

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 6

February 6, 2022

Courage (At home in the wilderness¹)



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What frightens you?

This past week, Christina Caron shared that she was afraid of driving in a *New York Times* article. As a result, she avoided driving for almost a decade until the pandemic motivated

her to face her fears. On the first day of driving school, Christina's instructor helped her put her anxiety into a helpful perspective when he told her that "The fear never leaves you."²

I'm usually a cautious driver myself. And while I wouldn't describe the anxiety I feel while driving as fear, I'm generally on high alert when I'm driving around the neighborhood. But my concern doesn't come from a fear of children darting from behind a parked

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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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Jesus Movement (Power in Weakness)



This past week I attended a tribute to a friend and colleague, the later Rev. Alonzo Vincent. Born in Chicago in the 1940s, Rev. Vincent experienced life as a prophetic voice commissioned by God and

as a black man. Speaker after speaker shared stories of admiration for my friend's character. Words like humility, hardworking, wise, caring, and love appeared in every testimony.

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Jesus Movement (Power in Weakness)cont from page 1

while void of resentment. My friend spent a lifetime advocating for the equality of all persons by simply pointing to the life and way of Jesus.

Welcome to our celebration of Black History Month at Asbury Church. It is a great blessing to celebrate the contributions made by African-Americans to our mutual well-being. And to look forward to a time when we live into the vision so eloquently articulated by the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a famous speech. He said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Rev. King's dream was firmly based on the good news of the gospel that continues to be a work in progress hampered, in no small part, by persons also claiming to live the Way taught by Jesus.

Measha Ferguson-Smith, in an essay published by *The Stanford Freedom Project*, writes that "Countless Black preachers claimed that the Bible, especially the Gospels, called Christians to work for the betterment of African Americans. They preached that true Christianity demanded attention to and effort toward the liberation of oppressed peoples and the recognition of our innate equality in God's eyes, as beings created in his image."¹

Unique by comparison to the insurrection consisting of predominantly white protestors storming the U.S. Capital a year ago, the civil rights movement was predominately non-violent. An approach consistent with the character and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Brian Zahnd, in *Postcards from Babylon*, makes a startling claim that "God's power is weakness!" His book lays out a solid argument for his assertion, beginning with the crucifix, a traditional Christian symbol. In particular, Zahnd distinguishes between the Catholic crucifix, on which an image of Jesus is found, and the Protestant cross.²

The preference for an empty cross reveals more about us than it does about God. Winning is everything for enough of us that a symbol that reminds us that Jesus was arrested, tortured, and executed seems to dwell on the wrong thing. After all, Jesus was victorious in the end as God exerted divine power over death.

Our interpretation of this victory over death influenced our celebration of my friend's life after the sad news of his death. Our claim was that death is never the end. Instead, God invites us to live in a place that Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the Kingdom that Jesus Christ told His accusers that He presided over. At funerals we prefer to refer to this place as heaven.

However, the words from scripture that I shared at my friend's celebration, spoken by Jesus centuries before me, describe a Kingdom of the living. More precisely, a Kingdom for persons left out and left behind by the very systems that crucified Jesus for leading a revolution. His Way challenged the notion that life is all about winning by grabbing and holding onto whatever power it takes to win.

God anointed me to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.

Luke 4:18-19

Jesus said that He was anointed to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). However, the Way to accomplish such lofty goals was not through the power of might. But instead, through the humility of weakness.



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

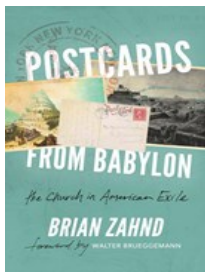
to thrive in the midst of so many obstacles.

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

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Book Club News

We finished our discussions of *Braving the Wilderness* by Dr. Brené Brown. So now we're ready for our February selection. The book that we're using as a key resource for our series, *the Way*, is sure to spark interesting, if not controversial, discussion. In his book, *Postcards from Babylon*, Brian Zahnd critiques the state of the church by the standard offered to us by Jesus Christ.¹



found in vowing allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth unleashed a shock wave that turned the Roman Empire upside down. Early Christianity was subversive and dangerous—dangerous for Christians and a threat to the keepers of the old order. Most of all Christianity was countercultural. But what about contemporary American Christianity? Is it the countercultural way of Jesus or merely a religious endorsement of Americanism? In his provocative book, *Postcards From Babylon*, Brian Zahnd challenges the reader to see and embrace a daring Jesus-centered Christianity that can again turn the world upside down.

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 and rumors 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.

¹ Brian Zahnd. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church In American Exile*. Spello Press, 2019.

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

The original gospel proclamation that the Lord of the nations was a crucified Galilean raised from the dead and that salvation was

In what ways are the *Build Back Better Plan* or *Make America Great Again* representative of *the Way* that Jesus lived and taught? In what ways do either of these two political slogans represent the antithesis of the Way? Let's talk about it.

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.

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.

Courage (At home in the wilderness¹).... cont. from pg 1

car into my pathway. Instead, it's other drivers who treat stop signs and red lights as suggestions.

But I don't ride my bike either. Instead, I simply look both ways and presume that a car coming toward the intersection may choose not to stop before speeding through the intersection. Like Christina, I treat my anxiety as a warning, but I still cross intersections on my way to my destination.

According to neuroscientist and author Wendy Suzuki, "The emotion of anxiety and the underlying physiological stress response evolved to protect us." Her conclusion comes from a theory known as Yerkes-Dodson validated that anxiety helps improve performance. However, there is a tipping point. As anxiety increases, so do the physical symptoms, including a faster heart rate, muscle tension, rapid breathing, sweating, and fatigue.²

However, attempts to simply refuse to acknowledge anxiety produces even more stress. Psychologist Seth Gillihan writes, "A lot of the distress that we feel with anxiety comes from the resistance to it." In other words, telling myself that "I need to stop feeling anxious" adds to my anxiety.²

Nevertheless, driving to the store shouldn't feel like a workout at the gym. But speaking of exercise, taking a walk helps reduce anxiety by increasing the level of serotonin and dopamine in our brain and reducing stress.

There are other benefits to accepting that anxiety is simply part of living. For one, "accepting anxiety can help you face your fears," argues Christina in her Forbes article.

Often, being the person God created takes courage. Much more courage than driving. Particularly if the critique of others feels like a personal attack. And when we choose to stand in opposition to popular choices, the spotlight reaches us, even in the wilderness. Therefore, engaging and managing our anxiety is essential in the wilderness.

A popular story is found in three of the gospels about a woman who forced her way through the crowds to get to Jesus. She believed that healing was certain if only she could get close enough to Jesus to touch His coat tail.

The woman suffered from a persistent medical condition for twelve years. Then, apparently, she heard the stories about this traveling Rabbi who miraculously healed people. But the popularity of Jesus created obstacles for access.

When we look close enough, this story about an unnamed woman contains bits and pieces of our own story. We all have persistent obstacles in our lives that hold us back from being the person God created us to be. Sometimes our obstacles come in the form of addictions. Other times we lose a job, or a person we depend on lets us down.

But we must be living under a rock if we haven't heard stories about Jesus and miraculous healing. Sure, some of the stories may be a little over the top or come from less than reliable sources. Yet, there is something during luring about His reputation that piques our interest. Just as it has for generations.

Luke's telling offers a few more details. For example, we read that the people were crowding Jesus from every side. And that the woman's medical bills took every penny she had. But there's another detail from Luke that's important.

We read that after the woman touched the edge of His coat, Jesus stopped and asked, "Who touched me?" Everyone denied it, of course. And Peter, who may have rolled his eyes, spoke up. And he reminded Jesus that, of course, someone touched Him given the size of the crowd. But Jesus persisted in His search.

Of course, the woman knew that it was she who pushed through the crowd behind Jesus until she caught up with Him, reached out, and grabbed a hunk of His coat tail.

Luke writes that when the woman realized that she had been found out, she came up to Jesus trembling and threw herself at His feet. And then, in front of everybody, she told Jesus why she had touched him. And how she had been healed at once.

Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well.

Matthew 9:22

What happens next is where I prefer Matthew's telling of the story. Matthew writes that after the woman's confession and public show of humiliation, Jesus tells her to have courage.

In his book, Zahnd discloses pieces of his own journey as an anointed prophet. He was heavily influenced, he writes, by the Jesus Movement, which barely lasted a decade, according to Wikipedia. It was a movement organized by young Christians inspired by their interpretation of the good news symbolized by the cross and following the Ways and teachings of Jesus.²

When the Apostle Paul appeared before the governor of the Judean Province, he admitted to being part of a group of misfits referred to as "The Way." The Way referred to faithful followers of Jesus. The Way was a countercultural approach to living. Rather than allegiance to Rome and its leadership, the followers of The Way were loyal to Jesus, who they believed was the only true Son of God.

Jesus was executed because he was found guilty of crimes against Rome. However, Jesus was not the leader of a violent revolution against those in power. And His only defense was that His Kingdom was nothing like the ways of this world. Instead, in the Kingdom of God, all persons are equally loved, and none are left behind or left out. And true power is found in weakness rather than domination.

We begin our new series, *the Way*, this Sunday. I hope you will join us as we celebrate Black History month by examining our role as followers of Christ in a world plagued by privilege and idolatry.

I invite you to worship with us on any given Sunday. We gather in the Asbury Arts Center in person and online on YouTube and Facebook. Video replays are available to watch later.

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 our [YouTube channel](#). You can find 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 Measha Ferguson-Smith. "A Christian Movement: Civil Rights in America." © The Stanford Freedom Project, 2015.

² Brian Zahnd. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church In American Exile*. Spello

Life groups questions & notes:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Luke 4:18-19. Jesus read these words from Isaiah and then declared that this prophecy was fulfilled. What does this mean to you? What does this mean for you? Are you represented in the list of benefactors? Why or why not?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Jesus movement*. Are you old enough to remember the Jesus Movement — it started in the late 1960s and ended in the late 1970s. Either way, are you familiar with this movement? Tell the others your understanding of what the movement was about. Discuss comparisons between the Way, lived and taught by Jesus, and the civil rights movement. What are some of the similarities? What obstacles prevent us from living the Way?
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.

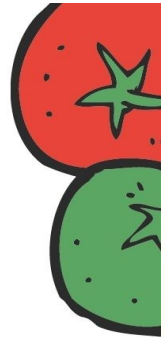
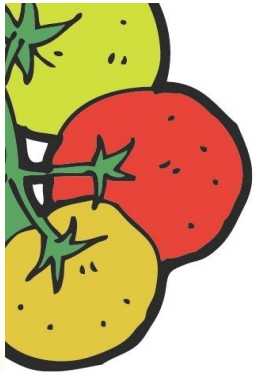
We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need 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
PRESENTS

FEBRUARY FOOD GIVEAWAYS & ANGEL CLOSET DATES

3410 Fenton Road (three blocks north of Atherton
Road)

Flint, MI 48507

Call 810-239-3427 for appointments/questions or
email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

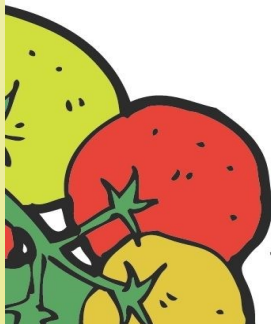
Food Giveaways: NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY!

Feb. 2nd and 16th, 11am-noon

Angel Closet: APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

Feb. 9th & 23rd, 10:30am-noon

MASK REQUIRED FOR ENTRY, ONE CLIENT AT A TIME
IN THE ANGEL CLOSET





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 ***

FREE!
FAMILY FRIENDLY!
\$1 RAFFLE FOR ASBURY
CDC!

Asbury Church February Open Mic

1653 Davison Road
Flint, MI 48506

02.25.2022

Show 7pm

Doors open

at 6:30pm

ALL ARE

WELCOME!!

Questions??? Call Katelin at 810-239-3427 or
email katelin@flintasbury.org

In all three accounts, we learn that the woman's belief that Jesus had the power to heal her was sufficient for her to get what she needed. But it took courage to do what she did, although not as much courage as it takes for her to live differently as a result.

After encountering the living Lord, the woman moves from the comfort of knowing that her condition kept her back. With her obstacles out of the way, she moved into her wilderness home of knowing the truth about Jesus.

This knowledge changes everything for her. Including a realization that she can't possibly keep what happened to herself. Her friends, family, and strangers will notice. For one, focusing on her own suffering is no longer necessary.

And while her meeting Jesus took care of an immediate problem, there are always more challenges. But now she knows where to look first for the solution. For she learned that day who she is in the eyes of God.

And so you and I are likewise faced with a choice. Do we spend everything we have searching for quick fixes and promises that never live up to our expectations? Or do we muster the courage to go to where we belong?

There is room at the feet of Jesus for everyone looking to confess. Everyone willing to say, "I am the one who reached out for You, Lord. I am the one who found healing when I finally felt Your touch. I need the courage to carry Your message in my heart, on my lips, and in what I do."

This week, will you push through the crowded circumstances that keep you from knowing that Jesus is the One who holds the keys to releasing you from your suffering? Will you reach out for Him with the confidence or even the desperation of knowing that nothing else is working?

There will always be new challenges and more struggles. But you never need to face them alone.

This week is the final episode of our series, *Wilderness experience*. As we end our series, we discover that the wild heart we developed by being who God created us to be, has changed our perspective. In other words, metaphorically, we realize that we belong to the wilderness.

This week we don't transition out of the wilderness. Instead, we take a new path that takes us further into the wilderness. We've discovered a new home in the wilderness, and we follow a path that brings us to the New Jerusalem. This path was called *the Way* by those first pilgrims.

We follow Jesus into the wilderness by sticking close to *the Way*. But this takes courage.

I'm grateful that you chose to join us on our *Wilderness experience*, and I pray that you're starting to feel at home. Feeling at home in the wilderness is crucial because we're not ready to leave here just yet. More work is to be done as we live *the Way* that Jesus teaches us to live.

Our new series, *the Way*, begins February 4. I hope you will join us as we celebrate Black History month by examining our role as followers of Christ in a world plagued by privilege and idolatry.

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Pastor Tommy

¹Brené Brown. *Braving the Wilderness — The Quest for True Belonging and the Quest to Stand Alone*. New York: Random House, 2019.

²Christina Caron. "The Upside of Anxiety." © New York Times, Jan. 24, 2022.