

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 24

October 24, 2021

Hope-filled (God gives us hope¹)



What do you hope for? Recently, the answer to this question for a lot of us goes something like “I just want to feel normal again.” But, unfortunately, the pandemic interrupted

life as we knew it and then hung around long enough to make us wonder whether “normal” is even a possibility for the future.

When hope is accompanied by action, in this case, getting vaccinated and taking recommended precautions, normal is on the near horizon. Hope that involves cooperation among a large number of people can seem more like unwarranted optimism. But we can still hope.

In her book, *You Are Enough*, Danielle Bean

Page 6



Please continue to wear your masks when in the building. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

DONATE

Inside this issue:

Hope-filled	1
Never Alone	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series	4
Pastor's Book Club-You are enough	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series-Better Together	5
Hope-filled	6
Never Alone	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Feed Flint	9
Feed Flint	10
SFSK November Dates	11
Asbury Veggie Boxes	12
Hope-filled	13

Never Alone (God is in the Roses¹)



Just under 23 million children are living in single-parent households in the United States. According to Pew Research, at a rate of just under 25%, our na-

tion has the world's highest rate of children living in single-parent households. This is nearly three times the overall average of around 7%.²

Before someone blames this situation on a lack of Christian values it's important to point out that this percentage is about the same regardless of religious affiliation.

Anyone who has experience raising children has some idea of how daunting this responsibility can be when their work is divided among two or more.

Page 2



Never Alone (God is in the Roses¹)..cont from page 1

A single parent takes on a role that requires a couple of superpowers to pull off. Fortunately, many parents find that they have just enough superpower to pull it off quite well.

Tamara Mason, a licensed social worker, writing for *YourTango*, lists seven capabilities that can really help single parents thrive rather than just get by. She begins her list with the importance of a positive attitude. Then, realizing that it is human nature to see everyone else's pasture as greener, Tamara encourages single parents to focus on what they can do.³

The story of Judith is a story of international conflict and intrigue. The book is found in a relatively obscure portion of the Christian Bible known as the Apocrypha. This section is left out of many biblical translations of the Old Testament because the writings weren't included in the official list by the early church. The book was considered worthy of study but fell short of their assessment as divinely inspired text.

Reading the story this past week reminded me of stories I've read in the NY Times or Washington Post. In this story, two nations are in a cold war that is heating up. Each is lining up allies to increase their power and influence.

The nation of Assyria, led by King Nebuchadnezzar, gets turned down by the countries it was counting on as allies. This included the Nation of Judah, where Judith lived.

Her leaders concluded that Assyria had no chance to win a war against their rival nation, Medes. But to everyone's surprise and dismay, Assyria prevailed. And Nebuchadnezzar vowed to take revenge against all of the countries that chose not to become his ally.

Hindsight often appears to be 20/20. If Judah had only sided with the Assyrians, they could have been on the winning team. Instead, they're now under attack. But in their defense, it hadn't been that long since they had returned from exile and rebuilt their community and city.

The Judean leaders tried sending a peace delegation to stop the pending attack. Still, Assyria wasn't willing to back down. Their military forces were marching towards Jerusalem, the capital of Judah. And the people of Judah were terrified.

A national day of prayer was called. So the people gathered at the temple dressed in sackcloth and with ashes on their heads. Sackcloth and ashes were a sign of mourning. It was a heart-warming scene. An entire nation coming together as one voice and praying to God for deliverance from their enemies. One nation, under God, praying that the liberty and justice they desired wouldn't be taken away from them by a relentless enemy led by an arrogant king.

Judith was a widow. Her husband died from heatstroke while overseeing the annual barley harvest. She was still grieving his death while stepping up to the responsibilities and obligations of a single-parent household. Scripture doesn't tell us the age of their children, other than there was clearly not a child old enough to run the family business.

Judith was well-liked and respected in her community. She had a reputation for wisdom. Perhaps this meant that she was an older woman. Yet, the writer makes a rather big deal over her feminine beauty. Apparently, when Judith entered the room, people took notice. And Judith's story focuses on the powerful men noticing her beauty.

The leaders of Judah were put on notice by the Assyrian General that war was imminent. As a result, Judah's supply chain collapsed, interrupted by their enemy. Anxiety and worry over the inevitability of Assyria's attack took a toll on morale and unity. As a result, the Judean leaders planned to surrender.

But Judith disagreed with their decision. Why would God rescue them from calamity only to turn them over to a ruthless enemy who would take away everything they had? "Surely God will come through," Judith argued. "Don't give in so soon!"

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Shirley Craig
 Richard Oram



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 NEWS:**

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016 as it changes.

Meanwhile, as a lot of you are already aware, sharp increases in new infections of COVID are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated.

Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking. If you don't have a mask, we can provide one for you, just ask the office.

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

Oct 25	Mon	6:00pm	Worship Team Meeting
Oct 26	Tues	10:00am-12:30pm	Food/Water Distribution
		3:00pm	CDC Board Meeting
Oct 27	Wed	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
Oct 28	Thu		
Oct 29	Fri		
Oct 30	Sat	12Noon	Food Not Bombs
Oct 31	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.)

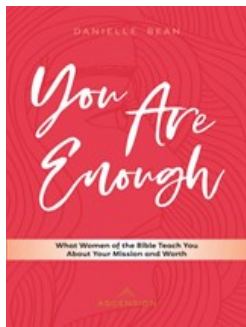
Asbury Worship Series Better Together



Licensed Image...AdobeStock_122125194

Book Club News

We're concluding our discussions of Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *Holy Envy*, so we're ready to jump into our next topic. Barbara is clearly a stand-out among women of her generation. A priest, professor, and frequent speaker, her words and stories continue to inspire us.



Over the past year, we've experienced the election of our first woman Vice President. The election of Kamala Harris places her both in the history books and in the spotlight. Kamala was one of six women who sought nomination as President. A 2019 survey conducted by LeanIn.org found that 53% of registered voters were either "very ready" or "extremely ready" for a woman president.

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

You can't make this stuff up. And you don't have to because it's right there in print. Turn to the book of Judith, and you'll find an intriguing story of sacrifice, deceit, and bravery by a woman willing to risk her life to save her country. A woman with her own book, Judith was a faithful, wealthy widow. When her country is threatened by the Assyrian army, and the people are ready to surrender, Judith

hatches a plan, confident that God will protect her from harm.

But I don't want to spoil the ending.

Better together is a 2-part worship series based on women found in the Old Testament. Much of the content for this series comes from the book,

Page 5

For our new series, *Better together*, our life group chose a book by a lesser-known yet influential female writer named Danielle Bean.¹ She is the brand manager for CatholicMom.com and former publisher and editor-in-chief of Catholic Digest. Danielle is also the creator and host of a weekly Catholic women's television talk show called *The Gist*. In addition, she has published several books, is a popular public speaker, and hosts her own podcast.

From the back cover of *You are Enough*, we read that Danielle Bean's book is an "invitation from God for belonging and love." Each of us is unique, worthy of love, and called to greatness. But in a divisive world, we get distracted from that truth and begin to doubt God's love is real.

Sadly, too many of us, particularly women, are told that we are not smart enough, pretty enough, sexy enough, or thin enough. So it is no wonder that so many forget that we are already made perfect. We are already enough. And God has made each of us for a unique purpose.

In her book, Danielle Bean introduces us to several women found in the Old Testament. She invites us to see how God's love for each of us shines forth through their stories. She invites us to connect with these remarkable women's hopes, dreams, struggles, and experiences. And to learn how their lives offer valuable lessons for our lives today.

Recent increases in new infections of COVID among the unvaccinated are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated. Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking.

We strongly urge all persons to get vaccinated as soon as practical unless advised by your doctor. Avoid news sources that promote baseless claims and pay closer attention to the experts we depend on to keep us safe.

We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. However, we look forward to returning to pot-luck lunches when infection rates fall. We anticipate this happening as the number of vaccinations reaches herd immunity levels, and the CDC relaxes precautionary measures.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away I encourage you to [join us online](#) for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others say by calling (929) 436-2866 -- enter 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

¹ [Danielle Bean](#). *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and*



Better Together ... Asbury Worship Series

You are Enough, a book about many of the women found in the Old Testament.¹

Our worship team is inviting you to share your favorite women of the Old Testament. Perhaps you identify with a particular story or character. Why? What fits? What doesn't fit? Send a selfie video to ArtsCenter@FlintAsbury.org so we can share your story with others.

Check out Rahab, Abigail, Bathsheba, Tamar, Judith, Delilah, Sarah, Hannah, the un-named Widow helped by Elijah, the Shunammite Woman, Miriam the Princess, Rachael and Leah, Ruth and Naomi, and of course, Eve. Which of these stories intersect with your story?

Man, woman, non-binary, or any combination, you're invited to participate in our series. Share what you admire about one or more of these women. In what ways do they remind you of a particular person in your life? What do you have in common?

Our Book Club plans to follow along in Danielle's book during our series if you want deeper discussions on our weekly themes. We have a few books available, or you can check with the library or order your own copy from several sources.

The latest variants of COVID are more contagious. As a result, there is a resurgence of new infections among the unvaccinated. 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 our [YouTube channel](#). 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.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Danielle Bean. *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and Worth*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Publishing,

Hope-filled (God gives us hope¹)... *cont. from pg 1*

shares a story about a time in her life when she was pregnant with their 4th child, and feeling like normal for her seemed elusive. For Danielle, normal meant more reliable and convenient transportation. All she wanted was a minivan to replace their aging and not-so-reliable station wagon. Don't normal families have a minivan? ¹

So Danielle did what many of us do when we want something we don't have but see little chance of our wish come true. We pray.

Admitting that her prayer was more edgy than usual and definitely more bratty, Danielle took her petition to God. All the while realizing that a minivan, given their constrained budget, would be impossible. She was asking for a divine miracle of convenience, realizing that God indeed saw through her petty whining and complaining. After all, did not Jesus once say something about not worrying about trivial things like food and clothes?

To be more precise, Jesus said something along the lines of "Do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings" (Matthew 6:34). And elsewhere, Jesus encourages us to ask for the things our heart desires. I'm not so sure that there is a right or wrong when it comes to our wants, although admittedly,

my longing for an F250 that is not rusted out may be affecting my judgment.

Our superwoman story for this week is about a woman who wanted what Danielle already had in abundance. Hannah wanted children, and she also took her request to God. In fact, when the Priest Eli confronts Hannah at the Temple, he thinks she might have come to church a bit high.

Hannah assures the priest that she was simply distressed over her situation and says to Eli, "I have been praying, pouring out my troubles to the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:15).

Hannah's situation was worsened by the constant torment of an adversary that flaunted her children in front of Hannah. And also took every advantage to build herself up by tearing Hannah down. So, admittedly, instead of feeling happy that God blessed Peninnah with children, Hannah was jealous.

I have been praying,
pouring out my troubles to
the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:15

"How often do we feel belittled by the blessings God gives to others, but not to us?" Danielle writes. So Danielle realizes as her husband reminds her that normal is not about owning a minivan. But even if there are more important things than minivans, Danielle's hope was motivated by more than jealousy.

Hannah does what a lot of us do when confronted with need. She bargains with God. Hannah's prayer concludes with, "Give me a son, and I will give him completely, unreservedly to you. I will set him apart for a life of holy discipline" (1 Samuel 1:11 MSG).

An article I found on HopeGrows.net offers that "To have hope is to want an outcome that makes your life better in some way." The article adds that hope is different from optimism because everyone hopes for something, including the most pessimistic among us. ²

Hope is more than optimism because hope also motivates us to anticipate our hopes coming true. Hope makes it more likely that the steps needed to realize our hope takes place. We meet

Judith hatched a plan. Was her plan also God's plan? I'm guessing she wasn't totally sure that God was behind her plan. But I'm convinced that Judith believed that whatever way it went, God was with her. And she was willing to accept whatever resulted. So despite every reason to doubt, Judith thought that God would not stand by and all Judah be destroyed.

Danielle Brown writes in *You are Enough* that "Judith understands that God's ways are different from [human] man's ways, and she trusts that God will save her people from their enemies." But if this is true then what can Judith do to help?

Judith was a natural at leading worship but likely never realized this particular superpower in herself. I suspect that until she stood in front of her neighbors that day, Judith didn't know what words would come out of her mouth. She may have made some notes ahead of time. Perhaps the girl had an outline. She may have even practiced her speech. We simply don't know. What we do know is that the people worshiped with her and that "all the people said amen."

I won't spoil the plot. Instead, I encourage you to read Judith on your own. Allow yourself to become an insider in the story. Imagine yourself as Judith. What superpowers does she have that you feel like your missing? What superpowers do you have instead?

Plan to join us this month for Part one of our new series, Better together. We plan to hear from several women in the Old Testament and their contemporary versions we can actually see and hear from between now and Thanksgiving. Bring a friend with you.

O my God...You have planned it all-what is happening now, and what is yet to be. Your plans have always been carried out...All the people replied Amen, Amen!

Judith 9:4-5, 13-20

You can join us each Sunday online by going to the 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 our [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 connect@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 Much of the content of this series is based on the book: Danielle Bean. *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and Worth*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Publishing, 2018.

² Kids Count Data Center, © Annie C. Case Foundation, 2021.

³ Tamara Mason. "7Critical Skills Single Parents Need To Master (Plus 2 You Can Totally Skip)," © YourTango, April 02, 2019.

Life groups questions & notes:

I am desperate, and I have been praying, pouring out my troubles to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:15 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read 1 Samuel 1. What was Hannah hoping for? Why? What steps did she take to make it possible for her hopes to be realized? What were the results? In what ways can you identify with Hannah?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Hope-filled*. What are you hoping for? Do you anticipate that your hopes will be realized? Why? What is your role in fulfilling your hopes? What is God's role? Are you hope-filled?
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.

“Feed Flint”



“Feed Flint”

Page 10



A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.

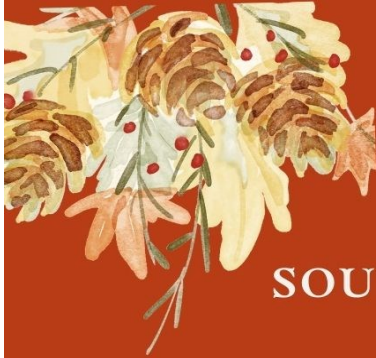
We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

**Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:
flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate**



SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
PRESENTS....

*November Angel
Closet & Food
Giveaway Dates*

Food Giveaways - 11/3/21 & 11/24/21
11am-noon

Angel Closet - 11/10/21 & 11/17/21
APPOINTMENT ONLY, email or call
to book an appointment.

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427 or
email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com



South Flint Soup Kitchen
3410 Fenton Road
3 blocks north of Atherton
Flint, MI 48507





ASBURY FARM FRESH

- TRY OUR WEEKLY VEGGIE BOX FOR \$10.00 -

SIGN UP FOR A FREE ASBURY FARMS ACCOUNT TODAY

AND

Receive a \$15 credit on your account for your first purchase

CREATE YOUR OWN VEGGIE BOX

Select what goes in your box from each week's harvest. Get \$5 off your next order when you fill your box with \$15 of produce.

WANT US TO DECIDE FOR YOU?

Choose Veggie Box Subscription and we will fill your order with a variety of each week's harvest. Pay when you pick up your box. **A \$15 VALUE FOR \$10.**

*** CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN ***

God part of the way by taking the first step towards what we hope for, followed by another step, and so on.

Sometimes as we move towards that which we hoped for, our desires change. We discover new ideas or realize that what we hoped for is no longer what we want. When this happens, we gain the insight that God really does know what's best for us.

A study conducted by the American Psychology Association found that the majority of persons who succeeded later in life despite growing up in poverty had hope in common. This insight is summed up by Dr. Valerie Maholmes, who said that hope involves "planning and motivation and determination" to get what one hopes for. Dr. Judith Rich writes that "Hope is a match in a dark tunnel, a moment of light, just enough to reveal the path ahead and ultimately the way out."²

What do you hope for? Our church building sits in a neighborhood under siege by crime, violence, and poverty. Instead of minivans and trucks, our most profound hopes are for a transformed city. Unfortunately, like eradicating the COVID virus, seeing this hope come true requires cooperation. The hopeful truth is that together we can move our community from its present state of scarcity to abundance.

This has been my hope since coming to Flint over ten years ago. Admittedly, I'm an optimist, and I've learned that I tend to dream bigger than the facts support. But I also am blessed to see divine miracles happening every day. And I believe that God wants abundance for the people of Flint. But more of us have to want this for our community as well.

This past week Asbury received a "Key to the City" from Mayor Neeley along with ten other faith communities. I realize that the key that came sealed in a frame does not really open a locked door. It's just a symbol of gratitude for our efforts.

But what if the key is more than a symbol of gratitude? What if this key is also a sign of optimism from God? What if God recognizes that there is so much justifiable hopelessness in our midst that those of us who still hold onto hope, but find it slipping away, need a divine sign that God wants what we want?

While it may seem like the match we have is too wet to strike a flame, hope can find light in other places. And while the dark tunnel that contains us may seem endless, hope recognizes that there is always light to be found, even when we are not experiencing it at the time.

You can join us each Sunday online by going to the 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 our [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 connect@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 Much of the content of this series is based on the book: Danielle Bean. *You are Enough: What Women of the Bible Teach You about Your Mission and Worth*. West Chester, PA: Ascension Publishing, 2018.

² "Why Is Hope So Important?" © HopeGrows.net, 2021.