

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 5 Issue 9

FEBRUARY 9, 2025

## Tempted (Convenient Opportunities)



Thousands, if not millions, of us are wondering and worried about how the recent executive orders signed by the president will affect us or someone we care about.

After pardoning or commuting sentences for those who stormed the Capital and interrupted the certification of his predecessor, including those found guilty of violent crimes, we're afraid that anything goes.

Page 2

## Mary (Jesus follower)



We begin our new series, *Friends*, as a precursor to our next series, which will examine the people and systems that chose to become enemies of Jesus. In doing so, we cannot help but notice the contrast as we consider current circumstances.

Our companion devotional guide began with the profound comparison that "every follower of Jesus has a not-so-great 'before.'" This is a time before meeting Jesus that, in some minds, should disqualify us from consideration.

Page 14

**EVERYONE HAVE  
A WONDERFUL  
AND SAFE  
WEEK!**

**DONATE**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Mary	1
Tempted	1
Tempted	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
Tempted	13
Mary	14
Kroger Rewards	15
Empowering the future	16
Ash Wednesday Series	17

Individuals who immigrated to the U.S. and are here on temporary authority are understandably afraid and worried, especially those without approval or whose approval has expired. The promise of the largest deportation program in U.S. history can mean many things. Even those trying to help could be collateral damage.

Social media posts, news stories, and family conversations speculate about what will happen next. It's tempting to respond to each statement, news release, or interview with anxious and angry declarations. Many of us are afraid of what will happen next.

Bishop Mariann E. Budde admitted she was a little afraid while making a plea for mercy during her sermon following the inauguration. The Bishop spoke on behalf of everyone who is afraid of the ways the newly elected president has threatened to wield his power.

Power is tempting. Unchecked power is both dangerous and addictive. And an uncertain future is unsettling.

In the final chapters of our companion book, Lisa shares how she deals with uncertainty. In her new reality, she lives under the threat of the men in black. Lisa describes her new outlook to Alex: "Every morning, I wake up and thank God for seeing the sun, hearing the birds sing. I enjoy the rain, the flowers, the clouds in the sky. I love people. I appreciate life because it can be taken away from me at any minute."

Lisa finds her new outlook as a result of the obvious presence of the men in black but reminds Alex and us that this is how life is for all of us. "Our life can end any second, but we don't think about it. It seems to us that we will live forever. And that's because we don't see the people in black."

Alex and Lisa return to their former lives but not to their former selves. Both appreciate life's pleasures and value their time, realizing that each second is a gift from God.

Alex and Lisa spend time in uncomfortable circumstances only to emerge more alive. Scripture often uses the wilderness as a metaphor for such experiences. Sometimes, the characters end up there because of decisions they made, and other times, it happens for reasons they did not contribute to.

The wilderness is a common human experience although we each have our own unique view of it.

The wilderness is full of temptation. It is a place where our insecurities and past hurts are most easily exploited. On our best days, we may feel God's presence and resist opportunities to make decisions that could benefit us in the short term while doing irreparable harm.

God understands our dilemmas.

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**  
**FEBRUARY 10 - 16**

Feb 10	Mon		
Feb 11	Tue	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
Feb 12	Wed		
Feb 13	Thu	1:00pm	United Women of Faith
Feb 14	Fri		
Feb 15	Sat	12:30-3:30	Baby Shower in Fellowship Hall
Feb 16	Sun	10:30am	New Beginnings Contemporary Worship

**\*\*\* DON'T FORGET THE IMMUNIZATION CLINIC FROM THE GENESEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WILL BE HERE ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH—SEE FLYER ON PAGE 19th FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)

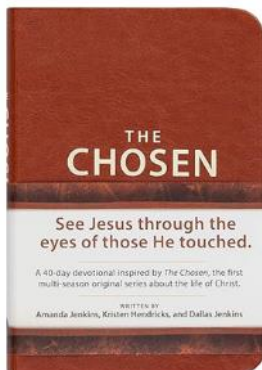
## Upcoming Worship Series "Who Dunitt?"



During this year's Lent observance, we, along with several other area UM Churches, are participating in a series titled *Who Dunitt? The people who wanted Jesus dead* (see article). The series begins after Ash Wednesday on Sunday, March 9.

So, in preparation, our February series will focus on the friends of Jesus in our series titled *Friends - the people who wanted Jesus alive*.

## Book Club News



We began 2025 with a worship series titled *Seconds*. Our last episode is on Sunday, January 26. As our companion

book, we used *The Price of a Second* by Dr. Leonid Altshuler, a board-certified psychiatrist and

writer, who writes under the pen name Leonid Alt. Our focus was on cherishing every moment of life and loving others.

We continue 2025 with a devotional book based on the first season of the TV Series *The Chosen*.

Our companion book for our new series is *The Chosen: 40 Days with Jesus*, which invites us to

encounter Jesus the way his followers did.

The followers of Jesus in the Gospels have a lot in common with us. Like them, we also had a not-so-great "before." In the Gospels, we meet a brash fisherman, a pious religious leader, and a demon-possessed woman, just to mention a few. We also meet a tax collector who exploits others.

In all cases, Jesus saw beyond their brokenness and offered forgiveness. And this was just the beginning. Jesus transforms the lives of all who follow Him.

## 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 — “Who Dunit?”

In researching companion books, I checked in with friend and colleague Adam Hamilton at the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, Missouri (and Kansas). Although he hasn't written a book specifically on this topic, his church is already doing a series on it, which began in January. The series is based on the popular made-for-TV series *Chosen*. We will follow their lead but with our own version and schedule.

*We rejoice and delight in you.  
We will praise your love more  
than wine. How right they are  
to adore you!*

**Song of Songs 1:4**

For a companion book, we'll use a 40-day devotional guide based on *Chosen* (see Book Club article). We'll begin reading these daily devotions on Monday, January 27, but our series doesn't start until February 9. We have a guest speaker on February 2, so we will celebrate communion on the second Sunday in February.

Here is the outline of our series:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Guest Preacher	February 2	Days 1-7
<i>Mary</i>	February 9	Days 8-14
<i>Afraid</i>	February 16	Days 15-21
<i>Tbd</i>	February 23	Days 22-28
<i>Tbd</i>	March 2	Days 29-35
Week of Ash Wednesday		Days 36-40

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](#).


Pastor Tommy

*Amanda Jenkins, Kristen Hendricks, and Dallas Jenkins. The Chosen: 40 Days with Jesus. © Savage, MN: BroadStreet Publishing, 2019.*

“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](http://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)

**LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:**

The twelve disciples travelled with Jesus, as did some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases, including Mary (who was called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had been driven out.

Luke 8:1-3

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

---

---

---

---

---

---

**QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:**

1. Read Luke 8:1-3. Describe what Christ has delivered you from. In what ways can you identify with Mary Magdalene? What role has Christ delivered you for?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled Mary. What are some of the inner voices you hear from? What are they telling you? How have you chose to deal with them?
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)

Each of the forty devotions offers scripture, a glimpse into a Gospel story, prayer suggestions, and questions that help you deepen your relationship with Christ. You're invited to see Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him best and explore the backstories of people like Mary Magdalene, Peter, Matthew, Nicodemus, and others.

If you choose to follow along, I suggest beginning day one's reading the Monday after our current series ends (January 27) and using the following schedule:

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Devotional Readings</u>
February 2	Days 1-7
February 9	Days 8-14
February 16	Days 15-21
February 23	Days 22-28
March 2	Days 29-35
Week of Ash Wednesday	Days 36-40

We will have a few books available for purchase, copies are available through Amazon or ChristianBooks.com for \$6.74 for the paperback edition. The price is \$9.99 for the Kindle version.

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)

Luke tells us Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit after He was baptized. The possibility of connections raises questions for most of us. Does baptism guarantee a wilderness experience will follow? Why would God lead us into such a place?

*When Jesus returned from the Jordan River, He was filled with the Holy Spirit and was led into the wilderness, where the devil tempted him.*

Luke 4:1-13

Matthew and Mark also tell us that God's Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for forty days. Granted, most numbers found in scripture are not symbolic than actual counts. Regardless, Jesus was in the wilderness for a while. And while He was there, we are told the devil tried hard to convince Jesus to give into temptations the devil put in front of Him.

The devil knows power is tempting, and unchecked power is both dangerous and addictive. But so does Jesus.

The temptations confronting Jesus while in the wilderness began with an appeal to His physical vulnerabilities. Jesus was hungry and was tempted to address His hunger with the most immediate resources available.

Similarly, fitting in feels like a pang of physical desire, even more than our craving for our favorite treat. When we fulfill our need to belong by adapting to whatever role and belief offer acceptance, we open ourselves to attaching our allegiance to whatever helps us feel better about ourselves.

Notice how temptations work. In the wilderness, we're confronted by questions that haunt us. If you're really who you claim to be. If people really cared about you. If you really deserve to be loved.

Saving the more subtle temptation for last, Jesus' recognition of His own value is tested, with a question that most of us face in the wilderness. If you are precious to God, God will surely save you even from the most foolish mistakes.

Jesus knows His value to God, and He also knows your value.

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

Fortunately, Jesus sees through our brokenness. He sees who He created us to be and recognizes that we simply need help to overcome the burdens we carry and eventually get past our past.

It's amazing how easy it is to reach a point where we believe we're unredeemable. A place where we're beyond the limits of grace. A lot of us faced situations too early in our lifetime that led us to the false conclusion that we're unworthy of God's love. Many of us learned that love must be earned only to discover we can't afford it or can never quite make the grade.

We see this in some of our political leaders. Perhaps feeling like they had to earn love motivated them to seek the public respect that is often found in holding a position with power over others. Certainly, receiving more votes than someone else for a powerful position is a huge ego boost.

We can only guess at the motivations behind destructive behavior and a need to avenge anyone who dared question the capabilities of a public figure. But we know one thing for sure. Such behavior doesn't reflect the teachings of Jesus.

God does not call us to support brokenness that does not reflect love and mercy.

Never the less, as we'll see in our next series, even some who claim faithfulness to God reflect the opposite in their actions.

The reality that we all fall short is comforting but doesn't excuse us from returning the love and grace God offers us by treating others with compassion.

Jesus surrounded himself with a diverse group of individuals that reflected the community around Him. He saw through their differences and loved through their deficiencies.

Luke tells us that both men and women were among His closest followers. But He only names a few of the women, including Mary, Joanna, and Susanna.

Mary was known as Magdalene, likely since she came from the village of Magdala, located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Perhaps she met Jesus on His way to Capernaum.

We're told that Mary was possessed by seven demons, which Jesus helped her shed. The idea of demons was a catch-all for anything that couldn't be explained. Demons were likely blamed for emotional challenges, including depression.

Demons had voices, according to scripture. We're all familiar with the idea of hearing voices. Some of us hear voices cheering us on, while others hear condemnation. I suspect most of us hear a mixture of mostly familiar voices.

How we respond matters. Some voices lead otherwise good people toward destructive behaviour, hate, or a lack of compassion. When people do destructive things, I often wonder if they are responding to inner voices of condemnation.

*The twelve disciples traveled with Jesus, as did some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases, including Mary (who was called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had been driven out.*

Luke 8:1-3

The gospel writers don't tell us much about Mary from Magdala. Only Luke tells us she was an early follower. But they all mention her near the end of their stories. She was with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, at the cross when Jesus was executed. Mary was also the first to see Jesus after the resurrection.

The most powerful story about Mary from Magdala comes near the end of John's Gospel. Mary went to the tomb by herself and saw that it was empty. Jesus appeared to Mary, but she didn't recognize Him, mistaking Him for the groundskeeper.

However, when Jesus says her name, Mary realizes Jesus is alive.

Mary from Magdala continues to be a metaphor for the various ways that people come to believe the stories told by the gospel writers. Some hear Jesus call their name, and others feel a pull toward belief.

Whatever your story, Jesus knows your past. More importantly, Jesus knows who He created you to be and loves you, despite your past and whether or not you choose to love Him back.

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 Adam Hamilton's series "The People Jesus Loved." © Church of the Resurrection, 2025. And by Amanda Jenkins, Kristen Hendricks, and Dallas



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

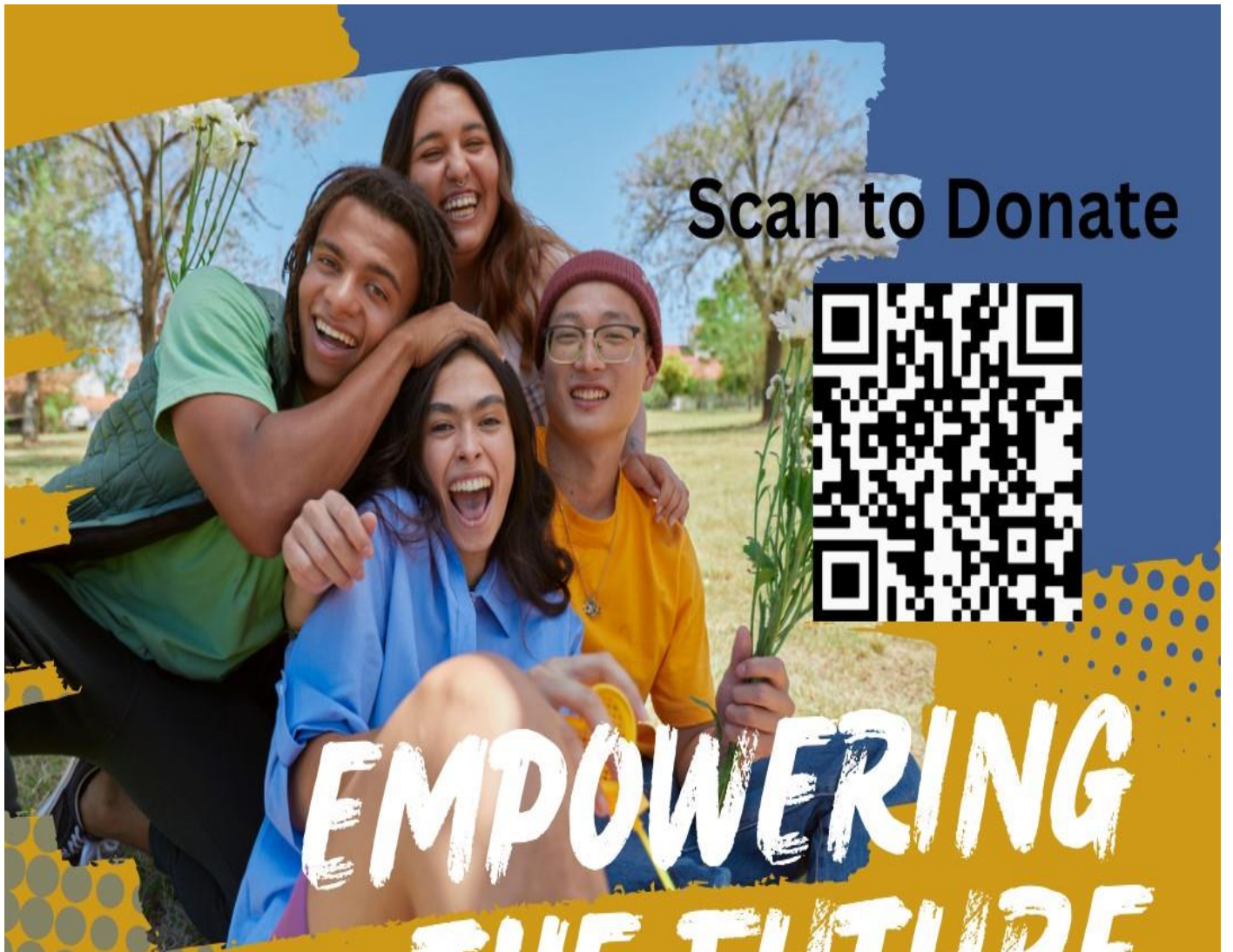
We're giving **\$2 million**

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



In Sunday school when we asked our teachers, “Why did Jesus have to die?” they answered, “Jesus died to save us.”

Maybe they gave us that simplistic answer because it seemed safer than saying, “Jesus died because he challenged the powers of this world.”

In this series we will learn about the people who wanted Jesus dead, and we will discover that God is calling us still to resist the powers that conspired put Jesus on the cross.

## SERIES OVERVIEW

*(Italics indicate pulpit swap Sunday)*

March 9	<i>The King</i>	Matthew 2:16-18
<i>March 16</i>	<i>The Neighbors</i>	<i>Luke 4:20-30</i>
March 23	The Religious Folk	Mark 3:1-6
<i>March 30</i>	<i>The Clergy</i>	<i>Luke 21:37-22:2</i>
April 6	The Disciple	Luke 22:3-6
April 13	The Governor	John 19:16b-22

## A NOTE ON ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday presents an opportunity to remember that our struggle is not against flesh and blood. In this series we will focus on people who attempted to cut short the ministry of Jesus, but those people represented, in one way or another, the spiritual powers of this world that Jesus encountered in the wilderness. The people who tried to kill Jesus were consumed by selfish desires - the desire for comfort, the desire for power, the desire for glory. Matthew 4:1-11 reveals why so many people believed that Jesus had to die: he refused to play the game, and in doing so he exposed the players and threatened to topple the “winners.”



**IMMUNIZATION CLINIC FROM  
GENESEE COUNTY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

**Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025**

**Time: 10:00am – 2:00pm**

**Place: Asbury United Methodist Church**   
**1653 Davison Rd Flint MI 48506**  
**(810) 235-0016**

**WE WILL BE OFFERING COVID, FLU  
TDAP (TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA, ACELLULAR  
PERTUSSIS) AND HEPATITIS B  
VACCINES.**

**THESE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANYONE  
THAT IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE VACCINES.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND PLAN ON  
STOPPING BY!**

