

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 4 Issue 17

NOVEMBER 17, 2024

Habits & Idols (Earth keepers)



It's been a warm summer and fall, with record-breaking warm temperatures recorded every month from June 2023 through this past September. It's even hotter than climate scientists expected. 2024 is on track to be the warmest year ever.

In addition to the unusual heat wave, drought conditions

persist in much of the country.

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EVERYONE
HAVE A
SAFE
WEEKEND!!



Good News (At least, it should be)



Climate change is negatively affecting Florida in several ways and is expected to have increasing negative effects over the next couple of decades. For example, statewide annual average temperatures have accelerated in recent decades, increasing at a higher rate than global temperatures.

The number of extreme heat days is expected to rise by 40 in inland areas of the state. Extreme precipitation events have increased, causing substantial damage, and are expected to increase as a result of climate change.

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Climate change “is no longer theoretical or a distant threat, an abstract one,” explains Aradhna Tripathi, a climate scientist from UCLA who helped author the latest national climate assessment. “It is not something that happens in the future here. It is not something only happening in places far away from where we live. All weather is now being affected.”

In an article for Vox titled “It’s not normal for the East Coast to be on fire,” Paige Vega writes, “This extreme period of dry weather is a part of the larger picture that scientists have come to expect: that our weather will become more extreme and unpredictable and that we will collectively experience more pronounced swings from incredibly dry periods to incredibly wet periods.”

Brian Fuchs, a climatologist with the National Drought Mitigation Center, explains that “when it’s 80 degrees in New York in November, trees and vegetation are still consuming water. There’s an extra period of demand on the overall water system, and that taxes water sources — lakes and streams begin to draw down and the ground holds onto less moisture.

Vegetation that grew earlier in the year begins to dry out — and fuel wildfires. It’s increasingly important for people to know where their water comes from and conserve it the best you can at any time.”

In this week’s chapters from our companion book for this series, Kyle Meyaard-Schaap offers helpful suggestions for Christians who want to contribute to addressing climate change. He begins with a familiar charge: tell your story.

That is, we can share our own stories about how climate change is affecting us and invite others to find their own ways to join the effort. However, “in order for our stories to be invitational,” explains Schaap, “we must do not three but four things: bond, connect, inspire, and invite.”

But how do we get started?

As Christians, we’re familiar with the idea of spiritual disciplines, even if we don’t call what we do disciplines. Prayer is one of the most basic spiritual disciplines.

And when spiritual disciplines become habitual, we naturally grow spiritually. We open ourselves to God’s offer of grace. Our priorities align more with God’s plans for us. We worry less, and we find joy.

Jesus encourages us to set aside worries—even worries about climate change. While this may seem contradictory, spiritual disciplines help us see and do the things we need to do rather than worry about them.

“We actually know how to solve climate change,” writes Schaap. “We have the knowledge, and we have the technology. All that’s missing is the will.”

You cannot serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:24

The issue comes when we make things sacred that aren’t. That is, when we take positions and make decisions contrary to the priorities God has established and called to us to honor. “You cannot serve both God and money,” Jesus tells us. It’s a matter of priorities.

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

NOVEMBER 18 - 24



Nov 18	Mon	2:30pm	Staff Meeting
		6:00pm	Leadership Team
Nov 19	Tue	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Nov 20	Wed		
Nov 21	Thu	1:00pm	Turkey drawing at South Flint Soup Kitchen
Nov 22	Fri	2:00pm	Turkey drawing at Asbury UMC
Nov 23	Sat		
Nov 24	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

*** Monday, Nov 18th—Registration to start for turkey drawings at Asbury UMC & South Flint Soup Kitchen.. Call (Connie) at the church office (235-0016) on Monday for more information!

(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 "Life"



On the Sunday before we celebrate everything scary for Halloween, we begin a new series titled *Life*. Speaking of everything scary. The debate is long over, and the consensus is that climate change is real and taking an increasing toll on our lives together. The time for Christians to be a part of the solution is long overdue.

One other scary note is that the election is coming up fast. While climate change may not be visible on the ballot, as voters, we need to know where the candidates stand on this issue and what they plan to do about it. We owe this to ourselves and to future generations.

Book Club News



We finish our current worship series, *Life*, on Sunday, November 24. We used *Following Jesus in a Warming World* by Kyle Meyaard-

Schaap for this series as our companion book.

We're trying something a little different in preparation for Christmas this year. Instead of chapters to read in preparation for Sunday's message, we'll have a short reflection to read each day.

Daring to Connect is a daily devotional for the four weeks of Advent. Each day, we'll read a reflection that explores faith through daring stories of risk, birth, and radical trust. Dr. Week's stories can help

revitalize our connection to faith, community, and personal transformation.

The Season of Advent offers opportunities each year to consider the stories we know as part of our faith: stories of risk, birth, and trying again. Moreover, these are stories of mutual, radical trust between God and God's people, trust manifested by God sending Jesus to live among us.

In *Daring to Connect*, we will read contemporary versions of similar stories experienced by members of Pastor Dawn Darwin Weaks' congregation. A church totally focused on

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Anthony & Jim	Ushers
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Christine	Cafe

Upcoming Worship Series — “Life”

Our next series looks at our changing climate, assisted by a book written by a fellow Michigander, Kyle Meyaard-Schaap. *Following Jesus in a Warming World* will be the companion book for our new worship series beginning on Sunday, October 27th. We will spend the weeks leading up to Advent looking at what Scripture says about our role in caring for our planet.

Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

Genesis 2:16

Millions of Christians took a stance they claimed to be pro-life. Honestly, while their position is understandable, the focus was more on decisions that shouldn't be theirs to make. More important, climate change is taking away life. Taking action to care for our planet is a pro-life position.

Here is the outline of our series and each week's reading assignment if you want to read our companion book as we progress through our series:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Neighbors	October 27	Luke 10:25-37	Intro & Ch 1
A Love Story	November 3	John 1:1-18	Ch's 2 & 3
Good News	November 10	Luke 4:16-22	Ch's 4 & 5
Habits & Idols	November 17	Matthew 6:24-34	Ch's 6 & 7
Investing	November 24	Matthew 25:14-30	Ch's 8, 9 & 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

Kyle Meyaard-Schaap. *Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 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:

You cannot serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:24-34

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Matthew 6:24-34. What do you think Jesus is concerned about in this text? What are some symptoms of serving other masters instead of God?
2. Read this week's article titled Habits & Idol. What are some of your experiences with climate change? How is climate change negatively affecting you? What habits can you adopt that can become spiritual disciplines for you?
3. How can the members of your group help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? 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



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How You Can Donate

- Text "FARMCDC"
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Donate Now



More Information :



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funding@flintasbury.org

personal transformation through mission in their community. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent, each day's devotion includes an Advent scripture, reflection, and prayer. Candle-lighting moments for each Sunday and Christmas make *Daring to Connect* an engaging Advent experience.

Rev. Dr. Dawn Darwin Weaks received her B.A. from Baylor University, her M. Div. from Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University, and her D. Min. from St. Paul School of Theology. Initially ordained in the Southern Baptist Church where she served as an associate minister, Pastor Weaks answered a call to become a Disciples of Christ minister in 1999. She is now the co-pastor of Connection Christian Church in Odessa, Texas, with her husband, Rev. Dr. Joe Weaks.

A frequent speaker at events nationwide, she has her writing published in various venues. Her three passions are her family, her relationship with God, and helping others hear and live out the calling God gives them.

Pastor Weaks offers this insight in her introduction:

Sometimes the weight of the world can bog us down. Everything can feel so heavy, it's hard to move. Yet Advent, this season of waiting for the coming of Christ anew, is meant to be an adventure. It's right there in the word! Within the pages of this devotional are stories of playfulness, courage, trying again, laughter, and radical trust- from God and us. After all, our story as Christians centers on God's outrageous risk of sending Jesus to us in the first place.

We'll have a few books available for purchase, but copies are available through most book retailers and libraries. As of the publication of this article, the price on Amazon for a new paperback edition is \$4.99, and the Kindle version is also \$4.99.

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

Dawn Darwin Weaks. *Daring to Connect: Advent as Adventure*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2024.

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

State officials realize that the state will need to prepare for sea levels to rise by just under two feet by 2050. This will have detrimental impacts on coastal forests and estuaries, contaminate drinking water, and greatly increase flooding.

Recent polls show that over 90% of Floridians believe climate change is real. Yet Trump easily won Florida with over 56% of the vote. This doesn't add up for me.

Coral Davenport and Lisa Friedman, in a recent New York Times article, began with this observation: "The fight against climate change has taken a body blow with the election of Donald J. Trump, who calls global warming a 'scam' and has promised to erase federal efforts to reduce the pollution that is heating the planet." Their conclusion is based in part on his promise to increase U.S. oil production beyond record levels.

During his first term in office, over 100 major environmental rules and regulations were repealed, and the U.S. withdrew from the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. What will happen next is unknown since truth is so hard to find within his hate-filled rhetoric.

Fortunately, there are economic reasons pushing back on Trump's threat to end U.S. efforts to participate in fighting climate change, according to their article. Most importantly, Republican congressional districts have benefited from around 80 percent of the money spent so far from funds to promote renewable energy. And lawmakers and business leaders want to protect that investment and the jobs they bring.

Kyle Meyaard-Schaap writes this about the disconnect seen in our priorities in this week's reading assignment from our companion book for this series, "The runaway warming of God's creation is a potent, physical, and global manifestation of the sum total of all of this brokenness. Climate change is rapidly changing the basic operating system of the world, making it fundamentally more dangerous and unpredictable."

Perhaps Floridians have the necessary resources to deal with the damage from climate change. However, they won't be able to replace the loss of life from catastrophic weather events.

And the cost of rebuilding is likely to skyrocket. Last year's price for recovering from weather-related catastrophes nationwide exceeded \$165 Billion. Our tax dollars supplement Florida's recurring recoveries from the effects of climate change.

But climate change doesn't just affect Florida. We're all negatively affected, and it's getting worse. Yet, the majority of voters see other priorities as more pressing. However, most of the world's population disagrees with our priorities.

It's estimated that nearly 80 percent of the world's population, living relatively close to the equator, feel the greatest impact of climate change. Yet the vast majority of the world's population collectively owns less than one-third of the world's wealth. This means they have the least resources to find ways to adapt to a much more dangerous climate.

Since economic development and wealth accumulation over the past centuries were proportionate to the amount of fossil fuels consumed, those most affected by climate change contributed the least to causing the problem.

The exchange of goods, or barter, is a communal ritual that connects our needs with the gifts of others. Money is merely a medium of exchange that underwrites barter. The priority, however, isn't the exchange or the medium. The priority is serving God by embracing divine priorities.

We're all earth keepers, a sacred calling established by God at creation. God empowers each of us to do our part but loves us enough to allow us to make our own decisions.

In his book, Schaap provides two websites with ideas for participating in earth keeping: ***Project Drawdown*** and ***Living the Change***. Each offers ideas that you can consider turning into habits and spiritual disciplines.

In my experience, following God brings great joy, but it also brings heartbreak when we put anything else before God.

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 are inspired by Kyle Meyaard-Schaap. Following Jesus in a Warming World: A Christian Call to Climate Action. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023.

Paige Vega. "It's not normal for the East Coast to be on fire." © Vox, Nov 12, 2024. Retrieved from: ***link***

Gavin Schmidt and Zeke Hausfather. "We Study Climate Change. We Can't Explain What We're Seeing.." © New York Times, November 13, 2024. Retrieved from: ***link***

I continue to be dismayed by the priorities of Christians claiming to follow Christ while supporting candidates and policies inconsistent with biblical mandates.

Let me explain.

Luke tells a story about when Jesus returned to his hometown. The scene is the church in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. Nazareth was one of those small, rural towns located in the hills. A similar town in the U.S. would likely be red on a political map.

Jesus grew up in a working-class family as the son of Joseph, the carpenter. While Mary was his biological mother, Joseph adopted Jesus after Mary became pregnant and gave birth while the couple was engaged. This adoption was likely a not-so-well-kept secret among the hometown folks.

The story is told in chapter 4 of Luke. Jesus went to Nazareth on the Sabbath and went to the synagogue as usual. When He was asked to read the scriptures, He stood up and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Most people back then could not read. But this hometown boy, Jesus, is handed a bible to read scripture during the church service. All eyes were on Him as

the townsfolk listened to find out if this homeboy's reading ability matched the rumors about His popularity as a healer and teacher.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor ...

Luke 4:18

Luke tells us Jesus unrolled the scroll and read where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people."

The crowd was impressed. I imagine that His diction and pronunciation of the ancient text were flawless. It was like a book reading by a famous author, reading one of her favorite parts of her book to a grateful audience.

I like to imagine how the crowd reacted. I don't know much about what actually happened. It's easier for me to imagine a church like the one I grew up in and a Jesus more like a young person today, returning home, with her reputation preceding her arrival. You probably can imagine something similar. Perhaps a scene where a lady whispers in her husband's ear, "I heard he graduated from some Ivy-league school."

Many of us are intimidated by smart people rather than grateful for their gifts. Jesus wasn't just smart; He was wise and full of divine insights into God's priorities. This story reinforces God's love and plans for the poor.

Luke tells us that after Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. He told them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

Jesus fulfills God's promise to reconcile all of creation. And His mission makes our priorities clear.

The author of our companion book says it this way, “If your ministry in the name of Jesus does not result in actions that are good news for the poor, you are doing it wrong. In a warming world this means that if our proclamation of the gospel does not result in actions that are good news for those suffering under the burden of an unequally changing climate—good news for those choking on pollution, losing precious farmland to rising seas, languishing under oppressive heatwaves, escaping deadly disaster and wasted homes only to run headlong into the arms of traffickers—then we, too are doing it wrong.”

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Pastor Tommy

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Florida Climate Center. “Climate Trends in Florida.” © Florida State University, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Coral Davenport and Lisa Friedman. “What Trump’s Victory Means for Climate Change.” © New York Times, November 7, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)



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