

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 20

November 20, 2022

Home Alone (Never abandoned)



This Sunday marks the end of a liturgical year and the last week of our *Pray* series. The liturgical calendar organizes the year into seasons and highlights traditional times of celebration and reflection. The calendar

includes recommendations for scripture based on a three-year rotation beginning with Matthew and followed by Mark and Luke. The last Sunday of the liturgical year is commonly known as "Reign of Christ" Sunday.

It's fitting that we end our study of the prayers of Jesus on this theme. While suffering on the cross, Jesus left us with prayers that call for deeper reflection into our relationship with Him.

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EVERYONE HAVE A
WONDERFUL AND-
SAFE WEEK!



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Crushed (God help me)



We've all been there. Some call it that spot between a rock and a hard place where we feel the weight of life crushing us. Bad things will happen, the other shoe will drop, and our day of reckoning is near. And we're desperate for relief.

"God help me" is a typical response when confronted with such situations.

There are thousands of metaphors and illustrations that fit the occasion. And if you can't think of one, just tune into the latest reality show or news source. For example, my heart breaks every time I watch news coverage from Ukraine highlighting the massive destruction, suffering, and death caused by other humans.

But I don't have to look a thousand miles away to find distress. Every day I feel surrounded by desperation and despair. On better days, our community looks full of promise and potential. On other days I see only the suffering and the cries for help.

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Pew Research discovered that most of us find meaning and purpose in our job. I'm blessed to be in this fortunate group. But I spend my days among many persons experiencing high levels of unemployment for whom purpose must be carved out of creative ingenuity.

Sadly, seventy percent of U.S. teenagers ages 13 to 17 report that anxiety and depression are significant problems among people their age in their community. Feeling overwhelmed is one of those places that feel like the pressure is more than we can bear.

As we near the end of our series on prayer, we're reminded that, for Jesus, prayer was an ongoing source of strength and grounding. His prayer habits kept Him in a continued Oneness with God that kept His human challenges from derailing His divine purpose.

How do I know this? First, Jesus followed Jewish practices of praying multiple times each day. Second, the gospel accounts share stories of Jesus finding time to pray even during a high-pressure day.

But the most apparent evidence for me is how Jesus treated others. He never condemned people that disagreed with Him. He wasn't cruel to people who judged or belittled Him. The strength it takes to speak love into the face of hate is beyond human capacity. But Jesus had divine power bolstering Him. Divine power fueled by a universe of energy.

The fifth prayer of Jesus that is this week's focus comes as He is praying shortly before His arrest.

Robert L. Morris, Jr. in *Pray Like Jesus*, positions the Garden of Gethsemane as a metaphor. He writes:

Gethsemane was a place of business. You see, *geth* in Hebrew (*gat*) means "press," — and a press was a large five-foot-high square pillar made of stone. The word *semane* in Hebrew means "olive." So Gethsemane literally means *press of olive*, or as we would say today, *an olive press...olives were gathered in a woven fishnet bag and placed on a special stone table with a trough on one side. Then the geth, or press, would be brought down on this bag of olives and left there, sometimes for two to three hours. It would take that long for the olives to be totally crushed and every drop of olive oil was funneled away.*

The metaphor works when we consider that Jesus went to Gethsemane with a few of His followers on the evening He would be arrested. Knowing that His life on earth would soon come to a brutal end, Jesus and a few His followers spent the final hours together after supper.

During supper, Jesus told His followers what to expect and why. He also knew that they didn't grasp reality when they heard what He said. Nevertheless, they did and saw a lot together over the past couple of years, including numerous miracles. While Jesus was clearly different, they also experienced His humanness.

I fall short when I imagine what it would be like to face what Jesus faced. Sometimes it helps me to put my own worries into perspective. But, honestly, other times, it doesn't help any more than others telling me their problems. Neither gives me more strength to face my own challenges.

Sometimes, even when you have every reason to feel blessed, instead, you feel like you're one of a thousand olives placed between a stone table and the pressing stone. At such times you feel like every drop of what makes life enjoyable is oozing out from the weight of the trouble facing you.

Father, if you will take this cup of suffering away from Me, Not My will, however, but Your will be done.

Luke 22:42

Isn't it just like Jesus, when He felt crushed by the weight of an impending cross, when He felt crushed to the point of anguish, that He went to a place of crushing.

The gospel writers offer poetic descriptions of this time. Such as Jesus sweating blood as He prayed in anguish. His prayers didn't stop what was about to happen. Jesus would suffer intolerable cruelty. A sacrifice that should and can be avoided by love.

Jesus did this, so we no longer have to be crushed by dread and despair. It is not prayer that changes our circumstances. Instead, prayer prepares us to face our circumstances, knowing that God is in control and wants joy and abundance for each of us.

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



PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS

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

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

This month instead of a companion book our club will focus on the key themes often associated with Advent. Our study begins with divine love on the Wednesday after Thanksgiving. In the weeks following we will reflect on peace, joy and hope. This will take us through the end of 2022!



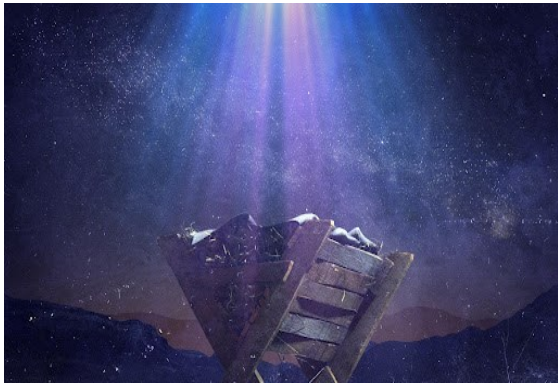
Thank you and everyone continue to stay safe!

COMING UP THIS WEEK
NOVEMBER 21 – NOVEMBER 27

- Nov 21 Mon 6:00pm Leadership Team
- Nov 22 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food/Water Distribution
 Thanksgiving Food Boxes Pickup
 (between 10am and 6pm)
 3:00pm CDC Board Meeting
- Nov 23 Wed Angel Closet (Appts required) at
 South Flint Soup Kitchen (239-3427)
 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Nov 24 Thu
- Nov 25 Fri
- Nov 26 Sat
- Nov 27 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.)

Upcoming Worship Series "Wonder"



What do you want for Christmas this year? This is a question that millions of parents ask children as they figure out their gift list and budget. And the answers vary widely, influenced by commercials, friends, and family members.

As we age, our list changes, and at some point, we quit thinking about wanting gifts wrapped in paper altogether. But experiencing the excitement of a child unwrapping a gift at Christmas never gets old.

Book Club News

We completed our reading and study of *Pray Like Jesus*.



by The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Morris, Jr., the week before Thanksgiving. Our series,

Pray, examined six prayers, said by Jesus, that help us be-

come more consistent pray-ers.

As we move into Advent, more commonly known as the Season of Christmas, our focus shifts toward the birth of Christ and the events that led up to God's choice to live among us.

Instead of a companion book our small group will focus on the key themes often associated with Advent. Our study begins with divine love on the Wednesday after Thanksgiving. In the weeks following we'll reflect on peace, joy, and hope. This will

take us through the end of 2022.

Scripture tells love is at the heart of the wonder of Christmas:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another. If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor & Exec Dir
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Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
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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 - "Wonder" ...cont from pg 4

Welcome to our new worship series, *Wonder*. In this series, we dive into the wonder of Christmas. Spoiler alert! We're likely to discover the wonder of Christmas isn't found in stores or under a Christmas tree. Instead, the wonder of Christmas is found in relationships.

Our series begins with the wonder of God's love for each of us. A love that isn't unwrapped once each year on a particular day. God has special gifts uniquely chosen for each of us. Gifts that we are sure to cherish.

Out of God's love for us comes a peace that we're at a loss for words to explain. Unlike treaties between nations and neighbors, Christ offers a lasting peace that isn't based on toleration. Instead, the peace of Christ comes out of God's love for all creation.

We often hear expressions like Christmas joy as a way to differentiate that special feeling that the season of Christmas offers. For some, it is the simple pleasure of watching a child drop a coin in a red kettle. For others, it is the taste of treats prepared for the occasion. Whether it is decorations that bring us joy or a simple "Merry Christmas" said by a stranger, joy is one of the wonders of Christmas.

However, not everyone feels the love, peace, joy, and hope of Christmas. For some, memories steal their wonder. For others, loneliness creeps into their spirit and snatches away their sense of wonder. Please know that whatever mood comes upon you, God is with you.

And this offers hope to all. A hope based on a promise found in a manger that changes everything. Perhaps this is the greatest wonder of all. That God chose vulnerability over power. And grace over accountability.

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

"The Wonder of Christmas" is licensed from [SkitGuys.com](#) and provides much of the content for this series.

Home Alone was a popular movie about a young boy on his own at home after his family left for vacation. After panicking when he discovered his family had left without him, the young boy asked himself what his parents would do in the same situation. He needed to be the parents until he was reunited with his family. This helped him cope with the anxiety of feeling alone and abandoned.

Anxiety insists on action. In *How Your Church Family Works*, Peter Steinke differentiates between reacting to anxiety, which is automatic and originates out of survival, and intentionally responding to anxiety. A response is a choice.

Anxiety occurs when the status quo is suddenly changed. When this happens, our priority is to restore what was. And our reactions are driven by the part of our brain focused solely on survival. In this mode, we react to anxiety.

Zach Meers, a licensed therapist, warns that if we do not deal with anxiety in a healthy way, we're likely to experience long-term adverse health effects. We all experience anxiety but to varying degrees. At its core, anxiety is fear stemming from apprehension about the future.

But there is great news for believers.

Researchers from Baylor University found that people who pray are less likely to experience anxiety-related disorders. Prayers worry less, are less fearful, and are less likely to experience obsessive-compulsive behavior. But it makes a difference, according to their study, in how we perceive God.

When we believe that we're praying to a loving and protective God we reap significant health benefits. Much more so than if we pray but don't expect any comfort or protection from God. Their study, entitled "Prayer, Attachment to God, and Symptoms of Anxiety-Related Disorders among U.S. Adults," was published in the journal *Sociology of Religion*.

How do we know what to expect from God when we pray?

The Prophet Elijah was sent by God to speak truth to power which angered King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. After a very public confrontation, Queen Jezebel ordered Elijah to be hunted down and killed. Running for his life, Elijah felt alone and abandoned by the very God who sent him. Escaping certain death, Elijah made his way up to safety on a mountain, hoping to encounter God in person.

Elijah expected God's presence in the obvious. Perceiving God is more like we experience with a modern-day dictator, Elijah anticipated God to arrive amidst the spectacular. But God wasn't in the howling wind. Nor did Elijah find God in the head-rattling earthquake or even an all-devouring fire.

Instead, God chose to speak to Elijah in the silence of deep reflection.

After the spectacular had passed and Elijah settled into seeing deep within the source of his anxiety, God arrived. But, likely to the shock of Elijah, God didn't bring up the past. Instead, God sent Elijah toward a different future.

According to Mark, a few wondered aloud if Jesus called out to Elijah as He neared death on the cross. Spectators mocked Jesus as He suffered the death of a criminal. Indeed if He is truly the Messiah, they reasoned, Jesus would perform the spectacular and save Himself first.

Life Group Questions & Notes:

People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus... In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law made fun of Jesus...And the two who were crucified with Jesus insulted him also...Jesus cried out with a loud shout "My God, my God, why did you abandon me? Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing. Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died.

Mark 15:25-39; Luke 23:34, 46 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP


Handwritten notes area with horizontal lines.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read Jesus' prayers from the cross found in Mark 15:25-39; Luke 23:34, 46. Where does your imagination take you? What are the implications for the world? For you personally?
2. Read this week's article titled Home alone. Share an experience you've had with feeling alone and/or abandoned? What insights did you learn about yourself from your experience? About God? What causes anxiety for you? How do you react? How do you respond?
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



**SOUTH FLINT SOUP
KITCHEN NOVEMBER
GIVEAWAYS**

FOOD GIVEAWAYS:

**NOVEMBER 2ND & 16TH
(THANKSGIVING FOOD
GIVEAWAY 16TH), 11AM-NOON**

**NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED FOR
FOOD EVER!**

ANGEL CLOSET:

**NOVEMBER 9TH, 23RD, AND
30TH**

APPOINTMENT REQUIRED!



**3410 FENTON ROAD
3 BLOCKS NORTH OF ATHERTON ROAD
FLINT, MI 48507
CALL 810-239-3427 FOR AN ANGEL CLOSET
APPOINTMENT OR QUESTIONS**



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 ***

The peace offered to us through Jesus Christ is beyond human understanding. We catch a glimpse in Psalm 23 with peaceful meadows, flowing creeks, and a cup that runs over with abundance. Jesus does not offer the peace available in this world. His is a peace that last forever and comes through unconditional love.

Christmas joy is much more than presents under the tree. Christmas is about the joy that Mary felt when the angel explained that she had been chosen to give birth to the Son of God. It is the joy felt by shepherds working in the field and learning of the birth of the Messiah. Christmas joy is the discovery made by travelers that a King was born who will save the world.

And out of this comes hope.

I invite you to join us each Sunday for worship as we explore the wonder of Christmas. Each Wednesday, we'll dig deeper into the themes of Christmas.

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.

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.

Sometimes we're blessed to experience God's miraculous power in response to prayer. Other times, it happens without our awareness. Usually, God's will differs from our own, and we cannot see where our future leads.

Only God bears the burden of foresight.

Each Sunday during our series, *Pray*, we're collecting prayer requests. You can submit a request online from our website [home page](#). In addition, prayer request forms are located around the church and during water and food giveaways.

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](#).

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Patrick van Kessel . "How Americans feel about the satisfactions and stresses of modern life." © Pew Research Center, Feb 5, 2020. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Pastor Tommy

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.

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



Look for the big banner
that says “SALE” ...

Peter Steinke argues that false prophets push for peace by reacting to anxiety with quick fixes aimed at self-preservation. Instead of calling for reflection and transformative change, false prophets offer simple, immediate relief.

Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing.

Luke 23:34

Instead of reacting, Jesus responds with a thought-provoking prayer, saying, "Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing."

The leaders expected the spectacular from God's Messiah. They also expected God to be found in a demonstration of destructive power. They anticipated a king more like the kings they had encountered. A king who would put his needs over the needs of ordinary people. Instead, they witnessed humility fueled by a love beyond their grasp.

Mark's account of the crucifixion includes Jesus crying out of His agony to God. Theologians have debated the meaning behind His prayer for centuries. "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?"

Robert Morris reminds us that the Greek word often translated as "abandoned" can mean to leave behind or be left alone. And in his interpretation, Rev Morris perceives our Messiah. Instead of a king or dictator as we see among humans, we experience a Savior who took on the sin of the world and put it on himself on the cross.

Jesus alone carried the sin of an entire world so that you and I can be free to pray to a God who responds with love.

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Steinke, Peter L. (1993, 2006). *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.

Zach Meers, LCPC, NCC. "Long Term Effects Of Stress And Anxiety." © Pathways Psychology Services, 2022. Retrieved from: [link](#)

"New Study Examines the Effects of Prayer on Mental Health." © PsychCentral, September 18, 2014. Retrieved from: [link](#)

FLINT ASBURY WATER BOX IS IN FULL OPERATION
SERVING FRESH WATER – PLEASE JOIN US
ON TUESDAYS FOR A 5 OR 2.5 GALLON OF WATER.
STOP BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10:00AM AND 1:00PM.



COMING SOON FLINT ASBURY DELICIOUS AND WHOLESOME MEAL KITS!!!

STAY TUNE ...

WILL POST MORE IN

OUR WEEKLY ASBURY

CIRCUIT RIDER!!



First Saturdays at the Farm

Sliding Scale Veggie Sale

\$12-\$24 per 3-4lbs
Pay what you can

HEALTH IS
WEALTH.

Music by DJ lei lei

Farm Tour

Learn: Asbury's winterizations
techniques

Asbury Farms

1601 Jane Ave
12:00am - 3:00pm

QnA w/Experienced Horticulturists

Kid Stuff

Juggling and magic!
Cozy up with a cup of hot cocoa

More Details@ facebook.com/AsburyFarmsFlint events