

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Leaders (Living by example)



Country music singer Jason Aldean finally had a song make it to the US Billboard Hot 100, thanks in large part to a controversial video. Aldean did not write the lyrics for "Try That in a Small Town," but he took the heat for filming a video in front of the Maury County Courthouse in Columbia, Tennessee. A site

known for the 1927 mob lynching of an 18-year-old Black man, Henry Choate. CMT quickly pulled the video once the controversy started.

Page 2

EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
AND SAFE
WEEK!!

DONATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Strangers (Walls and Bridges)



I still remember the anxiety I felt leaving for vacation during the oil crisis. The Nixon administration reiterated US support of Israel in response to a Saudi threat to halt oil shipments. An oil embargo ensued, gas prices soared and long lines at gas stations became part of our landscape.

Strangers	1
Leaders	1
Leaders	2
Coming up this week	3
In our prayers	3
Upcoming Worship/Book Club	4
Upcoming Worship Series/Book Club	5
Feed Flint	6
Feed Flint	7
Life Group Questions	8
Bottled Water Drive for SFSK	9
Support your local farm	10
Book Club News	11
Ways to Give to SFSK	12
Upcoming Worship Series	13
Strangers	14
Strangers	15
Leaders	16

Equipped with false optimism and a few experiences with finding gas stations with gas before lines formed, I set out despite the risk that I could get stranded. Throughout the trip, I watched for gas stations that looked abandoned. More often than even my optimism imagined, an empty station had gas available, but went undiscovered since the public looked for lines instead of open signs.

Page 14

Aldean defended the lyrics, the video and his decision to be a person willing to speak up after seeing news coverage of protests turning violent. In a New York Times article by Livia Albeck-Ripka, Aldean says "I know that a lot of us in this Country don't agree on how we get back to a sense of normalcy where we go at least a day without a headline that keeps us up at night."

The two chapters from our companion book for this week describe the major contributions to a cultural shift that began in the 2nd half of the last century. Preceding the shift and likely contributing to the coming change, crime increased dramatically across the county.

As crime increased, so did feelings of insecurity, along with a major shift in political alliances. White fright became a political strategy and blue collar Americans changed party affiliations in large numbers. The increase began during a time of relative economic stability, contradicting conventional thinking that crime rises because of increases in poverty.

Instead, crime started rising prior to the breakdown in cooperation between business, government and labor that correlated with rising living standards. During this cultural shift, business leaders organized around unregulated free enterprise influencing legislators through lobbying. And the balances that made democratic capitalism possible were systematically eliminated.

David Leonhardt writes "Just as the 1930s started a new political era, so did the 1960s. It was the decade when the coalition that had built democratic capitalism and allowed millions of families to achieve the American dream unraveled."

One correlation explains increased crime, however. Social discord. When political consensus falls apart, when people question whether society is fair and, in particular, when the trust of our fellow citizens fades, crime increases. Similarly, in times of cohesion and patriotism, and when people view the social hierarchy as legitimate, crime usually falls.

Elijah Anderson explains that once citizens question the justness of systems, many of its policies, laws, and rules seem illegitimate. Social trust is like the air that people breathe. A lack of trust affects how people respond to disagreement with neighbors, how willing they are to steal, and more.

In a recent article for *The Atlantic*, Anderson explains some ways that affirmative action, recently obliterated by the US Supreme Court, helped rectify some of the systemic racism embedded in our culture, laws, and practices. "Too many people forget, if ever they knew it, what a profound cultural shift affirmative action effected," Anderson writes. "And they overlook affirmative action's crucial role in forestalling social unrest."

The complexity of interactions between policy, culture, and laws requires a mixture of wisdom, imagination and intellect mixed with diplomacy to govern effectively. Leadership matters. And God weighs in on leadership's obligation to govern responsibly.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom Jonathon Misner
Sylvia Pittman Terrance Williams
Kim Sims



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux
Norma Buzzard Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK

FEBRUARY 5 - 11

- Feb 5 Mon 2:00pm Staff Meeting
- Feb 6 Tue 10:00am Food Distribution
- Feb 7 Wed
- Feb 8 Thu 1:00PM United Women in Faith
- Feb 9 Fri
- Feb 10 Sat
- Feb 11 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

**** PLEASE KEEP SYLVIA
PITTMAN AND KIM SIMS
IN YOUR PRAYERS AS
THEY BOTH RECOVER
FROM SURGERIES ...**



(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](#).)

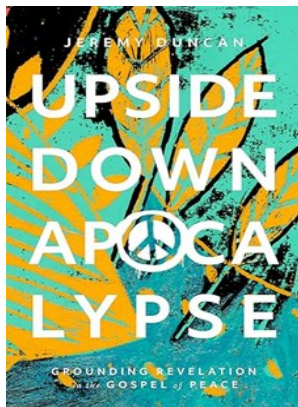
Upcoming Worship Series "Revelations"



Welcome to our long-awaited series, *Revelations*. While I've occasionally referred to scripture from this mysterious book this is the first time we're dedicating multiple weeks to cover the entire book. Ready?

First, *Revelations* may be one of the most theologically abused books in the Bible. It's used to justify a myriad of questionable opinions and prejudices. *Revelations* lends itself to a variety of interpretations due to its layers of symbolism, metaphors and meaning. However, it is part of our bible and, as such, consistent with the God of Salvation found throughout the scripture.

Book Club News



Our companion book for our new worship series is Jeremy Duncan's review of the Book of Revelations,

titled *Upside-Down Apocalypse: grounding revelation in the gospel of peace.*

Amazon's website describes his book this way:

The book of Revelation—which deals on a cosmic scale with good and evil, politics and empire, community and eternity—has intrigued and frustrated readers since it was written. How do we make sense of John's prophetic vision of cosmic war in light the nonviolence Jesus embodies in the

gospels? What does it mean to tell us about Jesus, our world, and the future of all things? As End Times conspiracy theories surge, it's more important than ever that we read the final book of the Bible without distorting the true message of Jesus.

In *Upside-Down Apocalypse*, author Jeremy Duncan draws on biblical scholarship and nonviolent theology to guide readers through the book of Revelation, understanding the vision of John in the light

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

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

And this is the main point of our series. Our plan is to review Revelations through the lens of the Gospels. After all, it is the same Jesus in all situations. The same Lord and Savior. The same God.

We are doing this series in cooperation with other Flint area UM churches. Two of our Sundays will feature guest preachers. The Reverend Naylo Hopkins, Pastor of Bethel UMC will be at Asbury on February 25. The Reverend Kimberly Metzger, Pastor of Open Door UMC will be with us on March 10.

We have both a companion book and an outline of Revelations to follow. Our guest speakers will follow the outline of scripture, but the companion book is unique to our journey (see Book Club article).

Here is the outline for covering Revelations with chapters from our companion book:

	Scripture	Upside-Down Apocalypse
Feb 18	Revelation 1:9-18	Chapters Forward - 2
Feb 25	Revelation 6:1-8	Chapter 3
Mar 3	Revelation 7:9-17	Chapters 4-5
Mar 10	Revelation 16:13-17	Chapter 6
Mar 17	Revelation 21:1-5	Chapters 7-8
Mar 24	Revelation 5:1-10	Chapters 9 -10
Mar 31	John 20:1-18	Chapter 11

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***](http://FlintAsbury.org).


Pastor Tommy

Jeremy Duncan. *Upside-Down Apocalypse:grounding revelation in the gospel of peace.*
Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2022.

“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:

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep...I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off, bandage those that are hurt, and heal those that are sick...

Psalm 146

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Psalm 146 and reflect on what it means for you. What does this Psalm say about God’s care for the earth and its inhabitants?
2. Read this week’s articles titled *Strangers*. Unless you’re native American your family immigrated from somewhere else. Where are your family’s roots? How many generations has your family lived in the U.S.? How do you prioritize family and community relative to global poverty and fairness? What are your main concerns regarding immigration?
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 ...

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

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More Information :



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of the Jesus we know through the Gospels—the full revelation of the Divine. Along the way, readers will discover what the writer imagines as he weaves this profound revelation of non-violent triumph and see with fresh eyes how the Prince of Peace turns violence on its head once and for all.

We have a limited number of copies Jeremy Duncan's book. But copies are available through most book retailers and libraries.

Here is the schedule of chapters for our *Revelations* Series:

Feb 18	Chapters Forward - 2
Feb 25	Chapter 3
Mar 3	Chapters 4-5
Mar 10	Chapter 6
Mar 17	Chapters 7-8
Mar 24	Chapters 9 -10
Mar 31	Chapter 11

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. You can 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

Jeremy Duncan. *Upside-Down Apocalypse: grounding revelation in the gospel of peace*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2022.

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

With each stop, a line formed by the time I finished pumping my gas.

The U.S. was coming down from an economic high that began after the Great Depression. And although I was driving a Mustang 2 with a stick, larger cars were still the norm. Princeton University historian Meg Jacobs summarizes the era this way. "Everybody was completely dependent and in love with their cars as a symbol of American triumph and freedom."

An "energy crisis" coming on with no warning created a shockwave. The U.S. appetite for energy was huge and growing, creating a dependence on oil imported from the Middle East, in particular.

According to David Leonhardt, the energy crisis completed a perfect storm of pressures that unleashed businesses from the cross-checks that allowed most Americans to flourish.

The stage was set for Ronald Reagan to win the presidency equipped with policies based on supply-side economics. His campaign platform emphasized lower taxes, deregulation, and free-market capitalism.

Although Reagan never used the phrase "trickle down," his speeches resonated with blue-collar workers and families hurt by increasing tax rates on incomes unable to keep up with rising costs.

The ideas are simple. Take away governmental controls, reducing cost and allowing U.S. companies to reap higher profits. Their success benefits everyone. Business leaders easily adopted a philosophy that higher incomes for themselves was good for America.

Another complicating factor contributed to the challenges facing most Americans. Immigration, during the boom years for American families, remained in the background. Immigration laws favored immigrants from Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland. Countries where their citizens were mostly not interested in leaving home.

Since immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries were not limited, corporate farms benefited from lower-cost labor without complication. Freer movement of people between borders benefited businesses by keeping labor rates down.

The idea of the U.S. being a melting pot of people from different cultures and national origin was only a footnote. With the help of a successful book by Senator John F. Kennedy, called *A Nation of Immigrants*, the notion became mainstream. Historian James Truslow Adams is credited with creating the phrase "American dream," in telling the success story of an immigrant from Russia, Mary Antin, who later would end her memoir with "Mine is the shining future."

President Johnson signed a new bill into law eliminating immigrant quotas by country and prioritizing family members of people who were already in the country and workers with high-level professional skills.

No one supporting the new immigration policies anticipated the impact the bill would have on the number of persons coming to the U.S. The bill did not count family members as part of the annual limits on new applicants, and the majority of immigrants looked for blue-collar jobs. In 1965, less than 5% of U.S. citizens were foreign born. Today, that number exceeds 14%.

Leonhardt reminds us of some of the prominent names whose parents came to the U.S. shortly before 1965: Barack Obama, Kamala Harris, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. Just to name a few. "Immigrants are not a random subset of the population," writes Leonhardt. "People who are willing to uproot their lives for better opportunities have more ambition and grit than an average person, and these qualities help them succeed."

Research shows that our personal view of immigration may have more to do with our social location than with our political or cultural affiliations.

American psychologist Jonathan Haidt and his colleagues made this discovery through a research instrument known as the *Moral Foundations Questionnaire*. Their research found that educated professionals are more likely to prioritize care for vulnerable persons and fairness.

But while people from the working-class share these same values, they're more likely to prioritize respect for authority, appreciation of tradition, and loyalty to family and community. Values that mean less to professionals.

These priorities help explain why working-class households are more likely to give a greater percentage of their income to charity, particularly churches, than upper-income households.

Leonhardt argues that immigration policy represents a distillation of the tensions between these two worldviews. From one view, the government needs to limit immigration and prioritize its own citizens. On the other hand, national loyalties can be blinding. Immigration increases the global standard of living by allowing more people to share in our country's prosperity.

The Lord protects the
strangers who live in our
land.

Psalm 146

Regardless of your own view of these tradeoffs, we're all part of God's created world. And God loves us all without bias. Psalm 146 reminds us that the Lord protects the strangers who live in our land. Whether they're a surgeon, farmhand, or in line at the soup kitchen.

And so should we.

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.

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Pastor Tommy

Parts of our series was inspired by David Leonhardt. *Ours was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2023. Reis Thebault. "Long lines, high prices and fisticuffs: The 1970s gas shortages fueled bedlam in America." © Washington Post, May 13, 2021. Retrieved from: [link](#)

God called on the Prophet Ezekiel to denounce the leaders of Israel for not governing effectively. The powerful not only kept the best for themselves, they failed to make sure that all had equal access to resources.

God criticizes the existing leaders with poetic artistry. "My other sheep have to eat the grass you trample down and drink the water, you muddy!" It was time for new leadership.

I, myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I will look for those that are lost, bring back those that wander off, bandage those that are hurt, and heal those that are sick ...

Ezekiel 34:1-19

I suspect that most of us can identify with God's frustration. And we clearly do not all agree on which leaders are more likely to lead effectively. But this is the beauty of a democracy. We each have a voice and a vote.

And while those of us who claim allegiance to Jesus Christ also find a lot to argue about, we at least refer to the same source of authority.

We know through scripture that God chooses love and grace over all other alternatives. And God knows the difference between empty words intended to win your vote and effective policy.

You and I are also called to lead through example. We look to the teachings and illustrations of Jesus Christ and model our own lives accordingly. And we should expect that our leaders to do the same. They don't have to believe what we believe, but their intentions should be the same.

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Taijuan Moorman. "Jason Aldean defends 'Try That in a Small Town' song." © USA Today, Oct 19, 2023. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Elijah Anderson. "Black Success, White Backlash." © The Atlantic, November, 2023. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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