

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 3 Issue 16

April 16, 2023

Never the Same (Quenching our Thirst)



It is customary during Holy Week to look back at what the first followers of Jesus witnessed. We imagine what it must have been like to see firsthand what appeared to be the end of their hope that Jesus Christ was and is

the long-awaited Messiah. After all, deliverance means something different for each of us. Yet salvation also has commonality. In particular, we desire that our thirst be quenched.

We've talked, reflected, and considered what it means to be thirsty for several weeks. We began by exploring the depths of our thirst, imagining what it

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EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
AND SAFE
WEEK!

DONATE

Missing (Searching for Jesus)



Google "How much food should I cater for a wedding?" and you're apt to find a rule known as the "25 to 50 Rule." This formula suggests feeding 50 to 75 percent of your anticipated guest count. But the answer I discovered also included the disclaimer, "Don't forget to count your guests and their guests."

As we begin our new series, *Water into Wine*, we follow the adventures of the main character of Angela Hunt's novel, *Daughter of Cana*, a woman named Tasmin. Writing in the first person of the main characters, Tasmin, along with Jude, younger brother of Jesus, we learn about Jesus through the witness of two persons standing outside the main crowd following Him. We explore the same stories we find in scripture from an almost uncomfortable distance.

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Is this really what most people living during that time thought about Jesus?

As Tasmin's story begins, she and her brother are catering a wedding in the village of Cana. Their father owns a date farm, and Tasmin is famous for the delicious desserts she makes using dates harvested from her father's trees. She also knows how to cook for a crowd and host a party. But Tasmin prefers staying in the background, ensuring every guest eats well and is satisfied.

Tasmin is noteworthy for another reason. Like numerous women referenced in scripture, her name never appears. Tasmin comes out of the imagination of the author, Angela Hunt, who chose to give a name to a subtle reference that this person exists.

Tasmin's twin brother is Thomas. Yes, the same Thomas whose name does appear in scripture fifteen times. However, to know that Thomas had a twin, we presume that John mentions that Thomas was called "the twin" as a reference to an unmentioned sibling. Angela simply chose to assume that the reason his twin isn't mentioned is that his twin was a she. And women are often unnamed in scripture.

This week's message is inspired by the first four chapters of Angela's book, which takes us through five days of a weeklong wedding celebration. Tasmin sarcastically estimates there isn't enough wine in all of Cana for such a large number. The bride and groom substantially underestimated how many guests would bring other guests, expecting to be fed.

A family from Nazareth grabbed center stage in Tasmin's worry about the guest list. Mary, the widow of Joseph, was a relative of the couple and an invited guest. Her children accompanied her, as expected. But what wasn't in the wedding plans was the additional guests invited by Mary's oldest son, Yeshua.

In a Q&A article about her book, Angela Hunt shared that she used a combination of names transliterated from Greek and Hebrew. For example, Yeshua is a transliteration of the Hebrew name found in ancient manuscripts for Jesus, which comes out of a root word meaning "to rescue."

Tasmin takes an immediate interest in Yeshua, but for reasons that may differ from your expectations. Nevertheless, their connection is foreshadowed by the first time that they notice each other:

"In a sudden silence, Yeshua shifted and his gaze caught mine. I stiffened, momentarily embarrassed to be caught staring, and lowered my eyes. I thought he would do the same, but when I lifted my head, he was still staring, with the suggestion of a smile on his lips. He nodded, almost imperceptibly, as if we shared a secret."

The secret they share will have to wait. Like every good novel, the author methodically unveils their character as the plot unfolds. And families often have

the inside scoop on the nature of other family members. But there isn't a lot to go on in scripture regarding how the family of Jesus saw their loved One.

This week's theme scripture provides fodder that feeds Tasmin's interest in Yeshua. An interest motivated by a combination of emotions resulting from the fascination that Thomas demonstrates toward him. She and Thomas were not only born on the same day to the same mother. They were best friends and business partners. Thomas had duties and responsibilities that he put aside to spend time with his new friends, Andrew, Simon Peter, Nathanael, James, and John, listening to every word from Yeshua.

Pretending to be cleaning up after dinner, Tasmin eavesdrops on a conversation when Yeshua is not with his brother and the others. "Tell us, James, about growing up with Yeshua?" asked Simon Peter. "We're like any other family," came his reply, perhaps a bit irritated by the attention these men gave to his brother even when he wasn't around.

"There was this one time," paraphrasing his response. James continues recalling a story later written down by the writer we call Luke. Jesus was twelve, according to Luke, and the family was visiting Jerusalem for the annual Passover Festival. A day after the family left to return home, they discovered that Jesus wasn't with them.

Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem to continue their search after realizing he wasn't with the group of travelers returning to Nazareth. Finally, after three days of searching, they found Jesus in the temple. He was sitting with the Torah teachers talking with them about the details of scripture. Even at a young age, Jesus has an uncanny insight into ancient texts.

His parents were worried and exasperated. Jesus questioned their need to search for him. After all, wouldn't it make sense that he would be in his Father's house? "Huh?" sums up the parent's response. Nevertheless, Luke tells us that his mother hid this incident in her heart while waiting for her son's life story to unfold.

Reading our author's embellishment, told through the eyes of a younger brother, brings the story to life. When I think about the divinity of Jesus, I'm not at all surprised that Jesus was already teaching religious experts about God a year ahead of when Jewish boys were mitzvahs.

But the story becomes more personal when I consider that Jesus was also human. How often did I worry my parents by wandering off without their knowledge? In real life, children learn independence, and parent worry about their safety. And I believe God lived among us, like one of us, to help us make a personal connection.

They found Jesus in the Temple; sitting among the teachers of Law, discussing deep questions with them and amazing everyone with his understanding and answers.

Luke 2:46-47

I invite you to follow along with us during our series. You can obtain a copy of Angela Hunt's book online, in bookstores, or look for it at the library. Our copies went fast, but you can contact our office if you need help finding a book. The paperback cost on **Amazon** was \$13.69 the last time I checked, but you can find used copies or read an e-version for less money.

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

Our series was inspired by and relies on content provided by Angela Hunt. *Daughter of Cana*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2020. Angela Hunt. "Another Q&A," © *INSPIRED BY LIFE ... AND FICTION*, August 15, 2022. Retrieved from: **Link to Article**

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom
Sylvia Pittman
Richard Oram



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Virginia Bigger Nancy Elston
Norma Buzzard



EXCUSE OUR MESS WHEN COMING INTO OUR ASBURY BUILDING.. WE WILL BE UNDER CONSTRUCTION FOR NEXT FEW WEEKSBUT WE WILL STILL BE HOLDING SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY!

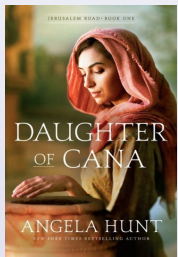
Not to much longer and we will be back in our offices! If you need to get a hold of us, please use our email at FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com and I will try to follow up with your questions/ concerns as soon as I am able to.

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 "Daughter of Cana" by Angela Hunt. This book will take readers on a tour of the many characters found in scripture and a few that didn't get mentioned.... I hope you all will join us each Wednesday at 12Noon.



Our Asbury member Nancy Elston was admitted into Hurley Hospital last week. She is in Room 724, Bed 1. Please keep her in your prayers. And she is welcome to visitors, but call first!

Please continue prayers for Virginia Bigger. She is now home but still recovering.



**COMING UP THIS WEEK
APRIL 17– APRIL 23**

- April 17 Mon 3:00PM Staff Meeting
6:00pm Leadership Team Meeting
- April 18 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm Food Distribution
- April 19 Wed 11am-12Noon Angel Closet at South Flint Soup Kitchen (\$5 or proof of income-see flyer for more details on page 15—no appts needed)
12Noon Pastor Book Club
- April 20 Thu
- April 21 Fri
- April 22 Sat
- April 23 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.)

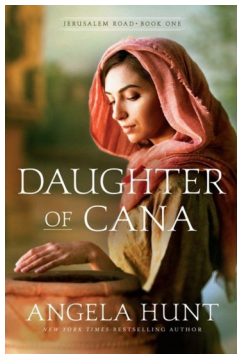
Upcoming Worship Series "Water into Wine"



According to scripture, Mary, the mother of Jesus, attended a wedding in Cana. The guest list was apparently quite long and included Jesus and other friends of the family, relatives, and friends of friends. Weddings lasted multiple days, and the groom was expected to provide ample food and wine for all guests to have their fill. And this wedding was no different. But a problem was brewing.

The Gospels are full of stories void of detail. Rather than a fictional novel where an author takes us through every twist and turn, building characters with dialogue and description, the bible leaves us hungry for more.

Book Club News



The very first Easter marked the beginning of a new era in human history. God chose to live among humans, and, as a result, life

would never be the same.

We begin a new worship series called *Water into Wine* in

the spirit of new beginnings. Our companion book was written by best-selling author Angela Hunt. This book is a part of her *Jerusalem Road* series that takes readers on a tour of the many characters found in scripture and a few that didn't get mentioned.

Although Hunt's book is fictional, her attention to details in scripture challenges our knowledge of the Bible. With each character, we meet the questions that percolate inside us. What parts of her description are likely genuine,

and which are made up? Was Thomas really like that? Did Thomas have a twin sister?

Allow our author's creativity to ignite your creativity in exploring the stories of Jesus. Here's what the publisher says about the book:

Thomas and Tasmin, twin siblings hired to oversee a wedding feast in Cana, worry when the host runs out of wine . . . until a guest tells Tasmin to have the servants fill the pitchers by the gate with water from the cistern. Reluctantly, she obeys and is amazed when rain-water becomes the finest wine ever tasted in Cana.

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
- Chris Freeman South Campus Bldg Mgr
- Israel Unger Finance Director
- Kim Sims Connections Suprv
- Terrance Williams Arts Center Mgr
- Katelin Maylum Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
- South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service

- Tony, Mirium Welcome Team
- Anthony, Jim Ushers
- Jonathon, Terrance Production Team
- Yasheah, Mirium Nursery
- Cyndi Worship Leader
- Christine & Norma Cafe

Upcoming Worship Series—“Water into Wine” ...cont from pg 5

Who is the twin brother of Thomas, or is she his sister? Who else was in the room when Jesus washed the feet of His closest allies? Who prepared the meals? What did they eat?

Beginning the first Sunday after Easter, join us as we explore possible answers to questions left hanging from Nazareth to Jerusalem. We start with a story of Jesus as a young boy gone missing as His family returned home from celebrating Passover in Jerusalem.

We won't dive into every story, but all of the tales add to a greater familiarity and a deeper understanding of the Gospels.

We won't allow best-selling author and theologian Angela Hunt to fill in some of the details behind the stories. Each week, after reading the story as told by Angela's creative imagination and gift for storytelling, we will dig into what scripture actually tells us. And we will imagine and share our own versions, as we find ourselves immersed in the stories of Jesus.

In a book from her *Jerusalem Road* series, *Daughter of Cana*, Angela follows Jesus from Nazareth to Cana, Capernaum, and Jerusalem. Along the road to Jerusalem, we will meet other characters, some only mentioned by name or reference, nevertheless, witnesses of God living among us.

You are invited to join us on Wednesdays at Noon to dig deeper into each week's message. You can purchase Angela Hunt's book, look for it at the library, contact our office for a copy, or pick up a copy before or after worship on Sunday.

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

must be like to be so dehydrated that we're parched. And we prayed for millions worldwide who know the meaning of parched firsthand as it relates to a lack of clean water.

Our journey began on Ash Wednesday. Unfortunately, the worship service we planned in common with our friends at Court Street was canceled due to dangerous weather conditions. Nevertheless, setbacks don't keep us from pursuing relief. So we didn't let the difficulty of the journey keep us from making it. After all, the stakes are too high. We're thirsty, and relief lies at the road's end, not the beginning.

Most of us are spiritually parched. Oh, we believe and all that. Yet, not a day goes by when we're not distracted by everyday worries, disappointments, and doubt. And most of us turn to our habitual goto for comfort.

I tend to eat when I'm feeling stressed. Usually, without conscious awareness, I'm not enjoying my food or even paying attention to what or how much I eat. And I'm blessed that my coping habits aren't more damaging to my well-being.

Jesus sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then He broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.

You know the feeling. You're thirsty. So you go to the refrigerator for something cold to drink. Afterward, you feel better for now. Yet, there is still something missing. You're still thirsty.

But your thirst is not for more of whatever you drank. The hunger you're feeling isn't for more chips or candy. The urges bubbling up within you are not for whatever habitual coping crutch you've grown attached to that gets you through another day.

During our journey for Lent, we turned to an expert on social justice. This topic lies at the core of what a Messiah was expected to accomplish. Eric Nilsen writes, "By social justice, we mean that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities – irrespective of their religion, caste, or creed – and particularly those in greatest need."

So if our Messiah came and ushered in a new era of justice, why does the world's richest one percent own over forty percent of its wealth? How does ten percent of the world's population live in poverty?

Perhaps for many of us, it's shocking when we discover that we are the ones we've been waiting for to make the changes that we so desperately want to happen. We know that the handful of influential leaders controlling most resources aren't interested in the kind of changes that Jesus came to make. The truth is they're more parched than most of us but have not learned that wealth and power won't quench their thirst.

This Easter, we walk along side Cleopas and His unnamed friend as they flee from disappointment and hopelessness. The person they hoped was the Messiah was executed as a common criminal and died like we all die. Once again they thought, they put their trust in another human only to be disappointed that letting each other down is too much part of our shared human condition.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

They found Jesus in the Temple, sitting among the teachers of Law, discussing deep questions with them and amazing everyone with his understanding and answers.

Luke 2:41-52

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS


- 1. Read the story of Jesus' parents finding the boy in the temple talking to the Torah experts in Luke 2:41-52. Can you place yourself in this story? In what way? Are you the missing child or the frantic parent? Was Jesus listening or teaching? Or Both?
2. Read this week's articles titled Missing. When have you felt abandoned by someone close to you when their attention focused on someone you don't know? What was your reaction to the other person? When you think of Jesus are you able to picture Him as a person? When you read the story of His parents finding Jesus in the temple discussing scripture with the religious teachers, which attributes of a twelve year-old stay remain part your image? Explain how you balance His human versus His divine attributes.
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

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!!





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 ***

When Thomas impulsively decides to follow the teacher from Nazareth, he and Tasmin argue. The twins have been together since the womb, and Tasmin can't accept losing her brother to some magician-prophet. But, aided by Jude, younger brother to Jesus of Nazareth, she decides to follow the Nazarene's group and do whatever she must to mend the fractured relationship and bring her brother home.

Angela Hunt has published over 100 books, selling nearly 5 million copies worldwide. Angela, a New York Times bestselling author, received the Times Book Club Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. She has a Ph.D. in biblical studies in theology and is well-versed in biblical text. Angela can be found online at www.angelahuntbooks.com.

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



EXPERIENCE APPLEWOOD AS A VOLUNTEER!!



Have you been looking for a way to serve your community?

The Ruth Mott Foundation is adding to our roster of dedicated Applewood volunteers for the 2023 season.

Applewood was built in 1916 as the historic home of Charles Stewart Mott and his family.

Today, it's a community resource open to visitors from May through October near the Flint Cultural Center.

Volunteers at Applewood play a vital role in programming and customer service. The benefits of volunteering are learning new skills, meeting new people, and serving your community.

If you're interested in learning more about volunteering or signing up, please visit applewood.org and scroll to the Volunteer section.

If you have questions, please contact Julia, Manager of Visitor Services, at jpopler@ruthmott.org.

Visit applewood.org to apply!

South Flint Soup Kitchen

ANGEL CLOSET PROCEDURES

YOU MUST BRING PROOF OF
INCOME WITH YOUR NAME AND THE
DATE (FROM THIS YEAR ONLY)
CLEARLY LISTED ON THE PROOF.
**CLIENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE ANGEL
CLOSET SERVICES IF THEY MEET
THE FOLLOWING:**

HOUSEHOLD SIZE ANNUAL INCOME:

1 - \$17,667

2 - \$23,803

3 - \$29,939

4 - \$36,075

**IF YOU DON'T MEET THESE
REQUIREMENTS OR HAVE A PROOF
PRESENT, THERE WILL BE A SMALL
ADMINISTRATION FEE OF \$5.**

QUESTIONS??? CALL 810-239-3427

So they dealt with their disappointment the only way they knew how using the only power they had under their control. They ran away.

Sometimes we can collect our thoughts, reenergize and recharge, and set out on another quest. However, no matter how often we quench our thirst, we discover that our physical thirst returns and our spiritual thirst are never satisfied. Until that is, we see and recognize that Jesus is alive.

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**](mailto: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

Our series was inspired by and relies on content provided by [**CleanWaterfortheWorld.org.**](#)

SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN

APRIL GIVEAWAYS

Angel Closet - April 5th &
19th, 11am-Noon (\$5 or
proof of income, see back
of flyer for details)

Food Giveaways - April 12th
& 26th, 11am-Noon

No appointments needed!

3410 FENTON ROAD
(3 BLOCKS NORTH OF ATHERTON)
FLINT, MI 48507

810-239-3427

