

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Spirited (Spirit-led Food¹)



As a pastor, I get to hear a lot of stories. My least favorite stories are told about persons not in the room and involve something this person did or didn't do that created anxiety in the storyteller.

These stories are particularly annoying when I'm the one telling the story.

The pandemic has thrown gasoline on smothering ambers. These ambers represent the tension

between persons and between persons and their relationship with God. These outbreaks are exacerbated by the battles going on between our ears. We all have inner voices, and sometimes these voices compete with each other for attention. Worse, there is, more often than not, disagreement between them.

Page 6

Satisfied (Give God's plan a try)



Piglets are crowded in a nursery at Greg Boerboom's farm in Marshall, Minn. Credit Jenn Ackerman for The New York Times

According to research published in the *National Academy of Sciences Proceedings*, more than 17,000 deaths a year are attributable to pollution from farms across the United States. Granted,

17,000 casualties seem like a relatively small number when we consider that COVID-19 was attributed to almost 600,000 deaths.²

However, this is an extremely dangerous argument for justifying the continuation of business as usual. We know that the vast majority of deaths from COVID-19 were preventable. A lack of cooperation and incompetent leadership caused most of the losses from the pandemic.

In *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, Joel Salatin writes, "Ultimately, one of the biggest human tragedies is succeeding at something God sees as evil.

Page 2

Volume 2 Issue 30

May 30, 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:

Spirited	1
Satisfied	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series/Coming Out	4
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series/Coming Out	5
Spirited	6
Multicultural Family Night	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Spirited	9
SFSK June Dates	10
Satisfied	11
Practical Parenting Strategies	12

Satisfied (Give God's plan a try) ..cont from page 1

And this happens a lot with humans.¹

We become very proficient at doing the wrong thing. We discover a mineral that we can use to make more robust tools, so we decide to supersize our tool making. This results in opening massive craters in the earth to extract as much of this mineral as possible. And once the mineral is depleted in one area, we move on, leaving the ground wounded.

We discover that pork tickles our taste buds when cured and smoked. But this requires a time-consuming process. So we improve on what nature has to offer by industrializing the raising, slaughter, and processing of pigs. We add bacon to our cheeseburgers and pizzas, increasing the profits of the wealthy and our waistlines.

Global climate change is as real as the rains that soak the thirsty ground. It's as real as the winds that tore through homes and businesses in several states this past week. We succeed at going against God's plan for how we are to care for the earth and for each other — and we reap the consequences.

Yes, my friends who deny climate change is real, storms are as old as the dirt they soak. But the intensity and frequency of devastating storms continue to increase. And this affects every one of us.

Journalist Christopher Flavelle covered a report released by the Environmental Protection Agency in a recent *New York Times* article. A report kept from public view by the previous administration.³

In his article, Chris reports that "Climate change is already happening ...And in many cases, that change is speeding up."

Citing the apparent consequences of global warming, he notes that "Wildfires are bigger, and starting earlier in the year. Heatwaves are more frequent. Seas are warmer, and flooding is more common. The air is getting hotter. Even ragweed pollen season is beginning sooner."

When it comes to caring for God's creation, humanity's report card shows a failing grade.

There is hope. According to a *Washington Post* article, Exxon-Mobile was recently forced to pay attention to the damage inflicted on our planet in search of profits for its shareholders. A similar reckoning took place at Chevron. Major energy companies are being forced to pay attention to the damage their companies do to the environment.⁴

And it's time for food producers to be held accountable for their damage to creation.

Granted the taking care of our planet gets complicated. Balancing how to address the needs of humanity with earth care isn't easy. And the quest for wealth motivates humans to succeed at something God sees as evil.

I realize that I can't convince you to stop visiting McDonald's if you believe that you can't live without their fries. Perhaps I can appeal to your desire for safety from the storms

made more dangerous and destructive by global warming. Environment destruction is caused in significant part by the consequences of our choice of food.

One of the Old Testament practices that we look at as outdated and irrelevant is sacrifice. The idea that God expects us to slaughter an animal and burn it on an altar to show how much we care about what God thinks is definitely primitive.

But the idea of sacrificing our time and money is quite contemporary. Charitable giving continues to be a conversation at tax time for the well-off. And passing offering plates predates the church. Scripture uses the word "tithe" to describe contributions that God expects from each one of us.

In the Book of Malachi's prophecies, we read about God's expectations regarding our tithes (see Malachi 3:10). A tithe is each person's contribution — we each have an obligation to contribute to the well-being of the whole. No one gets a pass who has something to give.

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** ★

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!

- May 31 Mon **HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY !!** 
- Jun 1 Tues 10am-12:30pm
 Water / Food Distribution
- Jun 2 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
 11am-12Noon Food Giveaway
 at South Flint Soup Kitchen
- Jun 3 Thu
- Jun 4 Fri
- Jun 5 Sat 12Noon Food Not Bombs
- Jun 6 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

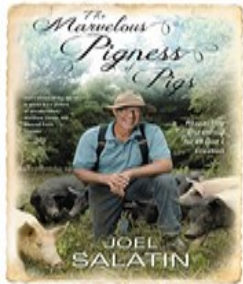
Coming Out

June 6 to July 25



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

The Center for Disease Control issued new guidelines for wearing face masks on May 13 that offer great hope for more of us coming out into the open. After a year and a couple of months of isolation from seeing smiles and frowns, many of us are excited to rejoin the show in progress. A production that was interrupted when a deadly virus spiraled out of control.

The guidance mandates the wearing of face masks for the unvaccinated. This affects a much smaller

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 Trejo	<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.

group than one might think since persons refusing to get vaccinated are often the same group refusing to wear a face mask. "It's about freedom" is one retort I've grown weary of hearing. Fortunately, businesses still have the option of requiring a face mask to be worn along with healthcare facilities and public transportation. The pandemic isn't over — it's just less of a threat.

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.

Coming Out (June 6 to July 25) ... Asbury Worship Series

Coming out is easy for a lot of us and not so easy for most of us. "Is it really safe?" we ask. "Is it really safe to reveal our vulnerabilities to one another?"

Part one of our new series coincides with the celebration of Pride Month. An annual tribute to the victims of a police raid in 1969 of the Stonewall Inn — a place where persons could gather whose gender identity or sexual orientation differed from their gender at birth. Coming out for persons coming to terms with their actual identity is substantially more terrifying than choosing to leave my face mask at home.

Fortunately, activist Brenda Howard, often referred to as the Mother of Pride, organized a way to keep the subject on the minds of a growing number of people. Including people with friends and family struggling with fears of coming out before being found out. And Pride Month took root and grew into a national time of recognition.

That these two life-giving opportunities share the calendar looked like a problem at first glance. Standing in solidarity with people made to feel abnormal for being who God created them to be, is crucial to the Asbury community. After all, we claim to be an inclusive community that puts the teachings of Jesus Christ into action. And as our spiritual leader, I don't want to take away from celebrating the coming out of any who risk relationships and hurt to be who they are wherever they go.

Yet, I realize that the losses created by our response to the pandemic are painful. Everyone was affected because so many of us were infected. And some of the same brokenness that is the human condition led to the needless loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. It's time to come out again and face a new normal. And we need to talk about it now.

Stay tuned. Meanwhile, share your thoughts, prayers, and creative gifts with our community. Testimonies are powerful. What you feel and believe matters a great deal. Let's plan to celebrate together.

I would be remiss if I did not emphasize that vaccinations are essential for everyone. Understandably a few have medical conditions where vaccination could be inadvisable. But the rest of us can protect our more vulnerable community members by ensuring that we aren't able to spread the virus. It's time to come out of whatever fears or biases keep you from being a part of the solution. Get vaccinated.

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

Spirited (Spirit-led Food¹)... *cont. from pg 1*

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology website warns that COVID-19 and the unprecedented lockdowns that followed have had a massive impact on relationships and family life. And the need for family psychologist rose dramatically as a result. ²

Isolation and fear of catching the virus or transmitting the virus made getting along an art form. And most of us were not prepared to deal with such dramatic change. Relationships suffered, and we all suffer as a result.

The Bible is chocked full of relationship stories. From drama to humor and from love to war, the biblical narrative weaves a storyline of persistent and unwavering love despite the ups and downs of life with one another sharing the same planet. There is one thing about this endless love that is consistent. Love is more than a feeling of affection — love is a verb that acts in ways where love is manifested in visible, tangible ways.

The relationship between God and people is often strained in stories from the Bible. During the time of the Prophet Isaiah, the neighborhoods and farms were tangible signs of people suffering. The land was overgrown, and buildings were deserted and in ruins.

God promised through the Prophet Isaiah that this wouldn't always be the case. There would come a time, Isaiah told the people, when God's Spirit would fall upon the people, and their community would return to prosperity. God's love would be felt and seen in tangible ways.

Jesus referred to this tangible presence of love as fruit. Just as plants produce fruit that makes the continuation of life possible, love also produces fruit. This is because love makes the continuation of life both possible and often pleasurable.

At last the Spirit is poured out on us from heaven. Then the wilderness will become a fertile field and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.

Isaiah 32:14-15

God created relationships as the foundation for all of creation. From the atomic level, where particles invisible to the naked eye bear fruit through a relationship with each other, to the cooperation between internal organs — each life is a symphony of relationships. This complexity of relationships within us is best recognized thanks to the human mind that conducts the symphony.

The greatest mystery of all, however, is the invisible interaction we call spirit. A force that binds us together, eliminating the possibility that anyone can exist without impacting the rest of us. Spirit ties each of us together into a more excellent score and connects us to something much grander than we can imagine.

We often talk about feeling God's presence in places where it seems like the separation between God and us is extraordinarily thin. God's presence lifts our spirits giving us a spiritual high. But spirit isn't just about "mountain top" experiences.

Joel Salatin writes in *The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs*, "We can't live a spiritually vibrant life from a onetime mountaintop experience. I don't care how wonderfully touched and moved by the Spirit I may have been at a certain service or in a certain place. It won't sustain me over the long haul."

Fortunately, God's Spirit is persistently present. Creation began with the Spirit of God and continued as plants, creatures, and eventually, humankind emerged out of the carbon from which life begins and ends. And this Spirit interacts with our own, claiming us as God's own. Relationships are born of Spirit, which manifests itself as love.

RESCHEDULED!



MULTICULTURAL FAMILY NIGHT

We are having a fiesta in our parking lot to kick off our new program!

English and music classes for kids start at 3pm

Dinner served at 6pm

Games at 7pm



Questions?

Call 810-235-0016 or

email Katelin at

katelin@flintasbury.org

There will also be a live DJ!

NOW JUNE 11th, 3PM

LOCATED AT ASBURY CHURCH

1653 DAVISON ROAD FLINT, MI 48506



Life groups question & notes

Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things.

Malachi 3:7-12 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Malachi 3:7-12. What does this text say about God’s expectations for humanity? For you? What is your tithe? How might this text apply to how we care for the earth?
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Satisfied*. What do you know about global climate change? What are some ways that you can help take care of our planet? What local food options do you have access to? What choices about your food are you willing to make? What sacrifices are you willing to make for the environment? What do you find satisfying?
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.

Joel Salatin writes about his farm as a place of relationships. A handful of soil contains as many microscopic creatures as there are people on the planet. His family's farm needs people to do the chores that result in a bountiful harvest. Tools and machinery are used to help humans carry out the work expected by God rather than take the place of people.

Contrast this approach to large, industrial farms relying on massive equipment and thousands of gallons of herbicides, pesticides, insecticides, and antibiotics to produce a harvest. The only love found in abusing the land and animals is love for money. This idol replaces and negates relationships with God.



This week we celebrate the beginning of the church as we know it. The church emerged out of Synagogues and altars and any place where humanity's spirit intersected with God's Spirit. The church is nothing more than a group of people and nothing less. Spirits coming together in a relationship based on returning the love offered freely by God and expressing love to each other.

But once the Spirit of God stirs our souls, we discover that there is too much love to contain. We are like rain barrels overflowing during a storm, unable to hold all of the love flowing out of the Spirit's presence. We take this overflow to the city streets, country roads, our nation's trails, and the world. And we never run empty as long as we allow the Spirit access to our true selves.

We began our series, *Living water*, 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.

On June 6 we begin a new series titled *Coming out*. You can find more information elsewhere in the Circuit Rider under the heading *Coming up in worship*.

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..

² "The psychology of family dynamics amid the COVID-19 pandemic," {Insight}. © The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, December 2, 2020.



JUNE DATES
**Angel
Closet &
Food
Giveaways**

June 2nd & 23rd -
Food Giveaways

June 9th & 30th - Angel Closet
(Walk-ins only)

**MASK AND TEMPERATURE CHECK
REQUIRED FOR ENTRY.**



South Flint Soup Kitchen
3410 Fenton Road
3 Blocks North of Atherton Rd.
Flint, MI 48507

810-239-3427

What we give and how much we give is quite personal, however. Think of a tithe as the contribution that God expects from you to assure that God's plan for creation is carried out. Tithes, for most of us today, consist of money, time, and capabilities.

Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things.

Malachi 3: 7-12

Tithes are one way that we give credit to God for all that we have. God doesn't need our money. God wants our affection for creation to show in our sacrifices. In other words, our tithes.

God wants us to try it out — to test what God promised. In other words, try doing what God asked us to do — try living the way God asks us to live — and then see what happens. This means taking care of creation the way God asked us to take care of creation.

And this includes paying attention to where our food comes from and being grateful for each spoonful.

Try paying attention to the carbon cycle that we talked about a couple of weeks ago. Try turning to local farms that don't use chemicals to grow

food. Try eating foods that aren't processed and enjoying the plants and animals sacrificed so that you can live.

God promised in Malachi that when we live the way God intended us to live, insects will not destroy our crops, and our grapevines will be loaded with grapes. And that our joy will be evident and contagious.

In other words, try living the way God intended us to live — and you will be satisfied.

If you missed our episodes of our series, *Living water*, you can find the articles under the Worship tab of our website — *Messages and Audio Teachings*. Our focus is on food. How we grow it, where we get our food, and how we treat creation in the process.

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² Sarah Kaplan "Air pollution from farms leads to 17,900 U.S. deaths per year, study finds," © *Washington Post*, May 10, 2021.

³ Christopher Flavelle "Climate Change Is Making Big Problems Bigger," © *NY Times*, May 12, 2021.

⁴ Steven Mufson "A bad day for Big Oil," © *Washington Post*, May 26, 2021.

As parents, one of our most fervent desires is for our children to stay healthy and safe throughout every stage of life, from infancy to old age. And much of the decisions our kids make now and in the future are significantly impacted by our influence. We know: Your kids don't always act like they're watching and listening to you — but they are.

While being an exceptional parent comes with a lot of pressure, it's something each of us can accomplish. Through God's grace and by implementing some practical everyday strategies, you can be the [role model](#) you're called to be and help your children learn to make healthy choices in life. [Asbury](#) shares some wellness strategies you can begin incorporating today to foster physical, mental, and spiritual health.



Image via [Rawpixel](#)

Engaging in Worship

Worship is at the foundation of any Christian life. As such, it must remain a priority in your life if you want to be effective in leading your children in Christ. It's also essential that you encourage your kids to engage in worship on a regular basis as it will play a more significant role in helping them make good decisions than any other factor.

Along with making time for your personal worship (remember: your kids will notice), make sure you are making room for [family worship](#) at home. This might include anything from singing songs together to watching sermons online. And, if possible, attend corporate worship events (such as weekly church or summer camps) that foster community among believers.

Prioritizing Education

Though they may not see it yet, your children's education will play a major role in their livelihoods in the future. Regularly speak with your kids about the importance of education, and provide verbal encouragement and other types of positive reinforcement as they navigate school. If your child is struggling at school, evaluate their [learning style](#) to ensure they are being given the best chance to succeed.

This is another area in which you can serve as a role model. If you're unhappy in your career, for instance, you can change it by earning a college degree. Say that you feel led to become a teacher. You can take online courses that fit into your schedule and lifestyle and obtain a teaching degree and [license](#). Or, if you are interested in becoming a marketing professional, you can pursue a degree in marketing. Not only will returning to school arm you with new knowledge, skills, and credentials, but it will also show your children that they can achieve their goals in life.

Being Active

Exercise is a critical part of living healthily. Make sure you are maintaining a consistent [fitness routine](#) in your own life so that your kids see the benefits that come with it. As with worship, find ways to exercise [together](#) as a family. For some families, this means scheduling daily walks or bike rides. For others, it means taking weekend hiking trips. Whatever you do, try to facilitate fitness in your household on a regular basis.

There's no reason why you can't be the parent you want to be for your kids. Remember to keep worship, education, and exercise as priorities in your household, and you'll be well on your way to helping your children make healthy choices now and later in life. And most importantly, don't forget to serve as a good role model!

Join Asbury Church every Sunday [for services](#). Online services are available!

(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 [Stongwell.org](#))