

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 4

December 4, 2022



EVERYONE HAVE A
WONDERFUL AND-
SAFE WEEK!



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Peace (The Good Shepherd)



I often describe my days as rushing from one thing to the next with little time to work on what can best be done by me. So by evening, I'm spent. But I'm also blessed to have a job where spending time with God is

expected. So I try to begin every morning alone with God. Otherwise, I face the day feeling less prepared and more on edge.

Life is hectic enough around us. Yet our lives are further complicated by a connected world where the actions of persons living thousands of miles away affect us. And since we cope with our lack of control by punishing elected officials, political rhetoric draws our attention away from the real source of our problems.

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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.

Page 2



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
 Chris Freeman

Richard Oram



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!

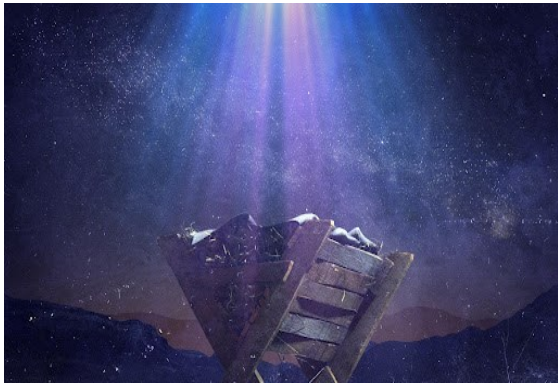
**COMING UP THIS WEEK
 DECEMBER 4 – DECEMBER 11**

- Dec 5 Mon
- Dec 6 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food/Water Distribution
 4pm-8pm Visitation for Shirley Craig
 at Browns Funeral Home 1480 E Hill Rd Grand Blanc
- Dec 7 Wed No Book Club due to a funeral
- Dec 8 Thu 1pm United Women in Faith
- Dec 9 Fri
- Dec 10 Sat
- Dec 11 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

become more consistent prayers.

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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Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Exec Chef & Dir Opers
Mike Sampson	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 - "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.

For example, the protests in China over strict COVID restrictions affect the availability of Chinese imports destined for shelves in our stores. As supply drops, prices go up on seemingly unrelated items. Our appetite for lower-cost convenience keeps demand high.

Russia's war on Ukraine is putting millions at risk of starvation. Millions depend on imported grain grown in Ukraine, which produces a large amount of the world's demand for wheat, corn, barley, and sunflower oil. In addition, oil prices increased substantially as the purchase of Russian oil was curtailed. We feel the impact at the gas pump.

And we share the same planet. This means that excess consumption on our part negatively affects the rest of the world, and what happens elsewhere affects us. One case in point: eliminating Rain Forests in South America harms the rest of us. Another example is our addiction to animal fat is supported by ever-increasing herd sizes taking a toll on our planet.

This connectedness affects every aspect of our lives. This makes finding peace a challenge.

The pandemic reminded us that we are so tightly connected that we share disease. But it also taught us that we can share cures. Our connectedness means that we share scarcity. But we can also share abundance. And sadly, we can share conflict, but we can also share peace.

Jesus declared, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). And Psalm 23 refers to His role as protector and provider. As such, Jesus leads us to that which we need and crave. We often refer to this paradox as an upside-down economy because this isn't what we see.

Instead, we watch the greedy enriched, and the humble shutdown. As we know it, the world rewards military might with prestige and wealth. And don't we elect the persons who degrade their opponents? Aren't kind words for the weak and meek?

The world resists the leadership of Christ in favor of promises made by louder voices with what sounds to be larger and quicker returns. The logic is hard to resist, and believers are also prone to falling for its lure. After all, don't we accumulate more by holding onto what we have and taking it away from others?

The Lord is my
shepherd; I have
everything I need.

Psalm 23:1

Yet, provision in God's economy comes from sharing. And abundance comes from serving each other. So when scripture says, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I have everything I need," we hear a testimony of someone who truly lives as Jesus instructed us to live.

So why do the wealthier want more wealth? Why do the powerful want more power? Don't they already have everything they need? The truth is that they don't have that which they need the most. They don't have inner peace.

Admittedly, it is difficult to find peace when you are lacking. The thirsty look for water, and the hungry search for food. It is hard to find peace while hungry. It's impossible to rest when thirsty.

Peace does not come easily when we're lacking. The imagery of Psalm 23 reminds us that Jesus brings rest in fields of green grass beside pools of fresh water. Is it possible to lack nothing and not have everything we want?

God promised that even when we go through the deepest darkness, we never go through it alone. Instead, the Good Shepherd protects us, so we need not be afraid. But there's more.

Life Group Questions & Notes:

The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need...Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid...You prepare a banquet for me...and fill my cup to the brim...I know that Your goodness and love will be with me all my life; and Your house will be my home as long as I live.

Psalm 23 (GNT)


NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read Psalm 23. Can you remember the first time you heard this Psalm? It is popular at funerals? The imagery is peaceful and reassuring. What are your favorite parts? Are there any parts that trouble you? If so, why?
2. Read this week's article titled Peace. Do you ever feel inner peace? If so, describe this feeling? If not, what are some of the reasons that inner peace is elusive for you? What does connectedness mean to you? What are some of the problems you experience with connectedness? What are some of the opportunities that arise out of connectedness?
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.





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
DECEMBER
GIVEAWAYS



Food Giveaways
7th & 21st
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED FOR FOOD EVER!
11AM-NOON

Angel Closet Holiday Closet
6th-8th, 13th-15th, 20th-22nd
Appointment needed

FOR APPOINTMENTS OR QUESTIONS CALL 810-239-3427

3410 FENTON ROAD
3 BLOCKS NORTH OF ATHERTON ROAD
FLINT, MI 48507



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](#).

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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” ...

Our Shepherd prepares a banquet with such abundance that our cups overflow. And you and I are honored guests at the Lord's table. And there's more.

We find peace because we know that the love of the Good Shepherd will sustain us and give us peace. Meanwhile, we gather for worship in gratitude for the good things God does for the world. Finally, we gather for worship to hear the voice of God.

Jesus said that all who belong to Him listen to His voice and follow Him. And that He knows each of them personally (John 10:27).

And this inner peace was promised to actual shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night. The sky lit up as angels shared the good news that a baby was born that evening who would bring a peace that had eluded the world since the beginning.

"Come to me," Jesus said, "and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. The door will be opened to anyone who knocks" (Luke 11:9-10).

I invite you to join us for worship. And if you have a prayer request you can submit your request online on 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](#).

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Pastor Tommy

Content for this series is based in part on: The Wonder of Christmas. An Advent worship series written and produced by © Skit Guys, 2022. Used with Permission.

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



SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN
CHRISTMAS
FOOD DRIVE

- 100 HAMS/TURKEYS
- POTATOES
- ROLLS
- CHRISTMAS COOKIES/GINGERBREAD
- MAC N' CHEESE
- 30-50 GALLONS OF MILK
- BUTTER
- PINEAPPLE
- ASSORTED VEGETABLES

PLEASE HAVE ITEMS TO
US BY DEC. 14TH!

FOR QUESTIONS, CALL
810-239-3427