

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 25

Hope (Plans and Challenges)



What do you hope for this Christmas? Last week I shared that I was hoping for a Hallmark Christmas. A hope that is unlikely to happen according to my specifications. So instead, I'm choosing to hope for a joy-filled Christmas.

Does this mean that hope is a choice? Do you and I choose whether to have hope or not?

"In psychology, hope is a cognitive practice that involves the intentional act of setting goals and working toward them with purpose," writes Maya Shrikant. Her article featured the study of hope at Arizona State University's Hope Center.

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December 25, 2022



EVERYONE HAVE A
WONDERFUL AND-
SAFE WEEK!



Subterranean (The birth of good news)



Anyone who comes into my office and observes the clutter leaves with the impression that I'm messy. That is unless their workspace looks similar. In this case, they're likely to presume that there is a hidden order to the messiness that allows me to find what I need.

And this observation is partially correct but mostly wrong.

It started out with a degree of order. Each stack represented a different project with a priority that needed to wait until later. But over the past several years, some projects didn't reach the top. And my desk became interlaced with stacks of future work.

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One of my favorite lines from a Peanuts cartoon comes from the character Pigpen. Charlie Brown explains to Sally that some of the dust that sticks to their friend could be from ancient civilizations, such as Babylon. After which, Pigpen looks at Sally and says, "Sort of makes you want to treat me with more respect, doesn't it?"

Messiness often hides a less obvious order. Likewise, on the surface, we can appear put together, while inside, we're more of a hot mess. Grandma's wisdom comes to mind that you can't judge a book by its cover.

On the surface, these insights may seem trivial and not relevant to the story of Christmas in general or the story of Jesus' birth in specific. Dig into the layers a bit deeper, however, and you may catch a glimpse of what makes the news so good that angels proclaimed on the night of Jesus' birth.

An ancient prophecy spells it out this way: A child is born to us! A Son is given to us! And He will be our Ruler. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The good news is what lies behind these titles that uniquely belong to Jesus Christ.

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When we think of royalty, we're likely to think about the distance between them and us. The royals of Great Britain make headlines regularly, and their daily lives are beyond reach for ordinary people. I can't identify with the life of a prince.

But the prophecy of our Prince begins with naming a reality that still prevails today. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now the light is shining on them (Isaiah 9:2). So what is this great light that shines over us?

Jesus often used parables to explain His role in our lives that featured ordinary people. For example, Jesus used the illustration of a shepherd searching for a lost sheep. "This is what it is like," He explained. The shepherd searches for the lost sheep and celebrates its recovery. So when we're feeling lost, we can be assured that Jesus hasn't given up on us.

A child is born to us! A Son is given to us! And He will be our Ruler. He will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Mark tells a story about a time when a man with a dreaded skin disease came to Jesus for help. Leprosy was contagious, and infected persons were excluded from the community and left on their own to suffer. And the condition was apparent, leaving the victims scarred and their disease easily recognized.

The man got a bit aggressive with Jesus and even somewhat indignant. "You can heal me," he complained, "but only if you really want to." Didn't this man know that Jesus was the very definition of compassion? Of course, Jesus wanted to heal the man, and it was rude for the man to challenge Jesus.

Challenged or not, we're told that Jesus felt great compassion for the man. It apparently broke His heart to see a person suffering the way this man was obviously suffering. "I do want to heal you," Jesus replied. And the man was healed with the appearance of leprosy disappearing as soon as Jesus touched him.

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!

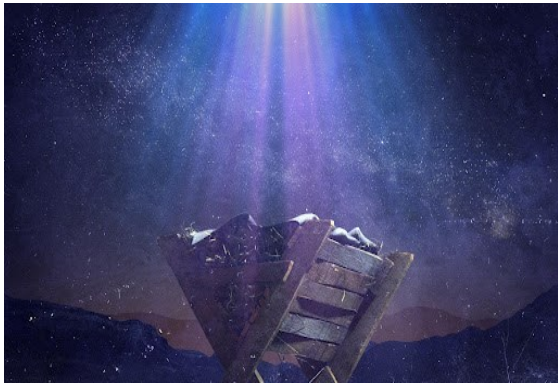


COMING UP THIS WEEK
DECEMBER 26 – JANUARY 1

Dec 26	Mon	6:00pm	Worship Team
Dec 27	Tues	10:00am-12:30pm	Food/Water Distribution
		3:00pm	CDC Board Meeting
Dec 28	Wed	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
Dec 29	Thu		
Dec 30	Fri		
Dec 31	Sat		
Jan 1	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).

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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.

In their research, the Hope Center staff discovered that hopeful students succeed more often in school and are more likely to participate in community activities. But there are substantive differences between hope, wishing, and optimism.

According to Crystal Bryce, Associate Director of Research at the Hope Center, "Hopeful people are able to set goals, identify ways to reach their goals and feel as though they can do the work to achieve those goals." Their research supports that hope is a choice.

John Parsi, Executive Director of the Hope Center, says, "Hope is an active process." The Hope Center works with children, youth, college students, and communities to help them become hopeful and achieve their dreams.

But the group recognizes that hope is contextual. For example, a lot of Christians associate hope with faith. And the writer of Hebrews tells us that to have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for and to be certain of the things we cannot see (Hebrews 11:1). Interpreting these words without additional context can lead us to conclude that hope is having faith in God to deliver on our hope. Rather than setting goals and doing those things that help us achieve that which we hope for.

In scripture, faith and hope often intersect during times of peril. And there's plenty of peril in scripture. Take, for instance, the exile of the Judeans by the Babylonians. With their homes and cities sacked, hope that depended on their power alone was elusive. They saw no way to make plans to return as long as their captors held power over them.

To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1

Ancient prophecy addressed their anxiety by describing a belief that their fate depended more on God than their own efforts or captors' will. The 80th Psalm is a prayer in response to this belief:

Bring us back, O God!
Show us your mercy,
and we will be saved!
How much longer,
Lord God Almighty,
will you be angry with
your people's prayers?
You have given us sorrow to eat,
a large cup of tears to drink
(Psalm 80:3-5).

Ben Yosua Davis writes in a reflection that "Hope is sometimes just a choice: a choice we make with clear eyes, one that we make even when the outcome is not assured...I don't have to feel hopeful to choose hope. Rather, it's a decision I make daily in cooperation with God to live out of hope, to practice hope, and to trust that it will be enough."

In his reflection, Davis shares his thoughts on a lesser-known hymn, originally written in Spanish and titled "Cuando El Pobre," translated as "When the Poor Ones." Written by Jose Oliva, the lyrics celebrate the willingness of persons lacking enough for themselves to choose to share the little they have with others. Oliva writes:

When the poor ones, who have nothing, still are giving; when the thirsty pass the cup, water to share; when the wounded offer others, strength, and healing; we see God, here by our side, walking our way.

Osheta Moore reflects, "Advent gives space for our most raw emotions and guttural cries for God." Moore reminds us that the story told by Advent begins amid conflict when the people ask, "Where is God?"

Life Group Questions & Notes:

A child is born to us! A Son is given to us! And He will be our Ruler. He will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


- 1. Read the ancient prophecy found in Isaiah 9:6. Examine the titles in this verse and reflect on what each one means for you. How do these titles affect the way that you view Jesus? God?
2. Read this week's article titled Subterranean. Are you generally orderly or messy when it comes to the spaces where you spend time? What about your appearance — are you usually well put together or anything goes? How does your outside appearance match how you're feeling inside? What does it mean to you that Jesus was born in a stable? What conditions are affecting you that keep you isolated from the community you want to be a part of? What would healing look like for you?
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.

Jesus enters into the messiness of our lives. He doesn't seem to worry whether there is some secret order that we use to cope with the chaos surrounding us. He doesn't love us based on our outward appearance or how we feel inside. Whether our condition is obvious, even if we're contagious, and when we appear put together but aren't, Jesus knows the truth and shows compassion toward us.

Jesus was born, we're told by Luke, in a stable where animals lived. Anyone who has been in a stable knows that it's nothing like a hospital birthing center. Anyone who has ever cleaned a stable knows that the smells aren't the odors you equate with sanitary spaces. Stables are messy places where animals sleep, eat, and poop.

His birth took place in a stable because there wasn't room for His parents to stay in the main house. They took what was offered them. They settled with whatever they could afford. Surely Mary had never imagined something like this happening to her. It's doubtful Joseph expected this was the best he could offer his bride-to-be.

That's right! I didn't mistype, and you read the facts. Mary and Joseph weren't yet married, and Mary was pregnant, but Joseph wasn't the father. Jesus entered into the messiness of life lived by most of us. Where resources are

short, choices are few, and mistakes get made. Except, in this case, decisions that would ordinarily be judged as unfortunate and unwise became wonderful outcomes. God's choices were on purpose and for a purpose.

Isn't it amazing that this is how God chose to live among us? God chose a stable over a castle and poverty over wealth. And the power Jesus had to heal was generously given without cost and often without so much as a thank you. His humility was a trademark of His service.

This is the story beneath the surface of the coming of the Messiah. This is the ordering below the chaos that we see all around us. This is the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

May the Christmas Season be a time of renewal for your soul, and may the New Year bring you abundant peace and joy. You are God's beloved child.

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

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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” ...

Exiled by their captors, it was clear to them that the world was broken and in need of salvation and restoration. However, the people longed for deliverance for generations before the Messiah was born.

The residents of Flint are familiar with longing and waiting. The people of Ukraine are familiar with death and destruction delivered by ruthless adversaries. The families mourning the loss of children gunned down with weapons manufactured for that purpose know tears. "Our stories personally and collectively mirror the story of Israel," writes Moore.

I'll never forget a line from a prayer I said after learning that my first grandson would not live to see his first birthday as a result of a hereditary disease. As I prayed with my daughter, her husband, and his other grandparents, I began my prayer with, "only God bears the burden of foresight."

Humans cannot predict the future. But we can have hope in the future and faith that God is with us. But our hope comes out of our belief that God lived among humanity. A belief that the birth of Jesus was both confirmation of God with us and our hope for salvation and restoration.

God said, through the Prophet Isaiah, "the Lord will give you a sign: a pregnant young woman will have a son and will name him Immanuel." God is with us regardless of our situation or circumstances. God offers salvation and restoration irrespective of our past.

This is the hope we celebrate at Christmas. This is the joy-filled Christmas that I hope for. And for me, my hope is supported by plans to gather with others for worship. Both on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas Day.

Hope is a choice to set goals supported by actions informed by a faith that assures us that God is with us through it all.

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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