

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 19

June 19, 2022

## Hot Mess (Jesus wept)



Are you a positive person? For me, my attitude varies with the day. For example, one morning this week, I received a text from our farm manager Matt. He wanted to let me know about

the latest theft and vandalism incident on our farm the night before. These acts of violence feel very personal.

Since I receive similar texts on average, one per week, I'm somewhat numb to the news of violence in our neighborhood. I'm trying to remain positive while my stomach flip-flops and my anger simmers. Do we prevail by wearing our attackers

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## My Bad (Your worse critic)



Last week I wrote about the importance of giving negative emotions enough space. Positivity, in this case, is highly overrated and can be toxic. But this week, I'm back on the positivity train again. That's because this week, we're not talking about something bad happening to us. Instead, this week we're focused on "My

bad" — when we do something bad.

We can often be our worst and least helpful critics.

Margarita Tartakovsky, in an article published by psychcentral.com, notes that we all have an internal critic. It's just that some inner critics are more subtle, and others are downright cruel. And our internal critics weigh in on most of our decisions.

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You may continue to wear your masks when in the building, if you feel more comfortable, but is not necessary.

**DONATE**

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According to Alyssa Mairanz, a psychotherapist based in New York City, "Those who develop harsh inner critics are raised in an environment where they are being directly or indirectly told negative things about themselves."

And inner critics can subconsciously disguise the source in a way that we operate as though their criticism is a given. This can lead to sabotaging our happiness in the choices we make, according to Mairanz, including who we choose as friends and partners.

Brené Brown differentiates between calling out bad behavior, which she calls guilt and an internal critic that claims that we are irreparably flawed. With shame, "My bad" presumes that bad behavior results from a bad individual incapable of doing good things.

Dr. Brown writes this about shame: "I define shame as the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging—something we've experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection."

Shame is neither productive nor consistent with Christian beliefs. Shame illustrates where we fail ourselves rather than an indication of factual evidence.

"Healthy guilt," on the other hand, writes Aundi Kolber in *Try Softer*, "allows us to recognize that we are loved and valuable even though we are imperfect." Love is the key. "No matter how hard we try, we can't hate or shame ourselves into change. Only love can move us toward true growth."

What does it look like to try softer with our internal critic? Recognizing that we're loved despite our imperfections is one way that we show compassion towards ourselves.

I have compassion for these people.  
Matthew 15:32

Jesus modeled compassion for us in his reaction to suffering. For example, we find a story in Matthew's gospel where a large crowd has been with Jesus for three days. Jesus recognized that they were hungry, and there was no place nearby to get food. We read that Jesus had compassion for the hungry crowds.

The origin of the Greek word translated as compassion describes a feeling one has in the pit of our stomach that takes us from a feeling to action. The original text uses a

verb to describe Jesus' reaction to the crowd. It wasn't enough to feel bad for the people. Compassion includes Jesus taking action to relieve their suffering.

In the same way, we show compassion towards ourselves when we recognize our suffering and take action that brings relief. In applying compassion towards ourselves as a way to deal with our inner critic, we first acknowledge that the message that we're flawed in some unrepairable way is a lie. While it's true that we make mistakes, sometimes repeatedly, our mistakes represent something we did wrong. Our mistakes do not define who we are.

One of my favorite songs by Christian vocalist and songwriter Lauren Daigle is *You Say*. Apparently, I'm not alone since she won a Grammy, among other music awards and recognition. While a Christian song, I often heard *You Say* playing among selections of secular songs. Her lyrics struck a chord with millions of us, with internal critics telling us that we're not enough and don't measure up.



In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom  
 Sylvia Pittman  
 Shirley Craig  
 Richard Oram  
 Chris Freeman

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston      Elaine Lamoreaux  
 Norma Buzzard      Mary Nations

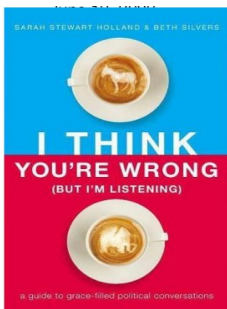


PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom, but we are also gathering in the Asbury Library Conference Room at 12Noon every Wednesday, unless otherwise noted.

Please call the Church Office for more information, as things could change (810-235-0016).

July's month book series is called, "I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening) by Audi Kolber.



Thank you and everyone continue to stay safe!

**COMING UP THIS WEEK**  
**JUNE 20 -26**

- June 20 Mon 6:00pm Leadership Team
- June 21 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm  
Food/Water Distribution
- June 22 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- June 23 Thu
- June 24 Fri
- June 25 Sat 10am-12Noon Angel Closet at  
South Flint Soup Kitchen (appts required 239-3427)
- 12Noon Food Not Bombs
- June 26 Sun 10:30am  
New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

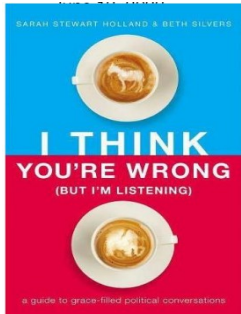
(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)



It's tempting to declare that we're beginning a new series on the first Sunday in July. It's tempting for many reasons, so why not just call our next several Sundays by a catchy title and announce a "new" topic? And I love new beginnings. Instead, welcome to Parts three and four of a series we began the Sunday after Easter called

Book Club News

On the Wednesday after Easter, we began a new adventure into the slow but rewarding process of self-discovery assisted by author and therapist Audi Kolber and her book *Try Softer*. In parallel to our worship series *Masterpiece*, our Book



Club went deeper into the process of self-discovery. Our journey, so far, is proving to be an exciting exploration of who we are behind our layers of protection.

We continue our exploration beginning in July, assisted by two friends with differing political views but somehow manage to stay good friends. How is this even possible in a world intentionally divided by political candidates into blue and red hats and t-shirts?

*I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening)*.

Whether you're a regular on Sunday mornings, only attend on an occasional holiday, or don't cross the threshold of a church building without coercion, there is something for everyone in this conversation.

Our book choice was written by two working moms from opposite ends of the political spectrum. And their hope is that we can learn that politics don't have to divide us. Instead, we can try to bring the same care and respect that we show at other times to discussions about policy.

Leadership in Worship & Service

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Tony, Mirium       | Welcome Team    |
| Anthony, Jim       | Ushers          |
| Jonathon, Terrance | Production Team |
| Miriam             | Children        |
| Cyndi              | Worship Leader  |
| Christine & Norma  | Cafe            |

Join us each Wednesday in July and find out as we read and discuss the book

Asbury Staff

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel | Pastor & Exec Dir        |
| Connie Portillo         | Office Manager           |
| Sylvia Pittman          | Empowerment Arts         |
| Jim Craig               | Board & Leadership Chair |

- |                   |                       |
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| 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       |



## *Asbury Worship Series* ...cont from pg 4

*Masterpiece.* The reason for not creating a more robust line of demarcation between then and now is that we're not finished.

Now that we've begun the work on ourselves that leads to better emotional and mental health, we deserve to feast on the benefits right away. Our rewards begin with taking our newly discovered truths about ourselves on the campaign trail. After all, it's summer, and COVID is finally becoming more of a bad memory than a current threat. In-person gatherings are returning so let's get together and debate the issues.

In parts three and four we continue exploring the masterpiece God is forming in us, assisted by two friends with differing political views but somehow manage to stay good friends. How is this even possible? After all, isn't the world intentionally divided into blue and red?

In our book club article, we learn that the book that parts two and three of our series is based on was written by two working moms from opposite ends of the political spectrum. And our hope is that we can learn that politics don't have to divide us. Instead, we can put what Jesus teaches us into practice in our debates about policy.

I promise that the next several weeks will be challenging. Even if for no one else other than your pastor. I'm a somewhat reluctant participant in this notion of finding agreement with the other side. I've spent most of my life competing in races for which there can be only one winner.

Nevertheless, I also long for a time when debate doesn't bring out the worst in people. So I'm all in for this next leg of our trip. And I hope you are as well.

We'll follow the outline of the book our series is based on. *I Think You're Wrong (but I'm Listening)* brings politics into the front door of the church. But not as a way to influence who you vote for. But, I hope you'll make sure you vote with the confidence that you know where you stand on the issues that matter most to you.

Our theme scripture for this next chapter comes out of John's Gospel. In chapter three we read the story of a Jewish leader named Nicodemus. The chapter begins by providing political context. Nicodemus belonged to the party of the Pharisees. And Jesus was more of an independent who understood both sides of the argument and loved even those with whom He disagreed.

Imagine that!

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](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

## Hot Mess (Jesus wept) ... cont. from pg 1

down from their inability to stop our progress despite increasingly damaging attacks?

Do we remain positive?

I began my prayer journal that morning with an often quoted and ignored text from Paul's letter to the church in Rome. Paul reminds us that struggle builds resilience which strengthens character. But, most important, hope is never in vain.

But did Paul have to deal with senseless vandalism from within the community he was trying to help? Did Paul spend more and more resources on security that could be better utilized in helping others?

Actually, Paul dealt with much worse. So was Paul all-wrong Mr. Positivity?

It's hard to be positive when life is a hot mess.

In an article published in the *Washington Post*, Allyson Chiu draws a startling conclusion. "Too much-forced positivity is not just unhelpful, they say — it's toxic." Who says that always being positive is toxic?

One source offered by Allyson is Natalie Dattilo, a clinical health psychologist with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Dattilo says we tend to undervalue

negative emotional experiences while overvaluing positive experiences. According to Dr. Dattilo, this tendency becomes toxic when we fall into the trap that "the best or only way to cope with a bad situation is to put a positive spin on it and not dwell on the negative."

Stephanie Preston, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, reminds us that toxic positivity is rooted in our culture. We value positivity as an attractive behavior in people. This may be caused by a belief that positivity makes us seem well adapted and more popular with the people around us.

But what about the persistent vandalism of our farm assets? Should we try to focus on the positive? Dr. Preston advises avoiding toxic positivity and concentrating on addressing the problem. Understandably, Matt is angry. And I'm not less of a pastor because I'm angry and feeling let down.

Jesus wept...

John 11:35

As a Christian, I try my best to model myself after Jesus, who didn't appear to hide His emotions. My favorite bible verse of all time and

the only verse I can consistently quote without forgetting parts, is also the shortest verse found in scripture. Jesus wept. For me, this verse is powerful because it reveals a very personal God who understands how it feels to be upset.

This verse comes from a story found in John's Gospel. In the story, the sisters of Lazarus are trying to cope with the loss of their brother. And although Jesus knew that the outcome would be joy and not sorrow, He allowed His emotions to bubble to the surface. Of course, we don't know whether Jesus was sad because of His friend's grief or upset because they projected some of their grief as anger towards Him. We do know that Jesus shed tears in the presence of witnesses.

Professor Brett Ford was the lead author of a study conducted at the University of Toronto that evaluated the effect of positivity on mental health in the face of adverse circumstances. Dr. Ford noted, "People who tend to not judge their feelings, not think about their emotions as good or bad, not try to avoid or put distance between themselves and their emotions, tend to have better mental health across the board."

"My bad" should be an admission of guilt where we take responsibility for a mistake. It is not an admission of character flaw.

Try this exercise for dealing with your harsh inner critic. First, think about someone you're connected with and feel empathy towards. Better yet, picture your younger self.

Pay attention to the source of the sensations you feel as you picture the younger you. Now imagine this younger version of you struggling with the same issues that cause you to worry that you don't measure up. What would you say to them? What advice would you give?

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](mailto: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](#).

Content for this series is based in part on? Aundi Kolber. *Try Softer: A Fresh Approach to Move Us out of Anxiety, Stress, and Survival Mode--and into a Life of Connection and Joy*. Carol Street, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020.

Margarita Tartakovsky. "What to Do with a Cruel Inner Critic." © psychcentral.com, May 20, 2016. Retrieved from: [link](#).

Brené Brown. "Shame vs. Guilt." © Brené Brown, January 15, 2013. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Life Group Questions & Notes:

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry

Matthew 15:32 (NIV)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the story of Jesus' compassion towards the hungry crowd in 15:32-39. What is the difference between feeling sorry for someone and showing compassion towards them? Why is the word translated as compassion a verb?
2. Read this week's article titled *My bad. Is this an expression that you use or have heard others use? What does this expression mean? Why is it unhealthy to use this expression as a description of yourself? What advice can you offer your younger self to deal with an internal critic?*
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](https://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)

South Flint Soup Kitchen  
presents...

# June Giveaways

Angel Closet - Saturday June 18th and 25th 10am-  
Noon, APPOINTMENT REQUIRED call 810-239-3427

Food Giveaways - Wednesday June 1st and 8th,  
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!!!

Located at 3410  
Fenton Road  
Flint, MI 48507

THRIFTING





**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 \***

Aundi Kolber, in *Trying Softer*, distinguishes between emotions, which refers to the sensations we feel in our bodies, and the labels we give various emotions, which she calls feelings. This subtle distinction is powerful because naming our emotions allows us to do something with them. Emotions that we consciously process are accessible to our rational brain.

Instead of burying our negative emotions, Aundi reminds us, "Emotions add texture to our lives. They are the feedback to our interactions. They are a response to our stories, physiology, and environments—those parts of our lives that make us who we are."

Peter Scazzero reminds us that to feel is to be human. And when we minimize or deny what we feel, we distort what it means to be created in the image of a very personal God. If we are unable or not allowed to express emotion, we impair our ability to love God, others, and ourselves.

I try to remember that whoever is vandalizing our farms is more damaged than the damage they're doing to us. And their cowardly actions represent the scum that sometimes accumulates around an otherwise delightful mix.

This is hardly positivity, I know. But at least I'm honest about my feelings.

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Allyson Chiu. "Time to ditch 'toxic positivity,' experts say: 'It's okay not to be okay'." © Washington Post, Aug 19, 2020. Retrieved from: [link](#).

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

Sarah Stewart Holland, along with Beth Silvers, cohosts *Pantsuit Politics* podcast, featured in the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, and named by Apple Podcasts as one of the Best Shows of 2021. Sarah and Beth speak frequently to universities, businesses, and civic organizations about improving political dialogue. Both attended Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

Sarah Stewart Holland received her Juris Doctors from American University. She began her career as a congressional staffer, campaign aide, and blogger and social media consultant. She lives in Paducah, Kentucky, where she served a term as a city commissioner and volunteers as a Court-Appointed Special Advocate for children. Beth Silvers received her Juris Doctors from the University of Kentucky. She lives in Union, Kentucky, and serves on several local boards of directors.

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, delighted when new people 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](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

*Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth A. Silvers. I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening): A Guide to Grace-Filled Political Conversations. Nashville: Nelson Books, 2019.*

Aundi Kolber. *Try Softer: A Fresh Approach to Move Us out of Anxiety, Stress, and Survival Mode--and into a Life of Connection and Joy.* Carol Street, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020.

**Providing a HOT MEAL and/or local, organic  
PRODUCE weekly.**

**SATURDAYS starting around 12NOON**

**Asbury United Methodist Church**

**1653 Davison Rd, Flint (810) 235-0016**

**Food Not Bombs** is a loose-knit group of independent collectives, sharing free vegan and vegetarian food with others. **Flint Food Not Bombs** believes that access of food among other necessities of life-should be viewed as a right, not a privilege. Yet in a nation with a military budget many times that of other nations, people continue to go hungry. This is immoral and unjust.

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION!**

**Facebook.com/flintfoodnotbombs**

**Twitter.com/flintfub**

**Email: flintfub@protonmail.com**

**Website: foodnotbombsflint.wordpress.com**

**We're currently looking for volunteers so we can expand. If interested,  
send us a message! Solidarity!**

**A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense  
than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.—MLK**

