

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!



Innocence (Line crossing)



We've reached the end of our series, *Help my unbelief*, and celebrate Ash Wednesday this coming week as the season of Lent begins. Lent is intended as a time of deep inner reflection about God and our connection with God.

During Lent, many of us will dig deeper into our beliefs about God while pondering the question, "Just what do I believe?" After all, how can we not believe that God is the creative power in control of the natural world? How can we not believe that God created sunrises and sunsets, waterfalls, and waterfowl?

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Ah, but there are people. Humans who piss in streams and throw their fast-food packaging out their windows for others to pick up. People who exploit others for their own gain. People who lie about anything and everything to get what they want. All of this makes us skeptical and suspicious. So why doesn't God do something about those people?

For most of us, the worst takes place elsewhere. So while we may be startled, we're thankful we weren't directly affected. While pictures and headlines may tell frightening stories, they're not life-threatening until it happens nearby.

For example, my interest in unmanned objects flying over North America increased significantly when a U.S. pilot shot one down over Lake Huron near the Michigan border. So far, these objects appear to be non-threatening and mostly annoying. But our lack of clarity leaves ample room for conspiracy theories to gain traction. What is going on? Should we be worried?

However, far more serious and real is the increase in gun violence that seems to be happening everywhere at once.

Again, evil can seem more like something that happens elsewhere. That is until it comes closer to home.

This past week a gunman killed three students on the campus of Michigan State University. He critically wounded five others before taking his own life. The murdered students were teenagers when our communities were shocked by the killing of high school youth in nearby Oxford.

We take notice when evil comes that close to home. We respond we take sides, we make choices, and we wonder. How is God good but allows so much evil to happen?

This question has baffled humans since the beginning, and we find an explanation in scripture passed down through the generations. The story was told by elders to grandchildren and shared around campfires for centuries before it was written down for our reflection centuries later.

However, the story reads more like a Disney children's movie ad than the hard-hitting, action-packed cinema that keeps us glued to a screen. It is a "once upon a time" story with few lines.

Nevertheless, each word gets surgically analyzed, and its meaning is interpreted in an effort to shape our daily lives. Still, for most of us, it's just a story.

As chapter three of Genesis begins, God has created the very first humans. In two chapters, nothing became something, and science tells us that millions of years passed as life flourished on earth. However, debating over missing details of what happened how and when distracts us from our earlier question. How did it come to be that humans choose to destroy each other and the planet we depend on for life?

According to the story, God warned humanity that there is a line that shouldn't be crossed. Some knowledge, the logic goes, leads to temptations that can weigh on our curiosity and some wear us down. And we are both curious. After all, this is how we learn to heed the warning of our server not to touch the plate they put in front of us using a hot pad. But we touch it anyway.

As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked.

Genesis 3:7

Googling "What does it mean to lose your innocence" yields this definition: "A loss of innocence is usually thought of as an experience or period in a person's life that leads to a greater awareness of evil, pain, and/or suffering in the world around them."

And that's what we learn from scripture. One person crosses a line God drew in the sand despite warnings, and recruits another person to join her. One lesson that emerges is that humans always have a choice when inflicting suffering on others.

But this explanation doesn't fully explain a shooters' motives, even when the prosecutor lays out a compelling argument.

According to the *New York Times*, Payton Gendron, age 19, apologized for killing ten innocent people because of skin color. And he blamed his rampage on the content he read on social media. Nevertheless, the Judge ruled that the shooter deserved no mercy and would never be free again.

Blaming his loss of innocence on social media doesn't reverse the damage, and the Judge ruled that there would be no second chances. Like Eve

choosing to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, the consequences are irreversible.

Law enforcement made the arrest, and prosecutors presented sufficient evidence to convince jurors to agree on guilty. This case is cut and dry. The perpetrator is over 18, of sound mind, and made his decision without coercion.

Are there no laws against posting content that influence disastrous decisions? Not really, since otherwise, case backlogs would overflow with accusations against a long list of influencers. And many of the names on such a list hold enormous power over large numbers of people who take their rants much more seriously than they do. But is there a line in the sand, drawn by God, that some chose to cross?

If so, why doesn't God build a wall instead of drawing a line?

Barnabas Piper offers this assurance in the Afterword of his book, "If you hang on to your relationship with God, you will find happiness beyond explanation on the other side." Perhaps this is all that's left after Eve's crossed the very first line. We need to "hang in there" and believe that God's grace is sufficient for all of us.

Perhaps this is where faith, belief, and trust converge. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, we hold onto as much belief as we can muster, that God is still in control of the outcome, even after one of us crosses the line.

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.
Jesse McKinley and Dan Higgins. *"Buffalo Gunman Sentenced to Life in Emotional and Dramatic Hearing."* © New York Times, Feb. 15, 2023. 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

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 20 – FEBRUARY 26**

- Feb 20 Mon 6:00pm Leadership Team Meeting
- Feb 21 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm
Food Distribution
- Feb 22 Wed 11am-12N Food Giveaway at
South Flint Soup Kitchen (No appts needed)
12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Feb 23 Thu
- Feb 24 Fri
- Feb 25 Sat 3pm-5pm Browse the Closet Fundraiser
at South Flint Soup Kitchen (see flyer)
- Feb 26 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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Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
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
Christine & Norma	Cafe

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Upcoming Worship Series - "Thirsty" ...cont from pg 5

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

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:

As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked.

Genesis 3:7

NOTES FROM WORSHIP


QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Genesis 3:1-13. What are some of the beliefs you had about this story before reading it again? Did you learn anything new reading it again? Try retelling this story in your own words? How does this story shape your view of why evil exists?
2. Read this week's articles titled *Innocence*. When and in what ways do you recall losing your innocence? How are you coping with the onslaught of news about violence? In what ways do these events affect your belief in God? What are some of your core beliefs that even bad news can't shake?
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.

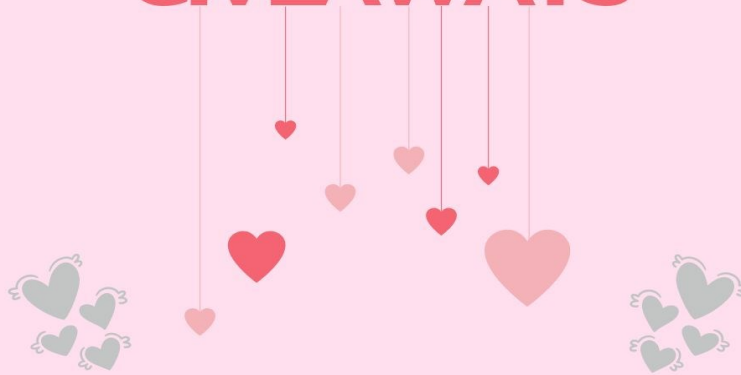
Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated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

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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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

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



Your hobby farm probably started as a way to get back to your roots, literally. It was a way for you to reconnect with nature, your food, and the land and a way to create a sustainable lifestyle. And you're probably aware that there is a growing demand for organic produce and healthy living.

Thus, the idea of turning what was once a hobby into a business enterprise is a smart one. And there are several ways of going about monetizing your farm, depending on what you enjoy doing, what your farm will support, and what the need is in your area. Below, Asbury Farms explains more about how to develop your passion into a hobby farm.

Choose the Products You Will Sell

The first step is deciding what you want to sell. You can sell vegetables, eggs, honey, or other goods that you produce on your farm. If you are not sure what will be popular with the public, then ask your friends and family for their opinion.

Besides produce, you might consider selling crafts like [wreaths made from items on your farm](#), homemade soap, beeswax candles, handmade birdhouses, or whatever craft you enjoy.

You can have a U-pick for strawberries, a Christmas tree farm, or a pumpkin patch with hayrides. But of course, all of those would mean your farm has easy access to a road and a town within easy commute.

Determine Your Target Audience

Next, you need to think about where your audience is. Do you want to sell at a farmers market, a grocery store, or through a CSA, [Community Supported Agriculture](#)? Next, how much time do you want to spend on sales? Do you want to be more hands-on and sell at markets in person? Or do you prefer the convenience of selling through an online shop?

If you're selling online, HostGator explains that you must make sure your website [lists all of the items](#) that you want to sell as well as what they will cost per item or by weight (if it's something like honey). You also need to include information about where the product is coming from (your farm) so customers know they are getting quality goods from an ethical source.

You may decide to get involved in a community organization like [Asbury Farms that resources local farms](#) to feed those in need. Look into similar programs in your area to give back to the community.

Make Your Marketing Efforts Count

Make sure that you have a website that is [easy to navigate](#) and provides information about your farm. This will attract customers who want to know more about the products that you have available.

Use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to get the word out about what you have to offer in terms of products or services. These platforms are free and easy for anyone with an internet connection, so they are accessible to a wide range of people. Share pictures of what goes on there on a regular basis, and include videos. You can also [make a YouTube channel](#) to provide how-to tutorials.

As you are selecting content for your social media and other digital marketing posts, be sure to focus on SEO (search engine optimization) practices. You'll want to use the right key words and phrases in your content and metadata so that search engines pull your content when people search for those phrases. It's important to know that PDFs are more SEO compatible than other file formats, so use them for your posts. [You can convert](#) most files over to this format using a free online conversion tool. It's as simple as dropping in the file and saving the newly formatted version.

How to Structure Your Business

The next step is deciding what kind of business entity will work best for your needs. How much capital do you need, and how much time do you want the business to take up in your life? Will it be a sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or S-Corp? Many small businesses [prefer to structure as S Corps](#), which is not a separate type of business entity like a corporation or an LLC. Instead, it is a tax election that you make with the Internal Revenue Service. It is taxed as a regular corporation but not as a partnership, and it keeps the business separate from its owners, which means that you [don't have to pay self-employment taxes](#).

Turn Your Garden into a Growing Business

If you are a homesteader who is looking to monetize your hobby farm, you have everything you need in your own backyard, literally. Just decide what you want to do and what your area will support, choose the business structure best suited to you, market like crazy, and your hobby can soon turn into a very enjoyable and profitable business.