And the earth that God made to sustain us also holds us accountable. God is like a mother who tends to our wounds when we scrape our knees while reminding us of the perils of skateboards. Likewise, the earth both nourishes and holds us accountable.

This week's lesson connects our respect for motherhood with the care that we owe to all creation in honor of all mothers. Nurture and nature have much in common, as do mothers and the earth that sustains us.

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!

We began our new. *Living water*, series two weeks ago. If you missed our earlier episodes, you can find the articles under the Worship tab of our website — *Messages and Audio Teachings*. Our primary subject matter is food. How we grow it, where we get our food, and how we treat creation in the process.

In this series we explore God's abundance and our role in its equitable use and distribution. Be sure to request your copy of Joel Salatin's book. And join us each Wednesday at Noon for Book Club and each Sunday at 10:30 am for New Beginnings.

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

¹ Most of the content for our series comes from: Joel Salatin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God's Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016..



South Flint Soup Kitchen

ANGEL CLOSET & FOOD GIVEAWAY MAY DATES

Food Giveaways: May 12th and 19th,
11am-noon

Angel Closet (Appointment ONLY):
May 5th and 26th, 11am-noon

**MASK AND TEMPERATURE CHECK
REQUIRED FOR ENTRY. IF YOU DON'T
HAVE A MASK, ONE WILL BE
PROVIDED FOR YOU!**

To make an appointment for the
Angel Closet: 810-239-3427 or
southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

3410 Fenton Road
(3 blocks North of Atherton)
Flint, MI 48507

Epigenetics is a branch of genetic research that considers the possibility that behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way our genes work. Fortunately, epigenetic modifications are reversible. They do not change our DNA sequence. But our behaviors and environment can change how our body reads a DNA sequence genetic coding. These changes that are passed on to our progeny are a result of what we do and even what we eat.⁵

The idea of divine covenant permeates the first few books of scripture. God makes a covenant with Abraham and keeps this divine promise for generations. The covenant requires that the descendants of Abraham and Sarah hold to the agreement. This included adherence to just over 600 regulations known as the Mosaic law, named after Moses. Some of the laws applied to agricultural practices.

Scripture is timeless. There is divine wisdom for each subsequent generation to discern how to interpret and apply lessons illustrated through less familiar circumstances. For example, the use of DDT to kill insects or the use of dioxin to kill vegetation is not directly addressed in Mosaic law.

But what makes scripture timeless is an ability that God gifted to humankind as earth caretakers to recognize that meaning is contextual and transcends time. So let's apply an ancient declaration attributed to the God who created us to the situations presented in this article.

In God's story, liberating Abraham's descendants from slavery, called the Exodus, God makes this declaration through Moses. *If you listen carefully and do what is right, you will not suffer any of the diseases that fell upon those who enslaved you* (Exodus 15:26). I paraphrased the actual text to leave out some of the original contexts for clarity in our context.

Joel Salatin argues that while this text is generally applicable, God's promise is specifically relevant to agricultural practices. His family endeavors to utilize the wisdom found in scripture at their farm in Virginia. The arguments in favor of farming practices that rely on heavy doses of chemical solutions seem compelling.

However, the history of DDT and dioxin and the unfolding history of glyphosate, an ingredient in Roundup, is telling. These stories suggest that our failure to heed the wisdom contained in scripture creates many, if not all, of the diseases that affect us.

Is it possible in these cases that we broke a holy covenant with the God who created us to subdue an enemy of our own making? That we reaped what we sowed? If so, may God have mercy on us despite our disobedience.

We began our new *Living water* series last Sunday. Our primary subject matter is food. How we grow it, where we get our food, and how we treat creation in the process. Over the next six weeks, we explore God's abundance and our role in its equitable use and distribution. Be sure to request your copy of Joel Salatin's book. And join us each Wednesday at Noon for Book Club and each Sunday at 10:30 am for New Beginnings.

If you listen carefully and do what is right, you will not suffer any of the diseases that fell upon those who enslaved you.

Exodus 15:26

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Pastor Tommy

¹ [Most of the content for our series comes from:](#)
Joel Salatin. *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God's Creation*. New York: FaithWords, a Division of Hachette Book Group, 2016.

² history.com Editors. "Agent Orange," © A&E TV Networks, May 16, 2019 & August 2, 2011.

³ Bill Ganzel. "The Chemical Age Dawns in Agriculture," © Wessels Living History Farm,

⁴ Kenneth S. Davis. "The Deadly Dust: The Unhappy History Of DDT," © American Heritage Magazine, Volume 22, Issue 2, February 1971

⁵ "What is Epigenetics?," *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*.

