

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 5 Issue 2

MARCH 2, 2025

## Accepted (Watercooler



God created us to live in communities and gave us each unique potential to contribute to the common good. In a competitive culture, rejection is inevitable. Sooner or later, we won't make the grade; we'll slip up or reach the end of an era where we can't do what we could before. Rejection often starts early, and we're fortunate if we learn how to cope and respond in a healthy way.

## Afraid (What drives you?)



Fear motivates us to respond in one of four ways. Sometimes, we freeze and are unable to move. Other times, we run away. Occasionally, we move aggressively toward the source of our fear. Last, we may try to appease the source of our fear.

Psychologists refer to these four types of responses as fight, flight, freeze, and fawn.

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

**DONATE**

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## Accepted (Watercooler conversation) *cont. from pg 1*

Research confirms that rejection, to our brains, is a lot like physical pain. Have you considered treating rejection with Tylenol? Researchers also confirmed that treating rejection as physical pain reduces some discomfort. An article by Kirsten Weir, published by the American Psychological Association, has the subtitle: "As far as the brain is concerned, a broken heart may not be so different from a broken arm."

According to Weir, research has shown that "Social rejection can influence emotion, cognition, and even physical health. Ostracized people sometimes become aggressive and can turn to violence."

C. Nathan DeWall, PhD, a psychologist at the University of Kentucky, writes:

Social rejection increases anger, anxiety, depression, jealousy, and sadness. It reduces performance on difficult intellectual tasks and can also contribute to aggression and poor impulse control. Physically, too, rejection takes a toll. People who routinely feel excluded have poorer sleep quality, and their immune systems don't function as well as those of peo-

We're wired to contribute to a vibrant community. We can feel it when it's working and when it's not.

The Bible offers numerous illustrations of vibrant and not-so-vibrant communities. In his gospel, John shares a story about a time when it wasn't working, and Jesus stopped by to make some much-needed changes.

John is unique among the four gospels in several ways. First, his gospel has no parables but includes lengthy monologues spoken by Jesus. While the other three follow a consistent timeline, John doesn't appear to try to tell His stories along a timeline. Last, and perhaps most powerful, John's gospel is full of symbolism and metaphors.

We're not given a name for this week's friend of Jesus, although she is quite recognizable. Often referred to as the "woman at the well" or the Samaritan woman, she seems an unlikely choice to be the first person for Jesus to reveal Himself as the Messiah.

The Samaritan woman is an outsider—a woman in a man's world, a stranger to Judaism, outside the physical center of

She is a nobody, and most people want to avoid the pain of being a nobody. Don't we all want to be recognized and cherished as somebody who matters?

This text is good news for anyone who has felt the pain of feeling like a nobody because Jesus engages her. As a result of their conversation, she is lifted from nobody status to someone of importance. Millions will read about her for centuries and be amazed by her story.

John begins the story by explaining that Jesus had to pass through Samaria. At the time, this would seem preposterous, as Jews avoided this route. However, the scene is set for something very special to happen along the way.

The group of travelers reach the village of Sychar, the location of a landmark known as Jacob's Well. A place with a long story of its own. Jesus chooses to sit by himself at the well while the others go into town to find food.

It's midday when the sun is directly above, and it is noticeably hotter when a woman approaches the well to draw water. So far, it's a rather dull story. But why would this woman go to a

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**

**MARCH 3 – 9**

Mar 3      Mon

Mar 4      Tue      10am-until gone      Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice

Mar 5      Wed                      ASH WEDNESDAY

Mar 6      Thu

Mar 7      Fri

Mar 8      Sat

Mar 9      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.](#))

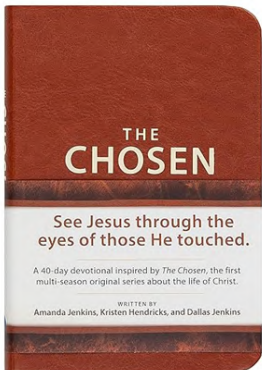
## Upcoming Worship Series "Who Durnit?"



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

In Sunday school, when we asked our teachers, "Why did Jesus have to die?" they usually answered, "Jesus died to save us." This is a really confusing, although truthful answer.

## Book Club News



We began 2025 with a worship series titled *Sec-onds*. 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 Manger/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 Dunnit?”*

In *Who Dunnit?*, we focus on people who attempted to shorten Jesus's ministry. After all, they represent, in one way or another, the spiritual powers of this world that Jesus encountered in the wilderness.

Let me explain. After His baptism, Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness, where Satan attempted to exploit His human weaknesses. During Lent, we are asked to reflect on our temptations and how God may call us to respond.

The people who tried to kill Jesus were consumed by selfish desires. The desire for comfort, desire for power, and desire glory. Many believed Jesus had to die because He refused to play the game, and in doing so, he exposed the hypocrisy of those who claimed to know God and live accordingly.

*So the Pharisees left the synagogue and met at once with some of Herod's party, and they made plans to kill Jesus.*

Mark 3:6

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 to put Jesus on the cross.

We'll use *The Friends and Foes of Jesus* for a companion book by Dr. Peter DeHaan. Our author says he often makes religious people squirm, but spiritual seekers cheer. He's not trying to be provocative, he says, but he seeks truth. And the truth makes some people uncomfortable.


Reading from our companion book is divided into mostly equal pages each week. Since our companion book is a whirlwind tour of dozens of names, our series won't connect directly. However, we'll have an opportunity to consider how the messages each week inform our understanding of each person's view of Jesus.

“Feed Flint”



# “Feed Flint”

Page 7



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 water I will give them will become a spring, giving them life-giving water and eternal life.

John 4:3-29, 39-42

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

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1. Read John 4:3-29, 39-42. Imagine yourself in the story finding Jesus waiting for you at the well (or water cooler) and asking you for a drink of water. How does the conversation go? How is it the same or different from the story in John's gospel?





## 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-12Noon 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


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- 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>
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February 2	Days 1-7
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February 9	Days 8-14
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February 16	Days 15-21
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February 23	Days 22-28
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March 2	Days 29-35
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Week of Ash Wednesday	Days 36-40
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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)

well during the warmest part of the day? It was customary for the women of the village to meet up early in the morning to draw water and exchange stories and gossip. The plot thickens.

This scene is dramatically reenacted in Season One, Episode Eight of *The Chosen*. The writers add words not found in scripture that enrich the story without compromising the truth of the text. At seven minutes, it is longer than others, so we'll watch it in segments during Sunday worship.

Jesus asks the woman for a drink of water. Again, this request is reasonable and understandable in a different place and time. First, Jesus is a man and a Jewish man at that. There is a customary expectation of rejection before a word is spoken. Second, Jesus comes from the side with a long history of disdain for her people.

Third, as a Jew, the Samaritan woman would be considered unclean, and to drink from her bucket would result in Jesus being unclean.

The woman also has a past. There's a reason she comes to the well when no one else would be there. She has been rejected by husbands and by society. She has given up on ever being a part of a vibrant community.

Now, the pieces fall into place. As an outcast, she is exactly the person Jesus is looking for. Someone who needs help to set aside their past and live into a greater future. A lost sheep who needs to return home to her flock.

Jesus offers the woman living water from the Messiah and reveals himself as the Messiah who provides water that becomes a spring, giving them

*The water I will give them will become a spring, giving them life-giving water and eternal life.*

John 4:3-29, 39-42

lifegiving water and eternal life.

Jesus is the "living Word" who does not conform to prior expectations. Jesus welcomes the nobodies into discipleship and to be a part of His church. This story is a reminder that people who we may see as nobody, Jesus, see as somebody special.

On that day in Sychar, Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. Since she was willing to talk to this stranger, a new future unfolded before her. She was given access to living water, to the living Christ, and to the living Lord. This woman was empowered that day by a conversation with a stranger whom she had

We are all invited to come to the well. We are invited to drink Living Water. We are all invited to come to the One who calls you by name. Just as we.

Jesus already paid the price for all of us so that we, too, can drink from the well-spring of life.

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**.

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** or let us know when you send a message through our **website**. We post an archive of past editions on our website under 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. **Link**. And by Amanda Jenkins, Kristen Hendricks, and Dallas Jenkins. *The Chosen: 40 Days with Jesus*. © Savage, MN:

God created fear as an emotion to protect us from harm. While there are times when fear is an appropriate response to a threat, God also gave us the ability to reason, assess the danger rationally, and choose an appropriate response.

When we don't assess our fear rationally, we're prone to making snap judgments with undesirable consequences.

Fear is a common human experience, and fear's effectiveness at motivating action is well known. This explains why people seeking power often use fear to motivate support for their ideas. Perhaps no politician has successfully utilized fear in our country to the degree of our current president.

Utilizing the tools of lies and partial truths used out of context, the majority of Americans fear an invasion of our homeland by immigrants. While it is true that thousands cross our borders without detection, our collective fear has made it possible for many of our federal programs to be dismantled with wreckless aggression.

People seek refuge in our country out of desperation and hope for a better future. We have a tremendous amount in

In a beautifully written op-ed in the New York Times, South Vietnamese-born American novelist Professor Viet Thanh Nguyen challenges us to reconsider and reenergize our American dream. To do so, the professor calls for "renewing our commitment to the most marginalized Americans who are already here and welcoming the immigrants and refugees who regenerate us."

Professor Nguyen shares his family's experiences and introduces five stories about other families who immigrated to the U.S.

A harmful, irrational response to unmerited fear is nothing new. This week's theme scripture for our series, *Friends*, reminds us of an earlier time when we feared contracting HIV/AIDS despite health professionals' assurance that HIV could only be contracted through body fluids.

Taylor Peter posted an article about Ryan White on the website of the Children's Miracles Network Hospitals. Ryan was a 13-year-old who contracted HIV/AIDS from a contaminated blood transfusion. The young boy was "denied the ability to go to school, hang out with his friends, and live a relatively normal life because of a fearful and misinformed commu-

Ryan's story helped spark a new understanding of HIV/AIDS. He stood up against bigotry with calls for compassion. Ryan lost his battle with the disease just months before he was to attend Indiana University.

The gospel writers share a story about Jesus intervening on behalf of a skin disease patient. In episode six of the first season of *The Chosen*, we are treated to a dramatic retelling of this story. The scene illustrates the fear that those who witnessed what Jesus did for the man likely

*If you want to, you can make me clean! Jesus reached out and touched him. Be clean! At once, the disease left the man.*

Luke 5:12-16

felt.

We learned last week that Jesus chose to hang out with people that the majority didn't approve of. Jesus has a way of bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and ideas. And in this week's theme text, Jesus breaks through a barrier that created isolation a result of fear.

In our devotional guide for this series, the authors remind us that those who were healthy longed for relief from Roman occupation and heavy taxation. Nevertheless, “they still got to go home after work, eat at their own table, and watch their children grow up.”

But the man with the skin disease was forced to live in isolation. Instead of moving away, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man, and he was healed of his disease.

Jesus was willing to see and touch a man who created fear for others. His future would be different than he ever imagined.

Jesus offers each of us a personal invitation to a relationship with God, others, and all of creation—a relationship not based on fear but built on love.

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)

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Pastor Tommy

Parts of our series are inspired by The Reverend Adam Hamilton's series “The People Jesus Loved.” © Church of the Resurrection, 2025. [\*\*Link.\*\*](#) And by Amanda Jenkins, Kristen Hendricks, and Dallas Jenkins. *The Chosen: 40 Days with Jesus.* © Savage, MN: BroadStreet Publishing, 2019. Viet Thanh Nguyen. “*From Here to Home.*” © New York Times, Nov 19, 2019. Retrieved from: [\*\*link\*\*](#)

Taylor Peter, “A Boy Who Sparked a Movement: The Story of Ryan White.” © Children's Miracles Network Hospitals, April 09, 2021. Retrieved from: [\*\*link\*\*](#)



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enrolled

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

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Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!



“EMPOWERING THE FUTURE—

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# EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

Help Asbury CDC enrich the lives of youth by donating to help get Tablets for them to attend 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

## ASH WEDNESDAY — SERIES OVERVIEW



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.”

Here is the outline of our series:

<u>Title:</u>	<u>Sunday:</u>	<u>Scripture:</u>	<u>Guest Speaker:</u>
<i>The King</i>	March 9	Matthew 2:16-18	
<i>The religious folk</i>	March 16	Mark 3:1-6	Ruth VanderSande
<i>The clergy</i>	March 23	Luke 21:37-22:2	
<i>The neighbors</i>	March 30	Luke 4:20-23	Vince Slocum
<i>The disciples</i>	April 6	Luke 22:3-6	
<i>The governor</i>	April 13	John 19: 16b-22	Palm Sunday
<i>The revelation</i>	April 20	John 20:1-25	Easter Sunday

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

*Peter DeHaan. The Friends and Foes of Jesus: Discover How People in the New Testament React to God's Good News. MI: Rock Rooster Books, 2019.*