

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 3 Issue 30

APRIL 30, 2023

## Overflowing (Wine for Everyone)



Water is a necessity. Too little water, and we die. Too much water and we also die. And water, for most of us, is so basic that it's, well, basic. So we add lemon to water. We chill, heat, and add tea leaves or coffee beans to change its flavor and composition.

## Waiting (The One)



Are you a patient person? Or do you start to fidget when you're waiting, desperately trying to expel nervous energy? Some of us pace when anxious or just move our legs in place. Others simply can't wait and go about doing instead of waiting for someone else to do what

Water can also be a metaphor for scarcity. We say we live on bread and water to suggest poverty, meaning we can't afford embellished water. And we certainly can't afford fine wine. We have more of a "beer" budget we might say.

This comparison suggests wine can be a metaphor for abundance. Wine satisfies a desire for something more than water but in balance. Too much

*Page 7*

they believe needs to get done.

Those who subscribe to the famous Nike slogan "Just do it!" may be prone to doing rather than waiting. While this sounds admirable, sometimes waiting is the best course of action. Mainly when we're waiting for someone more qualified. It's not so wise to take apart whatever isn't working if you don't know how to put it back together.

*Page 2*

EVERYONE

HAVE A

WONDERFUL

AND SAFE WEEK!!

**DONATE**

## Inside this issue:

Overflowing	1
Waiting	1
Waiting	2
Upcoming Worship Series	4
Pastor's Book Club News	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Upcoming Worship Series	5
Upcoming Worship Series	6
Overflowing	7
Life Group Questions	8
Feed Flint	9
Feed Flint	1
Asbury Water Box/Meal Kits	11
Asbury Veggie Boxes	12
Pastor Book Club News	13

Those known as the descendants of the "people of the Exodus" learned patience, but it took a generation of God's intervention for it to sink in. Freed at last from cruel oppression in Egypt, the ancestors of those living in first-century Palestine learned to trust God for everything from basic needs to meaning in life.

Perhaps their special status or uncommon practices drew negative attention toward them. Sadly, they should be admired rather than criticized. Or maybe it's simply that God chose to document their plight as lessons for all humanity. The friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances of Jesus knew both the struggles of their people and the divine promise of a Messiah who would free them once and for all.

God didn't just speak through one prophet, and some signs signaled God's plan unfolding. Isaiah told of a voice crying out in the wilderness that all should repent of wrongdoing in preparation. Micah speaks about a Messiah leading the people to freedom. And Malachi promises God's intervention into human affairs and a day of reckoning.

It feels like Christmas is coming soon whenever I start talking about the person commonly called John the Baptist. He goes by a variety of titles. Some parts of Christianity know him as John the Forerunner, while others call him John the Immerser. In Islam, he is referred to as the Prophet *Yahya*. Regardless of which modifier we added after his name, John was different.

First, John was a Nazarite. Not much is said about this practice, but according to the Book of Numbers, Nazarites vowed complete dedication to God and abstained from any kind of drink made from grapes or containing alcohol from fermentation. Second, Matthew tells us that John's clothes were made of camel's hair, he wore a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

John was more than a fashion statement or an entertaining sideshow. He was a charismatic preacher that drew large, diverse crowds from around the region. And John was candid about God's expectations for people, calling out leaders in particular. His titles, however, come from his practice of immersing persons in water as a sign that they chose to repent of wrongdoing and make changes in their life.

Most important, however, was John's message that he wasn't the One that the people were waiting on. Instead, John was just as a messenger. His purpose was revealed to his father, Zechariah, before John was born. And Jesus first met John while in His mother's womb when Mary visited John's mother, Elizabeth, when they were both pregnant. God also revealed to their mother's that something extraordinary was underway. Just watch!

We all know who John refers to since we know what happens next. But as often as I've read the stories. I still find surprises whenever I revisit them. So I've learned to be patient even though I think I know how the story ends.

I love how Angela Hunt tells the story using conversations between persons not featured in scripture. For example, one of the younger brothers of Jesus tells how their mother shared God's revelation about her relative's son. In her book, Jude hopes to find his brother in the crowd gathered to hear John speak.

"Are you the Christ we have been waiting for?" a man shouts from the crowd listening to John speak. "No" was the simple answer. In Angela's scripture quotation, John the Baptizer responds, "I immerse you in water for repentance. But the One coming after me is mightier than I am; I am not worthy to carry His sandals. He will immerse you in the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* and fire."

*Ruach ha-Kodesh* comes from Hebrew. It refers to the Spirit of God. And what it means to be immersed in the Spirit of God continued to unfold throughout history. And the mystery continues today.

One day, Jesus showed up in the crowd as John was speaking and baptizing. And He asked John to immerse him. John protested at first, sensing that Jesus may very well be the One he was talking about when he said someone else was coming after him.

Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing ..."

Matthew 11:4

Sometime later, John would send messengers from a prison cell asking Jesus straight up. Are you the One? The answer Jesus gave offers insight into the heart of God. Jesus told them, "Go back and tell John what you hear and see. The blind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor."

What can we learn from this response? Later, Jesus will tell His followers that they are to continue His work. So our answer lies in how we believe God is calling each of us to participate in continuing His work.

Jesus ended His response to John's messengers with this promise, "How happy are those who have no doubts about me!"

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. We have more copies coming.

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 Angela Hunt. *Daughter of Cana*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2020.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom  
 Sylvia Pittman  
 Richard Oram



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
 HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

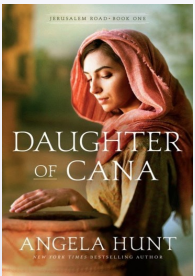
Virginia Bigger      Nancy Elston  
 Norma Buzzard

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 is now at Brairwood Nursing Center. Please keep her in your prayers.



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

Another long time member of Asbury has passed away over the weekend, Winnie Howe. Please keep the Howes in your prayers as they say goodbye to their beloved family member. Wonderful lady will be missed dearly.



**COMING UP THIS WEEK  
 MAY 1- MAY 7**

- May 1    Mon    3:00PM    Staff Meeting
- May 2    Tues    10:00am-12:30pm    Food Distribution
- May 3    Wed    12Noon    Pastor Book Club
- May 4    Thu
- May 5    Fri
- May 6    Sat
- May 7    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](#).)

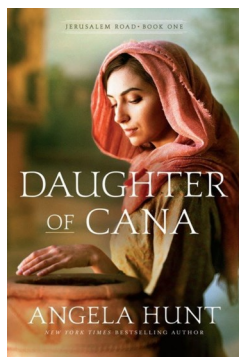
## Upcoming Worship Series "Water into Wine"



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.

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
- 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

wine leads to drunkenness. Similarly, too much of any good thing comes with consequences.

Wine is much more than flavored water. Wine is a composition of human effort in harmony with nature. Yeast consumes the sugar in fruit, converting it to ethanol and carbon dioxide and releasing heat. Making fine wine is an art.

But when all is said and done, wine is mostly water. Without water, there is no wine. Therefore, abundance is impossible without first meeting basic needs.

You've probably heard the story, but just in case you haven't, there are a few details you need to know. First, the event took place in Cana, which tradition suggests was a small village not too far from Nazareth in the hills of Galilea.

Today, Nazareth boasts the largest Arab-Israeli population in Israel. More than half of the Arab residents are Muslim. But in the first century, the people of this village were Jewish. And scripture tells us that Jesus lived there as an adolescent and young adult. The family of Jesus moved to Nazareth from Egypt, where they fled after the news of His birth angered the reigning king.

According to John's Gospel, Mary, the mother of Jesus, attended a wedding in Cana. Translations of this story claim that Jesus and some of His inner circle were also there by invitation. However, Angela Brown, in her fictional telling, speculates that Jesus was invited as one of Mary's "plus ones," and His friends came as extras invited by Jesus.

This explanation supports what happened next. So many extra guests arrived that it was clear the host hadn't stocked enough wine to serve everyone.

But before we dismiss the drama that unfolded as a simple case of poor planning, remember that Jewish weddings last a week. And out-of-town guests were unable to return home for dinner each evening. Also, neither Motel 6 nor the Red Roof Inn had expanded into small rural towns. In other words, a whole lot more wine was needed than planned.

Also important are the expectations put on a host in antiquity. Hospitality is a prevalent theme in scripture. God insists on hospitality. So to run out of food, wine, or even water, was to deny guests that which God deemed necessary.

Anyone who has prepared food for a large crowd that seems to multiply in real time knows a few tricks. For example, since wine is mostly water, why not increase the wine by adding water. Of course, quality suffers, but the extra guests require desperate measures. Unfortunately, by the end of the celebrations, the quality of the wine reaches its lowest point.

Mary recognizes an inhospitable situation in the making. There wasn't enough wine in Cana to satisfy this growing crowd. So the host would serve pure H2O by the end of the week. Mary wanted to help but her resources were limited, so she turned to her oldest Son.

At first, Jesus responds more like a teenager asked to help with dishes than an obedient son. Nevertheless, scripture tells us that He did as His mother asked and agreed to devise a solution. Mary tells the waitstaff to do whatever her Son asks.

Every home had giant water jugs used by guests to wash after their dusty trip. But even these were empty from the demand of too many guests. So Jesus tells the workers to fill the jugs with water.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing..."

Matthew 11:2-6

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read the story of how Jesus answered John's questions in Matthew 11:2-6. If you want to learn more about John the Baptist do a Google search or keyword search at biblegateway.com. As you read the story, think about your own questions regarding what it means to say that Jesus is the One God sent to save you. Share your answer with others.
2. Read this week's articles titled Waiting. Are you a patient person? What habits support answer? What does it mean to wait for help from God? How does Jesus' answer to John's question affect you? What is your role in continuing the work that Jesus did? In what ways is Jesus continuing to perform miracles in your life?
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”

Page 10



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](https://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](http://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](http://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](http://applewood.org) and scroll to the Volunteer section.

If you have questions, please contact Julia, Manager of Visitor Services, at [jpopler@ruthmott.org](mailto:jpopler@ruthmott.org).

Visit [applewood.org](http://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

These were massive jugs. It takes a lot more water to wash bodies than it does to water down wine. And, by now, most of the guests had arrived, so the need for full water jugs wasn't the problem. Can you imagine the puzzled looks on the faces of those watching?

Speaking of puzzled looks, Jesus tells one of the servers to draw a cup of water from one of the jugs and take it to the person in charge. And they do. But what happens next is thought to be the first miracle by Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

One sip made it abundantly clear that the cup the head server was handed contained perhaps the finest wine in all of Cana. And there was plenty of wine to satisfy every guest and then some. It was a wedding miracle! But why?

Why didn't Jesus turn just enough water into wine for the guests to not complain? Why not match the quality of the wine the host had served to this point? The head waiter told the host, "You saved the best wine for last!" Was Jesus showing off His winemaker skills?

Remember that God puts a premium on hospitality. Welcoming others and providing for their needs ranks near the top of God's expectations for humanity.

And God's track record is abundance. Scarcity is a condition created by the failure of humans to love and cooperate with one another.

Everyone else serves the best wine first, and after the guests have drunk a lot, he serves the ordinary wine. But you have kept the best wine until now!

*John 2:10*

The scarcity you witness around you is an illustration of the worst of humanity at work. But it never has to be this way.

Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of Heaven, bringing divine favor to humanity. And entry is into God's Kingdom is easy. Love God and your neighbor.

However, faith and fellowship are choices we each make. But each decision we make effects everyone else.

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. We have more copies coming.

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Pastor Tommy

Our series was inspired by and relies on content provided by Angela Hunt. *Daughter of Cana*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2020.



**MAY GIVEAWAYS!**

Angel Closet - May 10th & 24th, 11am-Noon  
\*\$5 or proof of income needed, see back of flyer for details.

Food Giveaways - May 17th & 31st, 11am-Noon

NO APPOINTMENTS NEEDED!

**SOUTH  
FLINT SOUP  
KITCHEN**

**3410 FENTON ROAD**

3 blocks north of Atherton Road  
Flint, MI 48507



**MORE INFO**

810-239-3427

(FORMERLY UNITED METHODIST WOMEN)  
US ...

WANTS YOU TO HELP

God brings us  
spring with bright  
rain, buds on trees  
garden, so we want  
our friends at



Asbury.

New Beginnings every  
sunshine and warm  
and healthy plants in our  
to celebrate all this with

We want to thank the Asbury congregation, our farm staff and the Asbury community development team with a *“special breakfast”* shortly after church on Sunday, May 7, 2023 (actually at noon). We are so blessed to have staff, volunteers and friends of Asbury to help us plant, grow, harvest and distribute vegetables and other produce from our many hoop houses to share with our community again this year. We couldn't have done it without YOU!

There is no set price this year, but we are asking for your reservation and a *“LOVE OFFERING”* for your meal. We will have door prizes, a short program and even some fun!

We have a lot to thank God for again this year. This is the second time we have been able to be together for a meal since the Pandemic began more than 3 years ago, so please join us!! God loves YOU and So Do We!

We do need you to let us know if you are able to attend so we will be sure to have enough food prepared. Chef Kevin will be in the kitchen. [Please let](#)

