

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 6

Issue 1

MARCH 1, 2026

20 more days for  
Spring!! ...



**DONATE**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Adultery	1
Anger	1
Anger	2
Coming up this week	3
In our prayers	3
Upcoming Worship/Book Club	4
Upcoming Worship Series	5
Feed Flint	6
Feed Flint	7
Life Group Questions	8
Support your Local Farm	9
Support your local farm	10
Book Club News	11
Ways to Give/Donate	12
Anger	13
Anger	14
Adultery	15
Adultery	16
Kroger Community Rewards	17

## Anger (All y' all)



This week marks the beginning of the Season of Lent and a new series based on some difficult teachings of Jesus on anger, adultery, retaliation, divorce, swearing, and love. But before you tune out, hang with us at least long enough to find out that our traditional ways of hearing what Jesus said don't tell the whole story.

For example, there is a strange word in Jesus' teaching on anger. The word "Raca" is Aramaic, the everyday language Jesus spoke. It is an old insult. It isn't profanity. It isn't explosive. It doesn't sound like much. It means something like: "empty one." "Worthless." "Good-for-nothing." Page 2

## Adultery (All y'all)



Every piece of glass does one of two things. It either lets light through or throws your image back at you. It either reflects you back to yourself or lets you see something beyond yourself.

We use glass for windows because, at its best, it is almost invisible. When it's clean, you barely notice it's there. It doesn't call attention to itself. It opens a room. It widens your world. It lets you see what has always been there but has been beyond your reach. Windows reveal treasure.

Page 14

It's a word that hasn't been used since the first century, though the meaning it conveys is used way too often. It is what happens when a person shrinks in our imagination. When Jesus reminds His listeners that the Ten Commandments prohibit murder, He does something unexpected. Instead of beginning with murder, He begins with this word "*Raca*."

Jesus begins with dismissal. With contempt. With the quiet moment when someone becomes "nothing" to us. It is what happens when a person shrinks in our imagination.

So, before we talk about violence, we need to talk about anger.

After all, anger is part of the human condition. A father snaps at his child after a long day. A wife replays a cutting comment for hours. A coworker smiles in a meeting but fumes in the car on the way home. We feel it when we are cut off in traffic. When we are misrepresented. When we feel ignored, threatened, dismissed, or afraid.

Anger itself is not rare. It is not abnormal. It is not always wrong. Often, anger tells us something matters. It signals that a boundary has been crossed or that something we love feels endangered.

Most of the time, anger rises and falls. It flares, then cools. But sometimes it doesn't cool. Sometimes it lingers. Sometimes it begins to build. Quietly, steadily — like pressure beneath the earth's surface. You don't see it at first. You only feel the tremors.

Think about road rage.

A driver merges abruptly. We feel disrespected. Unsafe. Invisible. Our pulse rises. Words come out that we would never say in church. What happened? Often, it is not the maneuver alone. It is the story that forms beneath it: They don't care about me. They think they own the road. I don't matter.

And because we cannot see their face — because they are anonymous, they're just a vehicle — it becomes easier to react without empathy. The other driver becomes an obstacle. Not a person. They become a small version of *raca*. It feels minor. But something is heating beneath the surface.

Road rage is a small example of a larger phenomenon. When faces disappear, empathy often follows. We are wired to read faces. A glance tells us whether someone is angry, afraid, uncertain, or calm. Remove the face, and uncertainty grows. And when uncertainty grows, fear is not far behind.

We see this dynamic play out beyond the highway.

In recent years, public debates about borders, enforcement, safety, and belonging have stirred strong emotions across communities. Policies carry real consequences for real families. Some feel protected. Others feel threatened. Many feel unheard.

When U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers conduct operations, some of which involve physical aggression and even cruelty, wearing masks adds another layer to an already tense environment. Hidden faces increase ambiguity. Ambiguity heightens fear. Fear hardens into anger.

And anonymity works in more than one direction. When a person becomes primarily a role — "officer," "immigrant," "protester," "citizen" — the human story can recede behind the label. Roles replace names. Categories replace stories.

This is not about assigning blame. It is about recognizing how quickly human beings can become abstractions to one another — especially when fear is in the air. And once again, it becomes easier to stop seeing a neighbor and start seeing a symbol.

But we need to widen the lens even further.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger	Paula Gamble
Sylvia Pittman	Richard Oram
Miriam Watson	Jonathon Misner



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux	Norma Buzzard
Nancy Elston	

COMING UP THIS WEEK: MARCH 1—8

Mar 2	Mon		
Mar 3	Tue	9:00am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		6:30pm-9:30pm	Chili'Seaz's
Mar 4	Wed	8:30am-6:30pm	Chili'Seaz's
		11am-1pm	Angel Closet at SFSK
Mar 5	Thu		
Mar 6	Fri		
Mar 7	Sat	REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS BEFORE GOING TO BED ONE HOUR AHEAD ...	
Mar 8	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 "All y' all"

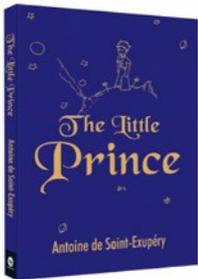


Over the past year, most of us have felt unmoored. Truth feels fragile. Anger feels constant. Power feels reckless. And too often, fear has been rewarded while compassion is dismissed as weakness. In moments like these, it's tempting to retreat, to disengage, to harden, or to surrender our moral imagination to the loudest voices in the room.

During the season of Lent, Asbury will join other congregations in a shared worship series entitled *All y' all*, rooted in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon, Jesus sets before his followers a vision of life that is both breathtaking and unsettling. Again and again, he takes familiar commandments and intensifies them:

Page 5

## Book Club News



During the season of Lent, our worship series, *All Y'all*, invites us to hear the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the

Mount the way his first followers heard them: not as a list of impossible individual expectations, but as a shared way of life meant to shape a

community that can heal the world.

To accompany this season, our suggested companion book will be *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

At first glance, *The Little Prince* appears to be a children's book. Its language is simple. Its illustrations are playful. But readers quickly discover that it asks profoundly adult questions.

Through a series of brief encounters, the story explores how grown-ups come to value the wrong things, how power and possession distort relationships, and how love always carries responsibility and risk.

In this way, *The Little Prince* pairs surprisingly well with the Sermon on the Mount.

The Little Prince is a deceptively simple story that asks adult questions about power, truth, love, and responsibility. During Lent, we'll read it slowly, alongside Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, letting the story help us notice what we might otherwise miss.

Page 11

## 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
	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 — “All y’ all”

You have heard that it was said... but I say to you...”

In All Y’ all, Jesus speaks to a people living amid instability, division, and the abuse of power—and calls them to become a community shaped by truth, restraint, courage, and love. These teachings are not abstract ideals. They are practical guidance for communities learning how to live faithfully when the world feels like it’s coming apart.

This series matters because the way we respond to anger, desire, truth, retaliation, and love will determine what kind of people we become—and what kind of future we help make possible. Each week builds on the last. Each teaching presses deeper. And together, they form a vision of shared life that can resist chaos without becoming chaotic itself.

This Lent, we will not look away. We will listen closely. Because how we live together now matters more than ever.

Jesus’ teachings on anger, desire, divorce, truthfulness, retaliation, and love have often been treated as impossibly high moral ideals. As a result, Christians have found ways to sidestep them, explain them away, or reduce them to private spiritual aspirations rather than lived practices.

This Lent, *All y’ all* invites us to ask a different question. What if Jesus was not giving instructions for individual moral perfection, but describing the kind of community that could heal the world?

The Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish Christian community living through upheaval. The Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed. Jewish followers of Jesus were being expelled from synagogues. Long-standing religious and social structures were unraveling.

In response, Matthew presents Jesus as a figure deeply rooted in Israel’s story. For Matthew, Jesus is a teacher like Moses, calling God’s people into a renewed way of life. Just as Moses went up the mountain to receive a law meant to shape a people, Jesus goes up a mountain and teaches a way of life meant to form a community.

When Jesus speaks in the Sermon on the Mount, he is not addressing isolated individuals. He is speaking to a gathered people. They are a diverse crowd of the poor, the overlooked, the wounded, and the hopeful. And Jesus calls them salt of the earth, light of the world, and a city set on a hill.

*Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.*

Matthew 5:17

This communal context matters.

In English, we lose an important distinction that exists in the biblical languages. When Jesus says, “But I say to you...,” the “you” is plural. Jesus is speaking to all of them together. A Community. If we were to translate Jesus’ words into a Southern vernacular, we might hear him say, “All y’ all have heard it said... but I say to all y’ all...”

Page 6

## Upcoming Worship Series — “All y’ all”

The title of this series comes from this anomaly.

The “higher righteousness” Jesus describes is not about spiritual heroics or moral scorekeeping. It is about how a community treats its members, especially the vulnerable. And how that community bears witness to God’s reign in the world.

For example, anger is not just a private feeling because anger corrodes relationships. Lust is not just a thought because lust objectifies and dehumanizes. Divorce laws are not abstract; they shape lives and power dynamics. Oaths and promises are not rhetorical flourishes. They reveal whether a community can be trusted. Retaliation is not inevitable because cycles of violence can be broken. And love extends beyond friends and allies to enemies.

Taken together, these teachings describe a people learning how to do right by one another and by God. Most of us read the Sermon on the Mount as a set of impossible standards meant to drive us toward guilt or despair. But the early church heard these teachings differently. For them, the Sermon on the Mount functioned as a rule of life. It served as a practical guide for shaping communities marked by reconciliation, honesty, accountability, and love.

In other words, rather than asking, “Can I live up to this?” the better question may be, “What would it look like for us to practice this together?” This shift from individual achievement to communal formation stands at the heart of *All y’ all*.

While guest preachers and pastors will bring their own voices and contexts to these texts, the shared question remains the same. What kind of people are we becoming when we take Jesus seriously and take each other seriously in the process?

This Lent, we will allow Jesus to challenge our assumptions, stretch our imaginations, and invite us into a deeper way of living together. Not perfectly. Not individually. But faithfully—all y’ all, together. Throughout Lent, we will explore six teachings from Matthew, chapter 5:

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	Feb 22	Anger	Matthew 5:21–26
Two	Mar 1	Adultery	Matthew 5:27–30
Three	Mar 8	Retaliation	Matthew 5:38–42
Four	Mar 15	Divorce	Matthew 5:31–32
Five	Mar 22	Swearing	Matthew 5:33–37
Six	Mar 29	Love	Matthew 5:43–48

Our journey begins on February 22, the first Sunday after Ash Wednesday.

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](http://FlintAsburyChurch.org).

Pastor Tommy

*Series concept and substantial content created and shared by © The Rev. Jeremy Peters, Court Street United Methodist Church, 2026. Used with permission. Additional content from: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The Little Prince. Translated by Richard Howard. NY: Harper Collins, 2000.*



# “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](https://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

If your right eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. It is better to lose an eye than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:27–30

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Four horizontal lines for taking notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

- 1. Read Matthew 5:1-12 (blessings) and then read Matthew 5:27–30, and this week’s Circuit Rider article titled Adultery.
2. This week, let’s try slowing our gaze and let the glass clear. The next time you find yourself making a snap judgment, ask yourself, “What am I assuming? What story do I not know? What image of God might be standing in front of me?”
3. Second, name the treasure. When you are tempted to reduce someone to a function, silently name what is sacred about them. Image-bearer. Breathing. Beloved. Someone’s child. Someone Jesus died for. You cannot easily use what you have named as treasure.
4. 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.



## Show Your Support For Your Local Farm

We need your help to purchase fencing to keep our furry friends from eating up all our crops and not sharing with us.

### How You Can Donate

---

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

Donate Now



More Information :



(810) 235-0016



funding@flintasbury.org

Like Jesus' teaching, this story does not argue its case. It tells the truth sideways. It invites reflection rather than compliance. And it reminds us that what matters most is often invisible to those who are certain they already understand the world.

Rather than offering a strict reading schedule, we invite you to read this book slowly and lightly during Lent. Some may read it all in a sitting. Others may return to a few chapters again and again. Either approach is faithful. The goal is not completion, but attention.

Throughout the series, themes from the book—seeing clearly, resisting domination, loving without possession, and accepting responsibility for one another—will echo the questions raised in worship. You do not need to read the book to participate fully, but for those who choose to do so, it may offer another way of listening for what Jesus is saying to all y'all together.

This Lent, we invite you to read a story, listen deeply, and practice seeing with the heart. Here are our planned themes for this series:

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Themes</u>
Feb 22	Misunderstanding and frustration
Mar 1	Possession versus love
Mar 8	Responsibility and consequence
Mar 15	Words, meaning, and trust
Mar 22	Power and resistance
Mar 29	The cost of love

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$6 each. Additional copies of the paperback edition are available through Amazon for \$6. 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 or themes. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. You can purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — [FlintAsburyChurch.org](http://FlintAsburyChurch.org).

Pastor Tommy

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. *The Little Prince*. Translated by Richard Howard. NY: Harper Collins, 2000.

Cash or checks can be sent to/dropped off at South Flint Soup Kitchen, 3410 Fenton Road, Flint, MI 48507. Please make checks out to South Flint Soup Kitchen!

Online at [www.mightycause.com/feedflint](http://www.mightycause.com/feedflint)

Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday 11am-12Noon. Calling ahead is not necessary, but our needs change frequently, so calling ahead of time is a good idea!

Give time! We need volunteers!!! Volunteers arrive at 9:30am and are done by 12:30pm. Tasks include handing out lunches, assisting in the Angel Closet, light cleaning, putting together items to pass out to clients, and more.

Refer people!!

Questions??? Call 810-239-3427  
or email [southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com)

Most people who feel anger never become violent. But researchers studying mass violence have noticed recurring themes that go beyond momentary emotion. Mental illness alone is not the strongest predictor. More common are patterns such as long-nurtured grievances, social isolation, a deep sense of humiliation, or the belief that someone has taken something essential away. A story of blame that grows more rigid over time.

In these cases, anger is not a flare. It becomes a story. A story rehearsed. A story refined. A story that explains everything. Violence rarely erupts without pressure building first. It often grows where resentment is fed, and isolation deepens. But when pressure builds long enough, eruptions are no longer surprising.

Violence erupts once anger becomes identity. And once someone is reduced to a symbol — an enemy, a category, a threat — harming them feels less unthinkable.

*Raca!* Empty!

We are living in a time when anger sits close to the surface. Public rhetoric is sharp. Policies carry real consequences for real families. Decisions about borders, enforcement, safety, and belonging stir fear and frustration across communities.

On both sides, it becomes easier to stop seeing a neighbor and start seeing a category.

*Raca!*

The ground trembles. Sometimes the pressure lingers. Sometimes it begins to build — quietly, steadily — like pressure beneath the earth's surface. A volcano does not erupt without warning. Magma gathers. Heat rises. Pressure builds slowly underground long before anyone sees flame.

You don't see it at first. You only feel the tremors.

It's true that anger is common. But when anger is fed by grievance, insulated by isolation, and intensified by fear, it can become something else — something more combustible.

Jesus does not begin with the weapon. He begins with the word. Jesus begins with the moment someone becomes less than human in our imagination. And that is where the pressure starts to build.

According to Matthew, Jesus began His public ministry on a mountain with a lengthy teaching.

If you weren't with us last week to hear about what happens later, also on a mountain, here is what matters: before there was light on a mountain, there was a voice. And the voice said, "Listen to him." So we listen. Not as spectators. Not as critics. Not as distant historians. We listen as participants.

Because when Jesus sat down on that mountainside, he was not addressing a spiritual elite. He was speaking to a gathered community—disciples, seekers, skeptics, wounded people, hopeful people.

Fishermen and mothers. Tax collectors and zealots. The devout and the doubtful.

All of them. All y' all. That phrase may sound informal, but it is deeply theological. Jesus began with blessings. But the blessings are not individual self-help slogans. They are communal declarations. Jesus is forming a people.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." All y' all who know your need.

"Blessed are those who mourn." All y' all who are carrying grief.

"Blessed are the meek." All y' all who are learning restraint.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." All y' all who are trying to hold fractured relationships together.

The mountain is not a stage for a few high achievers. It is a gathering place for the pressured. And we are not so different.

We, too, live under strain. Economic uncertainty. Political volatility. Cultural suspicion. Private disappointment. Lingering resentment. Pressure beneath the surface.

And before Jesus confronts anything in us, he blesses us. That matters. Because what comes next is searching.

The difference between a window and a mirror is surprisingly small. Just a coating. Just a layer. Just enough to turn something meant for seeing outward into something that traps your own image. But instead of expanding your view, it narrows it. Instead of revealing the world, it reflects you.

Stand at a window and something changes. You are no longer the focal point. The world stretches beyond you — hills, trees, traffic, sky, neighbors, weather. The glass disappears, and you find yourself looking outward instead of inward. In other words, mirrors reflect desire, but windows reveal treasure.

And the truth is — we live in a culture that has coated the glass. We are surrounded by mirrors. We have learned to treat windows like mirrors. We look at the world, but what we mostly see is ourselves.

We scroll through images, and instead of seeing people, we measure how they make us feel. Attractive. Threatened. Envious. Superior. Desiring. We look at the earth and see what it can give us — energy, lumber, profit, and convenience.

We look at relationships and quietly calculate: Who protects my interests? Who advances my side? Who threatens my tribe?

We look at the church and wonder: Does this feed me? Inspire me? Serve my family?

And the shift is almost invisible. We think we are looking at others. But so often, we are looking for ourselves. It is not that we are evil. It is how we are trained. Mirrors reflect desire, while windows reveal treasure.

We are trained by advertising to see desire before dignity. Trained by algorithms to see stimulation before the story. Trained by power to see the advantage before seeing humanity. We did not wake up one day and decide to reduce people to roles, bodies, votes, assets, consumers, or enemies. We simply learned to live in a hall of mirrors.

And in a hall of mirrors, everything bends back toward the one looking. Speaking of mirrors, for episode 2 of our series, *All y'all*, we're moving further along in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where He says, "You have heard it said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

It's a commandment everyone knows. It's clear, concrete, and references forbidden behavior. But Jesus does not stay with behavior. Instead, He says, "But I say to you, everyone who looks..." moving from the act to the gaze. From the visible line to the invisible posture. From the bedroom to the eyes.

And this is where we traditionally shrink the text enough for us to keep moving. We assume Jesus is only talking about sexual temptation. And most of us move on, leaving this teaching for those to whom it applies.

Well, okay, all of us probably step across the looking line occasionally, but it's just innocent fascination, isn't it? It's not a big deal, is it?

The problem is that Jesus isn't really talking about avoiding the possibility of having an affair by keeping our gaze where it belongs. We can't simply move on because Jesus is talking to all of us. All y'all, and including me.

What if Jesus is really talking about mirrors and windows? After all, Jesus describes looking, and does not describe seduction. He describes the moment another person becomes something you imagine in terms of your wants and desires. Adultery is a great example because it grabs our attention long enough for Jesus to get to the real point.

You see, the deeper fracture is acquisitive sight — the reflex that turns a human being into something for me. That is mirror-seeing.

After the blessings, Jesus appears to speak in a different register. "You have heard that it was said...But I say to you..." In the sermon that follows, Jesus does not abolish the law. He deepens it. Jesus narrows the distance between action and intention.

"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder.'" This command draws a clear line. Most of us feel safe standing behind it. We may have sharp words. We may have tense exchanges. We may even carry quiet contempt. But murder? That feels far away.

And then Jesus moves the line. "But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister..."

*All y'all have heard that people were told in the past, "Do not commit murder." But now I tell you; if you are angry with our brother, you will be brought to trail.*

Matthew 5:21-26

He relocates violence from the hand to the heart. Not because anger and murder are identical in consequence — they are not — but because they

share a root system. Jesus continues: "If you call your brother *raca*...If you say, You fool..." The language shifts from physical harm to verbal dismissal. From bloodshed to belittling. From eruption to simmer.

Jesus is not only concerned with craters. He is concerned with pressure. And suddenly the mountain feels closer. Because now the conversation includes all y' all.

The driver who mutters at the car that cut him off. The parent who snaps at a child. The coworker who rehearses cutting remarks in the shower. The politician who reduces whole groups of people to a single word.

The line has moved inward. And that is uncomfortable. But it is also merciful. Because if violence begins beneath the surface, then transformation must begin there as well.

Jesus is not waiting for the explosion. He is addressing the heat.

But before we defend ourselves or deflect toward someone else's greater failure, let's pause on the mountain and sit among the disciples, and simply feel the pressure we carry. Let's hear the blessings again, before we focus on the warning. Let's hear what Jesus says, not as condemnation, but as care.

Because the One who blesses the meek and the peacemakers is forming a community that can live differently. A community where anger is neither denied nor allowed to rule. Where contempt is named before it calcifies. Where reconciliation is urgent.

"All y' all" means no one is excluded from the blessing. And it also means no one is exempt from the work.

Jesus does not delight in catching sinners. He is not escalating the law so more of us can know how badly we've failed. Jesus is what is in the human heart. He knows the anger. He knows the broken vows. He knows the private compromises. He knows the words we wish we could take back.

And Jesus speaks before the cross — already moving toward it. The One who raises the standard is the same One who will stretch out His arms. So if you feel nervous about what is coming in the weeks ahead — about adultery, divorce, retaliation, oaths — stay seated. Do not step off the mountain. The blessing came first on purpose.

And it involves more than how we see an attractive person. For example, when we look at the earth and see only resources to extract, that is mirror-seeing. When we look at immigrants and see only a threat, that is mirror-seeing. When we look at political opponents and see only obstacles, that is mirror-seeing. When we look at those who disagree with us and quietly imagine they must be dangerous, disposable, or in the way — that is mirror-seeing.

In other words, the bedroom is not the center of this teaching. Jesus is taking us out into the real world. He's taking us to the office, out into the streets, and to the places where we play, shop, and work. That's because the center of this teaching is what happens in your heart when you look at another person or anything else in creation, not through a window, but using a mirror.

Because before we ever use someone with our hands, we have already handled them with our sight. And once a window becomes a mirror, something else happens. People and creation stop being mysteries and start becoming instruments.

Consider this: There are two ways to treat something you're looking at. As a tool. Or as a treasure. The difference is that a

tool exists for my purposes, but a treasure exists in its own right. A tool is evaluated by its usefulness. A treasure is honored simply because it is.

If the earth is a tool, we extract. If people are tools, we exploit. If opponents are tools, we manipulate. If institutions are tools, we bend them. If bodies are tools, we consume. But if what we are looking at is a treasure, then everything changes.

And this is where Jesus is pressing us. He was not focused on avoiding the temptation to have an affair. Rather, Jesus is telling each of us to see treasures through windows, rather than tools in a mirror. Because what you see determines what you value.

And what you value determines what you are willing to do. A mirror never shows you the other person. It shows you yourself — your longing, your hunger, your appetite. And if all you ever see is your own desire bouncing back at you, eventually the people around you stop being people. They become possibilities. They become functions. They become tools.

Jewish philosopher Martin Buber describes this human tendency to see mirrors rather than see through windows as two

fundamental ways we relate to the world. "I - it" is like seeing into a mirror. In this kind of relationship, the other is an object. Useful, measurable, and manageable. Something, or someone, to experience, categorize, or consume.

In an "I-Thou" relationship, the other is a presence, rather than an object to be used. They are a mystery to be encountered.

Mirrors train us to have I-it relationships. I-it is efficient, but I-Thou is sacred. So, when Jesus says that looking in a certain way already distorts the commandment, He is saying: you have learned to see others as I-it. You have learned to let desire define reality.

But the Kingdom of God that Jesus announces is built on I-Thou relationships. Seeing people as treasure. Windows reveal treasure. And that kind of sight changes everything.

In our companion book for this series, *The Little Prince*, there is a boy who loves a single rose. At first glance, it is just a rose. There are thousands like it. But over time, through attention and care, the rose becomes unique and special.



community rewards



Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!

### Learn more at

KrogerCommunityRewards.com  
Or, call Kroger Customer Communications at

**1-800-KROGERS, (576-4377)  
OPTION #3**



### Eligible Organizations

Kroger Community Rewards is open to organizations that are tax exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Participants include school groups, churches and synagogues, youth sports, food banks, animal support groups and many others. Kroger does not make donations to individuals.

Get your favorite local organization

enrolled

today! Enrollment applications can be downloaded at Kroger.com

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

**ZERO HUNGER  
ZERO WASTE**

by **Kroger**

Add the South Flint Soup Kitchen to your Kroger Rewards Card and Help Feed Flint

We're giving **\$2 million**

to local area non profits

Use your Kroger Plus Card and earn rewards for your favorite organization.

Where shopping and giving come together and you can help!

**THE SOUTH FLINT  
SOUP KITCHEN  
PRESENTS**

# **THE SFSK ANGEL CLOSET**

Select gently worn clothing and household goods!

**OPEN THE 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup>  
WEDNESDAY OF EACH  
MONTH FROM 11AM  
UNTIL 1PM**

**WE ARE ACCEPTING GENTLY WORN  
CLOTHING AT THIS TIME, PLEASE  
RING THE BUZZER TO DROP THEM  
OFF M-F FROM 11AM TO 12 NOON  
DO NOT LEAVE OUTSIDE  
THE DOOR**

**CALL (810) 239-3427 FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

We believe that everyone has a right to shop with dignity and have access to quality clothing regardless of their circumstances in life.

**South Flint Soup  
Kitchen  
3410 Fenton Road  
Flint, MI 48507**



In his travels, the boy meets a fox who teaches him how to tame it so they can be friends. The boy learns two important lessons through their friendship. The first is, "It is the time you spent on your rose that makes your rose so important." And, he learns, "One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes."

The little Prince learned to see through windows. The rose becomes a treasure not because it reflects the prince's desire, but because he has learned to see beyond himself.

Love does not reduce. Love does not consume. Love treasures. And windows reveal treasure.

And now, what Jesus says about blessings at the start of the Sermon on the Mount begins to sound different. For example, "Blessed are the pure in heart..." Purity here is not about repression. It is about clarity. An undivided gaze. A heart no longer turned inward on its own desire.

When a pure heart looks at another person, they see more than utility. More than attraction. More than a threat. More than an advantage. A pure heart sees God's image. Breath. It sees belovedness. A pure heart sees treasure.

So when Jesus uses shocking language about eyes and hands, He is not advocating self-harm. Rather, He is speaking about urgency. Guard your sight. Because mirrors reflect desire. And desire, when enthroned, will shrink the world to the size of your appetite.

But windows reveal treasure. And when you learn to see treasure, you cannot use what you treasure. You protect it. You honor it. You take responsibility for it.

You no longer relate to other people or to God's creation as tools to fulfill desire, but as treasures of great value. No longer I - it, but I-Thou.

Let's start with slowing our gaze. Mirror-seeing is fast and reactive. It labels quickly and categorizes instantly. While window-seeing requires a pause. The next time you find yourself making a snap judgment, "What am I assuming? What story do I not know? What image of God might be standing in front of me?" That is, slow the gaze, and let the glass clear.

Second, name the treasure. When you are tempted to reduce someone to a function — coworker, opponent, customer, inconvenience — silently name what is sacred about them. Image-bearer. Breathing. Beloved. Someone's child. Someone Jesus died for. You cannot easily use what you have named as treasure.

*If your right eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. It is better to lose an eye than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

Matthew 5:27-30

Mirrors reflect desire.  
Windows reveal treasure.

The difference between a mirror and a window is thin. Just a coating. Just a layer. And the coating our culture has applied is subtle. It tells us to evaluate everything by usefulness. By productivity. By attractiveness. By advantage.

But Jesus stands in the middle of that hall of mirrors and speaks to our eyes. "You have heard it said..." And then he moves from behavior to vision. Because before we ever misuse someone with our hands, we have already mis-seen them with our hearts.

The invitation of the Kingdom is not repression. It is restoration. To see clearly. To see as God sees. To see treasure where we once saw tools. To see Thou where we once saw It.

To look at a world trained by mirrors and choose the window instead.

When you begin to see treasure everywhere, the world becomes radiant again. The earth becomes a gift. Neighbors become sacred. Enemies become human. The church becomes family. And even you — standing not in front of a mirror but before God — become more than your performance, your failure, your desire.

You become beloved. Mirrors reflect desire. But windows reveal treasure.

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](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

Series concept and substantial content created and shared by © The Rev. Jeremy Peters, Court Street United Methodist Church, 2026. Used with permission.

Additional content from: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. *The Little Prince*. Translated by Richard Howard. NY: Harper Collins, 2000.

There is a story in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry that may seem rather insignificant, but reminds us of what Jesus tells us to do. The Little Prince tends tiny volcanoes on his planet. He cleans them out regularly, not because they are dramatic, but because they are ordinary. If he neglects them, they grow unstable. If he tends them, they remain useful and warm.

Anger is something like that.

Most of us do not erupt into catastrophe. But small resentments, unattended irritations, rehearsed grievances — they accumulate. And what could have been warmth becomes volatility. Jesus is helping us avoid the eruption by inviting us to tend the interior life before pressure becomes destructive.

Pressure beneath the surface is part of being human. But an eruption is not inevitable. We belong to the One who blesses the burdened, steadies the angry, and calls us peacemakers. So let us tend what rises within us. Let us choose restraint over reaction. Repair over resentment. Dignity over dismissal.

And let us walk down this mountain together — not scorched by anger, but formed by grace.

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 a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending 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

Series concept and substantial content created and shared by © The Rev. Jeremy Peters, Court Street United Methodist Church, 2026. Used with permission.

Additional content from:  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.  
*The Little Prince*. Translated by Richard Howard. NY: Harper Collins, 2000.