

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Not Yet! (I believe I Am)



"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." This famous line from Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, reminds us that names don't matter nearly as much as who

we are.

But this doesn't keep us from using names as a shortcut to making assumptions about each other. Speculation on the connection between names and outcomes dates back further than recorded history.

However, scientific research on whether our parent's choice of name helps determine our future role in society is primarily credited to a study published in

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EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
AND SAFE
WEEK!



How? (Belief is a relationship)



According to Dr. Robin Dunbar, a professor of evolutionary psychology at Oxford University, I am fast approaching the age when the number of close relationships I'm likely to maintain is about to plummet.

Professor Dunbar is best known for the number 150. This number rose to fame after the anthropologist published a paper in 1993 that sought to prove that, on average, we can practically maintain around 150 meaningful relationships. Since then, 150 has become known as Dunbar's number.

For those who struggle to stay connected to more than a handful of people, 150 sounds like a lot. But for others who interact with substantially

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higher numbers of contacts through social media, the researcher's numbers seem wildly understated. Either way, I've never lived in a home that accommodated this many people.

Dr. Dunbar's theory is based on the size and importance of our neocortex, the part of the brain responsible for conscious thought. His research suggests that our social networks are limited by our capacity to hold more persons in our conscious minds. By the way, the number 1,500 is how many people you can recognize, according to his study.

Closer to home, according to the theory, we can maintain relationships with around 50 total friends. Add the qualifier "good," and the number drops to 15. Still, our inner circles are limited to around five people who may also appear on our cell phone's favorites list.

Professor Dunbar's research rose again to prominence during the height of COVID as psychologists responded to an increasing caseload of clients experiencing increased stress due to isolation. Also, the pandemic

winding down allows us to rethink navigating our social and professional circles.

Suppose you have a long list of Facebook friends. In that case, you may agree with a more recent study uncovered by New York Times journalist Jenny Gross that questions Dunbar's number. She discovered a group of Swedish researchers who argue that the size of our neocortex is not the limiting factor. According to their study, we can maintain a long list of relationships if we're willing to put in the effort.

When asked about the research that questions his number, Professor Dunbar challenged whether "relationship" in this recent research had the same meaning. Dunbar argues that your relationship is only meaningful if you know them well enough to greet them in an airport lounge without feeling awkward.

There is no doubt that the use of social media to stay connected increased significantly during the pandemic. But on the subject of social media taking us beyond our biological limitations, Dunbar notes that "Having a conversation isn't like

a lighthouse; it is not just blinking away out there, and maybe someone is listening, and maybe somebody is not."

Nevertheless, building and maintaining relationships take time and effort. And this holds true for our relationship with God. And for God to be a part of our inner circle means putting as much time and effort into our relationship with God as those closest to us.

This connection between belief and effort is logical. We can understand it, and we can do something about it. Prayer, reading scripture, fasting, meditation, journaling, worship, music, art, observing the natural world, and conversations with others all contribute to a closer relationship with God.

Paul is credited, or blamed, for instructing us to "pray without ceasing." And while this sounds like Paul had no other friends taking up his time, connecting with God happens when we're not consciously praying or doing any of the things on the earlier list. At least not in the traditional sense.

For example, Isaiah offers a glimpse into the heart of God. We're told that to get closer to God we should share our food with the hungry and give clothes to those who need them (Isaiah 58:7). When we do, we connect with God.

You are like light for the whole world... In the same way your light must shine before people.

Matthew 5:14-16

How do I know this?

Jesus tells us that whenever we offer water to someone thirsty, food to someone hungry, and clothing to someone in need of clothing, it's Him that we're really connecting to (Matthew 25:40). That's the miracle of our friendship with Christ. God's Spirit is always as close as our own breath.

I pray that you'll choose to work on keeping Jesus Christ in your inner circle. He should be first on your favorite list. I'm confident that if you do this, the rest of your inner circle will be glad you do. When doing so, we become like a light on a hill quickly noticed (Matthew 5:15).

And it is through our belief that our relationship with God grows. We all struggle with doubt for a multitude of reasons. It's similar to the highs and lows in our closest relationships. One difference, however, is that God keeps all of His promises and loves us through it all.

Barnabas Piper writes, "Alone we are blind. The Spirit gives sight. Alone we are foolish. The Spirit gives wisdom. Alone we are dead. The Spirit gives life."

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's](#) homepage - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to our [YouTube channel](#). You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to connect@FlintAsbury.org or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

Content for this series is based in part on: Barnabas Piper. *Help My Unbelief: Why doubt is not the enemy of faith* © Barnabas Piper, 2020. Charlotte : The Good Book Company.

"Dunbar's number: Why we can only maintain 150 relationships." © [BBC.com](#), 2023. Retrieved from: [link](#).

Jenny Gross. "Can You Have More Than 150 Friends?." © New York Times, May 11, 2021. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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's book series is called "Thirsty" This series promises to be informative, challenging and inspiring.. And I hope you all will join us each Wednesday at 12Noon.



**COMING UP THIS WEEK
FEBRUARY 13 – FEBRUARY 19**

- Feb 13 Mon 6:00pm Worship Team Meeting
- Feb 14 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
Food Distribution
- Feb 15 Wed 11am-12N Food Giveaway at
South Flint Soup Kitchen (No appts needed)
12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Feb 16 Thu
- Feb 17 Fri
- Feb 18 Sat
- Feb 19 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 "Thirsty"

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The Season of Lent is a special time of year for many churchgoers, and Lent is celebrated in various ways. For many, Lent represents a time of deep reflection. For others, Lent is a time for dieting or giving up favorite foods. The day before Lent begins is commonly referred to as "Fat Tuesday") as some of us indulge by eating a pastry known as a Paczki.

We launch our new series on Wednesday, February 22, with an Ash Wednesday service at Court Street Church. The themes for our series is shared among Flint Area United Methodist Churches. Our series is based on content provided by a local non-profit, Clean Water for the World.

At Asbury Church, we're calling our series *Thirsty*.

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Book Club News

We finish our series and discussions on a subject familiar to every believer this Sunday. Next Sunday we'll transition to our new series, *Thirsty*. Over the past several weeks we explored the reality that 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.



World, our Sunday message, and other sources. Our goal is to wrestle with obstacles preventing access to clean water and reflect on possible solutions. Stories from scripture offer guidance on every aspect of life. Interpreting and applying biblical truths, however, require prayerful discernment that is best done in a group.

For Lent, our group will dig deeper into each week's message utilizing reference materials from Clean Water for the

I invite you to join us each Sunday for worship as we explore what it means that access to

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Katelin Maylum	Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
	South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service

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Anthony, Jim	Ushers
Jonathon, Terrance	Production Team
Miriam	Children
Cyndi	Worship Leader
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Upcoming Worship Series - "Thirsty" ...cont from pg 5

We launch our new series on Wednesday, February 22, with an Ash Wednesday service at Court Street Church. The themes for our series is shared among Flint area United Methodist Churches. Our series is based on content provided by a local nonprofit, Clean Water for the World.

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Water is a powerful metaphor in scripture. From the creation story in Genesis to the river of the water of life in Revelations that sparkled like crystal, water is crucial to life. Life is unattainable without water, but not all water is suitable for human consumption.

In this series, we'll dig into a few water stories from scripture as we explore the obstacles preventing access to clean water for everyone. And we'll learn about responses and how we can help ourselves and others.

The *Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church*, adopted in 2016, calls access to clean water a human right. Yet, estimates of water usage predict that global water demand could surpass sustainable supply by 40 percent by the end of the decade. This prediction is based on energy production utilizing 75% of total water consumption combined with rising energy usage and population growth.

In the U.S., we take access to clean water for granted. At least we did until 2016, when residents of Flint discovered that our public water supply was unsafe to drink.

Speaking of Thirsty. Did you know Flint is not the only U.S. city dealing with lead in their public water? According to the NRDC, high levels of lead are showing up in the public water of Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Newark, New York, Pittsburgh, and Washington D.C. Another study estimates that over half of U.S. residents drank water with detectable levels of lead between 2018 and 2020.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates the number of lead service lines to be between 6 to 10 million. However, a 2021 NRDC survey estimates a number closer to 12 million. Either way, there is a lot of damage left to undo.

Lead is a national crisis, and President Biden has called for eliminating all lead service pipes. But is this enough?

Most Flint residents are familiar with the dangers of lead. We took the time to learn about lead because too many of us ingested lead by drinking water coming out of our public water source. In 2016, Flint appeared in headlines worldwide when it became public that children were testing for high lead levels. In fact, lead levels had doubled since the city water began coming from a different source.

If life itself is a human right then so is access to clean water. I invite you to join us for this series that promises to be informative, challenging, and inspiring.

We welcome Pastor Brian Willingham from Bristol / Burton Christ Churches who plans to be at Asbury on March 12.

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

Clean Water for the World, a Michigan nonprofit. Find more information at CleanWaterfortheWorld.org.

The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church 2016. © Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016.

Keith Mulvihill. "Causes and Effects of Lead in Water," © NRDC, July 09, 2021. Retrieved from: Link.

1948 by two Harvard Professors. The research offered evidence that men with unusual names were academically less successful and more likely to exhibit symptoms of psychological neurosis than men with more familiar names.

In *The New Yorker* magazine, award-winning author Maria Konnikova summarized some of the research that's taken place since this original research was conducted. One of the more disappointing studies found that names influenced the selection of candidates for positions more than credentials. Specifically, the research showed a racial bias among resume reviewers giving less credence to claims made by individuals with names that sounded like a person of color.

The bottom line, humans use names as shortcuts. And sometimes, these shortcuts have life-altering effects despite the overwhelming evidence that names offer almost no insight into our identities. A rose, by any other name, still has a distinctive fragrance.

Names are one of the many things that children learn at an early age. Parents teach their children how to write their names, which becomes a critical skill later in life.

Children learn functional nicknames for those closest to them, such as mom, dad, and grandma. It's culturally rare for children to address the adults close to them by their actual names.

And then we become adults. A time when we learn to address each other by labels. Often, our label is also our name. But we frequently label each other with titles that reflect our role and usually our position of relative importance. Some of us are doctors, and a few are judges. Each label is a shortcut that conveys information while missing attributes most relevant to what it means to be human.

For many of us, labels leave us with the pressing question, "Who am I, really?" This question presses upon us as we realize that labels are temporary shortcuts. While our souls long for eternal existence.

Moses is one of the prominent names found in scripture. His story is located in a book called Exodus. This label represents God's intervention in human affairs to free enslaved people. Moses encounters God when he discovers a bush on fire in the wilderness.

God said, "I am who I am."

Exodus 3:14

God recruits Moses to lead people who do not know him to freedom. When Moses asks God for a name that he can offer to the people that substantiates his authority, God refuses his request. There is no name that isn't a stand-in for something finite. Therefore, no name sufficiently acts as a shortcut for God, was the implication.

Life Group Questions & Notes:

Moses replied, "When I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' So what can I tell them?" God said, "I am who I am."

Exodus 3:13-14

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Exodus 3:4-14. What did you take away from reading this story? What names do you use for God? How did you come to choose the names you use? What do you suppose God meant by telling Moses that God's name is I AM?
2. Read this week's articles titled *Not yet!* Do you go by the first name that appears on your birth certificate? If not, what name do others know you by? What name do you prefer to be called? Why? How does your name match who you are? What does the name Jesus Christ mean for you? In what ways does this name bring you comfort? Why? What other names do you use when referring to Jesus? How are they the same or different?
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”



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.

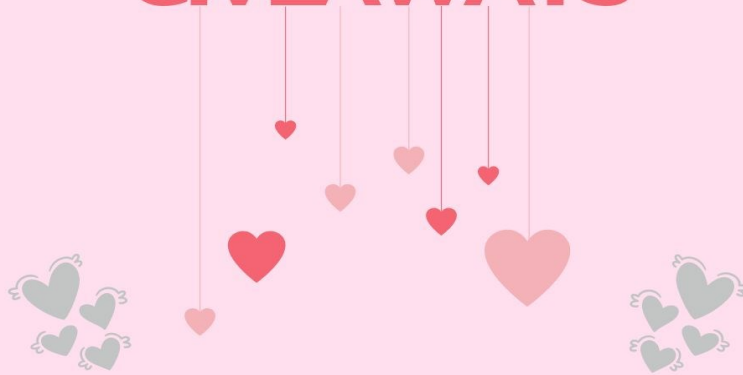
Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated 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

FEBRUARY FOOD GIVEAWAYS



FEB 8TH & 22ND
11AM-NOON



NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED!



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



QUESTIONS? CALL 810-239-3427



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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 ***

to clean water is a human right. I invite you to join us for this series that promises to be informative, challenging, and inspiring. And I pray that you'll join us each Wednesday as we dive further into each week's teaching.

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 or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

***Clean Water for the World*, a Michigan nonprofit. Find more information at CleanWaterfortheWorld.org.**

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

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN'S 1ST
ANNUAL
**BROWSE THE CLOSET
FUNDRAISER**

**FEBRUARY 25TH
3PM-5PM**

SWAP YOUR OLD STYLES FOR NEW ONES, PICK UP SOME
GOODIES AT THE BAKE SALE, AND LISTEN TO THE MUSICAL
STYLINGS OF JOHN LI!



**\$5 cover charge, hors d'oeuvres and other
refreshments provided!**

ENTRY ON VERMILYA SIDE OF BUILDING

**3410 Fenton Road (3 blocks north of Atherton) Flint, MI 48507
Questions? Call 810-239-3427**

The farm's new twist on a
CSA Food Box!!!!

Bring home only the veggies you love!

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" ...

Instead of a name, God instructs Moses to tell the people that "I am" sent him. This label was later claimed by Jesus Christ, and it stuck for Christians as one of the many labels used to refer to God's identity.

What God said was passed along as a story from generation to generation and first written in ancient Hebrew. The transliteration is written as *hāyā*. This ancient Hebrew word, sometimes translated as an English expression, appears over 3,500 times in the Hebrew texts. Most often, the term simply implies that something exists with no other qualifications.

The story of God instructing Moses to tell the people I AM sent him is interpreted in numerous imaginative ways. Perhaps Moses was to simply tell them that God exists. Yet *hāyā* is a plural form and usually points to the future, leading some, particularly Jewish scholars, to translate God's instructions as "Tell them We will be who we will be."

Barnabas Piper writes, "Our lives are based on a promise of 'not yet' fulfilled through Jesus's life for those who continue on in belief." And our

belief that God keeps promises makes it possible for us to live with the unsettledness of not yet. We find peace in the assurance that God has our back despite counterarguments.

God chose the name Jesus Christ for us to have a shortcut label that reminds us that God knows everything about the challenges of living in not yet. And through Christ, we learn much about God's trustworthiness. But we can never know, or even imagine, all there is to know about God. At least not yet.

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Maria Konnikova. "Why Your Name Matters." © The New Yorker, December 19, 2013. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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



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

STAY TUNE ...

WILL POST MORE IN
OUR WEEKLY ASBURY
CIRCUIT RIDER!!



First Saturdays at the Farm

Sliding Scale Veggie Sale

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

HEALTH IS
WEALTH.

Music by DJ lei lei

Farm Tour

Learn: Asbury's winterizations
techniques

Asbury Farms

1601 Jane Ave
12.00am - 3.00pm

QnA w/Experienced Horticulturists

Kid Stuff

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

More Details@ [facebook.com/AsburyFarmsFlint](https://www.facebook.com/AsburyFarmsFlint) events