

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 4 Issue 2

Hellfire (Divine Mercy)



Country singer Rodney Atkins in his hit song, "Going Through Hell," suggests, "Keep on going, don't slow down, if you're scared don't show it. You might get out before the devil even knows you're there."

Supposedly, a Winston Churchill quote inspired his song. "If you're going

through hell, keep going." And an old Irish toast, "May you be in heaven five minutes before the devil knows you're dead." *Page 2*

Fallibility (God's Love Letter?)



This coming Monday is Memorial Day. A holiday, originally created to remember and honor the thousands who died during the Civil War. But as time passed, the remembrance expanded to include all soldiers from all wars.

But memories fade over time. A recent Associated Press article laments,

"Memorial Day is supposed to be about mourning the nation's fallen service members, but it's come to anchor the unofficial start of summer and a long weekend of discounts on anything from mattresses to lawn mowers."

Page 13

JUNE 2, 2024

EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
WEEKEND!

DONATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Fallibility	1
Hellfire	1
Hellfire	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
Fallibility	13
Fallibility	14
Hellfire	15
Kroger Community Rewards	16
Empowering the Future—CDC	17

Hellfire (Divine Mercy)

cont. from pg 1

For some, hell represents those times when nothing goes our way. For others, hell is a place of divine punishment where bad people go after death. Regardless, I think most of us agree hell is not the place we want to be. Whether there is really hellfire, there is nothing about hell that sounds pleasant.

Hell does not specifically appear in the Old Testament. Instead, God doled out divine punishment in one's lifetime and passed onto progeny (think climate change). Although Daniel offers this insight, "Many of those who have already died will live again: some will enjoy eternal life, and some will suffer eternal disgrace" (Daniel 12:2).

In the gospels, we read Jesus used an Aramaic word translated into Greek as Geenna. In English, it's translated as hell. Geenna referred to a garbage dump, south of Jerusalem, where a fire constantly burned, known as Gehenna of fire. Elsewhere, Jesus used more descriptive phrases to describe what happens when we turn against God.

So who goes to hell?

The late C. S. Lewis said, "The doors of hell are locked on the inside." Staying in Geenna may ultimately be a choice. But John tells us that Jesus came to save rather than condemn humankind.

For many, salvation comes only to those who specifically ask Jesus for grace and acknowledging Him as God's only Son. Everyone else, according to their logic, goes to Geenna, which they presume is correctly translated as hell.

But what about children who never reach an age where they're able to ask Jesus for grace? What about adults whose cognitive abilities limit their understanding? What about persons unable to talk? What about persons abused by clergy or other church goers? How about persons understandably turned off by hypocrisy? What about persons who grew up in other faiths?

How can a God of love, a God of grace, a God willing to live humbly among sinful people condemn anyone to eternal punishment?

Is it possible many Christians are drawing conclusions with partial information or incorrect interpretations?

For example, Adam Hamilton, in chapter three of our companion book for this series, reminds us that Jesus offered grace to all who repented of wrongdoing. However, wrongdoing had nothing to do with whether persons believed Jesus is God's Son.

In fact, Jesus does not seem to focus on what we say. Rather, He looks deeper into our soul. Deep enough to recognize His own image buried beneath the surface.

Hamilton describes three general categories of Christian beliefs based upon how questions about divine punishment are answered. Exclusivism focuses on the personal acceptance of Christ for salvation. No other way is possible.

Universalism goes to the other extreme. God saves all people in the end whether or not they want saving.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kevin Croom
Sylvia Pittman
Mirium Watson

Jonathon Misner
Terrance Williams
Norma Natrass



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux
Norma Buzzard
Nancy Elston



COMING UP THIS WEEK
JUNE 3 - 9



June 3	Mon	2:30pm	Staff Meeting
June 4	Tue	10:00am	Food Distribution
June 5	Wed		
June 6	Thu		
June 7	Fri		
June 8	Sat		
June 9	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 "Doubt"

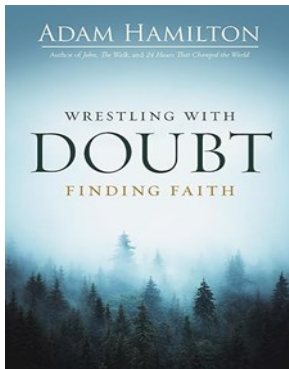


Beginning the Sunday after Mother's Day we begin a new series titled *Doubt*. Our series is based, in large part, on Adam Hamilton's book with doubt in the title.

Most of us have some doubt about what we claim to believe. Even if we don't verbalize our doubt, we express it in our decisions and actions. We say we have faith, yet we're anxious from worry. We say we trust God, and then go to great lengths to show distrust.

Doubt is part of the human condition.

Book Club News



Our companion book for our new worship series, beginning on the Sunday after Mother's Day, is Adam Hamilton's

Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith.

Amazon's website describes his book this way:

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often, we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty does not mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

In *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, join best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton as he discusses some of our most significant sources of doubt and shows how a steady trust in God can emerge from them.

We have a limited number of copies of Adam Hamilton's book. But copies are available through most book retailers and libraries. The price on Amazon as of the publication of this article is \$13.49 for paperback and \$9.99 for the Kindle edition.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor
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
Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
	Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
Terry Kinze	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 — “Doubt” ..

“We want certainty, but God gives us mystery,” writes Adam Hamilton in our companion book for this series, titled *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith* (see Book Club News). Hamilton argues doubt is both natural and healthy. As long as our doubt is motivated further reflection and a search for truth.

Here is the outline if you want to read the chapters from our companion book as we progress through our series:

May 19	Is there a God?	Chapters Intro-1
May 26	The Good Book?	Chapter 2
June 2	Are all non-Christians going to hell?	Chapter 3
June 9	Is Heaven real?	Chapter 4
June 16	When prayers go unanswered	Chapter 5
June 23	Why do the innocent suffer?	Chapter 6

The heavens tell about the
glory of God. The skies
show that his hands
created them. Day after
day they speak about it.
Night after night they
make it known.

Psalm 19:1-2

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

Adam Hamilton. *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*. Nashville: Abington Press, 2023.

“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:

For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its Savior.

John 3:16-21

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read John 3:16-21. Are you familiar with this text? What does it mean for you? What does it mean for others?
2. Read this week's articles titled *Hellfire*. Do you believe hell exists? If so, what is hell for you? Do you believe that some people spend eternity in hell? If so, who and why?
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

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

May 19	Chapters Intro-1
May 26	Chapter 2
June 2	Chapter 3
June 9	Chapter 4
June 16	Chapter 5
June 23	Chapter 6

Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that week's 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

Adam Hamilton. *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*. Nashville: Abington Press, 2023.

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

Thousands die unnecessarily in wars. Leading up to the Civil War, the institution of slavery divided our country over a notion that had its roots in economics, but was justified and maintained through physical and emotional violence. The violence included and was justified by the misappropriation of scripture.

How did so many Christians get it so wrong? Slavery was never God's plan!

A 2015 Pew Research report created a stir among many churchgoers by daring to say out loud what was only whispered in meeting rooms and during coffee hours. People were finding other things to do on Sunday mornings. Church attendance membership was in a free fall.

The number of U.S. adults self-identifying as Christian dropped by eight percent in seven years. Meanwhile, the number who self-identify as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular," increased six percent. Despite the lyrics to a well-known song that touts love as differentiating Christians from others. A more accurate differentiator emerged known as hypocrisy in scripture.

The Rev Dr Mark Sandlin, in an article published by the United Methodist Insight the year the study was released, argues that hypocrisy is a symptom of a more serious disease plaguing the Christian community. A disease that promotes claiming righteousness for ourselves while condemning others.

The problem, notes Sandlin, the Church developed "a highly sophisticated system that allows it both to quote the Bible and believe whatever it wants, without regard to the scripture itself."

Adam Hamilton, in chapter two of our companion book for this series, illuminates several examples where large numbers of churchgoers and clergy used scripture to justify behavior incompatible with love.

Scripture is believed to be the "Word of God" by Christians. But what does this mean? For many, this means the bible is inerrant and infallible.

Hamilton writes, "The word inerrant means without error and is usually taken to mean that the Bible is without error in everything it speaks about. Infallible means unable to fail, to make mistakes, or to be wrong." And Paul is given credit, or blame, for punctuating this claim in a letter credited to him where he states,

"God has breathed life into all Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Unfortunately, humans are not inerrant and infallible, despite claims to the contrary. And biblical interpretation can be a dangerous place to make such false claims.

John tells us in his gospel that Jesus is Himself, the Word of God.

I'm convinced the problem we struggle with is not because of Jesus. In fact, Jesus was so appealing that He drew people toward Him. Add in His miraculous gift for teaching and it's no wonder His followers increased in numbers daily.

However, a more recent study published by Pew Research found that 8 in 10 Americans believe religion is losing the influence battle. Their survey focused attention on connections between religious beliefs and candidates for president.

The study found that 94% of Americans want a president whose personal life reflects high moral and ethical standards. And around half of us want a president with strong religious beliefs. It's not clear whether either of these ideals actually affects how most of us vote.

After all, if the major problem facing Christianity is our propensity to behave contrary to the scripture we quote for measuring the goodness of others, then this insight doesn't tell us much.

What can Christians do to help reverse this trend?

One approach, suggested by a small number, is to make Christianity our national religion. And force people to worship God or else. Fortunately, this is only a small number since it seems inconsistent with the way of Jesus.

One of my favorite lines comes from a 2010 episode of Big Bang Theory, when Amy Farrah Fowler says, "I don't object to the concept of a deity, but I'm baffled by the notion of one that takes attendance." So does God take attendance?

In his article, Rev Sandin pondered whether Jesus was talking to church goers and leaders through those leaving the church. And he advised listening to the reasons they list for leaving church.

On the other hand, Jesus spoke plainly about what's important. Jesus says that it all boils down to loving God and loving others.

The Prophet Micah said it this way when answering the question, "What does God want from us?" Do what is just, love everyone and live in humble connection with God.

Perhaps this is why nearly all of us expect those who hold office to hold themselves to high moral and ethical standards. We know that these are about the chaos going on when they are not being watched.

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 FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com 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 Adam Hamilton. *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*. Nashville: Abington Press, 2023.

Ben Finley, "5 things to know about Memorial Day, including its evolution and controversies." © Associated Press, May 23, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Rev. Dr. Mark Sandlin. *"The Church Has a Bigger Problem than Hypocrisy."* © United Methodist Insight, May 18, 2015. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Pew Research Center. *"America's Changing Religious Landscape."* © Pew Research Center, May 12, 2015. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Pew Research Center. *"8 in 10 Americans Say Religion Is Losing Influence in Public Life."* © Pew Research Center, March 15, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Inclusivism also believes God offers grace to all persons regardless of their circumstances, the beliefs they held during their lifetime, or the havoc they caused. But some, even when confronted face to face with Christ after death, simply cannot let go of their arrogance.

For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its Savior.

John 3:17

Many of the early church leaders settled on this notion. Today, numerous Christians hold this view across most denominations.

Matthew offers the most comprehensive list of omissions resulting in eternal punishment. And the list focuses entirely on helping persons in need. Jesus emphasized the saved filled the glasses and plates of the thirsty and hungry. The saved clothed the naked, tended to the sick, visited the imprisoned and befriended the isolated. The unsaved face eternal punishment.

Hamilton writes, "What if hell is a place for the narcissists, the self-absorbed, the users and abusers, the cruel and unjust, those who loved the darkness more than the light, those who prefer self-love to selfless love—for those who, to the end, refuse God's grace?"

What if hellfire is nothing more than the emptiness we all feel whenever we put too much distance between ourselves and God's love for us or our love for others?

In my experience, Christians spend too much energy condemning others. Perhaps because of projecting our own brokenness. Instead, let's be thankful that we know the love of God in Jesus Christ. And let us cherish every moment, every person, and everything God created as though it matters eternally.

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 FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com 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 Adam Hamilton. *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*. Nashville: Abington Press, 2023.



Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!

Learn more at

KrogerCommunityRewards.com
Or, call Kroger Customer Communications at

**1-800-KROGERS, (576-4377)
OPTION #3**



The Kroger Community Rewards Program is designed to be the easiest fund-raising program in town! Simply swipe your Plus Card and earn rewards!

Eligible Organizations

Kroger Community Rewards is open to organizations that are tax exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Participants include school groups, churches and synagogues, youth sports, food banks, animal support groups and many others. Kroger does not make donations to individuals.

Get your favorite local organization

enrolled

today! Enrollment applications can be downloaded at Kroger.com

**ZERO HUNGER
ZERO WASTE**

by **Kroger**

Add the South Flint Soup Kitchen to your Kroger Rewards Card and Help Feed Flint

We're giving **\$2 million**

to local area non profits

Use your Kroger Plus Card and earn rewards for your favorite organization.

Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!



Scan to Donate



EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

Help Asbury CDC enrich the lives of youth by donating to help get Tablets for them to attended classes for job training. We're looking to get 5 Tablets for training for summer jobs

www.asburycdc.org/info

Text-to-Give 53-555 keyword = CDCYOUTH