

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 5 Issue 13

APRIL 13, 2025

The Governor (Who Durnit?)



The U.S. wields substantial economic and military power, and U.S. presidents are authorized to use this power to defend our nation and its constitution.

Since taking office on January 20, the current president has signed over 100 Executive Orders, several of which have been contested in the courts as unconstitutional.

Many seem to be bellwether signals that are creating fear and uncertainty about our future.

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**EVERYONE HAVE A
WONDERFUL WEEK!!**

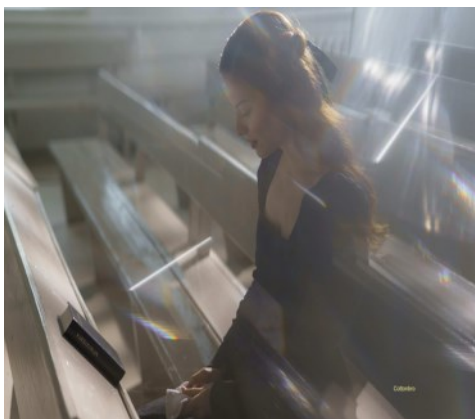


DONATE

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The Disciple (Who Durnit?)



The story of Judas Iscariot is heartbreaking. You likely recall that Judas betrayed Jesus by turning Him over to the authorities. He is the disciple everyone loves to hate. Why? Perhaps we worry that there may be too much Judas in us.

What happened? Like the others, Judas saw or felt something

about Jesus that was so compelling that he walked away from home, family, and career to follow Him. The other followers came to trust Judas enough that they put him in charge of the money.

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Ignoring the advice of experts, we're now in the midst of a global trade war with every country except Russia. The markets have plummeted after dismantling centuries of investment in goodwill and trust of the U.S. by the rest of the world.

Anyone who is in the U.S. legally but not a citizen is understandably fearful to speak out in opposition to the administration and risk arrest and transfer to a foreign prison without due process. Many fear that free speech is at risk for all Americans.

Numerous clergy and religious leaders defend and support the current administration's decisions and policies. Their support implies that our country is on a biblically defensible course. But is it?

Are our country's policies consistent with the teachings of Jesus, or are we more in harmony with the numerous characters who conspired to put Jesus to death?

There were plenty of people who conspired to kill Jesus. The list of suspects is large, including Herod, the people of Nazareth, the clergy, and the disciple Judas. They all had motives to kill Jesus, but none of them is the guilty party in

the gospel story. Only one person had the means. Ultimately, it was Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who decided Jesus would die on the cross.

The reality is that none of the Jewish enemies of Jesus had the power to put Jesus to death on the cross. Even though John's gospel refers to persons who opposed Jesus as "the Jews," John mostly uses this term to refer to religious leaders specifically. We sometimes forget Jesus is Jewish, and in the beginning of the Christian faith, nearly all of the followers of Jesus were Jewish.

As the gospel spread, the church moved further away from its Jewish roots. Several aspiring leaders appealed to Roman citizens and authorities by blaming Jews for Jesus' death. As a result, Christians often blamed all Jews for the death of Jesus. The effect was to virtually erase the Jewishness of Jesus.

But even worse, blaming Jews for the death of Jesus led to widespread persecution of people of Jewish descent. The holocaust of the 20th century was a continuation of Christian authorities committing genocide against Jews.

As we confront and confess our violent history, it's important to remember the Jews who wanted Jesus dead were mostly members of a wealthy, powerful elite who felt threatened by Jesus but did not have the power to put Jesus on the cross.

Pontius Pilate is a mysterious figure. We don't know where Pilate came from or what he was doing before he became governor of Judea. However, there are lots of made-up stories about Pilate's early years, invented hundreds of years after the gospels were written.

Historians don't agree whether Pilate was an active governor or inactive. But there is consensus on one thing. Pilate was brutal and had a habit of provoking the Jews.

For example, Pilate once brought flags bearing Caesar's image into Jerusalem. But even more provocative, he later had golden shields proclaiming the emperor's divinity mounted on the walls of the royal palace. Pilate's insensitivity often led to protests that were met with violence.

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

APRIL 14 – 20

April 14	Mon		
April 15	Tue	10am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
April 16	Wed		
April 17	Thu	6:00pm	Holy Thursday Service (at Asbury UMC)
April 18	Fri	12Noon	Good Friday Service (at Court Street UMC)
April 19	Sat		
April 20	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?"



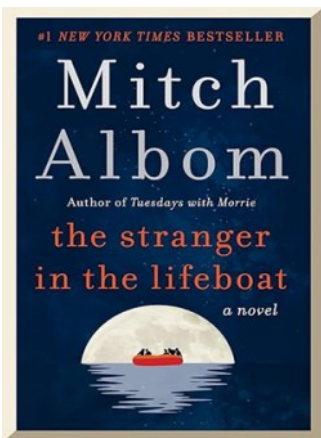
During this year's Lent observance, we, along with several other area UM Churches, are participating in a series titled *Who Durnit? The people who wanted Jesus dead* (see article). The series begins after Ash Wednesday on Sunday, March 9.

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.

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

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Book Club News



novel *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*.

Beginning the first Sunday after Easter, we're embarking on a new series titled *Lifeboat*. This series is inspired by Mitch Albom's

Mitch Albom is the founder of SAY Detroit, a nonprofit that provides pathways to success for Detroiters in need through major health, housing, and education initiatives. The nonprofit is funded in part by profits coming from a dessert shop and a gourmet popcorn line. He and his wife Janine also operate Have Faith Haiti, a home and school for impoverished children and orphans in Port-au-Prince.

As an author, Mitch Albom has written eight #1 New York Times bestsellers, Emmy Award-winning TV films, stage plays, screenplays, a nationally syndicated newspaper column, and a musical. As a result of his work at the Detroit Free Press, Albom was inducted into both the National Sports Media Association and Michigan Sports Halls of Fame and received the Red Smith Award for lifetime achievement.

In his New York Times Bestseller, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*, Albom ponders the question, "What would happen if we called on God for help and God actually appeared?" It is a story of hope and faith.

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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 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”

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“Feed Flint”

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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:

Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

John 19:16-22

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read John 19:16-22. What comes to mind as you read this text? Who is guilty in this story?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled The governor. What are some differences in terms of guilt between the co-conspirators and the governor in the death of Jesus? Can you see how Jesus differed from worldly leaders? Give some examples.
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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going with sack lunches, to bathe and brush
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Donations are accepted Monday-Friday
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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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How You Can Donate

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

Donate Now



More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

A diverse group of shipwrecked passengers pulls a strange man from the sea who claims to be “the Lord.” The group challenges the man’s assertion. “If you’re really who you say you are, prove it! Save us!”

The Lord is willing, but there’s a catch. He can only save them if they all believe in Him.

I want to share more with you, but I don’t want to spoil any surprises. In his book, Albom keeps us guessing until the end. You, too, will be anxious to discover whether this strange man is really who he claims to be.

The novel is fast-paced and compelling and promises to cause you to ponder your deepest beliefs. Is it possible that the answers to our prayers may be found where we least expect them?

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

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Parts</u>
April 27	v - 55	One & Two
May 4	56 - 97	Three & Four
May 11	98 - 144	Five & Six
May 18	145 - 191	Seven to Nine
May 25	192 - 228	Ten & Eleven
June 1	229 - 268	Twelve to Epilogue

We’ll have a few books available for purchase. New copies of the paperback edition are available through Amazon for \$10.86, and used copies in good condition are under \$7. This book may also 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

Mitch Albom. *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*. New York: HarperCollins, 2021.

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

The gospels portray Pilate as reluctant to put Jesus to death. He gives the people an opportunity to vote for His freedom. On the other hand, Pilate rarely hesitated to order the execution of Jewish prisoners. It's possible that the gospel emphasis on Pilate's reluctance may be more theological than historical. Nevertheless, it's likely Pilate preferred not to upset the crowds who cheered Jesus when He entered the city and gathered in large numbers to hear Him speak in the temple.

So why did Pilate choose to have Jesus executed?

Perhaps the sign Pilate had placed over Jesus' head offers a clue. The sign read, "King of the Jews." The chief priests tried to convince Pilate to change the wording to, "This man claimed to be the king of the Jews," but Pilate refused.

It seems that Pilate didn't really care about truth, falsehood, guilt, or innocence. What Pilate understood was terror and intimidation. Pilate was fond of reminding the Jews that he held the power of life or death. Should he be sufficiently provoked, Pilate could order the death of everyone in Jerusalem.

Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

John 19:16-22

Jesus' execution was another reminder that Pilate represented the Roman Empire. What if the real villain is the empire?

If you recall, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem because of an Executive Order signed by Caesar Augustus. This led to Herod trying to kill Jesus.

Is it possible that the primary enemy Jesus came to face was any power where people dominate one another? In other words, Jesus came to bring another Way. Jesus came to show us that healing comes from love. And love is more powerful than empire because love would rather die than kill. Jesus shows us a power that would rather serve than command, a power that would rather inspire than dictate.

Jesus, through His life, death, and resurrection, revealed that while the empires of this world may wield the power of death, without love, we can never know the power that leads to 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.](#)

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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. Pastor Jeremy wrote some of the content.

As we draw closer to the end of our *Who durnit?* Series, we've discovered that nuance is important. While the verdict that Judas betrayed Jesus is clear, the why is a mystery. Did Judas lose trust in Jesus like many of us have lost trust in some of the institutions we depend on?

Pew Research has tracked public sentiment toward major institutions for over 25 years. Its latest poll, published in 2024, discovered that even trust in traditionally highly trusted institutions is headed in the wrong direction.

Of course, they warn us that trust is highly partisan. Democrats are substantially more trusting of government than Republicans. Nevertheless, most of us agree that we want protection from terrorism, someone watching over our food and medicine, and help recovering from natural disasters. Surprisingly, most of us give the government high marks in these areas.

A few federal agencies, such as the National Park Service, the Postal Service, and NASA, continue to have high favorability ratings. But overall, most people are losing faith in our government and institutions.

Did Judas simply lose faith in Jesus?

It was six days before Passover. Jesus and His followers were staying with friends in the Village of Bethany. It was the home of Lazarus, who you may remember.

Luke tells a story about the two sisters fretting over Jesus when He visited. Martha fretted over getting a meal on the table while Mary soaked up every word Jesus said. I mention this because these are all bits of the story.

First, there's Lazarus. The sisters had sent word that Lazarus was ill and near death. But Jesus didn't leave right away. Jesus' followers warned Him not to return to Judea because the last time they were there, the people threatened to stone Him. But Jesus went anyway. When they arrived, Lazarus was already dead. Jesus, however, brought Lazarus back to life, which apparently caught the attention of the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

These details connect to Judas because John tells us that "From that day on, the Jewish authorities made plans to kill Jesus." And Judas later becomes a part of their plot.

The gospel writers don't speculate on why he decided to do what he did, only that Judas turned against Jesus and sold Him out to his enemies. But the why remains a mystery. Mark doesn't venture so much as a guess at why. Matthew says Judas did it for the money but also says Judas gave the money back. Luke and John both say, "The devil made him do it!"

So, we're left to speculate about what Judas might have been thinking. Our best clue involves Mary, Martha's sister. This takes us back to Bethany and when Jesus and His followers stayed with them.

As I said earlier, Jesus and His followers stayed in Bethany when Mary poured a whole pint of expensive perfume on Jesus' feet. This story must be important since it appears in all four gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that the disciples protested the wastefulness of this action. However, John adds a twist to the story that many scholars believe is connected with Judas' decision to betray Jesus.

John tells us that Judas responded to Mary's act with, "This perfume could have been sold for a small fortune! Think of all the money we could have given to the poor!" John adds that Judas didn't really care about the poor. In fact, Judas regularly helped himself to the funds for his own needs. Judas wasn't thinking about the poor. Judas was thinking about the profit he could have made by selling the perfume.

Maybe John's telling of this story explains the mystery of Judas' betrayal. Perhaps Judas decided to betray Jesus when he realized that Jesus didn't plan to capitalize on His celebrity status. Perhaps Judas had visions of the group building a mega-church.

Perhaps his betrayal really was nothing more than his love for money and power. It's possible, of course, that Judas betrayed Jesus for a bag of silver.

On the other hand, there is the secret of Judas' name.

It's interesting that Judas is referred to as "Judas Iscariot." We're not sure what Iscariot means in this case. Some believe the name refers to the town where Judas was from. Others speculate it's a family name.

However, some scholars believe the name Iscariot points to Judas' membership in a group of assassins known as the *Sicarii*.

The *Sicari* were Jews who used violence in opposition to Roman taxes and the occupation of their land by Roman soldiers. The name *Sicari* was derived from a weapon called a *sica*. The *sica* was a curved dagger they carried in their robes, waiting for a chance to drive it into an enemy's back. Afterward, they would fade into the crowd undetected.

This leads to the speculation that Judas chose to follow Jesus because he believed Jesus was planning a rebellion against the Romans. It makes sense. A rebellion is precisely what many expected the Messiah would do. Many believed that a Messiah would raise an army, march into Jerusalem, and overthrow the religious leaders who had corrupted the Temple. The Messiah would then drive out the Romans and proclaim himself king.

It's possible Judas believed that Jesus was this sort of Messiah.

Imagine Judas's frustration as he watched Jesus wander from one small Galilean village to another rather than heading straight for Jerusalem. It must have been music to his ears when Jesus finally announced that it was time to go to Jerusalem. Imagine his excitement when the people of Jerusalem gathered in large numbers to greet Jesus, waving palm branches. Surely, Jesus is the Messiah who will lead an assault to retake Jerusalem.

Judas went off and spoke with the chief priests and the officers of the Temple guard about how he could betray Jesus to them.

Luke 22:3-6

Judas' excitement continued when Jesus headed straight for the Temple and started flipping the tables of the moneychangers. You have made My Father's house a den of thieves? Jesus shouted as He drove the thieves out of the Temple.

Finally, the Jesus Judas had been waiting for showed up. What comes next?

It was time for Jesus to urge the crowds to storm the Temple and toss the chief priests out. It was time for the people to take over the city. Jesus would declare Himself King, usher in a new age, and make Judea great again.

But instead of mobilizing the crowds, Jesus became passive. This must have seemed strange to Judas. Just as the city became ripe for violence, Jesus chose to sit in the Temple and tell parables. Instead of forming alliances and drawing up battle plans each evening, Jesus started spending more and more time alone in prayer.

Can't you imagine how maddening this must have been to Judas? Surely, his patience with Jesus was at an end.

On the other hand, perhaps there was no one moment or act of Jesus that caused Judas to turn away. Perhaps Judas just got tired of being disappointed. Perhaps Judas finally broke down under the weight of too many letdowns and missed opportunities.

Is it possible that Judas rejected Jesus when he discovered that Jesus' plan for the world didn't involve anger, vengeance, or violence?

Perhaps we're not supposed to know Judas' motives.

What if the story of Judas is a warning? What is Judas really a mirror for us to reflect on our own lives and motivations?

Perhaps the story of Judas is intended to be a reminder that Jesus' friends can betray him just as surely as his enemies. Perhaps the story of Judas asks us, "What is our line in the sand?"

In other words, what is our non-negotiable that could trip us up in our faith? Do we have an agenda, our possessions, or is there a piece of ourselves we are so attached to that we would throw Jesus overboard if he tried to take it from us?"

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Pastor Tommy

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Claudia Deane. *"Americans' Deepening Mistrust of Institutions."* © Pew Research, October 17, 2024. Retrieved from: [link](#)



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**Where shopping and giving
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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.



**Children's
Grief Center**
GREAT LAKES BAY REGION



"To the world you may be one person, but to one person
you may be the world." --Dr. Seuss

**I am delighted to inform you about an important new initiative
coming to the Flint area, and to ask area faith communities for your
help in its launch.**

What:

The Children's Grief Center, Great Lakes Bay Region, is helping to establish a new Children's Grief Center in Flint to serve the Genesee County area. The need is enormous for grief support in the Flint/Genesee County area. And due to the abrupt closure last summer of the only free children's grief program in the area, there are very few places for families to seek help--especially help provided at no charge.

Why:

When the previous grief center closed, a group of folks from local hospice companies and funeral homes met together to discuss ways to meet the needs of grieving children and their parents. In the process of gathering information, we learned of the Children's Grief Center based in Midland and contacted them for advice.

The task seemed huge! To replace the previous program, we would need to: create a new non-profit, find a location, raise funds, design a program, recruit and train volunteers, assemble supplies...and we all have full-time jobs. But we decided to take a leap of faith.

The staff at the Children's Grief Center has not only given us great advice...they have graciously offered to help us to open a Genesee County program under the umbrella of their established non-profit organization. They will provide: grant writing services, program materials, volunteer training and help with program oversight.

When:

We hope to begin programming in September 2025. We have secured a location in a church building in Flint Township. We have begun recruiting and training volunteers, and we have reached out to U of M Flint seeking social work and psychology students who could intern with us.

We will start with peer support groups for children from age 5 through high school, as well as their parents/guardians. Our hope is to expand the program to provide grief support groups in local schools within the next couple of years.

What Area Faith Communities Can Do:

1. **Help us locate the right volunteers** by publishing the following announcement in your newsletter/ bulletins for the next several weeks. (Feel free to use the logo and QR code.)

The Children's Grief Center is seeking volunteers from Genesee County to assist with grief support groups for children ages 5 to 18 and for their parents/guardians. Volunteers will receive thorough training to be well-prepared to walk with families through their loss. All volunteers are asked to commit to two evenings per month for a full school year (fall 2025 through spring 2026). Evening Grief Support programming will begin twice a month in September 2025. If you're interested in learning more, please fill out the volunteer form at www.childrensgriefglbr.org

2. **Help us raise the funds** we need to get started.

We estimate that it will cost about \$2500 per month to provide these programs for families at no charge. This money will cover all program materials and supplies, a free dinner at each meeting (so that families can come straight from work/sports/etc. without worrying about supper), space rental, outreach materials, and staff time. We are currently seeking grant funding for the ongoing program, but we really need some resources to get started.

Please consider ways your congregation might provide a gift to help the Children's Grief Center to get started. We suggest perhaps receiving a special offering for this program on Sunday, June 8 (International Children's Day). To publicize such an offering, you can find lots of helpful information on the Children's Grief Center website.

Another option is to share this need and the web site address with your members through your newsletter/bulletin, allowing them to choose to donate individually if they wish. (Feel free to use the logo and QR code.)

Donations can be given directly through the Children's Grief Center website: www.childrensgriefglbr.org (A mailing address for checks is also found on the donate link.)

3. **Share our wish list** with your members:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2N5VON1J91N39?ref=wl_share

This list contains many basic supplies we'll need to get started. Folks can donate these things by ordering from the wish list, and items will ship directly to the Children's Grief Center. The QR code will also bring people to the Amazon wish list.

In advance, thank you so much for your support! Already I'm amazed at what a community can do when we work together!

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