

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 4 Issue 15

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

Voice (Fruitfulness)



Cyndi and I have several fruit trees but have yet to enjoy a fruit harvest. Healthy orchards take more care than we've had time to give them. Fortunately, our raspberries and blackberries are healthy and doing well. The red raspberries are best when their color is a deep reddish purple. But the blackberries start red

and turn deep black at their peak. If we didn't know the difference between them we might pick the fruit before its time. Page 2

Just Kidding (See me)



As we begin our new worship series, *Miracles*, Jones is in jail and Andy drives to the small Florida town to pick him up. During his brief stay, Jones meets Keely. Since their encounter is brief and Jones makes little progress in breaking through Keely's hard outer shell, we will learn more later on in our companion

book for this series, *Just Jones*.

The sub-title for our companion book points to a conundrum that brings the idea of a miracle to mind. "Sometimes a thing is impossible until it is actually done." After all, a miracle isn't really a miracle unless it didn't seem possible. Page 13

EVERYONE
HAVE A
SAFE
WEEKEND!!



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Recently, I reflected on a connection between fruit trees, vines, and briars and the health of our nation. A healthy democracy takes work to produce the freedom we hope for.

Jesus often used fruit as a metaphor for gauging whether a person's actions are consistent with His teachings. We learn a lot about a person's moral compass from the fruit of their actions.

I'm dismayed by the number of conspiracy theories circulating. Some theories promote bias towards persons of a particular heritage. Others question the integrity of our elections.

Conspiracy theories create division. And they gain traction when influential individuals repost them and mislead the public. Instead of strengthening our nation, their actions weaken our democracy by further dividing us.

Their actions are like bad fruit. Reposting conspiracy theories that divide smells of diseased and rotted fruit. Likewise, using conspiracy theories as grievances to justify one's self have the odor of spoiled fruit and an unhealthy tree.

A healthy democracy depends on giving voice to every person. Our nation is blessed with millions who responsibly show up at polls or mail in their choices for issues and candidates for each election.

Nevertheless, millions of Americans work, raise children, volunteer, and use their time to their limits and have little time to wade through misinformation and conspiracy theories to understand whether issues and candidates are consistent with their values.

A healthy democracy depends on the peaceful transfer of power after the votes are counted and the people's choices are identified. This has been a trademark of our nation since its inception.

Attorney General Merrick Garland, in a passionate speech he gave this past week, rebuked the use of conspiracy theories to smear the U.S. Justice Department for political gain. Quoting Garland in a Washington Post article, AP Journalist, Alanna Durkin Richer writes, "These attacks have come in the form of conspiracy theories, dangerous falsehoods, efforts to bully and intimidate career public servants by repeatedly and publicly singling them out, and threats of actual violence."

The fruit of a healthy democracy includes a voice for all citizens. And protection from baseless attacks by public figures.

We're blessed with dedicated volunteers and public servants working diligently to ensure our elections are fair. And we're fortunate that few discrepancies are found after challenges to the results are settled. The plethora of challenges following the last election were found to be frivolous, destructive, and void of evidence of irregularities. Instead, we've learned the attacks were motivated by individuals simply unwilling to accept the results.

Jesus performed many miracles of healing, and Matthew's gospel covers most of them. Often, the details are sketchy. But the miracle itself may not be the most important lesson. While each miracle removes walls that interfere with God's work in our midst, the reactions of witnesses offer mirrors for our own reflections.

Matthew tells us about a couple of times when Jesus healed a man who could not speak. In one story, the man was also blind. In both stories, the crowds watched in amazement. We don't know if any of them were or became followers. But we know that they saw what happened. *Page 14*

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger
 Sylvia Pittman
 Mirium Watson

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
SEPTEMBER 16 - 22



Sept 16	Mon	2:30pm	Staff Meeting
		6:00pm	Leadership Team
Sept 17	Tue	10:00am	Food Distribution at Asbury UMC
Sept 18	Wed	9am- till gone	Food Distribution at South Flint Soup Kitchen 3410 S Fenton Rd
Sept 19	Thu		
Sept 20	Fri	4pm-7pm	Farmers Market Wine Down at Asbury UMC
		For more info:	810-235-0016 or FlintAsburyCDC.org
Sept 21	Sat		
Sept 22	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

***** PLEASE WORK ON 2024 CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORTS
 TO TURN IN TO ME ...SOON... *****

(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 — “Miracles”

“Blow the trumpet and sound the alarm,” the Prophet shouts, “The day of the Lord is coming soon!” What follows sounds like a list of campaign promises, too good to be true. However, unlike politicians who say whatever to mind that might cause people to like them, every Word from God is truth with impact.

Blow the trumpet and sound the alarm. The day of the Lord is coming soon!

Joel 2:1

God says, “You will know that I am among you and that I, the Lord, am your God and there is no other ... I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message. Your old people will have dreams and your young people will see visions.”

We’re not sure just how many miracles Jesus performed. Somewhere around 40 show up in the four gospels, depending on how you count them. But we’re told Jesus performed many more than were recorded.

And Jesus was not finished.

You and I are also equipped for miracles, according to scripture. But if this is true, where are they? Why can’t we stop climate change before it destroys us?

We can! But it takes a movement inspired and led by God’s Spirit.

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

September 8	Chapters 1 to 4
September 15	Chapters 5 to 8
September 22	Chapters 9 to 12
September 29	Chapters 13 to 16
October 4	Chapters 17 to 20
October 11	Chapters 21 to 24
October 18	Chapters 25 to Epilogue

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

Andy Andrews. *The Noticer: Sometimes, all a person needs is a little perspective*. Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2011.

“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:

Jesus healed the man so that he was able to talk and see.

Matthew 12:22-35

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Matthew 12:22-35. Can you place yourself in the action of this story? Where do you fit and what are you thinking as you see Jesus restoring the man's sight and voice? What else did you notice as you read the verses?
2. Read this week's article titled Voice. How do you respond to conspiracy theories? How do you feel when you read or hear them? Are you registered to vote? Will you have a plan if you intend to go to the polls in person?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week 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

Jones is back in town, but he is also in jail. Andy receives a call in the middle of the night to pick him up. Jones is tight-lipped about the circumstances of his brief incarceration. After arriving to bail him out, Andy learns his friend opened an unusual business in one of the resort town's most high-profile shopping districts.

As summer nears, a practical joker becomes bolder and more inventive with each prank. Could Jones be behind some of it? Why is it every person Jones meets has a secret they will reveal only to him?

Based on a true story, Just Jones wraps fiction, allegory, and inspiration into stories about people needing miracles. Andy and Jones invite us on a journey. Along the way, we're reminded of the importance of perspective, the power of connection, and the ability we all have to help make miracles happen. To make the impossible happen.

We have a few books. But both new and used copies are available through most book retailers and libraries. The price on Amazon for a new hardcover edition, as of the publication of this article, is \$13.22. Used copies are available for less, and the Kindle version is \$9.99.

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

September 8	Chapters 1 to 4
September 15	Chapters 5 to 8
September 22	Chapters 9 to 12
September 29	Chapters 13 to 16
October 4	Chapters 17 to 20
October 11	Chapters 21 to 24
October 18	Chapters 25 to Epilogue

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

Andy Andrews. *Just Jones: Sometimes a Thing Is Impossible . . . Until It Is Actually Done*. Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2020.

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

On the other hand, the idea of a miracle doesn't necessarily need such tight constraints. Generally, the idea of miracles involves divine intervention. When the experts say no way but a way happens despite their assessment, we say, "It's a miracle," in response to the good news.

Meanwhile, tragedy and terror struck again when a teenager killed two teachers and two students at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia. The shooter surrendered to police who later arrested his father, charging him with several offenses, including four counts of involuntary manslaughter and two counts of second-degree murder. The fourteen-year-old used an assault rifle given to him as a Christmas present for his attack at the school he attended.

Several articles appeared focusing on Colt Gray's mental health and home environment. Quotes from officials and other public figures contained a variety of labels for the mass shooting, including that Colt committed an evil act.

We all want answers. We all want the violence to end. Sadly, we seem more worried about the price of chicken at Kroger than dealing with problems that affect us less directly.

Dr. Harold I. Schwartz, in an article published in the *Journal of The American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* in 2023, offers insight into common attributes among the perpetrators of school shootings. Is there a switch in the mind of a teenager that causes them to reach a point where they're willing to murder other children? And is this preventable?

One commonality noted by Dr. Schwartz is the choice of the school the shooter attended. And the common experience that their schools "were places of failure and, for many, of isolation, bullying, rejection, or ostracism."

However, our solutions, thus far, focus on the speed of response by law enforcement once the shooting begins. And taking every sign of a potential threat seriously. Dr. Schwartz argues, "Finger-pointing at people with mental illness is a politically motivated distraction from the centrality of guns in mass shootings."

Brian McLaughlin works as a mental health professional in his role as Director of Advocacy and Recovery. In an article published in 2011, he shared his personal experience dealing with his mental health diagnosis. After his diagnosis, McLaughlin recalled

praying feverishly for a miracle. Years later, he concluded his condition was the miracle he needed, so he could do his work as an advocate more effectively.

The gospel selection listed in this week's lectionary readings is a story about a mother born in the Syrian area of Phoenicia who asked Jesus for a miracle. Her daughter was suffering from some form of demon. Since scripture isn't clear on the girl's actual condition, we're left to speculate and invited to consider the mother's description of her daughter as a metaphor for a wide range of situations.

Go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter.

Mark 7:24-30

Perhaps her daughter was depressed. Perhaps she struggles in school, stays isolated from classmates, does not have friends, or has many issues. Whatever the specifics, her situation is dire enough that her mom asks Jesus to intervene.

However, Jesus antagonists saw things differently, offering conspiracy theories about source of Jesus power. Instead of using the opportunity to unite the people and bring them all closer to God, they offered positions that turned people away from God.

Jesus healed the man so that he was able to talk and see.

Matthew 12:22

In the situation where Jesus gives a man sight and voice, Jesus responds to the conspiracy theory circulated by political influencers. Jesus reminds them that a nation dividing itself into opposing groups soon falls if they are unable to work together.

Jesus took the conspiracy leaders head-on. "To have good fruit you must have a healthy tree," Jesus says. "If you have a poor tree, you will have bad fruit." And adding, "A tree is known by the kind of fruit it bears."

Indeed, each tree produces good or bad fruit based on its health. And in the same way, Jesus promises our acts will be judged based on who they serve.

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

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Alanna Durkin Richer. *"Garland says he won't let the Justice Department be used as a political weapon."* © Washington Post, September 12, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)

And, at first, Jesus refuses the woman's request. Since Mark tells us the woman's heritage was Syrophenician and Jesus uses derogatory language in explaining His decision, we are left to draw an initial conclusion of bias.

Whether Jesus' bias is justifiable is mute. When the woman persists, Jesus changes His mind. At least, it appears this way on the surface. Since we're unable to know fully His motivation, we're left to consider the nature of Jesus from other interactions.

Jesus tells the mother that when she returns home, she will discover her daughter's crisis is over.

Jones gets Keely's attention when he muses about an 11th commandment. "I've always thought that if Moses'd had a little more time on the mountain, he'd have come back with eleven," Jones tells Keely. "Number eleven would have been Thou shalt not kid thyself."

Jones realizes Keely is dealing with some form of demon. But instead of confronting her circumstances, she tells herself lies disguised as truth. Keely's miracle waits for another day.

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Pastor Tommy

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Harold I. Schwartz. "The Mind of the Mass School Shooter." © American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 2023. Retrieved from: [link](#)



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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.

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enrolled

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WASTE**

by **Kroger**

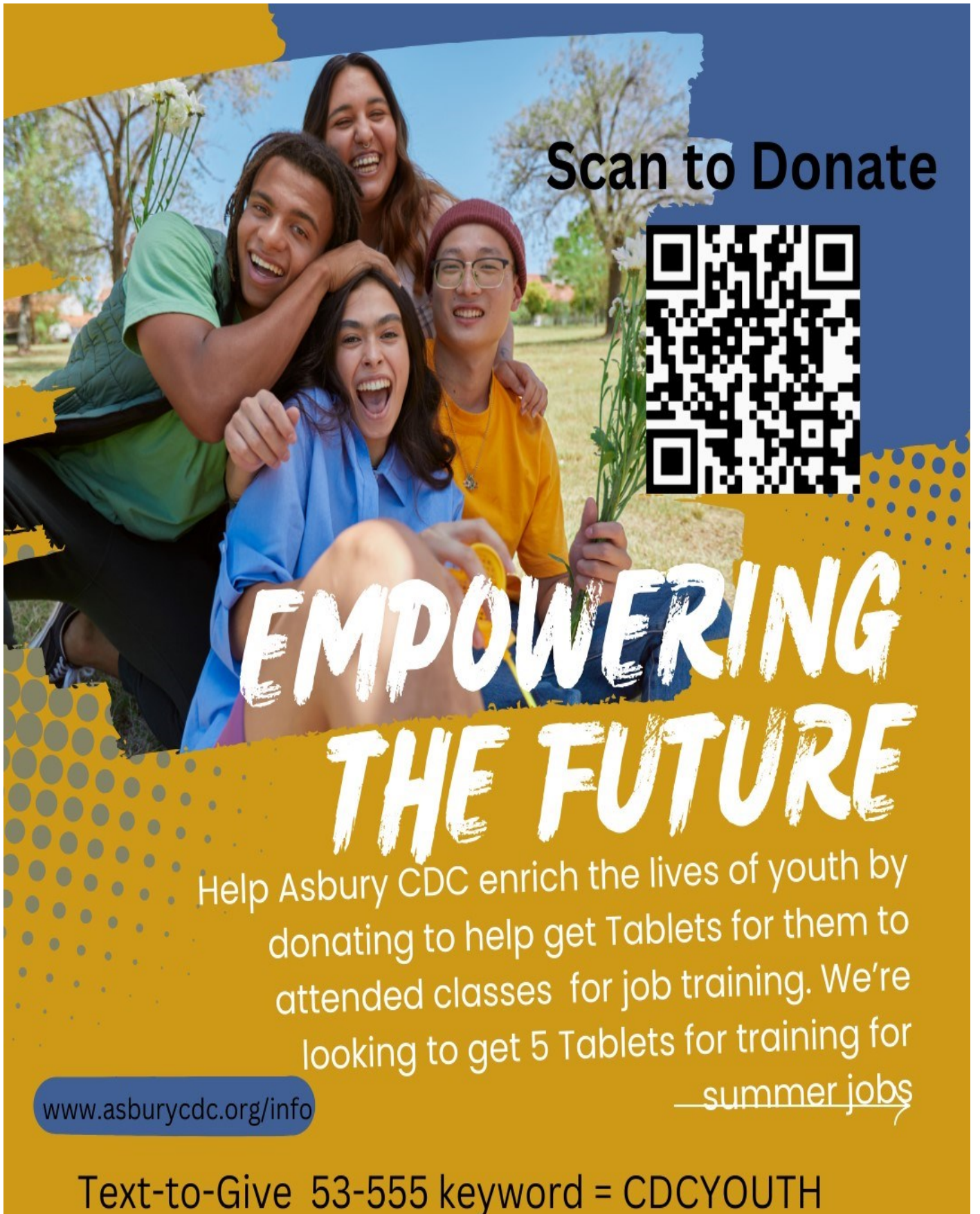
Add the South Flint
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Text-to-Give 53-555 keyword = CDCYOUTH

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FREE

UPCOMING
DATES

July 19

Aug. 21

Sept 18

Oct. 16

Nov. 20

Dec. 18

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specialist, and a wonderful
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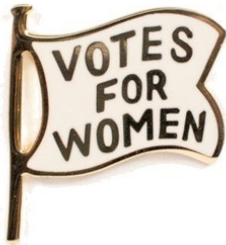
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WWW.FLINTASBURYCDC.ORG

Join Grand Blanc United Methodist Church Women of Faith for a

CELEBRATION

OF WOMEN'S' RIGHT TO VOTE.



FREE LIBERTY LUNCH

followed by

guest speaker Kathy Freeland

Saturday, October 5, 12 noon

What happened on August 18, 1920?



***The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution
made it legal for women in the United States to VOTE!***

CALL FOR RESERVATIONS (BY 9/30/24)

Virginia Sullivan (810-869-8581) or Sandy Jones (810-691-3013)

19TH AMENDMENT

HONORING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Grand Blanc United Methodist Church is located at 515 Bush Ave, Grand Blanc, MI