

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 6

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MAY 3, 2026

Prayer (Pace)



As I was sitting at a traffic light on my way home the other day, I noticed the sign at the corner gas station. The price read \$4.95. I found myself looking twice, just to be sure I was seeing it correctly. Yep—regular unleaded.

It wasn't just the number. It was that moment of pause. The quiet realization that something had shifted again... and not in a

small way.

And I imagine I'm not the only one who has had that kind of moment recently. You see it at the pump. You feel it at the grocery store. You hear it in the conversations around you. Something isn't lining up the way it used to.

Page 2

Busy (Pace)



There are weeks when I find myself grumbling about things quite close to home: my busy schedule, too many doctors' appointments, my own struggles to slow down and pay attention. Most importantly, there are times when I feel like I'm missing out on the joy of what's going on around me.

And then there are weeks when the news from elsewhere feels so heavy that my personal challenges seem trivial in comparison... and I find myself going a little numb.

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That's what this past week has felt like.

Like trying to listen to a radio station with the signal cutting in and out. You hear one thing, then another, and they don't quite line up. You watch the headlines roll in—one story replacing another, one explanation competing with the next.

And maybe the most unsettling part isn't just what's happening. It's the not-so-subtle pressure to ignore what we can already see. To move on. To look somewhere else. To accept an explanation that doesn't quite match reality.

This isn't just noise like a crowded room. This is the kind of static that distracts, redirects, and dulls our attention until we're no longer sure what's true or what deserves our focus. Truth doesn't become less true just because we're told to look somewhere else.

When that goes on long enough, we don't just get confused—we get tired. We become reactive. We stop paying close attention. And eventually, we begin to accept things we would have questioned before.

Part of my calling—and part of the church's calling—is to keep paying attention. To refuse to look away from what is real. To keep the light shining on what matters. To speak truth, even when it's inconvenient. Not

to add to the noise, but to resist the distortion.

But here's the danger. If we spend all our energy reacting to the noise out there, we never learn how to quiet the noise in here. And if we lose that, we lose our ability to discern the voice that matters most.

We've been asking a simple question in this series: Why run when Jesus walked? But the truth is, most of us aren't just running—we're reacting, scrolling, absorbing, and responding—without ever becoming still.

That's why this matters. Silence, solitude, and prayer are not escapes from reality. They are how we return to reality with clarity. They are not disengagement. They are resistance to a world that is constantly trying to tell us what to think about, what to fear, and what to ignore.

If we cannot find silence, we will be shaped by the loudest voice in the room. And that is not just a problem out there. It is a formation problem within us.

At this point in the series, it's worth pausing to remember where we've been with our companion book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. The opening chapters name the problem plainly: hurry is not just a pace issue—it is a spiritual one. It erodes our attention, fragments our relationships, and quietly

pulls us away from the life Jesus invites us to live.

If hurry is the problem, then the answer cannot be more effort or better time management. It requires something deeper. It requires a different way of living.

This is where our companion book shifts from diagnosis to practice. Not abstract ideas, but embodied rhythms that reshape our lives: silence and solitude, Sabbath, simplicity, and slowing. These are not techniques for self-improvement. They are ways to create space—space to notice, to listen, and to be present to God and to one another.

And it begins here, with silence and solitude. Not because it is easy, but because it is foundational. Before anything else can be reordered, our attention has to be reclaimed.

Which brings us to Jesus.

The Apostle Mark shares a story about a time when everything began to accelerate for Jesus. The crowds are growing. The needs are real. The demands are urgent. By every measure, this is the moment to do more, to move faster, to respond to every opportunity in front of him. This is where most of us have learned to increase our pace to the point of running.

IN OUR PRAYERS

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



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux Norma Buzzard
 Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK: MAY 3-10

May 4	Mon	
May 5	Tue	9:00am-until gone Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		12Noon-6pm Cinco de Mayo Taco Tuesday (see pg. 21)
May 6	Wed	11am-1pm Angel Closet at SFSK (see pg 18)
May 7	Thu	
May 8	Fri	
May 9	Sat	
May 10	Sun	New Beginnings
		Contemporary Worship
		12Noon-6pm Soul Food Dinners in the
		Asbury Fellowship Hall (see flyer on pg. 23)

(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 "Pace"



When I visited the Holy Land several years ago, one of our guides said something that has stayed with me ever since. As we were moving from one historic site to another, he paused and asked our group a simple question: "Have you found yourself running where Jesus walked?"

It was an observation more than a criticism. Most pilgrims arrive in the Holy Land eager to see as much as possible in a limited amount of time. The result is that people often hurry from one sacred place to the next, rushing through the very landscapes where Jesus once moved slowly from village to village.

But the guide's question lingered with me long after the trip ended.

Why do we run where Jesus walked?

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Book Club News



Beginning with Easter, we start a new series, *Pace,* accompanied by a book that helps us pace ourselves in a

world that won't. Given the theme of our series, don't read this book if it

causes you to hurry more than you already are. That's the point.

If you pay attention to the pace of life around us, it often feels like everything is speeding up. News travels instantly. Messages arrive constantly. Work and responsibilities spill into evenings and weekends. Even our leisure time can feel hurried, as if we are trying to squeeze one more experience into a schedule already too full.

Many of us sense that something about this pace is unhealthy. We feel distracted more often than attentive. We feel rushed even when we are doing things we care about. And we sometimes find ourselves reacting quickly to the world around us rather than responding thoughtfully.

In other words, many of us are running, rather than walking. The problem, of course, is that life was never meant to be lived at a sprint. Human beings were created for rhythms of work and rest, attention and reflection, engagement and renewal. Yet modern culture seems determined to push us faster and faster.

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Upcoming Worship Series — “Pace”

The question feels especially relevant in today's world. Our lives are packed with schedules, deadlines, notifications, and responsibilities. We move swiftly from one task to the next, often feeling like we're always trying to catch up with something just out of reach.

Many of us experience life at a pace that would have been unimaginable in earlier generations. Information arrives instantly. Demands on our time follow us everywhere we go, through our phones and computers. Even moments meant for rest are easily filled with more activity.

It is not surprising that many people today describe themselves as tired, distracted, or overwhelmed.

Yet when we read the Gospels, we encounter a very different rhythm of life.
Jesus walks.

Jesus walked from town to town, speaking with people along the way. He stops when someone calls out to him. He pauses to notice those who are overlooked by others. He withdraws regularly to quiet places to pray. Even when crowds press around him with urgent needs, he does not seem driven by the same hurried pace that shapes so much of our modern experience.

Is it possible that Jesus knows something that we don't?

In the stories of the resurrection, that pattern continues. The risen Christ appears in unhurried moments—walking with two disciples along the road to Emmaus, speaking Mary's name in the garden, sharing breakfast with his friends by the shore.

These are not hurried encounters. They unfold slowly enough for recognition, conversation, and understanding.

Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

During the weeks from Easter to Pentecost this year, we explore what it might mean to rediscover that pace in our own lives. Each week, we will examine a Gospel story in which Jesus stops, listens, or withdraws from the pressures around him. Together, we will ask a simple question that will guide the entire series:

Upcoming Worship Series — “Pace”

Why run when Jesus walked?

This question is not meant to criticize the busy realities of modern life. Most of us carry responsibilities that cannot simply be set aside. But the question does invite us to reflect on the deeper rhythms that shape our days.

What happens to our relationships when we move through life too quickly?

What happens to our ability to listen—to God or to one another—when our attention is constantly divided? And what might change if we began to learn the slower, more attentive way of life that Jesus modeled?

To help us explore these questions more deeply, you’re invited to read *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer. The book explores how the pace of modern life affects our spiritual lives and introduces practices that can help people rediscover a healthier rhythm.

You do not need to read the book to follow the sermon series, but those who choose to do so may find that it adds another dimension to the conversation.

Easter celebrates the good news that death does not have the final word. But the resurrection also invites us into a new way of living—a way shaped not by fear, pressure, or constant urgency, but by the steady rhythm of love.

Perhaps the weeks ahead will give us an opportunity to slow down just enough to notice where Jesus is walking beside us. And perhaps we may discover that the most meaningful moments in life rarely happen at running speed.

From Easter to Pentecost, we will explore seven Gospel stories where Jesus either slowed down or stopped, and what happened at Pentecost that launched the first church:

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	April 5	Hurried	Luke 24:13–35
Two	April 12	Doubtful	John 20:24–29
Three	April 19	Unsure	Mark 10:46–52
Four	April 26	Busy	Luke 10:38–42
Five	May 3	Prayer	Mark 1:35–39
Six	May 10	Sabbath	Mark 2:23–28
Seven	May 17	Worry free	Matthew 6:25–34
Eight	May 24	Rhythms	Acts 2:1–13

Our journey runs from Easter to Pentecost.

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

Series concept and some content comes from: John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.



“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:

Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35–39

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Mark 1:35–39 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Prayer.
2. This week, set aside a few minutes each day and sit in silence. No phone. No noise. No agenda beyond being present. Let the quiet feel unfamiliar if it needs to.
3. Choose one simple prayer to return to when your mind begins to wander. It could be as simple as, "Speak, Lord, I'm listening," or "Here I am." Let it anchor you.
4. And pay attention. Notice what surfaces in the silence—not just around you, but within you. Not to judge it, but to become aware of it.
5. 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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That is why our next book club selection may feel especially timely.

Our companion book for our new series is *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, written by pastor and teacher John Mark Comer. The book takes a close look at the pressures of modern life and asks an uncomfortable but important question: What is hurry doing to our souls?

Comer begins with a striking observation that has resonated with many readers. Borrowing from the spiritual writer Dallas Willard, he notes that hurry may be the greatest enemy of spiritual life in our time. Not because we are doing bad things, but because we are doing too many things too quickly. When life moves at a relentless pace, it becomes difficult to pay attention to God, to other people, or even to our own inner lives.

If you have ever found yourself distracted during prayer, impatient with people you care about, or exhausted by the constant flow of information, you may already understand what Comer is describing. But the book is not simply a critique of modern life. Its deeper purpose is to explore how followers of Jesus might live differently.

Comer suggests that the life of Jesus offers a striking contrast to the hurried pace we experience today. In the Gospels, Jesus strolls through villages and along dusty roads at walking speed. He stops for conversations. He notices people others overlook. He withdraws regularly for prayer. And even when crowds gather around him with urgent needs, he refuses to be driven by the same frantic urgency that shapes so much of our world.

In other words, the life of Jesus moves at a different pace.

Comer invites readers to consider what it might look like to arrange our lives around that same rhythm. Drawing on both ancient Christian practices and modern insights about attention and distraction, he describes several habits that help people slow down and rediscover a deeper way of living. These practices include silence, Sabbath rest, simplicity, and intentional community—practices that have been part of Christian spirituality for centuries but are often neglected in the busyness of contemporary life.

What makes the book especially helpful is its practical tone. Comer is not writing as someone who has escaped the pressures of modern life. Instead, he writes as someone who has experienced those pressures personally and has been learning how to resist them. The result is a book that is both thoughtful and accessible, inviting readers to reflect honestly about their own lives.

John Mark Comer himself is part of a younger generation of Christian leaders who are thinking carefully about how faith is lived in a fast-moving, technologically saturated world. After many years serving as a pastor in Portland, Oregon, he now teaches and writes about spiritual formation—the process by which people gradually become more like Christ through the patterns and practices of everyday life.

His work resonates with many readers because it connects ancient Christian wisdom with the realities of modern experience. Rather than offering quick fixes or simplistic advice, Comer encourages readers to step back and ask deeper questions about the structure and pace of their lives.

Those questions are particularly meaningful for people of faith. Christians believe that following Jesus involves more than adopting certain beliefs. It also involves learning a way of life—a way that shapes how we use our time, how we treat other people, and how we pay attention to the presence of God.

Over eight weeks, we'll explore these ideas together. Each week, we will read a portion of the book, which will be reinforced in our Sunday teaching. The goal is not simply to finish the book, but to begin noticing how hurry influences our daily lives and to consider how the teachings and practices of Jesus might offer a healthier rhythm.

You do not need to read the entire book before joining the conversation. We will move through it gradually, one section at a time. Whether you have time to read every page or simply want to listen and share your thoughts, you are welcome.

In a culture that constantly urges us to move faster, taking time to read, reflect, and talk together may feel almost countercultural. But that may be exactly what makes the experience worthwhile.

After all, if the life of Jesus teaches us anything, it is that the most important things in life rarely happen at running speed.

Some of you may also be participating in the book study, starting after Easter, that explores our Methodist heritage through *Knowing Who We Are*. That study looks back at the theological foundations of the United Methodist tradition and how John Wesley and the early Methodists organized their lives around practices that helped people grow in faith.

Our reading of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* approaches this same concern from a different perspective. While the Wesleyan study examines the history and theology of those practices, Comer's book reflects on how similar rhythms can help us manage the pressures of modern life.

For those who choose to take part in both discussions, the two books will complement each other—one helping us understand where our traditions originate, and the other encouraging us to consider how those traditions might influence the pace and patterns of our lives today.

Here is a suggested reading schedule:

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Themes</u>
April 5	Prologue - Ch 1	Enemy of Spiritual Life
April 12	Ch 2	Enemy of Love
April 19	Ch 3	Hurry & Emotional Health
April 26	Ch 4	Hurry & Attention
May 3	Ch 5	Silence & Solitude
May 10	Ch 6	Sabbath
May 17	Chs 7-8	Simplicity
May 24	Chs 9-Epilogue	Slowing

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$12 each. Additional copies of the hardcover edition are available through Amazon for \$13, with a few used copies at slightly lower prices. The paperback edition is more expensive. 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.

Pastor Tommy

This has been one of those weeks. And they seem to be coming more often.

I've found myself wrestling with what I'm hearing in the world around me. In particular, I'm disturbed by hearing the name of Jesus spoken with confidence... used to explain decisions, justify actions, even defend harm. I hear faith language woven into conversations about war, about policy, about who belongs and who doesn't. And if I'm honest, there are moments when I feel unsettled, even grieved.

Because it's my calling and my job to know the teachings of Jesus. I know the way He moves toward people, especially the vulnerable. I know the clarity of His call to love—not in theory, but in practice. And yet, I also hear that same name used in ways that don't sound like Him at all.

Maybe you've felt that too. Not anger as much as confusion. Not certainty, but tension.

Trying to make sense of how the same faith that teaches us to love our enemies can also be used to justify actions that seem to ignore that very command.

And somewhere in the middle of that tension, this simple phrase came to me:

Don't blame Jesus.

Because whatever is happening around us—whatever is being said or done in His name—we need to be careful not to confuse that with Jesus Himself. This is not a new problem. It is just showing

up on a larger stage.

What I'm feeling is not just personal—it's something many of us are trying to navigate together. We are living in a moment where the name of Jesus is spoken often... but not always truthfully.

It shows up in conversations about war, where violence is explained as necessary, even faithful.

It shows up in discussions about immigration, where some lives seem to matter more than others. It shows up in how we talk about the world itself—what we use, what we protect, what we're willing to sacrifice.

And again, what makes this difficult is not the absence of faith. It's that faith is being used in ways that contradict the heart of the gospel.

Faith is being used to explain. Used to justify. Used to give confidence to decisions that are already in motion. And for many of us, that creates a kind of disorientation. Because we're not unfamiliar with Scripture. We're not new to the teachings of Jesus.

So when we hear His name connected to things that don't sound like Him...we're left asking: Am I missing something? Is this what faithfulness looks like? Is this really what Jesus would say?

How does someone reach a point where they place responsibility for harmful decisions on Jesus?

Harm that has lasting effects, destroys families, inflicts pain, and creates deep and lasting hatred. Before such decisions happen on a national stage, the patterns first show up much closer to home. We blame Jesus for everyday decisions.

It shows up anytime we feel certain about what needs to happen...anytime we feel justified in our position... anytime we find ourselves asking God to support what we already believe is right.

It shows up in the quiet ways we divide people into categories—right and wrong, in and out. It shows up in how quickly we move from concern to judgment. It shows up in how easily urgency takes over, and listening becomes secondary.

And before long, something subtle begins to happen. We are no longer listening for the voice of Jesus. We are speaking with confidence...assuming we already know what He would say.

And when that happens—whether in our personal lives or in the world around us—it becomes very easy to say things in the name of Jesus...that don't actually sound like Jesus at all.

Don't blame Jesus.

Luke shares a short, somewhat comical story about Lazarus' two sisters. However, like the rest of scripture, the story has layers that come alive as we dig in a little deeper.

Jesus comes by to visit. Martha welcomes Him and immediately gets to work. There are things to prepare, responsibilities to manage, and expectations to meet. She is doing what all good hosts do. Meanwhile, Mary, her sister, does something different. She sits at Jesus' feet and listens.

And as the story unfolds, the tension begins to rise—not in the room, but within Martha herself. What begins as service slowly becomes strain. What begins as care turns into frustration.

Unwilling to tolerate her sister's lack of attention to the job at hand, Martha takes her concern to Jesus. "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?" Martha blurts out. "Tell her to help me."

It's a human moment. An understandable moment. A moment most of us have been through. Neither Luke nor anyone else has the right to trash Martha. We all need Marthas in our lives, and we all need to be a Martha at times. But listen closely to what Martha is asking. Because Martha isn't asking Jesus what He wants. She is asking Jesus to take her side.

Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!

Luke 10:38-42

Tell her..." she demands. In that moment, Martha moves from listening to Jesus... to speaking for Him. She has decided what needs to happen—and now she is asking Jesus to confirm it.

And Jesus responds. But not with harshness. He responds with clarity: "Martha, Martha... you are worried and distracted by many things. But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus does not criticize Martha's desire to serve. He names what has taken over her attention. She is worried. She is distracted. She is pulled in many directions. And in her frenzied self, something good has begun to replace what is most important.

She is no longer centered on Jesus.

And that is the turning point of the story. Because this is how it happens. Not through rebellion. Not necessarily through bad intentions. Rather, it happens through a slow shift. A shift where urgency replaces attention...certainty replaces listening...and we begin to move ahead of Jesus.

And once that happens, something else follows just as quietly. We begin to act with confidence in what is right... and then ask Jesus to bless what we've already decided.

Don't blame Jesus.

Notice that Jesus never told Martha to take control of the room. Jesus never told her to demand

more from her sister. Jesus never told her that her urgency was more important than His presence.

And if we are going to use His name—if we are going to claim His authority—then we have to stay close enough of His voice to hear what He actually says.

Throughout Christian history, there have been attempts to wrestle honestly with difficult realities. Perhaps none more serious than the question of war. Humanity has wrestled with this question so often that a theory called "just war" emerged, which has resurfaced again as to why we have soldiers and war machinery prosecuting a war in the Nation of Iran.

However, "just war" was never meant to make violence easy to justify. It was meant to place limits on it. To slow things down. To ask hard questions. To protect the innocent wherever possible. Not to give us confidence in harm, but to make us cautious in the face of it.

Which means anytime faith is used to make harm sound simple... or necessary... or unquestionably right... We should pause.

And we should listen again.

The same is true when we hear people describe someone as being guided by an "Old Testament" mindset—as if that somehow explains or excuses behavior.

But for those who follow Jesus, we don't choose between parts of Scripture. Jesus is the clearest picture of who God is. Not instead of Scripture—but as the One who brings Scripture into focus. Which means we don't use Jesus to justify our way. We follow Jesus—even when it challenges our way. And that brings us back to Martha.

Because her story is not about choosing between work and stillness. It's about choosing whether we will remain close enough to Jesus to be shaped by Him...or move ahead of Him and ask Him to catch up with us.

Only one thing is needed. And it begins by listening. Instead, too often, we blame Jesus.

If Jesus is right—if only one thing is truly needed—then the invitation before us is not just to believe differently, but to live differently. Because the alternative to confusion is not certainty. The alternative is clarity rooted in presence.

In the story, Mary is not praised for choosing stillness over work. She is praised for choosing “what is better” because she stayed close enough to Jesus to be shaped by Him.

That's the vision. A life where we remain close enough to Jesus...that His voice becomes more familiar than all the others. A life where urgency does not get the final say. Where outrage does not form our instincts. Where we are not constantly reacting—but intentionally listening.

John Mark Comer, author of our companion book for this series, reminds us that hurry is not just about pace—it's about formation. We become what we give our attention to. And if our attention is constantly pulled toward noise, conflict, and urgency, we will slowly begin to mirror those same patterns—even in the way we talk about faith.

But if we give our attention to Jesus—consistently, intentionally, relationally—something else begins to take shape.

We become people who are not easily rushed into judgment. People who do not need to grasp for certainty. People who refuse to treat others as problems to solve or obstacles to remove. People who sound like Jesus... because we've spent time listening to Him.

And that kind of life doesn't just change us. It changes the way we move through the world. It creates communities that are slower to speak, quicker to listen, more careful with their words, and more grounded in love.

Communities that don't need to use Jesus to justify their way—because they are being shaped by His. That is the better part. And Jesus says it will not be taken away.

So what does this look like for us? What might we do differently this week? Not in theory. Not in abstraction. But in the real pace of our lives.

It begins simply. Before we speak in the name of Jesus...we make sure we've spent time listening to Him.

That might mean setting aside a few minutes each day—not to analyze, not to debate—but to sit with His words. To notice what He actually says. To let His voice become familiar again. It means paying attention to what is forming us. What voices are we listening to most? What patterns are shaping our reactions? What sources are feeding our sense of urgency, certainty, or fear?

And then, gently but intentionally, we begin to make space for something different. Space to slow down. Space to listen. Space to notice when we are moving ahead of Jesus instead of walking with Him.



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First-century Palestine was neither quiet nor simple. It was a land under the rule of the Roman Empire—an authoritarian system marked by power, control, and, at times, ruthless enforcement. Local rulers like Herod Antipas governed with their own interests in mind, maintaining order in ways that benefited themselves more than the people they led. Heavy taxes, economic strain, and a constant awareness that authority could be exercised quickly and with little recourse were present.

And it wasn't only political. The religious landscape was complex as well. Some leaders were deeply faithful, while others had become entangled with the very systems that burdened the people. For many ordinary men and women, the lines between truth and power could feel blurred.

People were seeing one thing... and often being told to believe something different.

They were navigating competing voices—political, religious, cultural—all claiming authority over their lives. In that sense, the world around Jesus was not nearly as distant from ours as we might like to think.

And into that world, Jesus did speak truth. He challenged hypocrisy. He named injustice. He refused to be controlled by either political pressure or religious expectation.

Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35-39

But what's striking is how He did it.

He did not become reactive. He did not allow the loudest voices to set his agenda. He did not lose himself in the urgency of every demand placed upon him.

Instead, he remained anchored.

Which brings us back to the story Mark wanted us to hear. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus gets up, leaves the house, and goes to a solitary place to pray.

Before the voices. Before the expectations. Before the noise. Jesus withdraws. Before the crowds could define His priorities and before the day's noise could take hold, Jesus stepped away. He sought silence. He embraced solitude. He prayed.

And it doesn't go unnoticed. The disciples go looking for him. When they find him, they say what all of us might be thinking:

"Everyone is searching for you." In other words, there are people waiting... there is work to be done... why are you out here? Perhaps they were worried Jesus was disengaging from the world.

Jesus' response reveals something deeper. He does not return in a hurry to meet every expectation. He moves forward with clarity. He knows where He is going, and just as importantly, where He is not.

What we see here is not avoidance. It is not disengagement. It is not indifference to the needs around him.

Taking time for solitude, silence, and prayer allowed Jesus to stay faithful in a world full of competing claims and constant pressure. Jesus wasn't tuning out. He was tuning in. Tuning into the truth that could not be drowned out.

Jesus steps away from the noise, not because the world doesn't matter, but because it does. In the quiet, he listens. In solitude, he is grounded. In prayer, he is anchored in the voice that matters most.

And from that place, he is able to move through a noisy, demanding world without being controlled by it.

This is where silence and solitude begin to make sense for us. Not as an escape from reality, but as a way of returning to it—clearer, steadier, and more faithful. Because if Jesus needed that kind of space... we probably do, too.

So what does life begin to look like when we make room for silence, solitude, and prayer? Not perfect. Not untouched by the world around us. But different.

We begin to notice what we were too hurried to see. Our reactions slow. Our attention steadies. We are less easily pulled in every direction by every headline, every opinion, every urgent demand. Instead of being shaped by the loudest voice in the room, we learn to listen more deeply for the truest one.

Clarity begins to replace confusion. Not because every question is answered, but because we are no longer trying to answer them all at once. We learn to discern what is ours to carry and what is not. We become more present—to God, to one another, and even to the realities of the world we are called to face.

There is also a quiet strength that begins to take root. The kind that does not need to react to everything immediately. The kind that can hold conviction without being consumed by it. The kind that allows us to stay engaged with what is real without being overwhelmed by it.

And perhaps most importantly, we begin to recover a sense of alignment. Like Jesus, we are no longer driven only by what is urgent. We are guided by what is true. We are able to move through a noisy, demanding world with a steadiness that does not come from us, but from the One we have learned to listen to.

This is not escape. It is formation. It is how we learn to stay faithful without tuning out.

So where do we begin?

Start small. Set aside a few minutes each day this week. You might try earlier than you normally would, if possible, and sit in silence. No phone. No noise. No agenda beyond being present. Let the quiet feel unfamiliar if it needs to.

Choose one simple prayer to return to when your mind begins to wander. It could be as simple as, "Speak, Lord, I'm listening," or "Here I am." Let it anchor you.

And pay attention. Notice what surfaces in the silence—not just around you, but within you. Not to judge it, but to become aware of it.

You don't have to withdraw from the world to do this. But you may need to step away long enough to hear clearly again. Because if we cannot find silence, we will be shaped by the loudest voice in the room.

But if we learn to be still... we may begin to hear the voice that has been there all along.

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, 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

Some content comes from John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.

COME CELEBRATE CINCO DE MAYO—AND JOIN US THE REST OF MAY FOR TACO TUESDAYS!!



African Drum & Dance Parent Association
presents a fundraiser
In celebration of **Cinco de Mayo, May 5**

TACO TUESDAY
Noon to 6 PM
Asbury UMC, 1653 Davison Road, Flint 48506

Tacos, Tamales, Burritos, Nachos, Salad and more

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African Drum and Dance Parent Association presents

Taco Tuesday Fundraiser

May 12, 19 & 26
Noon to 6 PM
Asbury UMC, 1653 Davison Rd., Flint

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AFRICAN DRUM AND DANCE PARENT ASSOCIATION
WILL COOK FOR YOU ON MOTHER'S DAY!!

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**African Drum and Dance
Parent Association presents:**

SOUL FOOD SUNDAY, MOTHER'S DAY EVENT

Sunday, May 10, 2026
12 Noon to 6 PM
Asbury UMC, 1653 Davison Rd., Flint 48506

Menu

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Dinners include choice of meat, dressing & 2 sides	
MEATS:	DESSERTS:
Baked Chicken	Cake (7 up Pound, Strawberry & Chocolate)
 Fried Chicken	 Peach Cobbler
 Ribs	 German Chocolate Cake \$4
 Ham	
 Turkey Knuckles	
SIDES:	
Dressing	
Mac n Cheese	
Greens	
Cabbage	
Green Beans	
Candied Yams	
Red Beans & Rice	
Baked Beans	
Potato Salad	
Corn Bread	

Call ahead 810-394-3880 or 810-394-6521
Or drop in and pick up your dinner

Happy Mother's Day 

It also means holding our convictions with humility. Not abandoning what we believe—but remaining open enough to ask, again and again: Does this sound like Jesus? Does this reflect the way He treats people? Does this align with His call to love—even when it's difficult?

And when we find ourselves drifting—when we feel the pull of urgency, frustration, or certainty—we return. Not with guilt. Not with shame. But with the simple invitation Jesus offers to Martha: Come back. Sit down. Listen again.

Because in a world full of noise, full of confident voices speaking in His name, our calling is not to keep up. Our calling is to stay close.

Listen to Him. Don't blame Jesus for the decisions we make that are counter to His teachings.

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Fresh Ways for Flint Christians to Boost Everyday Mental Wellness

Flint-area church members, caregivers, and working adults often carry everyday mental health challenges that don't show up in Sunday smiles, ongoing stress, loneliness, grief, and the tiredness that makes prayer and relationships feel harder. The tension is real: faith is sincere, yet emotions can still feel stuck, and many people aren't sure what “help” should look like without drifting from what they believe. Christian mental wellness and faith-based emotional health make room for both honesty and action, drawing strength from Christian community support and steady, simple spiritual wellness practices. This kind of care can make daily life feel more grounded and less heavy.

Quick Summary and Key Takeaways:

- * Connect faith and mental health by choosing one fresh, outside the box self care practice.
- * Support emotional wellbeing by trying a Christian oriented strategy you can start this week.
- * Strengthen daily mental wellness by exploring multiple unique ideas instead of relying on one routine.
- * Build healthier habits by focusing on practical actions that fit everyday life and faith values.

Try Low-Risk Stress-Soothers Beyond the Usual

Those quick ideas can be even more doable when you have a few gentle tools for calming your body in the moment. Safe, alternative stress-soothers to explore (alongside prayer, community, and healthy routines) include acupuncture, aromatherapy, [kava supplements](#), and THCa. If you're curious about THCa isolate options, [click here to learn more](#). Remember to treat it like any new wellness support: start small and pay attention to how you feel. Next, it helps to see why “unconventional” practices can still fit Christian values and support emotional health.

Understanding Holistic Faith Integration

At the heart of faith-based wellness is this idea: your walk with Christ is the base layer of how you think, cope, and choose. The phrase [faith as foundational](#) helps explain why creative habits can support emotional health without replacing prayer or Scripture. Discernment means you test practices by their fruit, your conscience, and wise counsel.

This matters because stress often shows up as irritability, numbness, or isolation, not just “bad moods.” A steady spiritual core makes it easier to use helpful tools without drifting into fear, superstition, or self-reliance.

Think of creativity like a trellis for your mind. A short journaling prayer, sketching, or music after a hard day gives feelings a safe place to land, while [research on faith and mental health](#) points to real links between belief and wellbeing. With that foundation, practical next-step routines and community-centered ideas become much easier to choose.

Put it into Practice: 9 Creative Rituals for Everyday Resilience

Small, faith-shaped habits can steady your mind the same way daily bread steadies your body, consistently and quietly. Try a few of these creative mental wellness practices, keep what helps, and let the rest go without guilt.

1. **Start a 3-Minute “Breathe the Psalm” reset:** Pick one short verse (Psalm 23:1 or Psalm 46:1 works well). Inhale while you silently pray the first half, exhale with the second half, repeating for 10 slow breaths. This anchors your nervous system and your attention at the same time, turning a stressful moment into a faith-compatible mental health strategy you can use anywhere.
2. **Use a “Gratitude + Need” prayer card at breakfast:** On an index card, write two prompts: “Thank You for...” and “Help me with...”. Each morning, fill in one line for each prompt, then pray it out loud in under a minute. Simple daily Christian mental health practices like gratitude prayer build emotional balance because they hold joy and honesty together.
3. **Try a “thought replacement” script when anxiety spikes:** Write a two-sentence script you can reuse: “I’m noticing I’m telling myself _____. Lord, lead me into what is true: _____.” Keep it in your notes or wallet and read it when you feel the spiral start. This is a practical way to pair discernment with gentleness, naming the thought without shaming yourself.
4. **Create a one-sentence “rule of life” for your week:** Choose one spiritual practice, one body practice, and one relationship practice, each small (example: “Scripture at lunch, 10-minute walk after dinner, one check-in text daily”). Put it on your fridge and review it every Sunday night. Holistic faith integration is easier when your ideals have a realistic schedule.
5. **Do a “forgiveness scan” before bed:** Set a 4-minute timer. Ask: “Who am I still holding tight in my chest?” Name the person, release them to God, and choose one next step: pray, set a boundary, or have a clarifying conversation. This becomes a daily emotional health ritual that helps you sleep without carrying tomorrow’s weight.
6. **Build a 2-person “same pew” support loop:** Ask one trusted friend from church to trade one voice note each week: “One win, one worry, one prayer request.” Keep it brief and consistent, not intense. Community-focused wellbeing often starts with one safe relationship where you can be fully human.
7. **Practice a “micro-serve” habit once a week:** Choose one small act of service you can do in 15–30 minutes, drop off a meal, write a note to someone homebound, help stock a pantry shelf, or pick up litter on your block. Serving turns rumination into purpose and connects your faith to your neighborhood around Flint in a grounded way.
8. **Make your home a “peace cue” space with one object:** Pick one item, a candle, a cross, a smooth stone, and assign it a meaning: “When I see this, I breathe and remember God is with me.” Place it where stress hits first: by the keys, the sink, or your bedside. This is a unique self-care method for Christians because it uses the environment to support spiritual attention.
9. **Speak one sentence of life where you’ll see it all week:** Write a short, specific line you actually need, “God gives me wisdom for today,” or “I can take the next right step”, and put it on your mirror, dashboard, or laptop. When your words are visible, your mind has something true to return to on hard days.

Choose two rituals to start this week, one private, one community-facing, and let consistency do the heavy lifting. A few well-paced, faith-filled words around your home or church can also become a steady source of strength all week long.

Design Encouragement Posters That Speak Life All Week

Try designing and putting up posters with affirmations that motivate and uplift, phrases that speak hope, courage, and steady faith, and place them where you'll actually see them: at home, at church, or in community spaces. If you want a quick way to bring your ideas to life, you can use a [printable poster maker](#) to help build your design. Choose from ready-made templates, then personalize them with graphic designs and typography options, and set them up for easy printing.

Questions Christians Ask About Stress and Wellness

Q: How can engaging in community service or volunteering support mental health from a Christian perspective?

A: Serving shifts attention from rumination to purpose, which can lighten stress and build hope through connection. Choose one sustainable role, like a monthly pantry shift or prayer team support, and set boundaries so you do not overextend.

Q: In what ways can nature-related activities, like forest bathing or birdwatching, enhance a Christian's spiritual and emotional well-being?

A: A slow walk with "noticing prayers" can calm the body and widen perspective, turning creation into a cue for worship. Try 20 minutes outside, phone away, and end by naming three gifts you received.

Q: How can creative outlets such as art or music therapy align with Christian practices to improve mental health?

A: Pair creativity with devotion by sketching a psalm image, writing a lament, or building a worship playlist that matches your current mood and your hopes for comfort. If strong emotions surface, pause, pray, and consider processing them with a pastor or therapist.

Q: If I want to create inspirational posters or faith-based reminders to support my mental wellness journey, what tools can help me design professional-looking materials easily?

A: Look for a beginner-friendly poster design tool with templates, clear font pairing, simple color controls, and easy export for print and sharing, such as a [poster design tool](#). Start with one short Scripture or affirmation, then test readability from a few feet away.

Build a Steady Faith Rhythm for Everyday Mental Wellness

Stress, uncertainty, and responsibility can pile up fast, and it's easy to feel guilty for needing support. A steady approach, prayerful reflection paired with practical follow-through and Christian community, creates a faith-rooted mental health journey that doesn't depend on perfect weeks. Over time, spiritual mental health practices and practical faith-based support can strengthen Christian resilience building and make empowering mental wellness feel more doable day by day. Start small, stay honest, and let grace guide the next step.