

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Now What? (Lifeboat)



As we come to the last episode of our *Lifeboat* series, we reach the end of our companion book, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*. Mitch Albom treats us to a surprise ending.

It was Benji who took the explosions on board the Galaxy. His goal was to kill the owner, Jason Lambert, whom he thought was the father who had rejected him. The death of everyone else was simply collateral damage.

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Heaven Calling (Miracles)



What do you think happens when we die?

Late Show host Stephen Colbert occasionally asks this question to guests on his show in an episode called "The Colbert Questionert." The celebrities interviewed by Colbert provide a variety of responses, offering a

glimpse into their beliefs.

Most of us believe that there is something after death, but what happens is a mystery. Belief in an afterlife is common globally across nearly all religions.

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HAVE A GREAT WEEK!



DONATE

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The circumstances make Benji sound like a Psychopath. According to the staff at Psychology Today, Psychopaths lack empathy, are often callous and detached, and may be highly manipulative. Guilt, on the other hand, is a normal response to harming others. Benji felt guilty but still showed empathy towards others.

But it wasn't Benji who sank the Galaxy. The guilt of what he planned to do was too much for Benji. The night of the explosion, Benji decided to jump off the Galaxy to commit suicide, just as three whales rammed the bottom of the yacht, leaving a huge hole.

Dr Lawrence Howells, a Clinical Psychologist, in an excerpt from his book published by the British Psychological Society, reminds us that guilt is more complicated than other emotions, "because we have to have a sense of morality, a set of standards or values we believe we should live up to."

Psychopaths, on the other hand, are unable to process guilt in the same way as others and operate as though they have no sense of morality, standards, or values we should

live up to. Psychopathy is more likely a result of genetics and more challenging to treat than guilt.

After recovering from the initial shock of Alice, the little girl, telling him that she is the Lord, Benji sat quietly, holding her hand. He wrote in his journal, "Holding her hand was like a key turning a tumbler. My body melted. My breath calmed. As the minutes passed, I seemed to get smaller. The heavens grew enormous. When a spread of glowing stars took over the sky, it drew tears from my eyes. I realized this is what it means to forgo everything and be alone with God. And I knew that I was."

What a feeling that must have been, to know that you're with the Lord in person. The Lord reminded Benji that every moment spent with the people we love is a precious gift, but their death is never a punishment for those left behind.

Then the Lord said, "Benjamin. I know you before you are born. I know you after you die. My plans for you are not defined by this world. And because I go on, you go on with me. Feeling loss is part of

why you are on Earth. Through it, you appreciate the brief gift of human existence, and you learn to cherish the world I created for you."

Then the Lord said, "When people leave this Earth, their loved ones always weep." The Lord smiled and added, "But I promise you, those who leave do not."

Benji's story, told through his journal, helped Inspector LeFleur see the world differently and find peace despite the loss of his daughter, Patrice. "Lilly's all right," LeFleur tells his wife, "She's all right. She's safe."

In our next series, *Heaven*, we'll use one of Mitch Albom's earlier books, *The First Phone Call From Heaven*, as a guide. In his novel, Albom allows us to imagine what it might be like to hear firsthand testimony from others who are in heaven.

As the companion book for this series ends, Benji's conversation with the Lord comes to an end, as he asks, "What do I do now?" The Lord responded, "Forgive yourself. Then use this grace to spread my spirit."

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger
 Sylvia Pittman
 Mirium Watson

Terry Kinze
 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

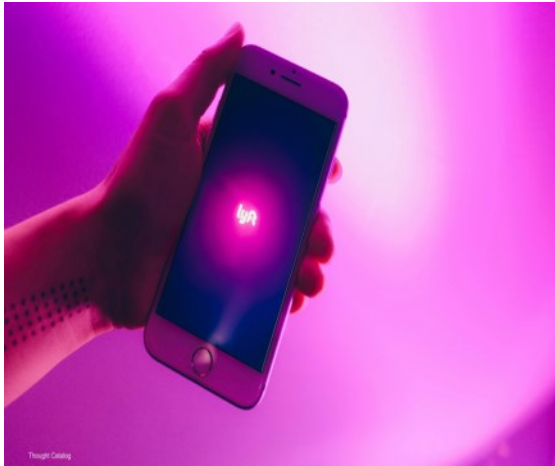
JUNE 9—15

June 9	Mon		
June 10	Tue	9am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
June 11	Wed	11am-1pm	Angel Closet Open (at South Flint Soup Kitchen)
June 12	Thu	1:00pm	United Women in Faith
June 13	Fri		
June 14	Sat		
June 15	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 "Heaven"



In our worship series, *Lifeboat*, we learn about a group of people desperately clinging to life after the yacht they were on sank. Three days after the accident, after drifting a considerable distance from where the boat went down, they pull a stranger into the lifeboat. The stranger claimed to be the Lord.

In this series, *Heaven*, we turn to another of Mitch Albom's best-selling novels, *The First Phone Call From Heaven*. In this mystery, Albom takes readers on a roller-coaster ride of mystery and hope.

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Book Club News



We're using another novel written by Mitch Albom for our next series, *Heaven*, beginning the second Sunday of June. *The First*

Phone Call from Heaven is captivating as Albom takes us on a rollercoaster ride of hope-filled mystery.

The story begins one morning in the town of Coldwater, Michigan, when several phones start ringing. What makes the calls unusual is that the voices on the other end claim to be calling from heaven.

Is this the greatest miracle ever or a cruel hoax? Soon after, a reporter from Alpena arrives, thinking her boss has sent her on an insignificant news story, visitors suddenly overrun the small town.

Meanwhile, a disgraced pilot named Sully Harding

returns to Coldwater from prison only to discover his hometown gripped by "miracle fever." When his young son starts carrying a toy phone, hoping to hear from his mother in heaven, Sully has had enough.

As proof of an afterlife spreads, the town and the world start to transform. Church attendance increases as believers turn to the local pastors for confirmation. But Sully is convinced there is nothing beyond this sad life. So he digs deeper, determined to disprove these miracles for the sake of his child and his own broken heart.

Asbury Staff

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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
Israel Unger (Izzy)	Business Service Mgr
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

Moving seamlessly between the invention of the telephone in 1876 and a world obsessed with the next level of communication, Mitch Albom takes readers on a breathtaking ride of frenzied hope.

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Upcoming Worship Series — “Heaven”

“Miracles happen quietly every day,” writes Albom, but “They are rarely tallied. No one keeps score. Now and then, a miracle is declared to the world. And when that happens, things change.”

And the miracle Albom writes about is a phone call. Calls happen every day with little notice. But a call placed to a member of Harvest of Hope Baptist Church was different. And so were the other seven. In the case of Katherine Yellin, the call was from her dead sister, Diane. She said she was calling from heaven.

Were these miracles or the result of a cruel prank? Stay tuned, and we will uncover the truth together. Albom’s book offers a creative and thought-provoking illustration of the reality of heaven. However, we will turn to scripture as our primary source of truth, supplemented by tradition, logic, and our own experiences.

*The Lord builds his
home in the heavens.*

Amos 9:6

Our series follows Mitch Albom’s book but adds our own concerns and relevant stories from scripture. His book is inspirational and should cause us to reflect on our beliefs about heaven and the afterlife.

The Book Club article in our weekly newsletter, the Circuit Rider, includes a reading schedule. All relevant articles and past issues of our newsletter are on our [website](#).


“Feed Flint”

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“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**

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you with me, so that you will be where I am.

Joh n 14:1-7

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Joh n 14:1-7 . What do you imagine heaven to b e li ke? What questions do you have after reading what Jesus promised?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled Heaven Calling. Do you b elieve we go to heaven when we die? What is the basis of your b elie f? How c ertain are you?
3. How can your group memb ers help you b e more re c eptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to b e blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



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More Information :



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funding@flintasbury.org

Album reminds us that while no one is certain who invented the telephone, the U.S. patent belongs to the Scottish-born Alexander Graham Bell.

Many believe he stole it away from an American inventor named Elisha Gray. Others maintain that an Italian named Manzetti or a Frenchman named Bourseul or a German named Reis or another Italian named Meucci deserves credit. What few dispute is that all these men, working in the mid-nineteenth century, explored the idea of transmitting vocal vibrations from one place to another. But the very first telephonic conversation, between Bell and Thomas Watson, standing in separate rooms, contained these words: Come here. I want to see you.

"Come here, I want to see you." These words describe the familiar feelings of telephone conversations between two people who long to be together. Their sentiment also reflects the promise of an afterlife where we're once again reunited with lost loved ones.

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.

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

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Chapters (Weeks)</u>
June 8	1 - 59	Weeks 1 to 6
June 15	60 - 101	Weeks 7 to 9
June 22	102 - 143	Weeks 10 & 11
June 29	144 - 186	Weeks 12 to 14
July 6	187 - 238	Weeks 15 & 16
July 13	239 - 308	Broadcast Day to 2 Months Later

We'll have a few books available for purchase. New copies of the paperback edition are available through Amazon for \$10.10, and used copies in good condition are usually under \$7, including shipping. This book is likely to 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

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

So now what? What can we do with whatever insights we learned over the past six weeks? Our companion book offers this suggestion. "Find another soul in despair. And help them."

To have good fruit you must have a healthy tree.

Matthew 12:33-38

So now what? Now we hear good fruit. We accept the grace God offers by forgiving ourselves and others. And we share the good news of the Gospel through our words, but mostly through our actions.

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 a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. 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

Our series was inspired by Mitch Albom. *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*. New York: HarperCollins, 2021.

Psychology Today Staff. "Guilt." © Psychology Today, 2025. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Psychology Today Staff. "Psychopathy." © Psychology Today, 2025. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Dr Lawrence Howells. "Understanding guilt: The useless emotion?" © The British Psychological Society, November 10, 2022. Retrieved from: [link](#)

According to a recent Pew Research article, 85% of adults in Indonesia, where Islam is the predominant religion, say there is definitely or probably life after death. In Kenya, where most are Christians, 80% of adults agree. The percentage drops to 70% overall for adults living in the U.S.,

According to an analysis published by Ryan Burge, 90% of older adults born in the same decades as me believe there is some form of life after death. Interestingly, Burge discovered that even the majority of people claiming no religious affiliation believe in an afterlife.

Sixty-seven percent of adults living in our country believe in heaven, where most of us hope to reside after we leave this place. So, where and what is heaven? What is heaven like?

These are just a couple of the questions we plan to explore over the next six weeks, aided by a fictional novel, *The First Phone Call From Heaven*, written by Mitch Albom.

We begin our new series, *Heaven*, with several phones ringing or vibrating around the town of Coldwater. Each phone call was a miracle. Calls happen every day with little notice. But a call placed to a member of Harvest of Hope Baptist Church was different. And so were the others.

In the case of Katherine Yellin, the call was from her dead sister, Diane. She said she was calling from heaven. Mitch Albom writes, "Had Katherine Yellin never stood up that Sunday morning, what happened in Coldwater might have passed like so many other miracles, held quiet, wrapped in whispers. But once exposed to the public, miracles change things."

Katherine can't wait to tell the world about it. The others who also received calls from deceased friends, relatives, and a former employee preferred to stay quiet.

"Faith, it is said, is better than belief, because belief is when someone else does the thinking," writes Albom when sharing that Pastor Warren's

faith was intact. Belief, however, had become more difficult for the Baptist pastor. Sure, church attendance was up dramatically, but Katherine's claim was definitely coloring outside the lines of the pastor's understanding of heaven.

Was it a miracle, a hoax, or the overly enthusiastic imagination of a well-meaning member of his church? Yet, Elias Rowe supported Katherine's claim by informing the congregation that he also received a call. Moreover, Elisa never speaks in front of a crowd.

"Miracles happen quietly every day," writes Albom, but "They are rarely tallied. No one keeps score. Now and then, a miracle is declared to the world. And when that happens, things change."

John tells us, in His Gospel, that Jesus spoke to His followers about the afterlife on the night of His arrest. "There are many rooms in my Father's house." Jesus said, "And I am going to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

A lot of pastors, including me, repeat these words from Jesus at funerals. Many of us prefer to call funerals celebrations of life or sometimes a "Going home celebration," reinforcing the promise Jesus made.

*There are many rooms
in my Father's house,
and I am going to
prepare a place for you.
I will come back and
take you with me, so
that you will be where I
am.*

John 14:1-7

Jesus also said, "And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to Myself, so that you will be where I am" (John 14:3).

Scripture tells us that the place Jesus is referring to is heaven, which, according to Genesis chapter one, was created by God on the second day. The Prophet Amos said that, the Lord builds his home in the heavens (Amos 9:6).

Heaven is real. But what is it really like? A phone call from someone already there would help clear up this question. Lots of phone calls from different people offering similar descriptions would be even better!

Meanwhile, we rely on our faith.

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 Mitch Albom. *The First Phone Call from Heaven*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.

Jonathan Evans, Kirsten Lesage, William Miner, Kelsey Jo Starr, and Manolo Corichi. *"Believing in Spirits and Life After Death Is Common Around the World."* © Pew Research Center, May 6, 2025. Retrieved from: [link](#)

Ryan Burge. *"Belief in an Afterlife is Increasing in the United States."* © Ryan Burge, April 17, 2025. Retrieved from: [link](#)

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Here is the outline of our series:

<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Episode</u>
June 8	Heaven calling
June 15	Is this real?
June 22	Go tell
June 29	Validation
July 6	Manna
July 13	Busted?

The Prophet Amos tells us that the Lord builds his home in the heavens. And Jesus promised that He would prepare a place for each of us. Whether or not anyone has ever received a phone call from there, heaven is real.

Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We share our weekly episodes on [Facebook](#) and our [YouTube channel](#), and go live at 10:30 a.m. You can find these links and more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#), [FlintAsburyChurch.org](#).

Pastor Tommy

Mitch Albom. *The First Phone Call from Heaven*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014.



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WHEN YOU SHARE, OTHERS SHINE.
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