



ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 3 Issue 3

DECEMBER 3, 2023

Evergreen (Leaving exile)



EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL AND
SAFE
WEEKEND!!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

	1
Evergreen	1
Evergreen	2
	3
Coming Up this Week	4
In Our Prayers	4
Upcoming Worship Series/Book Club	5
Upcoming Worship Series (Letters)	6
Life Group Questions	7
Feed Flint	8
Feed Flint	9
Bottled Water Drive to SFSK	10
Support your local farm	11
Book Club News	12
Ways to Give to SFSK	13
Upcoming Worship Series	14
Book Club Update	15
Evergreen	16
Homemade Salsa for sale	

Can you believe it's December already? Retailers started stocking their shelves with decorations a couple of months earlier. People everywhere are recalling and replaying Christmas traditions from Black Friday shopping to adorning their homes with lights and a variety of decorations. One of my traditions is watching Christmas movies during Thanksgiving break.

We titled our series for this year's Christmas season *Letters*. And Nancy Naigle's book, *Letters to Santa*, from her *Christmas in Evergreen* series, seems like a good starting point for discussing letters. Sticking with tradition, I first watched the Hallmark movie version of her story.

Evergreen (Leaving exile) *cont. from pg 1*

Lisa Palmer lived an unsettled life. As a child of military parents, she claimed to feel at home in her unsettledness. Traveling to different towns to help store owners reorganize was her specialty.

With no particular plans for the Christmas holidays, she decides to spend time in the town of her birth, Evergreen. Lisa had not been back since her family moved away when she was seven. One place, particularly meaningful to Lisa, was Daisy's Country Store.

Discovering the store closed and its owner deceased, Lisa recalled her last day in Evergreen. She wrote a letter to Santa that day asking that every Christmas be in Evergreen. Daisy, after reading the letter, suggested a subtle, yet powerful change. How about asking Santa for every Christmas to be "like" Christmas in Evergreen?

Of course, how we view and celebrate Christmas depends as much on each of us as it does on others. But it helps when others around you are of the same mind. For a lot of us, fresh snow adds a touch of magic to the holiday.

We each have memories that triggers our recollection of Christmas past. For many of us, the spirit of Christmas represents an abundance of goodness. Good food, deeds, decorations, parties, and gifts. All in greater abundance than at other times.

However, while the Christmas season may invoke tradition, we don't all view the holidays from the same vantage point. We're more often in a different place with different circumstances than the Christmas stored away in our imperfect memories. Sometimes our lives are unsettled. Other times we may feel exiled from the places where our traditions took root.

In the Bible, Babylon is a persistent metaphor for exile. And the idea of exile is less about a physical place than the emotional space we occupy. While our views of exile are as varied as our traditions, the consistent cause of emotional distress is the absence of God.

The most prevalent story of exile in the Old Testament centers on the people of Judah after the siege of Jerusalem. Ancient prophets warned of a time of darkness because of the people turning their attention towards other priorities and away from God. The result was exile.

There will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy!

Isaiah 35:2

However, God never gives up on us. And for most of us, the Christmas season is a reminder of God's love for humanity.

The Prophet Isaiah casts a vision of what it is like to return from exile. There will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! It will be as though all of creation is celebrating. Our outlook turns from darkness to light from gloominess to joyfulness. God is coming to save us!

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom
Sylvia Pittman
Jonathon Misner

Terrance Williams



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Nancy Elston



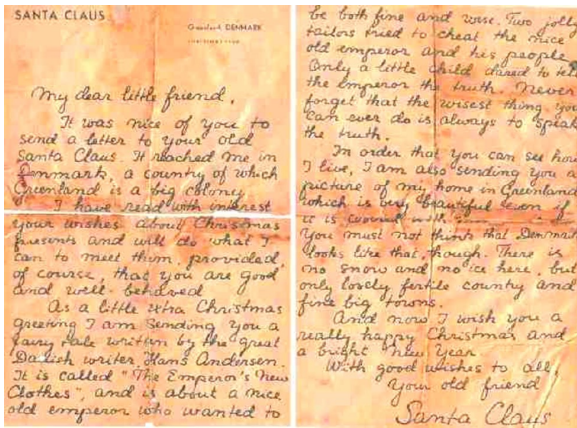
COMING UP THIS WEEK

DECEMBER 4 - 10

Dec 4	Mon	2:00pm	Staff Meeting
Dec 5	Tues	10am-12N	Food Distribution
Dec 6	Wed		
Dec 7	Thu		
Dec 8	Fri		
Dec 9	Sat		
Dec 10	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

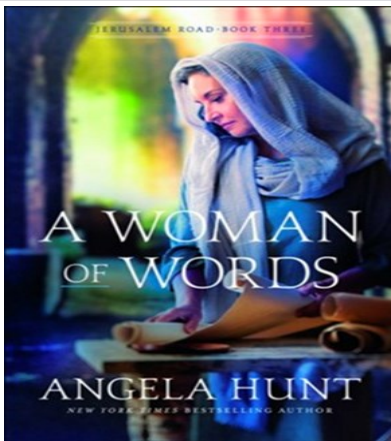
(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)

Upcoming Worship Series "Letters"



One of my favorite activities to do the week of Thanksgiving is to watch movies with a Christmas theme. Hallmark produces most of the movies I choose. There are more choices than time to watch them all, but the commonality between them reminds me of the similarities of messages found among greeting cards. A man or woman is in a place where they would not ordinarily be. Some obstacle or challenge presents itself. They meet someone, and somehow pieces fall into place and they live happily ever after.

Book Club News



Our companion book for our new worship series is Angela Hunt's third book in her

Jerusalem Road Series. *A Woman of Words* recounts the time after the Resurrection of Jesus when the church first takes root as His followers share the good news.

The narrators are two familiar characters. Matthew was a tax collector named Levi when he first met Jesus. One of the least likely candidates for ordination. But Jesus saw in Matthew what others could not.

and perhaps, least understood of all the persons who travelled with Jesus. Angela Hunt fills in the gaps using her imagination and an in-depth knowledge of scripture and speculation about scripture.

James, Peter and John ask Matthew to move to Jerusalem and help with the growing church. He dreams of preaching and performing miracles, but finds his dreams postponed after speaking with Mary, Yeshua's mother. Mary asks Matthew to help her write down the stories of Yeshua while the eyewitnesses are still available to be consulted.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is one of the most recognized,

Asbury Staff

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 Kevin Croom Executive Director/CDC
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 Sylvia Pittman Empowerment Arts
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 Mike Sampson Farms Manager
 Terrance Williams Arts Center Mgr
 Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
 South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service

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

Upcoming Worship Series — “Letters” ..cont from pg 4

I have often thought of creating a worship series based on one or more Hallmark movies. After all, many of their themes remind me of the ups and downs of many stories found in scripture.

Christmas is a time of anticipation. Most of us have preferences for how the season should play out based on imperfect memories of past holidays. And although we can picture the expected outcome, life happens in ways we had not anticipated.

Welcome to our series *Letters*. If you prefer books to movies, I encourage you to read along with me as our imagination wanders from the pages of Nancy Naigle’s book to ancient times, when persons and communities also faced life-altering decisions.

**Weeping we sat beside
the rivers of Babylon
thinking of Jerusalem.**

Psalm 137:1

Of course, the movie, *Christmas in Evergreen: Letters to Santa*, is available from the Hallmark Channel if this is your media of choice.

As I searched through Hallmark’s library, reading dozens of summaries, Babylon kept popping up in my subconscious. In scripture, Babylon is a city, a region, and an empire. Most of all, Babylon is a place of exile.

Abram and Sarai, better known as Abraham and Sarah, were originally from Babylonia. It was in Babylon that the community attempted to build a tower tall enough to reach heaven. The people of Judea were exiled in Babylon.


As with most movies, biblical stories are about specific people. While, at the same time, the stories reveal things about ourselves. We’re not only invited to take on roles as we experience the story, we are the story.

As the daughter of military parents, Lisa Palmer lived an unsettled life. And as an adult, she wanted to return to Evergreen, the town where she was born, to spend Christmas. Lisa’s family left Evergreen when she was seven. Before her family left, Lisa put a letter to Santa in the box at Daisy’s General Store asking that she could spend every Christmas in Evergreen. Daisy, the store owner, suggests she make a slight, but subtle change to her letter that every year be “like” Christmas in Evergreen.

“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**

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

There will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy!

Isaiah 35:2

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Isaiah 35:1-10. What images come to mind as you read this text? In what ways does this prophecy remind you of the Christmas Holidays?
2. Read this week's articles titled *Evergreen?* What is exile for you? Are you in exile now? If so, describe exile? What would returning look like for you? If you're not in exile, in what ways does your emotional location match with Isaiah's description of returning from exile? What are some of the differences?
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.

South Flint Soup Kitchen ...

BOTTLED WATER DRIVE



All Year Long!

Our clients need bottled water for cooking, going with sack lunches, to bathe and brush their teeth with, and MORE!

Donations are accepted Monday-Friday

11:00am-12 Noon at South Flint Soup Kitchen,

3410 Fenton Rd (3 blocks north of Atherton Rd)

Flint MI 48507

Any questions, please call 239-3427 or 235-0016 or

Email us at southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

To donate: www.mightycause.com/feedflint



Show Your Support For Your Local Farm

We need your help to purchase fencing to keep our furry friends from eating up all our crops and not sharing with us.

How You Can Donate

- Text "FARMCDC"
- to 53-555
- Scan QR Code

Donate Now



More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

Reluctantly, he agrees, although the two face numerous complexities. For one, Gaius Caesar, more commonly known as Caligula, decides to raise a statue of himself in the Holy Temple. And he is willing to kill every man in Israel if needed.

Matthew's attention turns to saving his people. Meanwhile, Mary encourages him to come to terms with his past. When they finally near the completion of their project, Matthew realizes that the job he reluctantly accepted might be his God-given destiny.

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?

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. Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that weeks chapters. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. I've purchased ten books but when they're gone you can still purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

Angela Hunt. *A Woman of Words*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2021.

Cash or checks can be sent to/dropped off at South Flint Soup Kitchen, 3410 Fenton Road, Flint, MI 48507. Please make checks out to South Flint Soup Kitchen!

Online at www.mightycause.com/feedflint

Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday 11am-12Noon. Calling ahead is not necessary, but our needs change frequently, so calling ahead of time is a good idea!

Give time! We need volunteers!!! Volunteers arrive at 9:30am and are done by 12:30pm. Tasks include handing out lunches, assisting in the Angel Closet, light cleaning, putting together items to pass out to clients, and more.

Refer people!!

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427

or email southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com

The people of Judah’s exile in Babylon came because of turning to other gods and losing their connection with the One True God. While in exile, they longed for holidays like they had when God was an everyday presence in their lives.

Christmas is particularly situated as a time of longing for God’s presence. Anticipating what might be possible when God lives among people, beginning as a helpless baby born in a place that new parents would not choose.

May your holiday be like Christmas in Evergreen. May your Christmas be filled with the peace and joy that Christ alone brings to all believers.

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



NEW
CHRISTMAS TRADITION!!

Beginning December 1st, read one chapter
Of the Book of Luke in the Bible each evening.

There are 24 chapters.

On Christmas Eve you will have read an entire account
Of Jesus's Life and wake up
Christmas morning knowing WHO
And WHY we celebrate!

Michele Weston, President
United Women in Faith



As Charles Schultz said through his character Linus in one of my all-time favorite movies, "And that's what Christmas is all about Charlie Brown!"

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 FlintAsburyChurch.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

Parts of our series was inspired by Nancy Naigle. *Christmas in Evergreen: Letters to Santa*. Hallmark Publishing..© Crown Media Family Networks, 2019.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BUYING
HOMEMADE SALSA HOMEMADE SALSA???!
WOULD YOU AT LEAST LIKE TO TRY IT??



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CALL THE ASBURY CHURCH
OFFICE 810-235-0016

PRICES ARE: 12 oz. \$4.99

24 oz \$8.99

THE GREEN SALSA WILL BE MILD.

THE RED SALSA WILL BE HOT.