ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 31

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.

Grace (hotter and drier)



It's been a warm summer here in Michigan. Fortunately, we've been spared the excessive temperatures experienced by other parts of the U.S. Nevertheless, there are more above 90-degree days than in the past, and this number is expected to continue rising.

And our freshwater sources seem to be more than enough for our needs. The Great Lakes offer a stark contrast to the shrinking Lake Mead Reservoir that

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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farmers and 20 Million residents of Arizona, California, and Nevada count on for fresh water.

Overall, the U.S. is the largest contributor to the emissions that warm our planet. But unfortunately, we've lagged behind Europe in implementing changes to slow climate change. Even after signing the 2015 Paris Agreement together with 195 other nations that set goals for limiting global warming by cutting emissions. Writing for the Economic Forum, Kate Abnett notes that current policies are insufficient to meet even the more modest goals set by the agreement.

July 31, 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 is this so hard for us?

To start with, fossil fuel companies collectively spend approximately \$200 Million on lobbying efforts, often to prevent legislation aimed at reducing our dependence. This is on top of massive advertising expenditures spent to discredit climate change science over the past few decades. Lately, the major oil companies changed tactics to positioning themselves as climatechange leaders and claiming green as their favorite color while continuing efforts to curtail progress.

Meanwhile, during a week of extreme temperatures and devastating fires in Southern Europe, Pope Francis called on world leaders to heed the Earth's "chorus of cries of anguish" stemming from climate change.

According to NASA, "Some changes (such as droughts, wild-fires, and extreme rainfall) are happening faster than scientists previously assessed." Climate change is coming faster than anticipated, and the fallout is turning out to be even worse than imagined.

Admittedly, I'm hoping that a few political figures who oppose legislation protecting our environment finally feel the effects of climate change themselves. But honestly, I don't want any of us to suffer. We're all in this together, and it will take tremendous cooperation for us to save our planet from eventual extinction.

I'm weary of watching planes dropping fire-fighting chemicals to slow down the destruction caused by forest fires. While I'm aware that forest fires occur naturally, research shows that the vast majority are caused by humans. Unfortunately, we can't stop them all. However, in her article, Abnett reminds us, "Climate change increases hot and dry conditions that help fires spread faster, burn longer and rage more intensely."

This is our future with climate change: less fresh water, more intense weather, increased flooding, and more forest fires destroy property and lives. It's time to put partisan politics in check and focus on solving climate change.

Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia finally announced that he would support legislation to invest in energy alternatives. Legislation that moves the U.S. towards upholding our agreement to reduce emissions. While healthy skepticism is understandable, there is some hope ahead. And more hope is possible if enough of us get to the voting booth in November to support candidates willing to make the hard decisions needed to tackle climate change.

But how is this even possible? It takes cooperation to go up against wealthy companies and the investors and politicians who depend on the massive profits from our overconsumption of fossil fuels. The answer is grace. Before you roll your eyes, let me explain why grace is important.

Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers write that "infusing discussions with kindness and respect for no reason other than to uphold the dignity of our fellow humans" is key to making progress. And this is difficult for all of us.

While they fundamentally disagree on which political party is the better choice, Sarah and Beth choose to focus on where they have agreement. They write:

We want the earth to be habitable for future generations. We want to reduce the number and devastation of natural disasters to the extent possible. We want people to be employed in good jobs that provide high wages and long-term security. We want to enjoy modern conveniences and preserve aspects of our culture that are important to us. All these desires can exist together...

And they figured out that the only way to get from disagreement to policy is by showing grace to one another. But notice that grace, by definition, is not something we earn. Instead, grace is a gift we offer to each other that recognizes "the unproven, unverifiable worthiness in every person we encounter."

God saved you by grace when you believed, and you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God ... For we are God's masterpiece.

Ephesians 7:8-10

Grace is a central theme in scripture. For example, we're told that God saves us by grace alone and that God's grace is a divine gift. We don't and can't earn salvation. Instead, God chooses to reconcile with us whenever we're ready to accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. Nor is salvation a reward for the good things we've done. Therefore, we cannot take credit for earning God's favor (Ephesians 7:8-9).

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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

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 AUGUST 1 -AUGUST 7

Aug 1 Mon

Aug 2 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm

Food/Water Distribution

Aug 3 Wed 11:00-12Noon Food Giveaway at

South Flint Soup Kitchen (No appts necessary)

Pastor Book Club 12Noon

Aug 4 Thu 1:00pm United Women in Faith

Meeting in the Asbury Library

Auq 5 Fri

Aug 6 Flint Food Not Bombs 12Noon Sat

Aug 7 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 "Masterpiece"



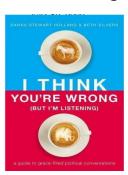
Book Club News

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.

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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.

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.

So we need to offer grace in our conversations around important issues. Even issues like climate change that we know threaten our very existence. And we also need to extend grace to persons we suspect are motivated by power and greed or simply uninformed about the magnitude of the problem.

On the other hand, grace does not mean that we're asked to eliminate healthy boundaries. Unfortunately, there will always be a handful of individuals with whom productive and helpful conversations are simply impossible. We know them by the soundbites they spout when asked about their plans to address climate change.

It's comforting to know that scripture reminds us that God's purpose in Jesus Christ was to save the world. But we each have a personal choice to make (John 3:16). And once we make that choice and do not fake our choice, our ability to show grace to others multiplies. However, grace seems impossible to offer when left on our own. And this is what happens when we pretend to accept Christ but secretly hold on to our bias.

We are God's masterpiece. God creates us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things God planned for us. (Ephesians 7:10).

Suppose you're still unsure about where you stand with God. In that case, it will be easier to find the answer if you're intentionally looking. And one place has proven to show us the answer is worship.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our website's homepage - 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

Content for this series is based in part on: 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.

"The Effects of Climate Change." © NASA, July 22, 2022. Retrieved from: link

Kate Abnett. "Explainer: How climate change drives heatwaves and wildfires."

© World Economic Forum & Reuters, Jul 25, 2022. Retrieved from: link

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Life Group Questions & Notes:	
God saved you by grace when you believed. And you ogift from God For we are God's masterpiece.	ean't take credit for this; it is a Ephesians 7:7-10 (NLT)
NOTES FROM WORSH	<u>IP</u>
QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GRO	<u>OUPS</u>
1. Read Ephesians 7:7-10. What does grace mean for you God's grace that you've experienced? What are some examples of where you've	nples of grace shown to you
2. Read this week's article titled <i>Grace? How real is climate</i> some examples of climate change that you've personally examples of agreements reached by Sarah and Beth that climate change legislation? What would you add or take aw most about potential legislation aiming to curb emissions? You that may be contributing to excessive emissions?	kperienced? Add or takeaway t they want considered in vay? What concerns you the
3. How can the members of your group help you this week be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of 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

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN

HUGUST FOOD GIVEHWHYS HND HNGEL CLOSET DHTES

FOOD GIVEAWAYS - AUGUST 3RD & 3IST - NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED, IIAM-NOON

ANGEL CLOSET - AUGUST 10TH & 24TH - APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
3410 FENTON ROAD
3 BLOCKS NORTH OF ATHERTON ROAD
FLINT, MI 48507
810-239-3427

WWW.MIGHTYCAUSE.COM/FEEDFLINT

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AND

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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!

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*.

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Pastor Tommy

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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!!!!

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" ...





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