



ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 4 Issue 24

Palms (Counterfeit Lambs)



Each year on the Sunday before Easter, we celebrate and remember Jesus entering Jerusalem with palm branches. This tradition got its start sometime around the 4th century of the common era when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of

the empire.

Perhaps this ritual reminds us of how the priorities of empire and Christianity are conveniently woven together. Which is odd. The story of how Jesus entered Jerusalem seems more anti-empire.

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New (No more tears)



A blogger was stealing content from author Vanessa Van Edwards and posting her work on their own blog. "I wanted to rain farts upon his brand," she writes, "I wanted retribution."

Regardless of whether the offense is stealing our ideas or scratching the door of our truck in the parking lot, most of us have empathy for Vanessa. Most of us know the taste and satisfaction of wanting retribution.

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MARCH 24, 2024

EVERYONE HAVE
A WONDERFUL
WEEK!!



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Palms (Counterfeit Lambs) *cont. from pg 1*

Fast forward a couple thousand years and we find many Christians continue to promote political positions as God's will for humanity. This includes God choosing candidates for president, according to more than a handful of persons.

In a New York Magazine article published last year, Ed Kilgore shares concern over a "Christian nationalist movement in which (Donald) Trump can only be described as an irreplaceable figure whose political success is crucial to God's plan for redeeming a sinful world."

According to Pew Research, most white evangelicals support Donald Trump because they believe he fights for them. For example, he appointed Supreme Court justices who subsequently reversed *Roe v Wade* and he moved the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

But even this group of voters question whether their candidate's behavior reflects characteristics Jesus tells us we should have. They're willing to support a counterfeit version of right in exchange for power over individual freedom.

In this week's chapters from our companion book for this series, Pastor Jeremy Duncan equates the quest for power with the dragon found in Revelation because it "looks like a lamb but sounds like a dragon." His argument is compelling. "This beast represents any religion that cosigns the objectives of politics. It may dress in the guise of peace and take on the language of worship, but the object of its fervor is power."

The dragon is a counterfeit lamb.

Ironically, but perhaps consistent with human nature, counterfeit is often our first choice. Perhaps authentic may simply come with too high of a price for most of us.

Apparently, Jesus knew what was waiting for Him in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, He confronted His executioners with a life-sized mirror.

The people expected a warrior king ready to free Jerusalem from Roman occupation and liberate them from oppression. They weren't so much interested in the morality of Jesus as they were in His willingness to use His power on their behalf. Sound familiar?

A Jewish priest, Judas Maccabaeus, led a successful revolt to regain Jerusalem from the Seleucid Empire in 164 BCE. According to the apocryphal book of Maccabees, the people waived palm branches in praise of Judas Maccabaeus as he entered Jerusalem. He was their hero. And they hoped it was time for history to repeat.

But God was interested in reversing and not repeating humanity's history of violence. Incarnating God's love on earth as it is in heaven, Jesus is the authentic Lamb.

You are worthy to take the scroll and to break open its seals. For you were killed, and by your sacrificial death you bought for God's people from every tribe, language, nation and race .

Revelation 5:9

In chapter 5 of Revelation, John sees the royal throne room. God's Word is written on a scroll that cannot be opened unless there is One considered worthy. But who is worthy of opening the scroll?

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom
 Sylvia Pittman
 Kim Sims

Jonathon Misner
 Terrance Williams
 Mirium Watson



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
 HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux
 Norma Buzzard
 Nancy Elston



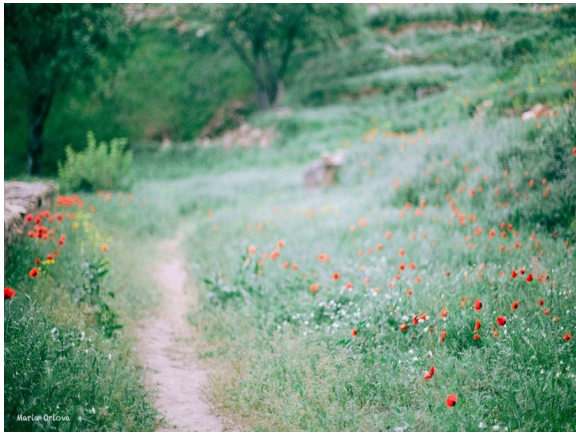
COMING UP THIS WEEK
MARCH 25 - 31

Mar 25	Mon	2:30pm	Staff Meeting
Mar 26	Tue	10:00am	Food Distribution
		3:00pm	CDC Board Meeting
Mar 27	Wed		
Mar 28	Thu		
Mar 29	Fri		Good Friday 
Mar 30	Sat		
Mar 31	Sun	10:30am	Easter Sunday
			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 "The Alternative"



Beginning the Sunday after Easter we begin a new series titled *The Alternative*. Our series is based primarily on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where Jesus offers us a better way forward.

The teachings of Jesus was commonly known as the Way, acknowledging that following Him is a way of life that changes everything. And, throughout history, the faithful thoughtfully tried to emulate the ways of Jesus.

Our companion book is titled *Jesus' Alternative Plan* by Richard Rohr (see Book Club News). Father Richard positions Jesus' sermon from Matthew within the context of the gospels as a whole. The reality is humanity continues to customize Jesus' plan to suite us. But, in His sermon, Jesus offers us an alternative.

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Book Club News



Our companion book for our new worship series, coming in April, is Jeremy Richard Rohr's insights into the Sermon on the Mount. His book is titled

Jesus' Alternative Plan.

Amazon's website describes his book this way:

When Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God, he was talking about an utterly different way of relating to human society as we know it. Discover a transformative understanding of faith in Jesus' *Alternative Plan: The Sermon on the Mount* by acclaimed spiritual leader and Franciscan priest Richard Rohr. In this updated edition of *Jesus' Plan for a New World*, Rohr explores the implications of

Christ's best-known teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, offering a fresh perspective on what it means for Christian life today.

Through his insightful analysis and commentary, Rohr explains the historical and cultural context of each of these Bible verses, shedding light on the revolutionary nature of Jesus' blueprint for an alternative way of being. From the Beatitudes to overturning conventional wisdom and challenging traditional power structures, this paperback book provides guidance and inspiration for those seeking the true heart of their faith.

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Asbury Staff

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Kevin Croom Executive Director/CDC
Connie Portillo Office Secretary
Kim Sims Finance Director
Sylvia Pittman Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig Board & Leadership Chair
Mike Sampson Farms Manager
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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 — “The Alternative” ..cont from pg 4

Here is the outline for covering Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount with chapters from our companion book:

	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Jesus’ Alternative Plan</u>
Apr 7	Matthew 7:1-5	Judging	Chapters Intro-1
Apr 14	Matthew 6:24-34	Possessions	Chapters 2-3
Apr 21	Matthew 5:13-16	Condiments	Chapters 4-5
Apr 28	Matthew 5:38-42	Violence	Chapter 6
May 5	Matthew 5:3-12	Beatitudes	Chapters 7-8
May 12	Matthew 7:7-12	Knocking	Chapters 9

Jesus saw the crowds and went up a hill, where he sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.

Matthew 5: 1-2


I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly episodes on [Facebook](#) and 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 FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

“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:

You are worthy to take the scroll and to break open its seals. For you were killed, and by your sacrificial death you bought for God people from every tribe, language, nation, and race.

Revelation 5:1-10

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Revelation 5:1-10. Describe what you're felt as you read this text. What characterizes the One who is worthy to open the scroll?
2. Read this week's articles titled *Palms*. Are there examples you have noticed where religion and politics are closely linked? What are some pitfalls of this linkage? Why do you think religious groups choose and openly support certain political candidates? What are the advantages to be gained? Where might Jesus stand on this subject?
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
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



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More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

The enlightening book offers a new way of understanding and living as a Christian woman or man, according to the teachings of Jesus. Whether you are a long-time follower of Jesus, a knowledge truth seeker, or are just beginning to study his religious sermons, Jesus' *Alternative Plan: The Sermon on the Mount* offers a clear yet challenging look at the vision presented by the holy Jesus. Gain a transformative understanding of his preaching and embark on a spiritual journey toward a complete relationship with the Kingdom of God.

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

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

Apr 7	Chapters Intro-1
Apr 14	Chapters 2-3
Apr 21	Chapters 4-5
Apr 28	Chapter 6
May 5	Chapters 7-8
May 12	Chapters 9

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

Richard Rohr. *Jesus' Alternative Plan*. Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 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

In Vanessa's case, she chose not to act on her desire for revenge. Instead, she researched what was behind the powerful emotions she felt and published an article titled "The Psychology of Revenge: Why It's Secretly Rewarding." And then thanked the thief for motivating her.

The desire for revenge by inflicting hurt on the perpetrator of an offense is about as human as it gets. Marvel makes millions on helping us do so through fantasy rather than taking up arms. Instead of choosing violence, we can read about a superhero that takes care of the bad guys for us.

Revelation has a lot in common with this popular storytelling genre.

In this week's reading assignment from our companion book, Pastor Jeremy Duncan takes us through the second cycle of prophecy. And introduces us to three critical methods of interpreting sacred text. For Revelation, the goal of all approaches is interpreting metaphors, unless you really believe that God's plan includes actual monsters. More likely, each monster is a stand-in for something more subtle and deadly.

One of the more often used techniques looks at history. In this approach, the reader assigns localized and time bound meaning to the imagery of Revelation. In the historical approach, as each trumpet sounds, a past reality is

unveiled. And the enemies of Israel are undone by divine retribution.

In his best-selling book, *Sapiens*, Yuval Noah Harari, shares the Roman Empire collected taxes from up to 100 million subjects. The taxes were used to finance a standing army boasting from 250 to 500 Thousand soldiers. Unfortunately, since Christians were unwilling to yield to a dictator's need for affirmation, they were often targets for retribution.

More popular for unraveling Revelation, however, interpreters look to the future, equating Revelation's imagery with current events leading up to a future outcome. Instead of Rome and Babylon, futurists imagine nations yielding deadly force against their homeland and ideals.

In both cases, the action described as each of the seven trumpets' sound satisfy a basic human desire for retribution. We're able to read Revelation like a Marvel Comic Book while imagining revenge against our enemies.

But notice that after the sixth trumpet sounds, the action stops. Also, whether tying the imagery to either historical or future events, the final trumpet must await the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple for a third time. This may take a while since the current site is occupied by the Dome of the Rock, an Islam holy place.

Duncan suggests using a literary approach to understanding Revelation. After all, Revelation is a beautifully written literary composition. And treating it as such doesn't diminish its importance. Instead, connecting the imagery with God's revelation through Jesus Christ opens our imagination to the truth about violent retribution.

There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.

Revelations 21:1-5

The trumpets appear after opening the seventh seal. One by one, the sound of the trumpets brings mayhem, chaos and violent destruction. But after the sixth trumpet, we are told of an intermission.

John is told to eat a scroll with a sweet taste but sour afterwards. Now what tastes sweet but creates regret afterwards?

Certainly not the counterfeit lamb. Only the slaughtered Lamb is worthy. The One welcomed with shouts of Hosanna and waving of palm branches only to be executed by religious leaders aligned with and receiving power from the empire.

The crowd welcomed Jesus as a hero and then condemned Him as a criminal when He didn't deliver on their hope for a counterfeit lamb.

One lesson from Psalm Sunday is how a person conducts themselves matters a great deal. Counterfeit is never a substitute for the real thing.

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Pastor Tommy

Parts of our series was inspired by Jeremy Duncan. *Upside-Down Apocalypse:grounding revelation in the gospel of peace.* Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2022. Ed Kilgore. *"Do Evangelicals Think Trump Is Jesus?."* © New York Magazine, May 8, 2023. Retrieved from: [*link*](#)

Research into how harm and retribution affect us discovered that revenge has the opposite effect from what we expect. Instead of punishing the offender and leaving us satisfied, revenge prolongs our pain and delays recovery.

Wait! Is this where Revelation takes us? We cheer God's punishment for those we believe deserve divine wrath. We equate the butt-whipping to our enemies and applaud John's affirmation of what we want to believe.

And then, the tables turn. "Once again," John is told, "You must proclaim God's message about many nations, races, languages, and kings."

Our text for this week's message comes near the end of Revelation. "There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain," God says. "The old things have disappeared." Gone is violence. Revenge vanishes! But the earth continues with God living among us.

Just as God said!

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Pastor Tommy

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Yuval Noah Harari. *Sapiens (A Brief History)*. New York: HarperCollins, 2015.





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