

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 3 Issue 1

January 1, 2023



EVERYONE HAVE A
WONDERFUL AND-
SAFE WEEK!



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Q & A (I've Got Questions)



I like to think of myself as a life-long learner. And I believe that my motivation to learn is only one of the many blessings that God chose to give me. I learn something new every day.

One of the downsides to learning is discovering that I was wrong about something I thought was true. Fortunately, this isn't an everyday occurrence. Nevertheless, it happens enough that when I find out I was actually right about something, I'm sometimes skeptical that I may be missing something.

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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.

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.

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



THANK YOU — GRACIAS!

For all the wonderful gifts and beautiful Christmas cards I have received! My hope and wish is that everyone has a wonderful, safe and healthy New Year!!

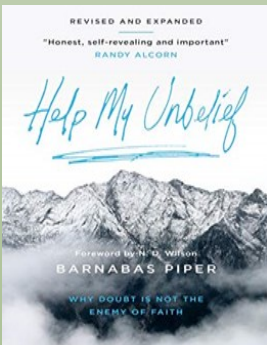
HAPPY 2023 TO ALL!!

Connie

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's book series is called "Help My Unbelief" by Barnabas Piper. It is based on his personal journey, what faith really means. Join us each Wednesday at 12Noon.

**COMING UP THIS WEEK
JANUARY 2 – JANUARY 8**

- Jan 2 Mon
- Jan 3 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
 Food Distribution
- Jan 4 Wed 12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Jan 5 Thu 1:00pm United Women in Faith
- Jan 6 Fri
- Jan 7 Sat
- Jan 8 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

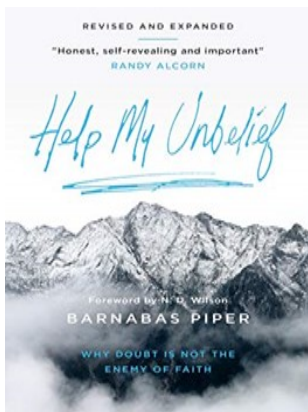


I'm fascinated by science. Unfortunately, my struggles with math limited how far I could progress. Nevertheless, I chose the science of computers as my field of study but focused on utilizing their power in business. Less math was required, and the demand was high. The problem for me was that I enjoyed the company of people more than machines.

Somewhere along the way, I moved further away from God. It was not the fault of science or technology, and I never thought of my situation as not believing. I never stopped believing God created science, scientist, and computer nerds. Nor did I find evidence in science that the universe came from somewhere other than God.

Book Club News

We completed our series and discussions on *The Wonder of*



Christmas. This series was written and produced by the Skit Guys as an Advent worship se-

ries, and we adapted their content for our use.

As we move into 2023, our first book deals with a subject familiar to every believer. Unbelief is often an under-acknowledged condition of our hearts. And instead of dealing with our unbelief, we choose hypocrisy as an easier road to travel. In other words, what we do is different from what we believe.

means. In doing so, he explains how embracing doubts and questions can help us to get to know God better. His aim is to help us trust God in our everyday lives, even when we don't understand everything we may want to know.

This book encourages us to ask God the hard questions that stand between us and let go of our doubts. Leaving us with the confidence to trust God, even when some questions remain. Initially published in 2015, his revised and updated edition includes biographical stories about Afshin Ziafat, C.S. Lewis, and John Piper.

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

In his book, *Help My Unbelief*, Barnabas Piper shares, based on his personal journey, what faith really

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

One reviewer writes this:

Upcoming Worship Series ...cont from pg 4

Instead, it was a matter of shifting priorities. God became less important than my ambitions. I tried to keep this shift a secret while not realizing that it's obvious when this happens. And God knows long before we realize it ourselves.

Scripture is full of stories about this happening to people. The results are never good. However, God does not give up on anyone. Some of us are slow learners, and it takes a lifetime to figure it out. Sadly, too many never do and miss out on the joy that accompanies trusting God with everything.

Our new series is based on a book by Barnabas Piper titled *Help My Unbelief*. In his book, he shares his personal journey with doubt and unbelief. And you and I gain insight into what faith really means.

The book title comes from a story found in the Gospel of Mark. A man brings his son, hoping to find a cure for his son's convulsions. When Jesus confronts the man about whether he genuinely believed that his son could be healed, the man asks Jesus, "I do believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:14-29).

It turns out that embracing doubts and questions can help us to get to know God better. So our hope for this series is that each of us will come to trust God in our everyday lives. Even when we don't understand everything we may want to know.

Fortunately, God never gives up on us. N. D. Wilson writes in his forward for the book that "When we cannot see, we are still seen." Jesus searches for the lost in the same way a Shepherd never gives up until a lost sheep is found.

We kick off 2023 with a dive into a struggle that is common to all believers, doubt. Few of us call our condition unbelief. But our unwillingness to be honest with ourselves does not change reality. Until and unless we fully trust God with every aspect of our lives, unbelief has a grip on us.

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

Barnabas Piper. *Help My Unbelief: Why doubt is not the enemy of faith*. © Barnabas Piper, 2020. Charlotte : The Good Book Company.

Knowing this reality, I've concluded that there may be some things I believe to be true about God that isn't true. This is a problem if there is a test that I'll need to pass before entering heaven. Fortunately, one of my beliefs is that there isn't an actual test. So perhaps, instead of a test, I'll experience Jesus having a belly laugh over some of my more outrageous beliefs that God finds particularly humorous.

This is the nature of belief as I've come to experience it. How about you? Do you have doubts about what you believe to be true about God?

According to his book, *Help My Unbelief*, Barnabas Piper has a few. And as a pastor and son of a pastor, I'm impressed at the questions he is willing to ask God. Some are the same as mine. But I still have questions about some of the beliefs he seems to take for granted.

One agreement we have in particular is about the Bible. We both believe God reveals precisely what God chooses to reveal in scripture. No more and no less. And scripture leaves us with more questions than answers. So why didn't God choose to tell us more?

While unsure of the answer, my guess begins with a question. Where would God stop if not where scripture stops? How many words would it take for God to fully disclose an infinite subject? Although I admit that math isn't my strongest subject, I'm pretty sure the answer is also infinite.

And I believe that God's nature continues to be revealed. However, our interpretations are imperfect and, a lot of times, downright wrong. But I believe God wants us to keep trying, which means we should never stop asking questions.

Barnabas reveals that his book's title comes from a story in Mark's Gospel. In the story, a man hopes that Jesus can heal his son. His son may have suffered from a condition beyond medical knowledge at the time. Nevertheless, the writer describes the boy's condition as possessed by an evil spirit.

Whether you believe in evil spirits is not the main point I want to highlight in this story. Jesus detected skepticism in the father's request when he added the qualification, "If you can?"

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Is this the essence of what it means to believe? That anything and everything is possible? If so, I've got a way to go with my belief.

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Mark 9:23-24

We read that in response to Jesus' comment, the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Elsewhere in scripture, we learn that belief of the caliber that Jesus referred to is a divine gift. But, as much as we may want to believe, we simply can't on our power. Even if we spend a lifetime studying scripture, become fluent in ancient Hebrew and Aramaic, and graduate from seminary. We are not able to fully trust God without God's help.

Life Group Questions & Notes:

“If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

Mark 9:14-29

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


1. Read the story found in Mark 9:14-29. What questions do you have after reading this story? What stands out as significant? What might God be waiting you to know from this story?
2. Read this week’s article titled *Q&A*. Do you have questions? Doubts? Are you willing to accept whatever answer God reveals to you? If not, why not? Does it concern you that you have doubts and questions? Why? Have you asked Jesus to help your unbelief?
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



January South Flint Soup
Kitchen Food Giveaways

January 11th & 25th
11am - Noon

NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED FOR
FOOD EVER!

South Flint Soup Kitchen

3410 Fenton Road
3 blocks north of Atherton
Flint, MI 48507

Questions? Call 810-239-3427





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 ***

Too often our struggles with doubt are hidden, pushed into the back of the cupboard like a corrosive agent that is too dangerous to touch. With clarity, warmth, and candor, Barnabas Piper shows us that doubt does not have to be something that corrodes, but rather in its right place can be something that strengthens faith. -Mark Sayers (07/01/2015).

Barnabas Piper is a pastor, author, podcaster, and speaker who lives near Nashville, Tennessee, with his family. He writes regularly for *He Reads Truth* and blogs at BarnabasPiper.com. Rev Piper has authored several books and Bible studies. In addition, he co-hosts *The Happy Rant* podcast, a popular show discussing issues of faith and culture in a light-hearted, humorous manner.

I invite you to join us each Sunday for worship as we explore belief, faith, doubt, and unbelief. We will dig deeper into these subjects each Wednesday as we read Piper's book together.

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 and are 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

The Wonder of Christmas. An Advent worship series written and produced by © Skit Guys, 2022. Used with Permission.

Barnabas Piper. *Help My Unbelief: Why doubt is not the enemy of faith*. © Barnabas Piper, 2020.
Charlotte : The Good Book Company

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

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” ...

Fortunately, the gift of belief is available to everyone who asks.

Once we run out of questions. Once we run out of options. And when we finally surrender our lives wholly and entirely to God, we receive the gift of belief.

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.

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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