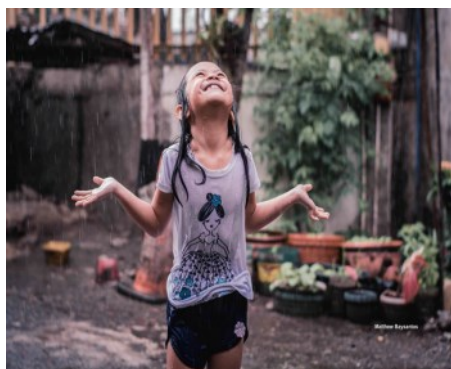


ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 5 Issue 10

AUGUST 10, 2025

Grateful (Prayer)



Surviving a close call is a reason for celebration. Yet survivors often face other emotions when someone says, "You're lucky!" as the reality of what they survived sinks in.

I remember a time when I was "lucky to be alive" several days after emergency surgery, after my appendix burst. This was what I heard from the partner of my primary physician when he came into my room to check on me after surgery. For some reason, his comments angered me. I wasn't feeling lucky.

Page 2

Asking (Prayer)



The images of starving children coming from the war zone in Gaza are heartbreaking. Opposition groups in Israel are labeling what is happening genocide. The Israeli Prime Minister claims no children are starving, while other officials, who don't deny the obvious, blame Hamas for preventing aid

from getting to families in need.

I do not doubt that people are praying for food, both in Gaza and around the world. I know I have. So far, war has been prioritized over humanitarian assistance. Other nations are trying to help, but the obstacles have proven to be too great.

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THE BEAUTY OF OUT DOORS!



DONATE

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Of course, I was grateful, but I usually think of luck as gambling—drawing the right card or buying a winning lottery ticket. I was too young to die and had too many reasons to stay alive. No! Luck is for games. When my life is on the line, I want something more than luck on my side.

God never revealed why this happened or why my life was spared. Instead, I learned about grace. The dictionary defines “Grace” as something you receive without asking. Grace is a gift. I never truly understood what Grace was until that week I spent in a hospital, fighting for my life.

When we receive a gift we don’t deserve, we’re grateful. Or at least, gratitude is the only response I can imagine. The experience might take our breath away, we may be overtaken with joy, or just silently stunned. I don’t see luck as a part of such a scene, however. Love, on the other hand, permeates every fiber of such an experience.

Definitions of gratitude focus on actions rather than words. While gratitude includes a feeling of appreciation, we show that we’re grateful through the kindness we give back. Although

appreciation begins with a thank you, what comes afterward reveals whether we’re truly thankful.

Gratitude is a key theme in scripture. The Hebrew enslaved people gradually learned to be grateful as they journeyed through the wilderness toward the fulfillment of God’s promise of a new life. Thankfulness did not come easily for them. As they encountered new challenges, complaints became their main focus. Let’s face it, it’s tough to feel thankful while facing ongoing struggles.

This week’s stories from our companion book focus on the theme of thankfulness. Each story offers an illustration of gratitude on the part of the storyteller.

Chapter 8 begins with the story of Rosemary and her family, who faced the terror of waking up to their home engulfed in fire and smoke. Rosemary was awakened when her three-year-old daughter Molly fell out of bed, and she walked into a wall of smoke in the hallway. Her husband, Bill, rushed into Molly’s room, while Rosemary rescued their ten-month-old, Barry. Fortunately, neighbors brought over a ladder so they could safely climb down from a second-story window.

Too many conversations with friends and neighbors started with “You’re lucky!” The McLaughlin family wasn’t feeling lucky. Gratitude doesn’t come to mind when imagining what this experience was like. Of course, the couple was grateful to be alive, but they lost their home and belongings, and they were celebrating Christmas while living in a tiny apartment.

The family decided to attend Christmas Eve worship, which included a nativity scene. Rosemary shared that she just could not keep her eyes off the tiny baby and his homeless family. Suddenly, she realized how grateful she was that their lives were spared and they still had each other.

Other stories featured items that held great significance for the person praying to find them. Ann prayed that the man whose vehicle keys she sold to someone would miraculously appear. Emily prayed that she would find the watch her family had given her. Paulette prayed that she would find pictures, taken by her sister, of her sister’s cats.

At first, their requests seem minor compared to the other stories, but gratitude doesn’t measure importance.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger	Fred Hans
Sylvia Pittman	Jonathon Misner
Miriam Watson	Terrance Williams

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux	Norma Buzzard
Nancy Elston	

COMING UP THIS WEEK: AUGUST 11—17

Aug 11	Mon	11am-12N	Angel Closet (at South Flint Soup Kitchen)
Aug 12	Tue	9am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		11am-12N	Angel Closet
Aug 13	Wed	11am-12N	Angel Closet
Aug 14	Thu	11am-12N	Angel Closet
		1:00pm	United Women in Faith
			Summer Luncheon Meeting at Starlight Coney Island
			1500 Center Rd Burton (see flyer, pg 19)
Aug 15	Fri	11am-12N	Angel Closet
Aug 16	Sat		
Aug 17	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 "Prayer"

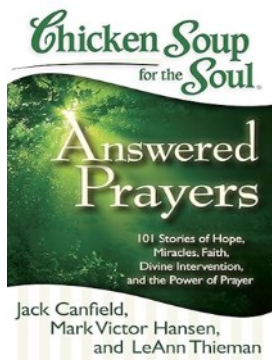


In our last worship series, *Heaven*, we gave thought to what heaven might be like. And we considered the plausibility of someone in heaven speaking to the living. Is it possible? It would be a miracle if it were to happen.

In this series, *Prayer*, we give thought to words, mostly going the other direction. We talk to God, but we also hope to hear back. If not audibly, we hope to see evidence that our prayers were heard. Well, at least some of them once in a while.

Page 5

Book Club News



There are hundreds of books under the umbrella title *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. So many that this title is now its own publishing

company. Out of the hundreds of options, we've chosen one special

edition of our new series, *Prayer*.

According to their website, motivational speakers Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen started in 1993 with the idea that people could help each other by sharing stories. The two had shared stories told to them over the years, and their audiences kept asking if any of the stories had ever been published.

But when the two tried to get their first book published, they were turned down by every single big publisher. Fortunately, the book was published by a small health and wellness publisher in Florida named HCI. After the owner, Peter Vegso, read some of the stories, he decided to give the book a chance.

Since then, more than 100 million copies have been sold in the U.S. and Canada, 400 titles, and translations into more than 40 languages. Their goal is to spread happiness, inspiration, hope, and wellness across the globe, "changing your world one story at a time."®

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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
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

Upcoming Worship Series — “Prayer”

The gospels share that Jesus often prayed, and Matthew and Luke include stories about Jesus teaching His disciples how to pray. This is our source for that which we call the Lord's Prayer.

We also learn about the importance of humility as we pray. After all, we are dependent on God for all that we have. Fortunately, God showers us with love and good things. Unfortunately, humankind is more often out of rhythm with God's intention. Therefore, God's plans are thwarted by selfishness, cruelty, and arrogance.

But we continue to pray not just for ourselves, but for others. God hears our prayers and God acts for our good.

For motivation and some content, we'll utilize a book of stories from people who share their experiences with prayer. Our companion book is part of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. You can read more about this book in the Book Club article, which includes a reading schedule.

Here is the outline of our series:

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>
One	July 20	Rhythm
Two	July 27	Healing
Three	August 3	Asking
Four	August 10	Grateful
Five	August 31	Trust
Six	September 7	Angels

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

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers: 101 Stories of Hope, Miracles, Faith, Divine Intervention, and the Power of Prayer*.
Cos Cob, CT: Chicken Soup for the Soul, 2011.


“Feed Flint”

Page 6



“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:

He threw himself to the ground at Jesus' feet and thanked Him.

Luke 17:11-19

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Luke 17:11-19. Why did the other nine not return to thank Jesus? Where do you fit into this story? What grabs you about this story?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider titled Grateful. What is your story of gratitude? What are you thankful for? What grace has God shown to you for which you haven't given thanks?
3. How can your group members help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to be blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



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- Scan QR Code

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More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

Miracles happen all the time and became a major theme from our last series. The stories in our companion book for the new series of answered prayers are sure to leave you in awe. We hope these stories will not only inspire you but also strengthen your faith and hope.

These stories offer testimony that God is actively involved in our lives. And that God hears our heartfelt hopes and needs. The stories include miraculous true accounts of healing, divine appointments, angels among us, signs from above, timely gifts, and other answered prayers.

Since each story exists independently of the others, you can choose to read all of them or just a few. Perhaps read one story each day as part of a daily devotional routine. For our series, we'll select one or two stories from a specific chapter in case you want to read ahead.

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

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Chapters</u>
July 20	4 - 45	One
July 27	116 - 153	Four
August 3	182 - 217	Six
August 10,	252 -293	Eight
August 31	294 - 327	Nine
September 7	328 - 351	Ten

We'll have a few books available for purchase. New copies of the paperback edition are available through Amazon for \$11.60, and used copies in good condition are usually under \$6, including shipping. 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

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, LeAnn Thieman. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Answered Prayers: 101 Stories of Hope, Miracles, Faith, Divine Intervention, and the Power of Prayer*. Cos Cob, CT: *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, 2011.

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

Emily, who goes by Susie, prayed for comfort in her grief over the loss of her father after dying in an auto accident. She wished she had paid more attention to her father's stories when the idea of writing a family memoir from her storyteller dad's perspective. The experience reminded her that she also frequently put God on ignore. Emily's prayers were answered when she found a composition book full of stories left by her dad.

Luke recounts a story about Jesus being approached by ten men, all suffering from a dreaded skin disease who hoped for healing. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the Temple. If their skin cleared up, they could ask for permission to return to their community.

On their way, their skin became clear. They were healed.

Afterward, one of the men returned to thank Jesus for healing him. "Weren't there nine others?" Jesus asked out loud. "Why was it that the immigrant was the only one to return to show gratitude?"

Perhaps the immigrant had the most to gain and so he was the most grateful? We're left to speculate, see ourselves in the story, and faithfully interpret the lessons Jesus offered. Do only one in ten of us thank God for what He has done for us?

He threw himself to the ground of Jesus' feet and thanked Him.

Luke 17: 11-19

The story from our companion book that grabbed my attention the most this week was told by Julia.

Julia had gone to three different specialists and had every test the specialists knew to try, but the cause of her symptoms remained a mystery. Her prayers for healing had gone unanswered until Julia heard, "Julia, you haven't told Me thank you."

"What do I have to be thankful for?" Julia thought out loud. Her devotion to God didn't seem to help. Was sickness her reward for faithfulness?

"I've cleared your schedule, you have no responsibilities and no one expects anything of you," God responded. "I've given you a chance to start over with your time, and you've not told Me thank you."

"Thank you," Julia remorsefully murmured. "Thank you for letting me start over." Julia was assured that she would get better, but it would take a while. But what did God expect from her in the meantime?

Julia's health gradually improved. She and her husband, David, were captivated by a piece of art showing children waiting for the school bus in the rain under an umbrella. It was a print of a painting by artist Beth Henrickson Logan. In the scene, one child

stood to the side, looking upward as rain splashed on his face. A caption beneath the print read, "Smile at the rain."

The couple bought the print for their home as a reminder that God's plans for us are always made with love. But the rains come.

Rain or drought, we can be grateful for each breath we take and each heartbeat. Life is a gift, after all.

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 by sending 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

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Where is God? According to scripture, God is in the pictures, holding the starving children as they take their last breath. Comforting parents as they cry out. And waiting for humanity to show mercy.

The politics of Israel's circumstances are complicated. Hunger is not.

A couple of weeks ago, I listened to a cabinet member claim that no one has died as a result of the U.S. cutting off funding for the United States Agency for International Development, better known as USAID. While his denial may be good politics, his claim is clothed in camouflage, denial, and lies.

He justified defunding USAID, claiming that our country can no longer afford to borrow money to help other countries while we have so much need here. I was angered and a bit insulted by his oversimplification of our nation's finances. Does he believe that we're that stupid?

Especially, after Congress recently passed a bill that experts anticipate will add \$2.4 trillion to our national debt, which features massive tax cuts for the most wealthy among us, funding to build numerous prisons, while making substantial cuts for medical assistance to our most vulnerable.

We aren't borrowing money to help others. We borrow to keep the wealthy from paying their fair share. It's a matter of perspective. If our priorities were to come out of the gospel instead of the playbook for conservatives, we would say that we can no longer afford to borrow money to finance the wealthy and large corporations. And our tax revenues would first go to support not only the most vulnerable in our country, but also those elsewhere.

God does answer prayers, but there are over eight billion people living on the same planet. God sorts out the requests and focuses on those in need first. Just as scripture says. There is no indication that God first takes care of the wealthy.

Chapter six of our companion book is filled with stories of asking, seeking, and knocking. We begin with Sandi and her husband, Paul, returning to the ashes left from a fire that destroyed their home. Over 2,500 homes were destroyed by five different wildfires in Southern California. Paul prayed that God would give his wife "kisses on the cheek" so she would know that she is still loved.

Her kisses began with finding a picture of her father unharmed, along with her mother's wedding Bible. Sandi grew up as one of four daughters of missionaries who knew what it was like to face human-made devastation and suffering.

We also meet a pastor trapped in a snowstorm, praying for someone to find him in time, only to be rescued by the owner of the property where he was trespassing. We also meet a mother who, after losing her son, prays and receives a dream that allows her to see her son's face and find some comfort in her grief. A woman desperately searching for a lost glove, a gift from her deceased sister, finds it after Elaine, working the checkout line, prays that she will find it.

God wants the best for us. In the Book of Jeremiah, God says through the prophet, "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for (Jeremiah 29:11).

Matthew tells us that Jesus asks us to consider, "Would any of you who are parents give your children a stone when they ask for bread?" (Matthew 7:9). Of course not.

*Ask, and you will receive.
Seek, and you will find.
Knock, and the door will be
opened to you.*

Matthew 7:7-12

Jesus goes on to illustrate the contrast between human parents and God's will for humanity. Of course, God provides for those in need. But God offers you and me the opportunity to participate in God's plan for heaven on earth. Our priorities matter a great deal to God, and so do our politics.

Jesus began His illustration with this assertion, "Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you." There's a lot to unpack in this statement of fact. And much has been made of His claim, often out of context.

Sadly, our current administration is moving our nation further away from our roots as a people who recognize that God expects us to prioritize care for the most vulnerable and

welcome strangers. Our policies now resemble the self-serving cruelty of those nations that we have historically opposed.

Fortunately, most of us see through the lies and manipulation of news sources. And millions are showing up to voice their opposition. Most of all, dire circumstances call for prayers of asking, seeking, and knocking.

For everyone who asks will receive, and anyone who seeks will find, and the door will be opened to those who knock (Matthew 7:8). The Lord provides that which we need, helps us to find a way forward when we're lost, and hears us cry out when we're hurting.

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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PRESENTS

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OUR FREE PRODUCE STAND FOR
UNDERSERVED FAMILIES**

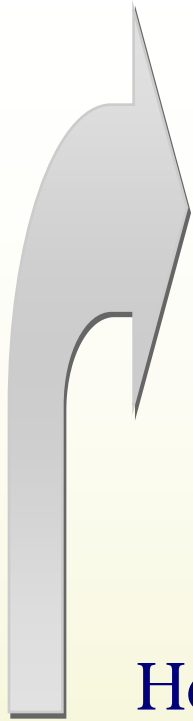


FORWARD

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2025 5PM - 7PM AT THE FANZONE HOLE #17
WARWICK HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**

**"WHEN YOU GIVE, SOMEONE GROWS.
WHEN YOU SHARE, OTHERS SHINE.
LET'S PLAY IT FORWARD—TOGETHER."**

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Days meals are served: Monday—Friday

For more information: Asbury UMC/CDC Offices
(810) 235-0016



United
Women
in Faith

EVENT: United Women in Faith
Summer Meeting

DATE: Thursday, August 14, 2025

TIME: 1:00pm

WHERE: Starlight Coney Island
1500 N Center Rd Burton

You may call Michele Weston at 810-624-1184
to RSVP, and let us know if you can make it!!

PLEASE JOIN US!