



ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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DECEMBER 29, 2024

Missing (Growing up)



This past week, I spent a few hours at the Henry Ford Museum with three of my grandchildren and their parents. The museum has been hosting a hockey display for several weeks, and families with young hockey players were anxious to see it before it left the museum. Two of the

three grandchildren play hockey. The special display, called "HOCKEY: Faster Than Ever," promises to take viewers on a journey through the evolution of ice hockey.

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

EVERYONE HAVE
A WONDERFUL
SAFE



DONATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Light	1
Missing	1
Missing	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
Missing	14
Light	15
Kroger Rewards	16
Empowering the future	17

Missing (Growing up) *cont. from pg 1*

At ages 10 and 7, my grandchildren persistently test boundaries established by their parents. They frequently headed in three different directions, each with their own idea of where the family should go next.

As a grandparent, I had the best seat in the house as I watched my oldest daughter deal with strong, independently minded children who reminded me of her at that age.

We all go through it. Each year of growth brings new opportunities to discover our likes and dislikes as we settle on a suitable answer to the question, "Who am I?" We also learn how to deal with the ups and downs of not always getting our way. We discover people other than parents to turn to when things don't go our way or we're stressed from anticipation of what may come.

One post-Christmas story from Luke reminds us that Jesus was once a child. Luke reminds us that Jesus grew up in a family that observed Jewish law. In particular, his family made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for various religious holidays. Experts estimate such a trip would have taken four or five days, and the family would travel in a caravan with extended and other families.

At the time, Jesus was a couple of years older than my oldest grandchild. Nevertheless, at the age of twelve, Jesus was still a child. According to Jewish custom, a male child became a man and embraced the traditions of his ancestors at the age of thirteen.

After the celebrations and the family packed up and left for home, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without the permission or knowledge of His parents. It took a while before His parents discovered Jesus was not with them. Understandably, the reaction of Mary and Joseph reflected how one would expect parents to respond.

While Luke doesn't say they panicked, I know I would, given the circumstances. The parents returned to Jerusalem to search for their missing son. Luke tells us they searched for three days before finding Jesus at the Temple, sitting with some teachers, discussing deep questions with them, and amazing everyone with his understanding and answers.

Jesus' parents responded the way my parents responded to me when I was twelve and wandered off. The streets of Memphis, in the neighborhood where we lived, were no place for a twelve-year-old to wander around.

His parents did not know what to think. "Son!" his mother said, "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

"But why did you need to search?" asked Jesus, "Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" But his parents did not understand.

Luke 2: 49-50

Those of us reading this story centuries later are not surprised that at a young age, Jesus had an uncanny insight into ancient texts. After all, we reason that Jesus was the Son of God.

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 30 - JANUARY 5

Dec 30	Mon	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Dec 31	Tue		
Jan 1	Wed	HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL !!	
		FELIZ ANO NUEVO PARA TODOS!!	
Jan 2	Thu		
Jan 3	Fri		
Jan 4	Sat		
Jan 5	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](#).)

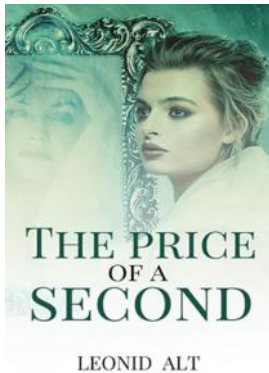
Upcoming Worship Series "Seconds"



What is the purpose of worship? Have you ever considered this question? I'm sure many of us have at times. Many of us consistently and persistently show up each Sunday. We look forward to seeing familiar faces, even if we don't really look forward to the effort of getting here.

But that does not answer the question. Familiar faces and feelings are just some of the benefits of our efforts. While these feelings are important, they're not the reason, are they?

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

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- Anthony & Jim Ushers
- Jonathon & Terrance Production Team
- Yasheah & Mirium Nursery
- Christine Cafe

Upcoming Worship Series — “Seconds”

We worship somewhat out of expectation but mostly out of gratitude. God gives us life and offers us eternal peace and joy. Therefore, worship is not a burden or even an expectation. It is simply a gesture, a recognition of our total dependence, and, most of all, a show of affection.

Worship is also a giving of our time, isn't it? Most of us are so busy that setting aside a couple of hours each week to get to church takes away from other priorities. So, how can we justify this infringement on our time when we are already maxed out?

Come and see!

We kick off 2025 with a series titled *Seconds*. The title of our companion book poses the question of what a second is worth. Psychiatrist and writer Dr. Leonid Altshuler, who writes under the pen name Leonid Alt, offers insight from his professional and personal experiences.

We're doing this series a little differently. Our scripture comes from the Common Lectionary, a weekly schedule of readings for the year published by the World Council of Churches. Each week, consider how Dr. Altshuler's creative storytelling relates to the gospel selection read by churches around the world.

Here is the outline of our series:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Scripture</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Dreams	January 5	Matthew 2:1-23	Chapters 1-2
Spirit	January 12	Luke 3:15-17, 21-22	Chapters 3-5
Abundance	January 19	John 2:1-11	Chapters 6-7
Tempted	January 26	Luke 4:4-21	Chapters 8-10

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. We share our weekly episodes on [Facebook](#) and our [YouTube channel](#), and we go live at 10:30 a.m. You can find these links, along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website, FlintAsburyChurch.org](http://www.FlintAsburyChurch.org).


Pastor Tommy

Dr. Leonid Alt. The Price of a Second. © Leonid Alt, 2021.

“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:

But why did you need to search?" asked Jesus. "Didn't you realize that I would be in my Father's House?" But His parents didn't understand.

Luke 2:41-52

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Luke 2:41-52. As you read this story, what strikes you as unusual? What parts can you relate to? What parts of Luke's story seem obvious to you? Are there any parts that surprise you?
2. Read this week's article titled Missing. Did you ever worry your parents by wandering off when you were a child? Have you lost track of a child you were watching as they wandered off unnoticed? How did you handle the moments before finding them? What did you say to the child when found?
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

To donate: www.mightycause.com/feedflint



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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

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- to 53-555
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Donate Now



More Information :



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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.

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

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

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.

But what if you are the parent of a twelve-year-old who has you worried sick? His parents were worried and exasperated. However, they discovered something else about their son that most parents are delighted to learn. Jesus is very bright for his age, but he is still a twelve-year-old.

Then Luke tells us that Jesus questioned their need to search for him. "Why did you need to search?" Jesus asked. "Didn't you realize that I would be here at the Temple?"

Again, this makes perfect sense to believers. Of course, Jesus would be in his Father's house.

But for His parents — "Huh?" sums up their response. Nevertheless, Luke tells us that his mother hid this incident in her heart while waiting for her son's life story to unfold. The reactions of Mary and Joseph are true to life; what parents cannot emphasize with their distress?

Hidden in Jesus' response to His parents are his pronouncements of the necessity of what He was doing. In several translations, Jesus said to His parents,

"Didn't you know that I had to be in My Father's house?" This statement suggests an awareness of God's purpose that makes the fulfillment of certain activities imperative. Jesus' life was bound to God's purpose.

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.

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.

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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: Challice Press, 2024.



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enrolled

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ZERO WASTE**

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

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EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

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

www.asburycdc.org/info

Text-to-Give 53-555 keyword = CDCYOUTH



Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Each year we are blessed to share God's miraculous story of hope, joy, faith and love as we look forward to Christmas day. And as the Superintendent I am blessed to be able to travel across the District to hear how each faith community retells the story of a tiny baby, who with his birth, transformed the world.

This time of year is also known as the season of giving. I want to thank you for caring for families in need during this season. May we dedicate ourselves to journeying with them, now and throughout the year.

I have made a donation on your behalf to UMCOR's Hurricane Response, the Blue Water Free Store and the Flint Soup Kitchen.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Joyful and Happy New Year!

"God bless us, everyone."

(*Tiny Tim*, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, 1843)



"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

7 TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS & MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAYS



PLAN AHEAD

Have a plan in place for all your holiday tasks and activities.



DON'T WORRY

Don't feel obligated to complete every small thing on your list.



JUST SAY NO

If you have too much on your plate, let your friends and family know.



STAY ACTIVE

Exercise is a great way to deal with holiday stress, and anxiety.



SET ASIDE DIFFERENCES

Enjoy other's company and talk about topics that bring happiness.



ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

Have a plan in place for all your holiday tasks and activities.

