

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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## The Open Door (What happens when we die?)



"Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door" is a line from the 1970s that transcends time. The imagery created by Bob Dylan when he wrote this song as a soundtrack for the movie "Pat Garrett and

Billy the Kid" is powerful. The imaginary is powerful regarding death's presence and the question of what happens after we die.

Late Show host Steven Colbert occasionally asks his guest fifteen questions that he claims will help his guest be fully known. The last question is, "What happens when we die?" The host receives a wide range of answers, including a few that leave viewers in deep reflection.

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EVERYONE  
HAVE A  
WONDERFUL,  
SAFE WEEK!



## Multiplication (A little of that)



Baking was one of the more popular indoor activities that people took up during the pandemic. Celebrities and ordinary people traded starters, recipes, and baking tips. So surely bread eating increased across the world.

Yeast is a common ingredient in bread making, and yeast makes a versatile metaphor. Yeast is a living organism with chromosomes and DNA and, thus, a eukaryote. And yeast as a single-cell organism reproduces and converts sugars and starches into alcohol and carbon dioxide in fermentation. This makes this naturally occurring fungi popular among wine and beer makers and bakers.

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The art of bread making often includes adding yeast to flour and water. This initiates a process where carbon dioxide is released into the dough, causing it to rise. A little yeast is all it takes to begin the transition, which is aided by creating conditions conducive to the fungi's growth.

However, not all bread is made with yeast. For example, Matzo is a popular bread among people of the Jewish faith that is eaten during the celebration of Passover. A tradition began during the Exodus as the Hebrew slaves were instructed to bake bread without yeast. There was no time to wait for the dough to rise, and it's said that the people "took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing" (Exodus 12:34).

According to an article by Steve Nubie, published in *Off the Grid News*, *Matzo was an obvious choice for their trip into the wilderness. Without yeast and properly stored, Matzo could last several years without molding.*

As I mentioned earlier, yeast causes bread to rise and helps beer and wine ferment by turning sugar and starch into alcohol. And yeast is also a versatile metaphor to illustrate the power that a little fungus can have on a large batch.

I don't remember the first time I heard the ancient wisdom that "a bad apple spoils the whole bushel." But I'm guessing it had something to do with choosing persons I would spend time with and how I might be negatively influenced.

Jesus used yeast similarly when He cautioned followers about listening to the religious

leaders who opposed Him. In one story found in Matthew, several religious leaders were pressing Jesus for a miracle to trap Him. Afterward, Jesus tells His followers to "be on guard against the yeast" coming from them.

In his version of this story, Luke claims that Jesus was referring to the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, not their actual words. This interpretation is supported elsewhere in scripture by Jesus in His criticism of persons who instruct one way but live another.

Get the point? So did Jesus only eat bread that wasn't made with yeast?

**The Kingdom of God is like this—a baker takes some yeast and mixes it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of dough rises.**

**Luke 13:20-21**

Perhaps, but before jumping to this conclusion, let's consider a comparison that Jesus makes between yeast and the Kingdom of God. In Luke, we read Jesus saying that the Kingdom of God "is like taking a little yeast and mixing it with a bushel of flour until the whole batch of dough rises" (Luke 13:21).

So the corollary to the ancient wisdom is that good yeast makes great bread, fine wine, and tasty beer. Likewise, avoiding hypocrisy is a good recipe for a better life. Fortunately, avoiding hypocrisy is simple. Just do that which you say you plan to do.

If avoiding hypocrisy is so simple, why are Christians known more as hypocrites than as people who follow the teachings of Jesus? It's complicated because you and I have layers of good and not-so-good

experiences influenced by unholy temptations.

In other words, it is nearly impossible to avoid all the bad yeast surrounding us.

Fortunately, we're also surrounded by God's Spirit. So while we can't avoid all of the bad things in life, and every one of us makes less than stellar choices, we can stay in constant touch with God. One way to do this is through prayer. In our next series titled *Pray, we'll dig into the prayer life of Jesus in more detail.*

Just as important as prayer, in avoiding hypocrisy, 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](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](#).

Pastor Tommy

Content for this series is based in part on: Candace Simpson. *Who Can We Be Together? A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13*. New York: United Methodist Women, 2022.

Steve Nubie. "Long-Lasting Breads You Can Stockpile For YEARS and YEARS." © Off The Grid News, date. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Lindsey Valich. "Baker's yeast: Three surprising things you might not know" © University of Rochester, February 18, 2021. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Eric Ferreri. "After 9/11, A Short-Lived Rush to Church." © Duke Today, August 19, 2016. Retrieved from: [link](#)



# Upcoming Worship Series "Pray"

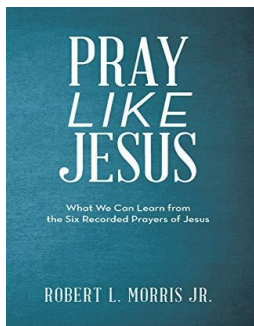


"Will you pray for me," the man asked his friend. "Of course," came the response. What else could his friend say? Prayer is so easy. It doesn't even have to be verbal. And prayer is so personal that no one knows if it even takes place.

But to whom will his friend pray and how will his friend go about praying? After all, nationally, we are a diverse group demographically and politically, and our religious beliefs vary.

## Book Club News

Our worship series beginning in October focuses on



prayer and our book club selection that accompanies our series is titled *Pray Like Jesus*.

This book, written by Robert L. Morris, Jr., examines six prayers of Jesus, found in the Gospels, to help us

become more consistent prayers.

Prayer is probably the most talked-about subject in churches. However, not enough of us actually pray regularly. Rev. Morris believes that this is because we don't know enough about how to pray. The six prayers of Jesus can teach us how to grow our prayer life deeper and wider than ever before.

According to Amazon's description of our book selection:

*Pray like Jesus* is intended to be a simple

spiritual how-to-manual for those who do not have a vital prayer life but seek one. It is one intended to be an academic book as much as it is an epistle from a fellow believer who may have learned a few things in forty-one years of ministry. Author Robert L. Morris Jr. invites you to join him and look at six prayers of Jesus, but you will intentionally not examine the Lord's Prayer in depth. The reason is simple: the Lord's Prayer contains valuable information on how disciples should pray, but this book is about how Jesus personally prayed.

### 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 Suprv
- Terrance Williams - Arts Center Mgr
- Katelin Maylum - Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
- South Flint Soup Kitchen

### Leadership in Worship & Service

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

## Upcoming Worship Series - "Pray" ...cont from pg 4

As Christians, we believe that there is one God and we're likely to presume that praying means taking our petitions there. Yet we also believe that God lived among humanity and that we know God through Jesus Christ. And that God is ever-present through the Holy Spirit.

But according to a 2021 Pew Research Study, just under one-third of the U.S. population do not claim an affiliation with a particular religious group. Instead, they identify as atheist, agnostic, or simply respond "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious identify. And while the majority of U.S. resident self-identify as Christian, this percentage dropped 11 points over the past decade from 3/4 to less than a third.

Does this mean that prayer is a dying trend? The news is disturbing.

According to an article published in the *Christian Post* based on the Pew Study, *less than half of Americans pray daily. This is quite a contrast to the prayer habits of Jesus. As a Jew it's likely that Jesus prayed at least three times each day.*

Doesn't it make sense that, as Christians, our prayer life would resemble that of our Savior, Jesus Christ? Of course.

Our new series, *Pray*, examines the prayer life of Jesus by looking at each of the six actual prayers that we find in the Gospels. While there are numerous references of Jesus praying there are only six actual prayers preserved for our benefit.

Come learn how Eat, Pray, Love gets lived out when we try to emulate the prayer habits of Jesus.

Our series is based on a book written by the Reverend Dr. Robert L. Morris, Jr., a Presbyterian pastor for over 45 years. Our series will utilize his book titled *Pray Like Jesus as a guide. Be sure to get your copy before or after Sunday worship, or find a copy at your local library or favorite source for books. And join us at Book Club each Wednesday at Noon for further discussions on each Sunday's message.*

Everyone is invited to submit prayer requests for each worship. Each prayer request will be dedicated during worship and be included in our prayers. Prayers requests can be submitted through the homepage of our website or filling out a prayer request form.

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

*Robert L. Morris, Jr.. Pray Like Jesus: What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus.. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2019.*

The truth is that none of us know for sure, although a few of us claim to know the answer in vivid detail. And while Jesus talked about the Kingdom of Heaven, He used the Kingdom of God interchangeably. Moreover, this Kingdom was, at the same time, both present and futuristic.

The Lord's Prayer speaks about heaven on earth as a goal. So it's not completely clear where life ends and heaven begins.

As we come to the end of our series *Together*, we find a perplexing illustration. Jesus first says that a narrow door sits between the Kingdom of God and us. A door that creates a barrier for a lot of us.

Entering this Kingdom where a little yeast makes fantastic bread and a tiny mustard seed grows into safe harbor isn't easy. At least for most of us. But the problem is spiritual. The problems begin when we realize that we can't take stuff with us. And it's tough to let go of something we're convinced we can't live without.

It also turns out that our ideas about how things ought to work are among the stuff that doesn't fit through heaven's door. And one idea that doesn't fit through the door is our tendency to make judgments about the fitness of others to fit through.

While it's true that Jesus said that "many will try to enter but will fail," it's clear that our judgment has no bearing on the entrance exam (Luke 13:24). At least not for the other person. Instead, judging others makes it more challenging to enter. Jesus also said, "Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you" (Matthew 7:1).

The reversals that we can anticipate in God's Kingdom are mind-blowing. Where else are the first put at the end of the line? And how can a narrow door also be an open door? Does this mean it's still hard to get through even when the door is open?

This week's message is a "companion piece" to last week's conversation about hypocrisy. And the meaning of the narrow door may be one way of testing our hypocrisy. Just how narrow is the door? And if the door is narrow, is it possible to squeeze through?

Although the problem is spiritual, in Matthew Jesus said that those of us who are spiritually poor are blessed (Matthew 5:3). Doesn't this mean that the spiritually poor still get through the door? Luke's version of this blessing tells us that the economic poor are blessed? (Luke 6:20).

Does this mean that the well-off aren't blessed? Can the well-off get through the door somehow? After all, Jesus said, "It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle" (Luke 18:25).

The problems are insurmountable. The truth is that the door is just too narrow for any of us to get through. Unless we know the doorman. When we know Jesus Christ and trust in His grace, we pass through the door into this Kingdom of safety and abundance.

**Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail.**

**Luke 13:24**

What happens when we die? It all depends on whether or not we trust Jesus Christ with the answer.

Life Group Questions & Notes:

Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He replied, "Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail..."

Luke 13:22-30 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read the Parable of the narrow door found in Luke 13:22-30. How do you read this parable? What does your interpretation say to you about your life choices? What does it mean to be known by God?
2. Read this week's article titled The open door. Where do you see the borders between the Kingdom of God and where we are now? What are some of the barriers that separate you and me from the Kingdom of God? What can we do about these barriers? What do you believe happens when we die?
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”







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)

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**SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN**

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# SEPTEMBER GIVEAWAYS



**CLOTHES  
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& MORE**

**ANGEL CLOSET (APPT. ONLY)**

21ST & 28TH 10:30AM-NOON

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**FOOD GIVEAWAYS (NO APPT.  
REQUIRED)**

7TH & 14TH 11:00AM-NOON

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(3 BLOCKS NORTH OF  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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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 \***

The Reverend Dr. Robert L. Morris Jr. has served in various ministerial positions for more than forty-five years. This includes serving as senior minister at First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida, for over seventeen years. Rev. Morris has since returned to Young Life staff, where his ministry began.

He is on the board of the Salvation Army and an organizing board member of First Ministries, a nonprofit serving the poor and homeless in Jacksonville. Rev. Morris is also a former board member of Habitat for Humanity in both Jacksonville and North Carolina.

I invite you to join us each Sunday for worship as we explore the six prayers of Jesus and consider how to improve our prayer life. Each Wednesday, we'll dig deeper into the wisdom offered by our book selection. You can pickup a copy of the book when you attend worship.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away, I encourage you to join us via Zoom 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

*Robert L. Morris, Jr.. Pray Like Jesus: What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus.. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2019.*

**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/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](mailto: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” ...

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](#).

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Pastor Tommy

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Robert Dylan. *"Knockin' on Heaven's Door."* © Ram's Horn Music, Universal Tunes, 2022.