

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 2

January 2, 2022

Rhythms (Keeping Home¹)



By Christmas Eve, according to our series schedule, we found home. We found that place where we feel hope, peace, joy, and love. We found home, not in a physical space, but in our connection to Jesus Christ.

Christmas is over. Most of us ate far too many cookies and our favorite holiday treats. We

opened gifts, sang Carols, and enjoyed some time with others.

Now what? Our country is still divided. Millions refuse vaccinations and ignore health precautions offered to stop COVID. The atmosphere is still eroding, and the seas warming. Now that we've found home, how do we keep our home as a place of hope, peace, joy, and love? Will the daily onslaught of baseless conspiracy theories and self-centered claims eventually wear us out?

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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

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Temptations (Packing for the wilderness¹)



It's 2022 — a new year is underway. Have you committed to any resolutions this year? If not, I highly recommend it. Even if you don't keep them, there is therapy

committing to important ideas and moving in a direction that helps them come true. If you have committed to New Year resolutions, I hope you'll take those first steps.

During our December series, *Going home*, the topic of belonging emerged. Of course, we want to go home for Christmas because home is where we belong. But what if I told you that you need to pack for the wilderness to travel to a place of true belonging?

If belonging and wilderness sound like two different places to you, then our January series,

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Temptations (Packing for the wilderness¹)cont from page 1

Wilderness experience, will offer you some crucial insights into what it means to belong.

Admittedly, the wilderness is the go-to metaphor for places where the welcome sign seems more like an invitation for bad things to happen. Poems, scripture, songs, and artistic expressions of all genres use the idea of wilderness as that place where we are more apt to spend time alone.

The connection between wilderness experiences and belonging is a paradox. They fit more comfortably as opposites, and it seems absurd to put wilderness experience and belonging together. But paradoxes are those contradictions that prove to be true.

So if we are headed out into the wilderness, how do we pack? How do we prepare for our journey?

The wilderness experience recommended by Dr. Brené Brown does not require us to pack a suitcase. Carrying any extra baggage weighs us down, and this is the problem. We get to the wilderness by first shedding anything that changes who we are to the people around us.

We use the wilderness as a metaphor for this place of vulnerability. We choose to be authentic but it takes courage to avoid being inauthentic to fit in. "But I don't try to fit in," you respond, "I'm usually on the other side of most arguments."

According to Dr. Brown's research, finding value in fitting in and finding value in being different, defiant, or contrarian are two sides of the same coin. For the contrarian, being true to who God created us to be is likely to cause us to agree with others on issues that we thought we opposed. Likewise, those of us who show agreement to fit in may discover that we don't agree at all.

The wilderness is where we take a stand on who we are and what we believe even though we are likely to face criticism. And this is why we are tempted to avoid the wilderness altogether.

A story about Jesus found in all three synoptic gospels about a time of temptation in the wilderness. This story is filled with symbolism and wisdom. So much so that a myriad of interpretations are offered even by the same person. Our discussion of belonging clamors for yet another angle.

As our story begins, Jesus leaves from His baptism into the wilderness. All three accounts tell us that God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. This was a journey with a divine purpose. I believe that we are led into the wilderness at critical times for a divine purpose. And this includes our need to live out the identity and purpose God gives to each of us.

The temptation of Jesus began with an appeal to His physical vulnerabilities. Jesus was hungry and was tempted to address His hunger with the most immediate resources available. Similarly, fitting in feels like a pang of physical desire, even more than our craving for our favorite treat.

When we fulfill our need to belong by adapting to whatever role and belief offer acceptance, we open ourselves to attaching our allegiance to whatever helps us feel better about ourselves. This leads us to shift our priorities to fitting in rather than keeping God as our first love and focus. This was the 2nd temptation of Jesus.

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

THANK YOU FOR ALL THE WONDERFUL CARDS AND GIFTS I HAVE RECEIVED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

I WANT TO WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES A GREAT CHRISTMAS AND A VERY WONDERFUL, SAFE NEW YEAR!

AND WE PRAY THAT 2022 WILL BE A MUCH BETTER, SAFE YEAR FOR US ALL!

MERRY CHRISTMAS
 FELIZ NAVIDAD!!



CONNIE



- Jan 3 Mon
- Jan 4 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food/Water Distribution
- Jan 5 Wed 11am-12N Food Giveaway at
 South Flint Soup Kitchen (No Appt needed)
 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Jan 6 Thu 1:00pm United Methodist Women
 (will meet in the Asbury Library)
- Jan 7 Fri
- Jan 8 Sat 12Noon Food Bombs
- Jan 9 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 Wilderness Experience



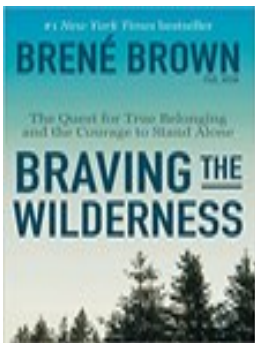
Cyndi and I enjoy watching reality shows that feature individuals living in the Alaskan wilderness. Neither of us have a desire to live alone in the woods. Rather, we're fascinated by the creativity and grit that these rugged individuals discover within themselves to survive. And even more so by the few that seem

to thrive in the midst of so many obstacles.

A common theme heard among the Alaskan pioneers is a sense of belonging to the vast untamed and unforgiving wilderness. They share common bonds with the other creatures living

Book Club News

Our theme for December was *Going home*. This theme led us into weekly conversations about home as we wrestled with what home means for each of us. In addition, we celebrated the Season of Advent by studying the ancient prophecies that promised the coming of the Messiah.



ness as a paradox. In scripture, the wilderness is thought of as a place of solitude and dangerous temptation. But the untamed wilderness is where we travel to find true belonging according to our author.

The write-up found on Amazon has this to say about our next book:

Social scientist Brené Brown, Ph.D., MSW, has sparked a global conversation about the experiences that bring meaning to our lives—experiences of courage, vulnerability, love, belonging, shame, and empathy. In *Braving the Wilderness*, Brown redefines what it means to truly belong in an age of increased polarization. With her trademark mix of research, storytelling, and honesty, Brown will again change the cultural conversation while mapping a clear path to true belonging.

In her book, Brené Brown describes a spiritual crisis of disconnection that she believes is pervasive in society. And she offers recommendations for how to experience true belonging that challenges what we think about ourselves and each other. She encourages us to venture out of our ideological bunkers and show up as our true selves. Dr. Brown challenges us to brave the wilderness of uncertainty and criticism.

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.

Increases in new infections and yet another variety of COVID pushed us back into isolation. While the latest surge is described as a pandemic of the unvaccinated, breakthrough infections are rising, putting us all at risk.

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

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.

We kick off the New Year with a topic most associate with home. In our next series, *Wilderness experience*, our theme is belonging.

Our book for this series is *Braving the Wilderness*. In her best-selling book, Dr. Brené Brown offers the metaphor of wilder-

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

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



Wilderness Experience... Asbury Worship Series

around them, even those they hunt for food. All belong to a natural order that is much larger and beyond their grasp.

There are unseen dangers and yet to be discovered delights in the wilderness waiting for the brave ones willing to take the risk to venture into its uncertainty.

Our new series, *Wilderness experience*, explores the risks and rewards of braving the uncertain. And in exploring the uncertain we tackle the thorny question of “Do I belong?”

Brené Brown asserts that “belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.” Based on her research into one of life’s most intimate questions Braving the Wilderness calls each of us to reclaim who we are by letting go of who we are not. ¹

But discovering who we are is only the beginning. Being who God created us to be is easily confused with fitting into a particular expectation. If we confuse fitting in with belonging we’re disappointed and lacking. It’s exhausting to be whatever persona others choose for us.

I wonder if choosing to be alone in the wilderness of Alaska takes less effort than fitting into a community as an imposter. On the other hand, in being who God created us to be may mean taking a stand where no one else is visible. We may find ourselves standing alone.

But what if this is true belonging?

Our series consists of five episodes that roughly maps to Dr. Brown’s book. There are extra copies of her book in the Arts Center. Alternatively, her book can be found at libraries, bookstores or purchased online.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly episodes 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 Brené Brown. *Braving the Wilderness — The Quest for True Belonging and the Quest to Stand Alone*. New York: Random House, 2019.

Rhythms (Keeping Home¹).... cont. from pg 1

We can go the power route. We can use the name of Christ to influence voters, support candidates friendly to the church, and siege the centers of government by force. But this option comes with a prophetic warning. This approach didn't work before, and it won't work now.

I find it amazing how a love story becomes a power trip. The story of God living among us didn't start with shock and awe. Instead, the story begins with a helpless, lovable baby born in humble surroundings to a couple begging for shelter. Instead, God's presence began with tenderness amid a violent, oppressive world.

Of course, the baby grows from infant to child to adult. But, isn't it amazing that there is no evidence that Jesus was taught to defend himself with weapons or that the early bird gets the worm while the last loses out? Instead, when we listen to the wisdom of what Jesus said, we hear the opposite.

In a reflection, D. L. Mayfield writes that "Jesus did not stay the meek and mild baby in a manger that we often see this time of year. But as he grew up, he still embodied the hallmarks of the kingdom of God, which included subverting the norms of power and influence and religiously inspired hierarchies."

And this didn't go over well with those who chose power over meekness. Nor those who chose self-centeredness over sharing and hate over love. Don't you wonder why God didn't just eliminate the resistance to His divine plan and force everyone to do whatever He said?

Instead, Mayfield notes, "Jesus brought a peace which ended up getting him killed. It's a sobering thought today, as it was for those in the early church." This is indeed a sobering thought, but also a valuable insight into God's expectation for His church.²

So far, choosing the same weapons that Jesus opposed isn't working. Instead, people are leaving churches at record numbers. Neither does a mandate for church attendance work. Nor does

insisting on persons following any particular doctrine.

What works is for others to see hope, peace, joy, and love lived out in what we do daily.

In a letter to the church in Colossia, we find a list of virtues that Jesus embodied and taught followers to aspire to practice in our life together. The list is long enough to lose our attention and feel exhausting. But, on the other hand, these virtues collectively describe various attributes that create a place where hope, peace, joy, and love are found.

The list begins with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Removing any of the virtues in this list infringes on our quest to find home. Add tolerance and forgiveness to assure ongoing peace.

The pathway to home is not found in a checklist, however. Instead, like all journeys, finding our way home involves movement from where we are towards our destination. Soon we achieve a rhythm with each step followed by another step. But our focus is never on the process of walking.

Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else.

Colossians 3:13

As our focus turns outward towards the world around us, we're more apt to see the vast richness surrounding us. Neighbors who still believe that home is some physical place that takes constant renovation, new furniture, and everything in its place. And others who gave up on ever finding hope, peace, joy, and love.

The days get too short during the middle of winter and the cold winds can create a shiver that's difficult to ignore.

Yet, peak inside one of the Asbury Farms hoop houses and you will see hope in beautiful spinach thriving.

The nightly news is full of evidence that hope is fragile and peace is elusive. The stories that warm our hearts get lost in the headlines of bad news. However, stop by the South Flint Soup Kitchen around lunch time and you see a different story. A similar scene plays out every Tuesday at the Asbury Community Help Center.

Standing in lines for a little help are our neighbors. Some know the same home that we know. But most are still looking and waiting for a credible invitation.

Living as Christ taught has a certain rhythm to it. We take home on the road. Spreading hope, peace, joy, and love everywhere we go. These aren't found by exerting power over others. Home is a lived expression of God's hope, peace, joy, and love in us.

I'm glad you're home. Now let's get to work. We're expecting company.

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 Katelin Maylum, Tommy McDoniel, and Terrance Williams. "Home for Christmas." Flint, Michigan. © Asbury Church, 2021.

² D L Mayfield. "Waiting for a Different Kind of King." *The Upper Room Disciplines 2021: A Book of Daily Devotion*.

Saving the more subtle temptation for last, Jesus' recognition of His own value is tested. If you are precious to God, God will surely save you even from the most foolish mistakes. So what's the hurt in going along even when the crowd heads in a direction you know is wrong for you? Jesus knew His value to God, and He also knows your value.

When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity come.

Luke 4:13

None of us need to increase our value to God to earn God's love. We are each a beloved child of God who loves us and wants us to find belonging. But our journey to belonging begins with being exactly that person God intended us to be.

The wilderness is any place where we're tempted to fit in, but we choose to take a stand to be who we are instead.

Welcome to the Wilderness experience. I'm glad you're going with us. Be sure not to pack anything, however. We'll be going entirely as ourselves without anything extra.

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Life groups questions & notes:

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where he was tempted by the devil for forty days.

Luke 4:1-13 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read the book of Luke 4:1-13. Were you already familiar with the story of Jesus' temptation before reading it this time? If so, did you discover anything new or other interpretations? What are some of your temptations that you're trying to avoid? How can or has God's Spirit helped you avoid temptations?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, Temptations. Do you ever find yourself trying to fit in? If so, how do you feel afterwards? Can you identify with Brené Brown's argument that fitting in takes a lot of energy? What keeps you from being yourself? Are you willing to spend time in the wilderness in order to be your authentic self?
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”

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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 January Giveaways

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

May this year bring new happiness...

Angel Closet Dates (Appointment only):

January 19th & 26th

11am-noon

MASK REQUIRED REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS.

If you

don't have one, one will be provided for you.

Food Giveaways (NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED):

January 5th & 12th

11am-noon

Call 810-239-3427 to make an Angel Closet appointment or for questions!

South Flint Soup Kitchen

3410 Fenton Road

Flint, MI 48507



This institution is an equal opportunity provider



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 ***



\$1 Raffle
with proceeds going to
Asbury Help Center!!!

ASBURY CHURCH

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Friday, January 21, 2022

7:00pm - 10:00pm

Doors Open at 6:30pm

RSVP Required!!

Email to: Katelin@FlintAsbury.org

Located at 1653 Davison Road, Flint

Any questions??? Call 810-239-3427 and
ask for Katelin