

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Spirit (Baptism)



Google the word spirit, and you'll be treated to a plethora of opportunities to explore the airline with this word in its name. Spirit Airlines is known for its low prices but few amenities and extra charges for most services, including choosing a seat. The company

recently filed for bankruptcy protection.

Page 2

**EVERYONE HAVE
A WONDERFUL
SAFE
WEEKEND!**

DONATE

Abundance (Finding happiness)



Wedding feast at Asbury Church

The fires in Los Angeles, California, are a blunt reminder of the damage we've done to our planet over the past century. Our planet recorded the warmest year in history in 2024, and Southern California's drought that began several months ago continued into the rainy season, setting them up for disaster.

Page 13

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Abundance	1
Spirit	1
Spirit	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
Abundance	13
Spirit	14
Abundance	15
Kroger Rewards	16
Empowering the future	17

Spirit (Baptism) *cont. from pg 1*

Google the phrase spiritual world, and you're invited to go a different direction. The focus is on the unseen. The mystery of other dimensions outside our perception, beyond the four dimensions of length, width, depth, and time. String theorists have identified a total of ten dimensions, seven of which are too small and curled to be detected with current technology.

On the other hand, many believe the 5th dimension involves a parallel universe, alternate timeline, and spirituality.

While we know a lot more about the world than our ancestors did, I'm not sure we know anything more about the spiritual world than people who lived centuries before us.

In our companion book chapters for this week, Alex is determined to have a conversation with the spirit of his dead father. After speaking with his colleague about the process, Alex stares into a mirror, hoping his father's image will appear.

As our chapters for this week close, Alex sees his father's likeness appear.

Meanwhile, Alex meets with a new patient recently admitted to the hospital. Lisa was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Her symptoms included auditory and visual hallucinations, and she had attempted suicide several times by cutting her hands with a knife.

Alex knew her case was complicated. However, as their interview began, Lisa wanted to leave the hospital to resume her busy schedule. Eventually, she began to share how it all began, but the medications she was given made it difficult for her to concentrate. We'll learn more in later chapters.

Meanwhile, our theme scripture for this week comes from Luke's account of Jesus' baptism. The story begins with a relative of Jesus named John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah. Luke tells us that some speculated that John was the long-awaited Messiah. But John puts these rumors to rest when he emphasizes that he baptizes with water, while the Messiah will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

There's that word, spirit, again.

While John offered colorful illustrations of what it means to be baptized with water, his main focus was repentance. He warned his listeners to bear good fruit by sharing our excess, being fair in our business dealings, and caring for one another.

Jesus was baptized, too. And as He was praying, the Holy Spirit descended on Him, and a voice from heaven said, "you are my Son, and I am pleased with."

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Luke tells us that Jesus showed up to be baptized after John finished with the crowd. A dove appeared as Jesus came out of the water in Matthew's version, but Luke says that as Jesus was praying, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven was heard saying, "You are my Son, whom I love, and with You I am well pleased."

Jesus heard words from His Father that we all want to hear from our parents. And most of us want to hear these words from God at some point. Some of us spend a lifetime trying to earn these words.

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
JANUARY 20 - 26, 2025

Jan 20	Mon	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY	
		6:00pm	:Leadership Team Meeting
Jan 21	Tue	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Jan 22	Wed		
Jan 23	Thu		
Jan 24	Fri		
Jan 25	Sat		
Jan 26	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](#).)

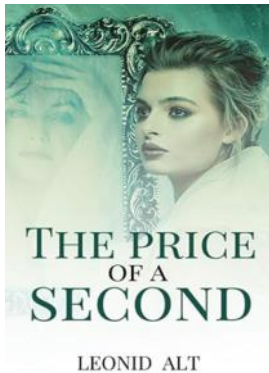
Upcoming Worship Series "Seconds"



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:

Everyone else serves the best wine first, and after the guests have drunk a lot, he serves the ordinary wine. But you have kept the best wine until now!

John 2:1-11

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read John 2:1-11. What are some of the possible symbolisms in this story? What does this story mean for you?
2. Read this week's article titled Abundance. What does being a good host look like to you? What does abundance mean for you? What can you do to reduce carbon emissions?
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.



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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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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

According to a recent *New York Times* article, climate scientists warn that “the world has entered a dangerous new era of chaotic floods, storms, and fires made worse by human-caused climate change.” And the wildfires in California are one example. As were the cyclones in Appalachia, where Hurricanes Helene and Milton tore through mountain communities this past October.

Scripture reminds us that God put us in charge of caring for creation from the very beginning. But we’re doing a miserable job of it. Most of us realize there is a problem, but we’re not in a hurry to do something about it. Unfortunately, a few of us continue to deny that we’re the ones God expects to stop the harm.

There is more than enough denial around to make progress painfully slow. But the ramifications are becoming increasingly more deadly.

Alex’s hope to connect with the spirit of his dead father suddenly takes a weird turn he couldn’t have imagined in our companion book chapters for this week. He is transported into another world where his daily work consists of moving rocks from one place to another. Only to start over again the next day. The work seemed meaningless to Alex.

The author’s use of imagery and metaphors to capture the lives of so many of us is brilliant, but it has an in-your-face impact that’s almost too much to handle.

When one of the community leaders, Greg, asks Alex if he is happy in his new life, Alex shares that he is. Alex notices that he has become kinder, calmer, and more appreciative of his time. Nevertheless, Alex longed for the life he had before.

This puzzled his new friend. “Were you happy there?” Greg asked. “To be honest,” Alex replied, “No. I was stressed all the time, But Alex just couldn’t get used to the idea that tomorrow might be the last day of his life.

The mirror that changed everything when Alex stared into it may be the most subtle yet powerful metaphor of all. Don’t most of us deal with this fact of our existence simply by denying the truth? The truth is that we simply don’t know how much time we have left, so we should live as though we may not have a tomorrow.

In his new life, Alex had everything he needed. When he decided to start writing again, he was given everything he needed. Alex had always wanted to get back to writing but never took the time. In many ways, Alex had been transported to a place of abundant hospitality, although it didn’t feel that way. Alex simply couldn’t find contentment.

For most people, the world is not a place of abundance, we say with substantial doubt, “Bring it on!”, though, the abundance sought by most of us is more excess than necessity. For those of us who live in privilege, there is never enough.

When I think of abundance, I wonder what it means to be good host. Let me explain.

We are all visitors here on earth. We arrive as a guest on its Creator. And God knows how to be a good host. So I googled, “What does it mean to be a good host?” In search of ideas we can all identify with that are not clothed in symbolism.

Fortunately, unlike a lot of earthly fathers, God doesn't offer His love as a transaction. Instead, God's love never ends, and He takes pleasure when we return His love towards Him by loving creation, ourselves, and others.

As United Methodists, we believe baptism to be a special event called a Sacrament. For us, baptism is a miracle, not unlike the one describe by Luke after Jesus was baptized. In baptism, we offer a visible sign of our desire to accept Jesus as our Savior. However, invisible to the eye, the miracle promised by John is already at work within us when He said that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

But where does the fire come in?

Fire is a metaphor for the change taking place within us. Heat purifies precious metals, separating them from the impurities clinging to them. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit purifies us and connects us with God's love. Through God's grace alone, the Holy Spirit helps us respond with love toward all creation.

The fruits of the Spirit are acts of love. This is how we know when God's will is our intent rather than our own. All that harms others is contrary to God's will.

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 Dr. Leonid Alt. *The Price of a Second*. Leonid Alt. 2021

I found an article by Martha Beck in *Oprah Magazine* that illustrated her experience visiting a friend. She was pleasantly surprised by how comfortable her host made her feel. It was clear that her friend knew what it meant to be a good host. Essentially, a good host focuses on the needs of their guests rather than their own need for approval.

For this week's theme scripture, we turn to John for a story that illustrates abundance and being a good host. According to John, the story takes place in the village of Cana. Jesus, along with His family and friends, attended a wedding there. Jewish weddings usually lasted a week, and there wasn't enough wine for the number of guests.

Since wine is mostly water, it was common to increase the amount of wine by adding water. Unfortunately, by the end of the celebrations, the quality of the wine reached its lowest point. Perhaps there wasn't even enough diluted wine to satisfy all of the guests, or perhaps this story illustrates radical hospitality.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, recognizes an inhospitable situation brewing and asks her Son to help save the party and the reputation of the groom and his family. Jesus instructs the servers to fill the large water jugs, which He then turns into fine, undiluted wine. More than enough to satisfy all the guests.

Everyone else serves the best wine first, and after the guests have drunk a lot, he serves the ordinary wine. But you have kept the best wine until now!

John 2:1-11

Divine intervention enabled the guests to enjoy radical hospitality. God knows what it means to be a good host.

While we're all visitors here, we're made in the image of our home's Creator. We're more than guests, however. We're family, and we're asked to be His hosts.

Good hosts set boundaries for their hospitality. As hosts, we're expected to take care of ourselves even as we take care of our planet. We're expected to find a balance. But we're still obligated to take care of all the guests.

Those who can afford to be the best hosts aren't sharing their wealth. A 2023 report published by Oxfam, an international non-governmental organization focused on climate change, claims that "The richest 1% of the world's population are responsible for as much carbon pollution as the people who make up the poorest two-thirds of humanity. Oxfam is challenging the inequality that comes with climate change.

Oxfam's report reminds us that the richest people and countries have enough wealth, power, and influence to protect themselves.

But with that power comes a huge responsibility to be better hosts for all of creation. And some of the properties lost in the LA fires belong to wealthy people.

Perhaps we're not really able to hide behind wealth or denial.

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