



# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



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## Road Trip (Joyful Belief)



I grew up in a family that took driving vacations. It helped that there are twenty years between my oldest and youngest siblings. I don't think my parents could afford a vehicle capable of carrying eight people, and the station wagon was usually crowded as it was. Never-

theless, I fondly remember road trips sitting behind my dad as he took us on numerous adventures.

Page 2

## Preparations (Honesty)



"There's no place like home," said Dorothy in the classic *Wizard of Oz*. This mantra paved the way for Dorothy to return home. Dorothy recognized that all she hoped for was within reach of whatever space she occupied as long as she remained true to herself.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice finds a door in a

tree. Alice was preparing for adulthood. In preparation for adulthood, Alice confronted the bizarre and often unpredictable world lying outside the only world she knows. There's something safe about a world found only in our imagination. Most of all, we're in charge of the unpredictable.

Page 13

EVERYONE HAVE  
A WONDERFUL  
WEEK!!



**DONATE**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Preparations	1
Road Trip	1
Road Trip	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
Preparations	13
Road Trip	14
Preparations	15
Kroger Rewards	16
Empowering the future	17

## Road Trip (Joyful Belief)

*cont. from pg 1*

As an adult, I've traveled more miles on airplanes than on roads. I earned Delta's million-mile status decades ago. But, honestly, I prefer road trips. Flying over places is no comparison to driving through them. While I'm a planner, Cyndi and I depend almost exclusively on GPS technology to help us reach our destination after numerous reroutes from side trips that weren't in our plans.

However, we haven't taken any overnight road trips this year. With a home to build and livestock to care for, we've kept our trips to places we can reach and return from on the same day. This may be one reason road trips have been on my mind this Christmas season. I missed seeing my siblings this past year and the adventures Cyndi and I have when we travel.

The media is another reason for thinking about road trips. News stories about crowded highways and airports warn travelers to plan ahead, get an early start, and expect delays. It's estimated that 75% of people living in the U.S. planned to take at least one road trip this year. The vast majority were under 100 miles, however.

All this talk about road trips is a sad reminder of the damage we do to our environment by using personal vehicles. By 2022, the U.S. was using over 368 million gallons daily to fuel personal vehicles.

On the other hand, there is a good reason to think about road trips during Advent. The Christmas story seems incomplete without young Mary's visit to her relative, Elizabeth.

Let me catch you up. First, an angel visits Mary, who is engaged to Joseph, telling her she will have a child, but her fiance isn't the father. Elizabeth, who is past her childbearing years, is pregnant. Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, learned that his wife would have a son despite her age. And that their son would prepare the way for the Messiah.

Mary leaves Nazareth on a road trip. God's call on Mary's life asked her to risk the future she had dreamed of from early childhood. To risk normalcy and to risk it all for a promise.

Luke says that Mary was perplexed by the angel's message. Perplexed can mean to be completely baffled. She was a teenager. Of course, Mary was

perplexed! Imagine what happened immediately after Mary's conversation with the angel and how she must have felt. Wow! What just happened? Was that what I thought it was? Now what?

We don't know what happened between the angel's visit and Mary's departure. Surely, she told her mother about the news, but we don't know. Perhaps she chose to keep it a secret from everyone except Joseph. Either way, Mary had some heavy thinking to do.

It's no wonder Mary headed out of town to visit Elizabeth. Nazareth was a small town, she was pregnant, and the explanation was beyond bizarre. Perhaps she heard word that Elizabeth was also pregnant. Given Elizabeth's age and the uniqueness of her pregnancy, the news likely took a road trip of its own.

How far did she travel? Luke doesn't tell us for certain. In the verse following what was read, we know that she stayed with Elizabeth for three months, likely until John was born.

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  
 Nancy Elston

Norma Buzzard



**COMING UP THIS WEEK**  
**DECEMBER 16 - 22**

Dec 16	Mon	2:30pm	Staff Meeting
		6:00pm	Leadership Team
Dec 17	Tue	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Dec 18	Wed		SFSK Christmas Food Boxes giveaway
Dec 19	Thu		Asbury Christmas Food Boxes giveaway
Dec 20	Fri		
Dec 21	Sat		
Dec 22	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 "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

## Asbury Staff

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Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
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Mike Sampson	Farms Manager
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Venus McBeth	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	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](http://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](https://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)

**LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:**



*How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!*

*Luke 1:39 -45*

**NOTES FROM WORSHIP**

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**QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:**

1. Read Luke 1:39-45. Can you place yourself in this scene? Do you identify more with Mary or Elizabeth? What emotions do you feel?
2. Read this week's article titled Road trip. Are there any road trips, in particular, that you enjoyed taking? Describe your trip and what made it special. What are some of the possible scenarios for Mary's road trip?
3. How can your group members 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](mailto:southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com)

To donate: [www.mightycause.com/feedflint](http://www.mightycause.com/feedflint)



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More Information :



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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](http://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](http://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](mailto:southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com)

Alice learns that adults need rules to live by. We learn them as children by watching the adults in our lives, often without questioning why. Of course, this leads to confusion when we observe inconsistency between the words we hear and what we see. We also discover that we don't all see the world through the same lens.

Like Alice, most of us struggle with how to respond when asked who we are. The process is complicated by constant change, both within and around us.

In the first act of Shakespeare's play Hamlet, Polonius, chief minister to King Claudius, offers advice to his son, Laertes, who is preparing to leave for college. "This, above all, to thine own self be true," he says.

Parents and mentors often reuse much of this father's advice. For example, he reminds his son to be careful before speaking out and to avoid lending or borrowing money from friends.

The problem is the source of the advice. Polonius often does things that illustrate an inherent dishonesty in his advice. The father wears the t-shirt, declaring himself a good person, but lives out a less authentic identity.

Nevertheless, many parents borrow his words as their children prepare for adulthood and search for their own place in the world. His story makes me wonder how my children accepted my advice as they prepared to strike out on their own.

Speaking of preparations, I'm thrilled with the Christmas decorations adorning many of the houses I pass by each night. I'm grateful that so many other people's Christmas preparations add interest to my dark drive home each evening and remind me to see the joy in the midst of cold temperatures and slippery roads.

Also, on the topic of preparations, God promised a messenger would prepare the way for the Messiah through the Prophet Malachi. God also warned us to be prepared and expect big changes in ourselves.

During the time of Malachi, the people questioned God's claim that humility and honesty paid off. The opposite seemed to be the reality. The arrogant's boasting amplified the lack of justice and accountability. God's claim that honesty and being true to ourselves were not the truth people were experiencing.

But God knew better.

Luke tells us that an elderly Priest named Zechariah is visited by an angel while he is burning incense in the inner temple. After questioning the validity of what the angel told him, Zechariah is unable to speak. God's message through the angel sounded impossible, and he simply wasn't prepared to believe what he was told to expect.

Our text for this week begins with Zechariah's declaration after his extended silence. Zechariah's voice was restored after he confirmed that his and Elizabeth's son would be named John. It appears that during his months of silence, Zechariah concluded that the angels prophecy could be trusted. As foretold in ancient prophecy, his son would be a messenger preparing the way for the coming Messiah.

*God is merciful and tender and will cause the bright dawn of salvation to rise and shine on all who live in the dark shadow of death, guiding our steps into the path of peace.*

Luke 1:68-79

What does it mean for Zechariah's son to "prepare the way?" A little later in Luke, after

Experts estimate that Zechariah and Elizabeth lived around 100 miles from Mary's family. We presume Mary's family arranged for her to travel with a caravan headed towards Jerusalem, near the town where her relatives lived.

Some scholars suggest that she may have composed the Magnificat while she traveled. Perhaps Mary kept a diary. I think Mary was taught Hannah's prayer as a child. Perhaps a shortened version, her Mother sang to her, and she knew the verses by heart.

*How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!*

Luke 1:39-45

Living centuries later and having Luke's book as a reference, we know how the story ends. But Mary had only a tiny glimpse of her future. She would ask Elizabeth for advice. And Elizabeth had incredible news of her own. It's likely neither had made the connection in advance.

On the other hand, Luke hints that Elizabeth has already figured it out. Had Mary's news reached Elizabeth ahead of her?

Luke tells us that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She shouts toward the sound of Mary's voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"

Elizabeth tells Mary her baby jumped with gladness. Did her child also know that their first meeting would not be their last? Luke tells us Elizabeth was overjoyed when she heard Mary's voice. And apparently, Mary had gotten the hang of the idea of what was to happen to her, and she really liked it. Mary felt at peace. Gone were the worries about what was going to happen. God was in charge.

For now, Mary could enjoy her time with Elizabeth.

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 are inspired by the Reverend Dawn Darwin Weak. *Daring to Connect: Advent as Adventure*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2024.

John becomes an adult, we discover that his call for repentance turns our attention to rule-following. But John was not a conservative. He was more of a progressive. John told the people that it was not enough to declare their goodness. They needed to live out their faith by bearing the fruits of goodness. Ideas like sharing your clothing and your food. Be honest and fair in your business, and not cheat others.

Were the people confused about what it meant to be faithful to God? Apparently, they identified as followers. They owned the logo, but they were focused on the entitlements of claiming faithfulness rather than living a life that reflected faithfulness.

Spiritually, they were children, but it was time for them to grow up. Rules are important, but they can seem downright silly when blindly followed.

Perhaps home is the place where we don't need to sport a team logo for others to realize we're authentic. I remember my mentor from seminary, Dr. Jim Perkinson, walking with the graduates. The school had to loan him a robe to wear over his jeans, t-shirt, and sandals.

Pomp and circumstance weren't his thing. He focused on living out the spirit of John's call to faithfulness.

Sometimes, I think we need a different word for faithfulness. How about honesty? I like this word. We need to be honest with ourselves about our own preparations.

Preparations imply a process that begins with raw materials and a vision. Preparations aren't perfection. Perhaps there is a plan, but a plan sure to change.

It's as though we're God's Christmas decorations, along with the snow and all of creation. Some of us are twinkling, while others are always on until we run out of energy and crash. None of us are perfected. Instead, we're all preparing for that day when we return home and meet the One we celebrate at Christmas.

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Parts of our series are inspired by the Reverend Dawn Darwin Weak. *Daring to Connect: Advent as Adventure*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2024. " 'To Thine Own Self Be True' , Meaning & Context." © *No Sweat Shakespeare*, 2022. Retrieved from: [link](#)



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Asbury UMC  
★ 1653 Davison Rd, Flint, 48506  
Mon-Fri 11:00-2:00 pm

Give online at

[www.flintasburycdc.org](http://www.flintasburycdc.org) or  
[www.southflintsoupkitchen.org](http://www.southflintsoupkitchen.org)

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