ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 24

Timing (For every season)



We have a primary election coming up on August 2, and mail-in ballots must be in place before 8 PM on election day to be counted. In addition to nominations for candidates from each party, funding for MSU Extension appears on the ballot. Every election is essential, so be sure that your vote counts.

Why? (Healthy Care)



What is most important to you? Family? Good health? What values drive your everyday decisions to do the things you choose to do? Love? Fairness?

In other words, why do you do the things

Each week I choose a controversial subject area that is demanding our attention. My goal is to offer an illustration that illuminates the insights Sarah Stewart Holland, and Beth Silvers provided in their book I Think You're Wrong (But I'm Listening). This week, we're asked to consider putting politics and party affiliations into their proper time and place.

We're faced with easing our grip on the notion that government is both the cause and the solution to most of the problems we face. According to various surveys, Sarah and Beth point out that public confidence in other institutions, including education, the media, and even the church,

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that you do?

Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers write, "Our values are the rocks that should serve as our foundation—helping us weather all the controversy, change, and challenges of current events." Do you agree? If so, is this how you choose which candidates you vote for, or do you simply choose by affiliation to a political party?

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July 24, 2022



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



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Why? (Healthy Care)...cont from page 1

I know, it's complicated.
We're basically a two-party system regarding the vast majority of election outcomes. Even when there are more than two choices on the ballot. So sometimes we're faced with either compromising our values or voting for a split ticket.

Political parties are handy shortcuts to supporting the side that best represents our views. But isn't it crossing a moral line once we use a political party as a shortcut to exploring and living by the values we choose to uphold?

"Politicians shouldn't determine our positions and values,"
writes Sarah and Beth. Instead,
"our values should determine
the policies and politicians we
support." But instead, our choice
of political party becomes
"cheap imitations of core values," and we often "use them as
a shortcut for our own soulsearching and analysis."

Let's explore this assertion further.

As Christians, we claim that our values come from scripture. But do we sometimes follow political candidates that lead us onto a totally different path than we claim we want to be on?

"What should I do?" is a question that most of ask God from time to time. So when I finally realized that my life was way off track, the version I asked was, "What do You want from me?" And I got an answer I wasn't expecting.

One day Jesus was asked one of those edgy questions that cause politicians to redirect and answer with soundbites. But Jesus does the opposite. He first asks His interrogator their opinion.

In Luke's telling of this story, Jesus is approached by an expert in the law who hopes to trip Him up with a politically hot question. The question of God's favor is a tricky one. What must I do to ensure I'm pleasing God and can anticipate eternal blessing?

Jesus asks his interrogator how he interprets what it says in scripture about this question. And the man responds that we must "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind; and Love your neighbor as you love yourself." "That's right," Jesus replies, "Do this, and you will live."

What do the scriptures say? How do you interpret them?

Luke 10:26

Of course, it doesn't end there. A follow-up question that dives into how Jesus sees this mandate getting lived out in day-to-day life comes afterward. "Who is my neighbor?" the man asks. The answer Jesus gives

illustrates how our Christian values should inform our choice of candidates we support and how we vote on resolutions.

In this case, Jesus takes us on an adventure into everyday life to illustrate neighborly love with a story. A man is walking on a rather dangerous road. He could be any place where safe outcomes are uncertain. More importantly, the "road" is also a metaphor for the choices each of us makes. The specifics of the story are less important than the illustration.

The man is attacked, robbed, and left. Two different people see the man in distress and choose to ignore him. Fortunately, a third person goes to the aid of the person in need. "Which one was a neighbor to the person in need?" Jesus asks.

And, like the lawyer interrogating Jesus we have similar questions. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves? Who is our neighbor?

In this story, the person in distress and the person who helped were strangers with no apparent commonalities. Two walked away when they saw a person in need. Who gets your vote if these three persons were running for council in your ward?

Before you answer, assume that the person who helped is not affiliated with the political party you ordinarily support.

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom Sylvia Pittman Shirley Craiq Richard Oram Chris Freeman



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston

Elaine Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Mary Nations

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN NEWS

South Flint Soup Kitchen, a nonprofit that is dedicated to providing a meal to anyone in need, is one of the charities participating in A Community Thrives challenge, a program that supports community improvement ideas with grants up to \$100K. To qualify for a grant, South Flint Soup Kitchen needs to meet a fundraising goal from its own network of \$6,000. Help us raise awareness and funds to help Feed Flint by saving the date and making a donation online from July 18th through August 12th at mightycause.com/feedflint.

What: Give to South Flint Soup Kitchen to support their A Community Thrives Campaign.

When: July 18th through August 12th

Where:

Online at mightycause.com/feedflint

For more information: Like us on Facebook and Twitter. Help us get the word out about this campaign. Tell your friends! Forward this email ...

We are grateful for your continued support.

Katelin Maylum, Senior Program Manager

South Flint Soup Kitchen

(810) 239-3427



COMING UP THIS WEEK JULY 25 -JULY 31

July 25 Mon 6:00pm Worship Team Meeting

July 26 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm

Food/Water Distribution

3:00pm CDC Board Meeting

July 27 Wed 12 Noon Pastor Book Club

11am-12N Food Giveaway at

South Flint Soup Kitchen (No appts needed)

July 28 Thu

July 29 Fri

July 30 Sat 12 Noon Flint Food Not Bombs

July 31 Sun 10:30am

New Beginnings

Contemporary Worship

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

Asbury Worship Series "Masterpiece"



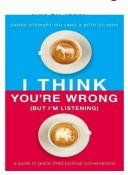
Book Club News

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

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On the Wednesday after Easter, we began a new



adventure into the slow but rewarding process of self-discovery assisted by author and therapist

Aundi 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?

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel 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 Supry Terrance Williams Arts Center Mgr Katelin Maylum Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

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

Asbury Worship Series - Masterpiece ...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*.

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.

Timing (For every season) cont. from pg 1

continues to decline. Which has led to our present political stalemates because politics is too often the sole source of our confidence, happiness, or self-worth.

Sarah and Beth argue, "We are in political paralysis because we've decided that every issue is existential." In other words, we've allowed candidates for public office to convince us that our very existence is threatened if we don't support their party's view on a particular issue. And few issues feel more like a personal threat to many U.S. voters than the subject of gun control.

I don't have the space or knowledge to offer a lot of detail on the 2nd Amendment that is so quickly referenced as forever protecting the right of U.S. citizens to own guns. The fact that the context of this Amendment to our constitution has changed and the possibility that court cases aside, we're stretching reality to the breaking point is mute.

If owning a gun is essential to you, it's understandable that it concerns you that our representatives could pass a law that restricts a fundamental right protected by the constitution. But, it is protected, isn't it?

Warren Burger became Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court after his nomination by Richard Nixon. His affiliation with the Republican Party and reputation as a conservative judge offered a stark contrast to the makeup of the Supreme Court at that time. This is what makes his legal opinion, titled "Second Amendment Does Not Guarantee the Right To Own a Gun," so interesting.

Justice Burger argued that the regulation of firearms in no way violates the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution because this Amendment is not about hunters owning guns or homeowners protecting their property. Instead, Burger argues that in the same way that operating and owning a vehicle is regulated, "It is even more desirable for the State to have reasonable regulations for the ownership and use of a firearm in an effort to stop mindless homicidal carnage."

But we're living during a time when Republican candidates for office flood the airwaves and internet with pictures of themselves holding guns. And when, regardless of their personal opinions, they recognize that their conservative base expects them to defend a right based as much on fiction as the U.S. Constitution. No wonder gun owners are worried.

Carl Hulse, the chief Washington correspondent for the New York Times, writes about Mike Durant. The latter sought nomination for the U.S. Senate in Alabama. Durant piloted a helicopter in the famous Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia. His opponent found a clip from a speech made 11 years ago at the Army War College. In his remarks, Durant suggested that the civil war in Somalia would be helped by disarming the population.

An attack ad airing the clip claimed, "Mike Durant — dangerously wrong on guns." It doesn't matter that his remarks were taken out of context. But the damage was done. And many believe that this cost Durant his bid to run for the Senate as a Republican Candidate.

Meanwhile, by some counts, 90% of U.S. voters favor gun control legislation. So why is this so difficult, particularly given increasing incidences of gun violence?

Perhaps the most likely reason for the stalemate on gun control is known as the "slippery slope." This phrase refers to the fear that any movement towards compromise is only the first step towards total surrender.

Slippery slope reasoning goes something like this — allow "them" to ban assault weapons, and they'll soon take away my deer rifle!

While this may appear to many of us as irrational logic, existential subjects aren't always approached using the rational brain. So, for example, what happens when our party line takes a particular stance on an issue that we're led to believe is a threat to our very existence? The part of our brain that deals with physical threats take over.

The writer of Ecclesiastes has to be one of the most quoted authors in history. How often have you heard the phrase "For everything, there is a season?" The beginning of Chapter three of this book from scripture is frequently requested for celebrations of life. It reminds mourners that while seasons don't last forever, God is in charge and has a plan for every one of us.

Few of us read Ecclesiastes in its entirety. The writer's stream of consciousness is hard to follow and, in places, a bit depressing. Nevertheless, the writer's advice to enjoy each moment of life seems like a great way to view each day we're among the living.

Choosing which candidates get our vote is essential. But just as necessary are the issues that we want our elected officials to address. If helping our neighbor in distress is a core value, we should know what help looks like. And shouldn't we expect our elected officials to feel empathy for persons in distress?

In a Harvard Business Review article, Dr. Marc Harrison describes how the pandemic revealed the obvious — our healthcare system isn't working for the vast majority of us. In his article, the doctor offers five priorities for restructuring U.S. healthcare. And preventative care tops his list for taking intentional steps toward effective healthcare.

Fortunately, healthier choices rank at the top for preventing chronic illness for most of us. Unfortunately, too many of us continue to make choices that negatively impact our health. But our healthcare system doesn't get a pass in choosing prevention over treating illness. At the core of our healthcare system is a focus on treating rather than preventing illnesses.

Healthcare is expensive in the U.S., but preventive care reduces this cost dramatically.

Dr. Harrison's second priority addresses the most obvious shortcoming in our healthcare system. Covid-19 hospitalization rates and death rates were substantially higher for non-white patients. Systemic racism creates a complex web of

disparities exasperated and made evident by the pandemic.

Research has discovered that there are "social determinants of Health" that, at first, don't appear to be related to health. For example, where we live plays a significant role in our need for and access to healthcare. Where we live is the road we're traveling, and our health outcomes are directly related.

Beth and Sarah offer a challenge to consider. "How would the world view the church in particular if it heard people of faith express an interest in ensuring access to good-quality health care at fair prices? When we lead with the values that inform our faith—compassion, forgiveness, and love—we enter into even the most emotionally charged discussions with a new perspective."

Why does Asbury do what we do? Why did we invest in creating a place for people to connect?

First, we did so because we believed that a lack of connection was at the heart of the problems that plagued our community. Research shows that broken relationships with God, each other, ourselves, and the planet are the root causes for keeping persons impoverished. Scarcity flourishes in a disconnected society. And scarcity promotes disconnectedness in the way that a contagion infects a new host.

But is connecting neighbors really our what rather than our why? Why are we trying to connect with neighbors?

When asked what he needed to do to gain eternal life, Jesus answered the question with another question. What does it say in scripture — how do you read it? "Love God and love neighbor was the short answer.

We do what we do because we believe that loving God begins with loving each other. And we choose to show our love by addressing the insidious root causes for communities lacking resources: a lack of connection.

Why do you do the things you do?

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

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Marc Harrison. "5 Critical Priorities for the U.S. Health Care System." © Harvard Business Review, December 15, 2021. Retrieved from: <u>link</u>

Life Group Questions & Notes:	
For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak.	heaven A time to tear and a
NOTES FROM WORSH	Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7 (NLT)
	·

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. What do these words mean for you? Are there any ideas that surprise you? When are some times that it is appropriate to speak? Share an example of a time when you realized you needed to stop talking and listen?

Read this week's article titled Timing? Are there any topics in political news that you feel threaten our very existence? What role can you play in addressing this issue? What is the role of the church regarding this issue? What is the role of education? Do you own a gun? If so, what concerns you most about gun legislation?

1. 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.





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





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 *

Political conversations have their time and place. They don't have to ruin Thanksgiving dinner or church potlucks. But our county has important issues to tackle, and public bickering has displaced productive debate and effective legislation.

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Congress finally passed legislation that addresses some of the concerns regarding the control of guns. While falling short of banning assault weapons, it is a first step towards providing reasonable control of gun ownership. And the privilege to own a gun continues with little or no infringement.

Meanwhile, if we need to address existential threats, shouldn't we instead be talking about climate change. Stay tuned!

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Warren E. Burger. "Second Amendment Does Not Guarantee the Right To Own a Gun." © U.S. Department of Justice, 1992. Retrieved from: **link**

Carl Hulse. "Why Republicans Won't Budge on Guns." © New York Times, May 26, 2022. 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 — <u>FlintAsbury.org</u>.

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

Flint 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/flintfnb

Email: flintfnb@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





Summer is getting into full swing at the farm!!!

Coming soon, the farm's new twist on a CSA Food Box!!!!

You pick what you want, bring home only the veggies you love!

First Pick-Up Date: <u>Saturday</u>, <u>July 16th</u>, <u>11am-1pm and until further</u> <u>notice</u>. <u>We will post if anything changes</u>.



Want more information?? Email: kelly.jewett@outlook.com



We were stoked to be kicking off our very first Asbury Farms Sliding Scale Food Box Program last week! Get the most local, organic, delicious produce!! Grown on the East Side!

Pick what veggies you want, how much you want and pay what you can between \$12.00 — \$24.00.

Every Saturday from 11:00am to 1:00pm 1601 Jane Ave Flint MI

Look for the big banner that says "SALE" ...

