

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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MARCH 9, 2025

Accepted (Watercooler conversation)



fortunate if we learn how to cope and respond in a healthy way.

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 will 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

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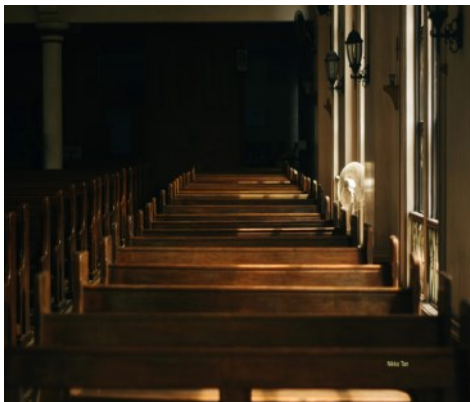
**EVERYONE
HAVE A
WONDERFUL
AND SAFE
WEEK!**

DONATE

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The Clergy (Who Dunit?)



Why did Jesus have to die?" There are a few scripted answers to this question, a plethora of theological justifications, and perhaps just as many explanations and speculations. Perhaps "why" is too heavy. Likewise, "Who dunit?" is too simplistic without nuance.

And that's the point of this series? We plan to dive into the nuances surrounding the circumstances of His murder. Oh, is "murder" too provocative?

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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 people with strong social connections.

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 Temple worship, outside conventional morality, and a stranger to Jesus and the gospel. John does not name her in his account of her story.

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 10- 16

Mar 10 Mon

Mar 11 Tue 10am-until gone Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice

Mar 12 Wed

Mar 13 Thu 1:00pm United Women in Faith

Mar 14 Fri

Mar 15 Sat

Mar 16 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 Dunnit?"

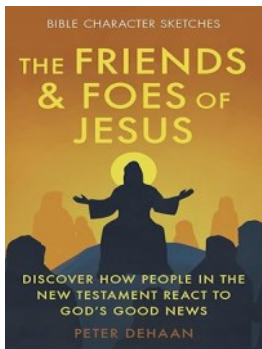


During this year's Lent observance, we, along with several other area UM Churches, are participating in a series titled *Who Dunnit? The people who wanted Jesus dead* (see article). The series begins after Ash Wednesday on Sunday, March 9.

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.

Perhaps they gave us that simplistic answer because it seemed safer than saying, "Jesus died because he challenged the powers of this world." Page 5

Book Club News



For our Who dunnit? Series, we will use *The Friends and Foes of Jesus* for a companion book by Dr. Peter DeHaan.

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.

Our author says he often makes religious people squirm, but spiritual seekers cheer. He is not trying to be provocative, he says, but he seeks truth. And the truth makes some people uncomfortable.

Throughout history, some people have called Jesus Lord, while others called Him a great prophet. And some called him a

troublemaker and nailed him to a cross.

The Jesus of the New Testament is both human and divine. He was adored but also feared, and He was both meek and powerful. We cannot sum up Jesus by a word or simple phrase. His impact on world history and on the spiritual lives of believers today can't be overstated.

In our companion book, you'll learn about the closest followers and most outspoken rivals of Jesus, from the High Priest who hated Jesus to the beloved disciple who laid his head on Jesus's breast at the Last Supper.

Asbury Staff

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Leadership in Worship & Service

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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”



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:

The chief priests and the teachers of the Law were afraid of the people, and so they were trying to find a way of putting Jesus to death secretly.

Luke 21:37-22:2

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Luke 21:37-22:2. What do you suppose Jesus was saying to the people that disturbed the priests enough to want Jesus dead?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled The clergy. In what ways does your church or pastor influence how you see issues? How does your faith inform how you cast your vote? Do you spend enough time digging into the details before casting your vote? What can you do during Lent to help you recenter yourself into your faith?
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 ...

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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

- Text "FARMCDC"
- to 53-555
- Scan QR Code

Donate Now



More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

Since our series focuses more on groups of people than individuals, although a few are named, our weekly messages generally won't follow the companion book. However, our companion book offers excellent insights into the various individuals in the bible and their connections with Jesus.

If you choose to follow along, I suggest using the following schedule:

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Devotional Readings</u>	
March 9	1 - 16	1st Sunday in Lent
March 16	17 - 29	2nd Sunday in Lent
March 23	30 - 42	3rd Sunday in Lent
March 30	43 - 58	4th Sunday in Lent
April 6	59 - 75	5th Sunday in Lent
April 13	76 - 87	Palm Sunday
April 20	88 - 100	Easter Sunday

We'll have a few books available for purchase, copies are available through Amazon for \$15.99 for the paperback edition. The price is \$9.99 for the Kindle version. This book may be available at the local library.

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

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.

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

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. She is an outcast.

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 life-giving water and eternal life.

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

John 4:3-29, 39-42

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 been carefully taught to fear and hate.

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 wellspring 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*](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 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: BroadStreet Publishing, 2019. Kirsten Weir. "The pain of social rejection." © American Psychological Association, 2012, Vol 43, No. 4. Retrieved from: [*Link*](#)

Our opening answer to the question of who dunit is “Jesus died because he challenged the powers of this world.” This answer is rational and consistent with historical experience. Those who challenge power oftentimes fail in their attempts, and many end up dead. Power is an addictive elixir, and there is no greater power than to determine whether another person lives or dies.

The most powerful person during Jesus’ ministry was Caesar, the dictator in charge of the Roman Empire. Arguably, the President of the United States is similarly powerful in modern times, although power is shared among numerous world leaders.

In first-century Palestine, the people had no say in who held power. The same is true in several authoritarian nations today. But in the U.S., each of us has a say in determining who we put in charge. And Christians, in particular, are among the most influential voters.

Dr. George Barna, Director of Research at the Cultural Research Center of Arizona Christian University, argues that it was self-identified Christians

who made the biggest difference in our last presidential election. This is because 56% voted for our current president, and Christians represented 72% of the voters who turned out.

While Kamala Harris received 60% of the non-Christian vote, this segment was outnumbered five to one. Voter turnout was down significantly from prior elections, including among Christians. However, turnout among non-Christians was even lower.

One group in particular, known as Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians, turned out in force, with 99% casting a vote in the last election and 90% voting for our current president. Catholics also turned out in higher numbers than in past elections.

Notably, only a quarter of Christian voters cited the party platform as influencing their decision.

One source of influence consistently identified among conservation Christians, however, was clergy and churches. This source was clearly more impactful than individual research. On average, voters estimated spending less than two hours figuring out who and what they would vote for. And one in five admitted spending no time looking into the facts before voting.

Just under 60% of Christians connected with theologically conservative segments cited religious beliefs as their primary motivation for how they voted.

Inflation topped the list of issues cited by Christians that influenced their vote, followed by immigration. However, immigration was more likely to influence theologically conservative Christians. Abortion and the candidate’s view on Israel were secondary to every group.

Immigration also influenced Christians from mainline denominations, along with defending freedom and democracy.

More than half of Christian voters reported encouragement by their pastor or church to vote, and just under half received information connecting particular issues to biblical principles.

Our current president received just under 50% of the popular vote, a much smaller margin than earlier presidents. The American people did not give him a mandate to do whatever

pleases him. Like all presidents before him, we expect him to uphold and defend our constitution. In particular, he is expected to further reign in inflation, improve our ability to pay our bills and have a little left over for a rainy day.

Collectively, Christians are mostly responsible for whatever outcomes, good or bad, our nation and the world experience over the next four years and beyond.

But what does this all have to do with who murdered Jesus? If we investigate this case simply as a historical event, the answer is not much. But what if we focus more on the dynamics leading up to His death? What can we learn about speaking truth to power?

Priests living in first-century Palestine were in the upper-income levels of society. Following the Babylonian Captivity, there were no kings in Judah for five hundred years. Power centered among the priests, who collectively acted as a ruling class. They retained much of their political power even after kingship was reestablished around a hundred years before the birth of Jesus. However, a few decades before the birth of Jesus, Judah lost its independence when Rome decided to intervene in a Jewish civil war.

Priests also wielded a lot of economic power. One source of their income came from a temple tax levied on every Jewish person.

Priests lived in luxury at a time when most were struggling to survive. Archeological excavations of priestly residences have revealed great reception rooms with mosaic floors, large dining rooms with

extravagantly carved and painted walls, and lots of fine furnishings.

The biggest threat to the priests' economic and political power was Rome. The priests knew that the Romans were willing to intervene again in the event of another conflict. So, the priests appeased their occupiers by making daily sacrifices for Caesar in the temple. They also used their power and influence to keep the peace among the Jewish people.

The chief priests and the teachers of the Law were afraid of the people; and so they were trying to find a way of putting Jesus to death secretly.

Luke 21:37-22:2

Jesus made the priests nervous. For example, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, he was celebrated by a great crowd of people. Soon after, Jesus went to the temple and warned the people to beware of religious leaders exploiting the vulnerable to live in luxury. He also blamed the temple tax for forcing widows into poverty. Jesus even predicted that the temple itself was about to be destroyed and that a war was about to shake the nation.

Jesus' connection with common people worried the priests. Jesus had an influence over people that they could never hope to have. But when Jesus cut into the daily profits by turning over the tables of the moneychangers in the temple, the priests concluded that Jesus had to go.

What do you suppose Jesus might say about religious leaders today? What about followers who

live in comfort while our neighbors struggle to survive? What might he say about our economic systems and our increasing wealth inequity? What might he call us to see, and what might he call us to relinquish, and would we be any more willing to give it all up than the chief priests and scribes?

Lent is a great time for reflection on our own priorities and to gain inspiration through the help of the Holy Spirit to chart a new course for the future.

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

Our series was inspired by The Reverend Jeremy Peters of Court Street United Methodist Church, Flint, Michigan in collaboration with several United Methodist Pastors serving the Flint area. George Barna. "2024 Election Research - Report #2." © Arizona Christian University, November 13, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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.



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ZERO WASTE**

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WHODUNNIT?



A series
about the
people who
wanted Jesus
dead, and why

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.