

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 11

December 11, 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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Joy (Finding Treasure)



Over the past few years, I've grown fond of Christmas movies. I'm not talking about high-budget blockbuster hits, however. Instead, I'm fond of the Hallmark Channel, lower-budget, predictable movie studios crank out by the dozens. This suggests that I'm not the only one fond of this genre.

I wrote in my Prayer Journal the other day that I wish for a Hallmark Christmas. The kind with a small town full of friends and a home full of family. You know what I'm talking about. I want a Christmas filled with joy. Who doesn't?

So how does a Christmas of joy come about? Before you go to the store to buy fancy party invitations, let's talk about the differences between joy and happiness.

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First and sadly, joy is elusive for millions. And perhaps, for the vast majority, their inability to find joy is understandable and justifiable. This makes the Christmas season a time of intense sadness for many people. Perhaps this is the case for you?

But it's helpful to differentiate between happiness and joy.

Jamie D. Aten Ph.D. survived two significant and unexpected setbacks a few years ago. The first was Hurricane Katrina which hit shortly after he moved to southern Mississippi for a new job. The 2nd was a cancer diagnosis. Dr. Aten responded to the effect of these events by becoming an expert on the trauma caused by catastrophes. During the height of the COVID pandemic, he interviewed an expert on joy.

During their interview, Dr. Pamela Ebstyn King carefully differentiated between joy and happiness. She compared happiness to a feeling we might have while enjoying a favorite food that goes away soon after supper. In other words, happiness is dependent upon what is happening around us and to us.

This suggests that happiness comes from our reaction to events, people, places, things, and thoughts. For example, I might say, "I'm not happy that Cyndi ate the rest of the

chocolate chips." This is purely theoretical, of course. Nevertheless, happiness, and its opposite, unhappiness, are emotions brought on by external events and circumstances.

Joy, on the other hand, is much more complex and doesn't require anything external to us. Dr. King describes joy as "an enduring, deep delight in what holds the most significance" for us. This means that being unhappy is different than lacking joy. This is because joy is a feeling that comes from within us.

Mel Walker, writing for Christianity.com, says that "It is a natural human inclination to think that living through trials and negative circumstances would not be an occasion for joy. Choosing to respond to life's difficult situations with inner contentment and satisfaction doesn't seem to make sense."

And I agree. But Walker reminds us that Joy is a choice

A post using the handle "Andre" made on PsychologyEduicator.com concurs that joy is a choice we each make. He writes, "Joy is an unexploited reservoir of potential that is always present inside you. Basically, it is the attitude of your spirit and heart; hence you can still feel joy in tough times."

Mel Walker reminds us that God is the originator of true joy.

Christmas is the time of year when we might hear, "Jesus is the reason for the season," and then catch a glimpse of an eye-roll. The truth is that the sort of Christmas portrayed by Hallmark didn't emerge from Christian tradition. Instead, Christmas is a mixture of cultural influences, family rituals, and practices adopted and adapted by Christians in various ways.

However, Jesus is the reason for the joy that I want for Christmas.

And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where they child was.

Matthew 2:9-10

I'm reminded of the story of travelers from the far East who arrived in Palestine sometime after Jesus was born. This group planned their trip using some undisclosed combination of ancient prophecy, astrology, and likely other influences. They were searching for a child, who they believed, was destined to be King.

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!

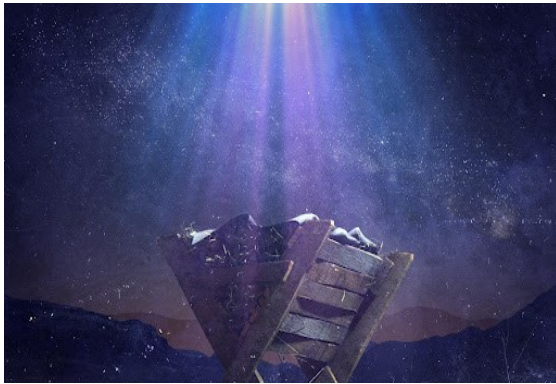


COMING UP THIS WEEK
DECEMBER 12 – DECEMBER 18

- Dec 12 Mon 6:00pm Worship Team
- Dec 13 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food/Water Distribution
 Angel Holiday Closet at South Flint
 Soup Kitchen (appts needed 239-3427)
- Dec 14 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
 Angel Holiday Closet at South Flint
 Soup Kitchen (appts needed 239-3427)
- Dec 15 Thu Angel Holiday Closet at South Flint
 Soup Kitchen (appts needed 239-3427)
- Dec 16 Fri
- Dec 17 Sat
- Dec 18 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
Connie Portillo	Office Manager
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Exec Chef & Dir Opers
Mike Sampson	Farms Manager
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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.

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:

And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him.

Matthew 2:1-11 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


- 1. Read the story of the visitors traveling to find the Christ child in Matthew 2:1-11. Is this story familiar to you? What insights into joy versus happiness does this story offer you? Can you relate to the travelers? Explain.
2. Read this week's article titled Joy. What makes you happy? Can you recognize a difference between feeling joy and being happy? Have you ever felt joy when you weren't happy? What makes you joyful? What is your Christmas wish?
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

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.

Understandably, their first stop was the existing king. I admire their moxie. After consulting with his own experts, the king sent them on their way, saying, "Go and make a careful search for the child" (Matthew 2:8). And they did.

As the story continues, we read, "When they saw the star that had guided them, how happy they were, what joy was theirs!" (Matthew 2:9). The group searched for happiness and found joy.

This is the experience of everyone who searches for joy and discovers that Jesus Christ is God.

However, joy is a divine gift that springs from our connection to Jesus Christ. Mel Walker argues that all things happen for a reason. So experiencing joy begins with recognizing that God is at work in our lives even amid unhappiness.

Perhaps, but I'm not sure that every bad thing we experience is God's choice. Instead, I believe that God, out of unconditional love, offers us the gift of choice. But all creation is connected, so individual choices have consequences that affect everyone else. And suffering often comes out of consequences from choices we did not make.

Nevertheless, joy is always within our reach. And the testimonies of spiritual giants who spoke of joy in the presence of unhappy circumstances bears witness to joy's perpetual presence.

I pray that you experience joy both during this Christmas season and beyond. Even when happiness is elusive.

And as far as my hopeful Hallmark Christmas. I pray that the joy Christ has given me will prevail even as plans fail and invited guests choose other options.

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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Andre. "Psychology of Joy vs. Happiness." © PsychologyEduca- tor, 2020. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Mel Walker. "What Is Joy in Christianity?" © [christianity.com](#), November 7, 2019. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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).

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Pastor Tommy

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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](https://www.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





ASBURY ORGANIZATION WIDE

6PM – 8PM