

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 7

Curious (Peas and Carrots)



"Aren't you curious," her friend asked. "Of course, I'm curious," she replied, "but don't you know that curiosity killed the cat!"

We all know that curiosity killed the cat. At least according to conventional wisdom. However,

this expression began as a line in Ben Jonson's city comedy "Every Man in His Humour." In his play, William Shakespeare said, "care killed the cat," as one of the cast members. The line appeared again the following year in Shakespeare's play "Much Ado about Nothing."

The underlying theme for the phrase could be about fretting over things that shouldn't warrant expending that much energy. But I think it means that worry breeds anxiety, and anxiety is a health hazard likely to end your life earlier than not. On the other hand, curiosity more often reduces anxiety.

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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

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.*

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August 7, 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 climate-change 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, wildfires, 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 over-consumption 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).

Asbury Worship Series "Masterpiece"

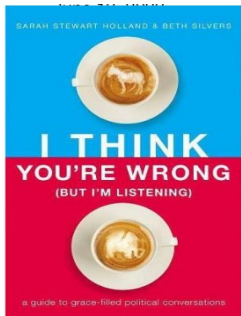


It's tempting to declare that we're beginning a new series on the first Sunday in July. It's tempting for many reasons, so why not just call our next several Sundays by a catchy title and announce a "new" topic? And I love new beginnings.

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

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?

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.

So curiosity helped the cat live a longer, happier life.

However, when curiosity is truth-seeking, the consequences of information may come with discovering you were wrong. This makes humility an essential companion for curiosity. "They go together," as Forest Gump's mother would say, "like peas and carrots."

As we near the end of our *Masterpiece* series, we need to elevate curiosity to the level of spiritual discipline. This is because curiosity makes us more aware of the world around us. And more aware of how policies affect us. And what we learn when we're curious helps us to make informed decisions about how we cast our votes.

Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers write about the need for "transformative conversations." In other words, "the kind of conversation that can break open Washington's gridlock and open up a world of political possibility." Transformative conversation "requires personal humility in the form of genuine curiosity," they argue.

Aren't you at least a bit curious about what is causing inflation?

I purchased my first home directly from the seller. The owner understandably wanted assurance that he wasn't wasting his time on a prospective buyer who couldn't afford to pay a fair price. So to learn a little more about my background, he engaged me in a conversation about a subject with which he was familiar.

Since I worked in the computer industry, the seller quizzed me on the benefit of using computers in business. For him, running a profitable business was straightforward. "I buy a bushel of

tomatoes for \$15 and sell the bushel for \$20," he said. "And I make a \$5 profit," he concluded. "It isn't any more complicated than that, so why would I need a computer?" he asked.

"Do you pay taxes?" I asked. "Of course I pay taxes," he answered. Taxes are just one complicating factor. "Do you import any of the things you sell?" I asked without needing a reply. "Some items require that additional taxes are paid on the goods, whether or not you're able to sell them." The simple transaction of selling a tomato doesn't require a computer. However, import a container of tomatoes from Mexico, and things get complicated in a hurry.

The taxes added to goods that move from one country to another are called tariffs. For example, the U.S. charges 17.5% on tomatoes imported from Mexico. We also charge tariffs on most goods coming from China. The average tariff on Chinese imports is over 19%.

If a producer charges one dollar for a product, the new price is at least \$1.19 higher. This is because U.S. tariffs on imports from China were increased substantially under the prior administration in response to a promise to create a fairer deal for U.S. companies. Ever wonder what causes inflation?

What thoughts go through your head when you hear foreign policy or trade? Your reaction to these terms is flavored by your knowledge of what they mean. But more so how they affect you. A candidate for office who promises to balance our trade with China is making a claim about how policy impacts the imports from and the exports to that country. And for most of us, the impact feels as far away as the country itself.

Until we go to the grocery store or stop for gas.

We feel the impact of foreign policy every day. Our trade policies affect the price of coffee, tea, and many other items that we depend on to improve our lives. For example, gas prices increased after the U.S. and many other countries stopped importing oil from Russia. With substantially less oil available, gasoline and diesel prices rise. And when diesel increases, so does the cost of transporting tomatoes.

The very essence of business is simple, and so is foreign trade. Until we factor in the impact that it has on our everyday lives. The U.S. and our allies stopped importing Russian oil to reduce Putin's funding for his war against Ukraine. Millions of lives are at stake. I don't like paying 4 dollars a gallon for gas, but I understand why it's happening.

She thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it ...

Genesis 3:1-7

One of the best-known stories in scripture may have a connection to curiosity and cats. God told the first humans that they could harvest fruit from any of the trees and eat any of the plants. But there was one tree that was off limits because its fruit revealed the knowledge of everything.

Curiosity got the best of the first humans, and they ate the fruit anyway. Among the very first insights, they gained was shame. And things got more complicated from there (Genesis 3:1-7).

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](#)

Life Group Questions & Notes:

Do your best to win full approval in God’s sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God’s truth.

2 Timothy 2:14-16 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


1. Read 2 Timothy 2:14-16 and Genesis 3:1-7. How do you interpret the story in Genesis of humanity’s original sin? How does this relate to curiosity? In what ways does our text from 2 Timothy support the importance of curiosity?
2. Read this week’s article titled Curious? Are you familiar with this traditional wisdom that “curiosity killed the cat?” What does it mean for you? Are you a curious person? Why or why not? What areas of foreign policy are a mystery for you? What explanation do you believe for what is causing inflation? Where does your information come from? Can you think of a time when your curiosity helped you to discover that you were wrong?
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

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*** CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN ***

But before you get the wrong impression I'm not trying to justify their actions. Only that I would have done the same thing. And their curiosity came with consequences. According to traditional interpretations of the story, this was humanity's first sin because they ignored God's warning.

Interpreting ancient oral myths is fascinating because so much is packed into the story, but even more is left unsaid. The story itself is short and void of details and context. Nevertheless, it offers a simple explanation for the balance we find between good and bad consequences, along with a myriad of other life lessons.

And this may be the most crucial point. Curiosity is the beginning of knowledge and an invitation to adventure. Curiosity is the journey we take in pursuit of truth.

In the letter called 2 Timothy, we read that we are to "Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The pursuit of truth requires massive doses of curiosity as we work towards discerning the truth found in scripture and elsewhere. Add a double portion of humility, and you're headed towards rewarding adventures.

Curiosity is not an invitation to ignore divine warnings. Instead, curiosity is an invitation to live a richer, fuller life, informed by truth rather than whatever someone made up to gain your support.

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"*The Interesting Meaning and History of the Phrase 'Curiosity Killed the Cat'*." © Interesting Literature, 2022. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Laura Reiley. "A new tariff on Mexican fresh tomatoes starts Tuesday. Get ready for prices to skyrocket." © New York Times, May 7, 2019. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Jim Tankersley, Ana Swanson and Alan Rappeport. "Biden Weighs Tariff Rollback to Ease Inflation, Even a Little Bit." © New York Times, June 14, 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 — 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.

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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/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**



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: Saturday, July 16th, 11am-1pm and until further notice. We will post if anything changes.



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

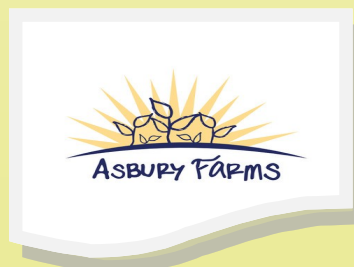


We were stoked to be kicking off our very first Asbury Farms Sliding Scale Food Box Program last week! Get the most local, organic, delicious produce!! Grown on the East Side!

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

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