



# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 4 Issue 22

DECEMBER 22, 2024

## 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.

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

Page 2

## Light (Recognition)



Light is necessary for sight. It provides the illumination needed for our field of vision to reach our brains and be processed into images. Without light, we see nothing.

Yet, even with light, we don't see everything.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, everyone has a blind spot in their retina where the optic nerve connects. No light-sensitive cells are in this area, so this part of your retina can't see. Elsewhere, when light hits the retina, special cells called photoreceptors turn the light into electrical signals that travel from the retina through the optic nerve to the brain, which turns the signals into the images we see.

Page 13



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Light	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
Light	13
Road Trip	14
Light	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                      Norma Buzzard  
Nancy Elston



COMING UP THIS WEEK  
DECEMBER 23 - 29

Dec 23	Mon	10am-untill gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Dec 24	Tue		
Dec 25	Wed	<b>MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL !!</b> <b>FELIZ NAVIDAD PARA TODOS!!</b>	
Dec 26	Thu		
Dec 27	Fri		
Dec 28	Sat		
Dec 29	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](http://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, *Connected*, on Sunday, December 29. As our companion book, we used a daily

devotional, *Daring to Connect*, written by Pastor Dawn Darwin Weaks.

We kick off 2025 with a new book by Dr. Leonid Alt, a board-certified psychiatrist and writer. Dr. Alt's professional background helps him write holistic books about the connection between mental health and spirituality. His interest includes exploring the connection between psychiatry and the paranormal.

meticulously structures each day to ensure that no surprises await him. Spontaneity and changes to his plans make Alex feel uneasy and out of control.

However, Alex decides to risk the unknown and connect with his deceased father despite warnings that, on rare occasions, consciousness can be moved to unexpected places. One day, Lisa, a patient with self-harming tendencies who is having auditory and visionary hallucinations, comes in. Alex is intrigued by her case and by her as a person. When Lisa goes missing, Alex is thrown into a world of doubt. It seems that all the planning in the world doesn't always work out.

Our companion book for our new series is *The Price of a Second*. The story's main character is a psychiatrist named Alex. He

## Asbury Staff

- Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel      Pastor
- Kevin Croom      Executive Director/CDC
- Connie Portillo      Office Secretary
- Kim Sims      Finance Director
- Terry Kinze      Ops Manager/CDC
- Sylvia Pittman      Empowerment Arts
- Jim Craig      Board & Leadership Chair
- Mike Sampson      Farms Manager
- Terrance Williams      Arts Center Mgr
- 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:**



*The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him.*

John 1:9-13

**NOTES FROM WORSHIP**

---

---

---

---

---

---

**QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:**

1. Read John 1:9-13. In what ways is Christ a light for you? Why, do you suppose, Jesus was not recognized? What is different today?
2. Read this week's article titled *Light*. Do you suspect you have one or more blind spots? Where? Do you believe our country has any blind spots? The church overall? Our church?
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)



## 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](mailto:funding@flintasbury.org)

Alex decides to investigate her disappearance, but what he wasn't prepared for, was a journey into his own actions and decisions. Powerful ideology shifts are coming his way, and Alex is about to learn the true price of a second.

At 78 pages, this book is a quick read and difficult to put down once you start. Nevertheless, we'll reference the book when it fits using the following schedule:

January 5	Chapters 1-2
January 12	Chapters 3-5
January 19	Chapters 6-7
January 26	Chapters 8-10

We'll have a few books available for purchase, copies are available through Amazon for \$9.99 for the paperback edition and \$3.99 for the Kindle version. Since this book is self-published, its distribution is limited.

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



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)

We usually don't notice our blind spots since the spot in one eye doesn't match the spot in the other eye, so the other eye supplies missing information. Also, sometimes, the brain fills in missing information with what it thinks should be there. This is one form of optical illusion.

Of course, there are many other kinds of blind spots. Some can cause accidents if we miss seeing a car in the lane next to us when we're changing lanes. But these are personal examples.

Some blind spots are contagious. When enough people share them, a false truth emerges that may stay with them for generations. Discovering our blindness can sometimes inspire us to look for other blind spots. More often, however, we're apt to become defensive, choosing to continue in comfortable blindness.

None of us are exempt from either of these options.

The Gospel of John begins with a most profound message of good news. The light has come into the world. But in our theme scripture for this week, the writer reminds us that not everyone saw the light. John punctuates the significance, reminding us that Jesus is the very Word that created the world.

John's prologue is at the very heart of our Christian witness. His witness lies at the foundation of our faith that Jesus Christ is God living among us. In just a few verses, John tells us how significant this good news is for the world.

This wasn't the first time God addressed the subject of divine light. From time to time, a communal blind spot causes darkness to settle over the land and people. Other times, calamity creates a feeling of darkness. God occasionally intervenes in human history to ease suffering and correct injustice.

God chose to live among us to save us. In doing so, Jesus lights up the dark places, exposing the brokenness of people and systems. Shining light into the world's blind spots, removing our blindness, and inspiring us to see ourselves as God sees us.

The light that came into the world was not just for the privileged or even just for humankind. Jesus was the light of our creator, not in the form of a mighty king, but in common, ordinary, everyday living flesh.

Christ came into the world so that the world could be saved. Not saved by a warrior wielding weapons of mass destruction but by you and me

The Word was in the world, and though God made the world through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him.

John 1:10

God sent light into the world, Emmanuel, to reveal God's nature to us and God's love for us. Christ came into the world to bring light into our darkness. Once our eyes are opened and we recognize Christ, we recognize that God's will is that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

Then and only then can the lion sleep with the lamb. Then and only then will a world that spends billions on wars seek to fight poverty instead. Then and only then will a world that values people for what they produce see that we are all God's beloved.

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](#).

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](mailto: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 the Reverend Dawn Darwin Weak. *Daring to Connect: Advent as Adventure*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2024.



Once we recognize Jesus Christ, we're better able to recognize Christ in each other. Strangers will be welcomed. And we can recognize Christ in each other and in ourselves.

Once we have the light of Christ as our Lord and Savior within us, our eyes are opened to injustice, to the plight of our neighbor, to Christ among us, and to God's hand in everyday human events.

Once our eyes are opened, Christ can offer us the divine gift of salvation. Once our eyes are opened, we can become Christ's brothers and sisters and children of 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](http://FlintAsburyChurch.org).

This is a reminder that we publish this newsletter called the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to [FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com](mailto: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 the Reverend Dawn Darwin Weak. *Daring to Connect: Advent as Adventure*. Danvers, MA: Challice Press, 2024.



Where shopping and giving  
come together and you can help!

### Learn more at

[KrogerCommunityRewards.com](http://KrogerCommunityRewards.com)  
Or, call Kroger Customer Communications at

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



### 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](http://Kroger.com)

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

**ZERO HUNGER  
ZERO WASTE**

by **Kroger**

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

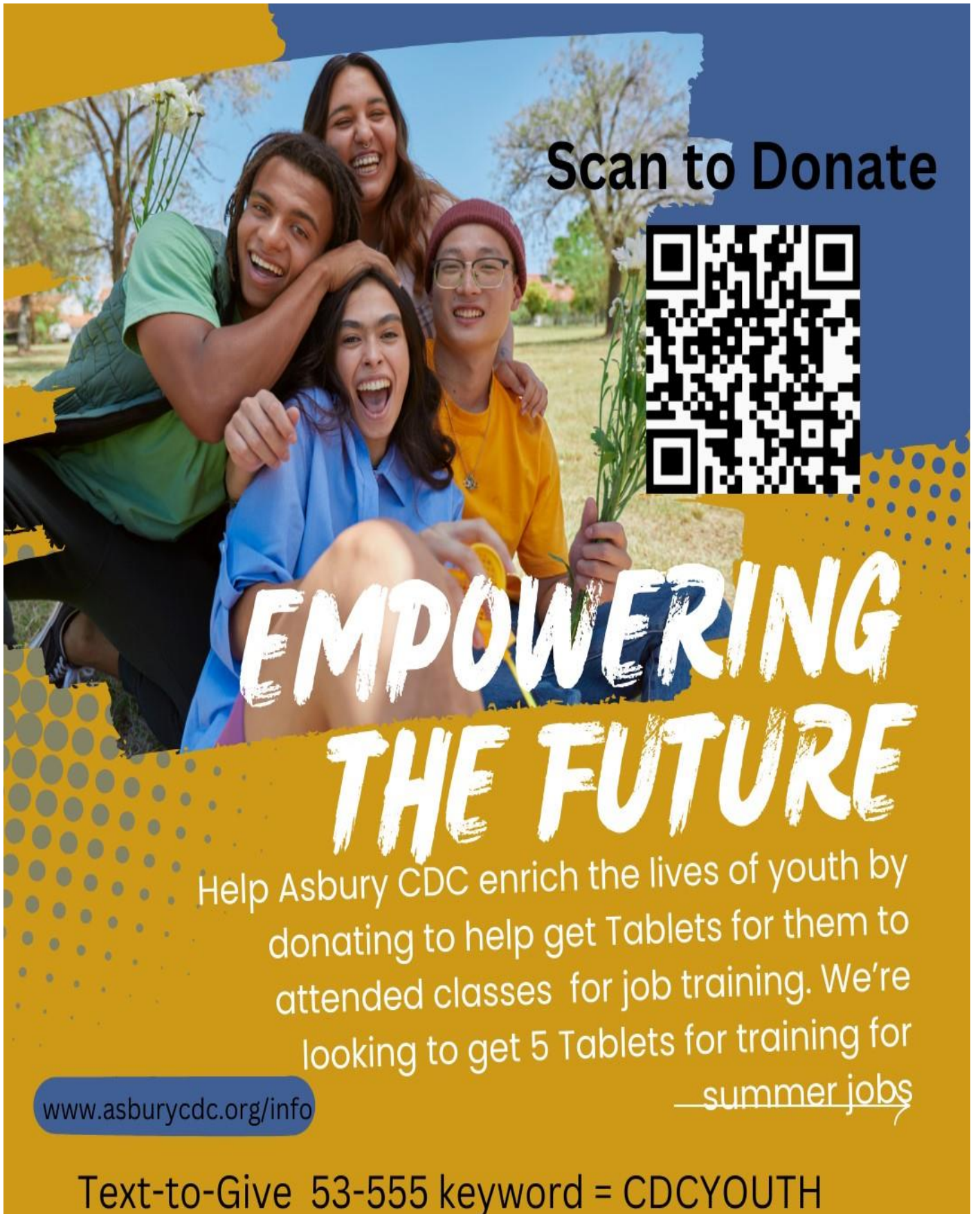
We're giving **\$2 million**

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](http://www.asburycdc.org/info)

Text-to-Give 53-555 keyword = CDCYOUTH





# "THANK YOU MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE!"

A BIG "THANK YOU" TO OFFICER ROY VILLARREAL AND HIS CREW, FROM MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, FOR THEIR DONATIONS OF BLANKETS AND SOCKS FOR THE HOMELESS FOR ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND ASBURY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP!! WE ARE SO GRATEFUL!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!



Pictured from left: Officer Roy Villarreal, Connie Portillo, Michele Weston, Kevin Croom, Christine Heck, Kim Sims