

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER



Volume 6

Issue 31

MAY 31, 2026

Us (Truth)



Our companion book for this series is Walter Isaacson's *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*.

At first glance, his title sounds like an overstatement. After all, the Declaration of Independence is a key document that has helped

shape our nation's history. Yet, our author chooses to focus on a single sentence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."

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Rhythms (Pace)



I suspect that every parent eventually deals with the question of focus versus shared attention. I can still remember arguing with my parents about homework. They wanted the television off. I insisted I could multitask. "I can do both," I insisted, "I can keep one eye on my homework and one eye on the TV."

Looking back...I'm pretty sure I was learning neither math nor life particularly well. My parents understood something I didn't understand yet: shared attention usually weakens both things.

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In his book, Isaacson shows how extraordinary those words really are. He slows down long enough to examine each phrase, each choice, and each individual word. He explores how differently the sentence could have been written, and how the meaning of our nation might have changed if it had been.

That approach matters because words matter. A single word can widen the circle of human dignity. A single word can narrow it. A single phrase can unite a people around shared truth. Or it can divide neighbors into tribes competing for power.

One of the most important words surrounding that sentence is not actually found inside it. It appears just before it: "We." Or perhaps more simply: "Us." Who belongs inside that word? Who gets protected by it? Who gets excluded from it? And what happens to a democracy — or a church — when the definition of "us" becomes smaller and smaller?

After all, we're living in a moment when the meaning of "us" is shrinking. More and more, "us" seems to mean the powerful. The wealthy. The connected. The protected.

And everyone else is expected to fight for whatever scraps remain.

Immigrants are treated as threats rather than neighbors. Diversity is framed as a problem to solve rather than a strength to embrace. Compassion is mocked as a weakness. Inclusion is ridiculed as "wokeness," as though not all of us matter. And now, faith itself is increasingly used not to widen the circle of human dignity... but to narrow it.

But the danger goes deeper than harsh language or political division. The real danger begins when a society slowly forgets who belongs inside the word "us." Because once "us" becomes smaller, democracy becomes weaker.

That is why voting matters. Voting is not simply a political act. It is a declaration of belonging. Every ballot says: "My voice matters." "My community matters." "I am part of us."

But the U.S. has never naturally lived up to those ideals. For much of our history, voting rights were reserved mostly for white men with power and property. Women were excluded. Black Americans were terrorized, blocked, and systematically denied equal access to the ballot. This was done by creating obstacles to voting, including poll taxes, literacy tests, intimidation, and even violence.

Even after the Civil War...even after the Constitution guaranteed equal protection...many states worked tirelessly to keep parts of "us" from having a real voice.

This is why the Voting Rights Act of 1965 mattered so much. It was one of the great moral achievements of our nation. It recognized something essential: democracy cannot survive if some voices are protected while others are suppressed.

The Act created safeguards for communities with long histories of discrimination. States with repeated abuses could no longer change voting laws without federal review. In other words, the nation finally admitted that equality on paper was not enough.

But over the past decade, many of those protections have been steadily dismantled. It began with *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013, when the Supreme Court weakened key enforcement provisions of the Voting Rights Act. Subsequent decisions continued narrowing the protections that generations fought and bled to secure.

And the result is predictable. Trust erodes. Participation declines. Communities begin to wonder whether their voices still matter equally.

And once people stop believing they belong... "us" begins to fall apart. Because democracy depends on more than laws. It depends on a shared belief that we belong to one another. That your voice matters to me. And mine matters to you. That no group is disposable. No neighbor is invisible. No person is outside the circle of human dignity.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger

Sylvia Pittman

Mirium Watson

Paula Gamble

Richard Oram

Jonathon Misner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK: MAY 31 — JUNE 7

June 1 Mon

June 2 Tue 9:00am–until gone Produce will be available each
week, along with canned goods, until further notice

12Noon–6pm Taco Tuesday (see flyer pg. 25)

June 3 Wed 11am–1pm Angel Closet at South Flint Soup Kitchen

June 4 Thu

June 5 Fri

June 6 Sat

June 7 Sun 10:30am New Beginnings

Contemporary Worship

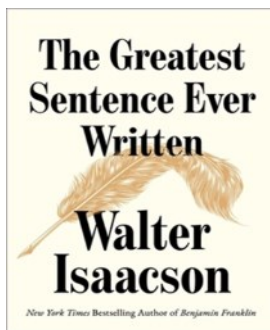
(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these
Links along with more information about us on our website at ([FlintAsbury.org](#)).



Upcoming Worship Series "Truth"



Book Club News



As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, our attention is already filling with arguments about history, patriotism, politics, identity, and

the meaning of America itself. Some voices will insist that the story of our nation is simple. Others will insist it is

hopelessly broken. Most of us, meanwhile, are left trying to make sense of the noise and wondering whom to believe.

We begin our summer at Asbury with a new worship series called *Truth*.

Each week, we will explore questions that sit at the center of both faith and public life. Along the way, we'll also look at what happens when truth becomes flexible. The reality is that when truth bends, trust breaks.

To accompany our series, our Book Club will be reading *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written* by Walter Isaacson.

Many readers know Isaacson through his bestselling biographies of figures such as Leonardo da Vinci, Steve Jobs, and Benjamin Franklin. In this recent work, however, Isaacson turns his attention to a single sentence from the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..."

Rather than treating the sentence as untouchable mythology, Isaacson explores both its brilliance and its contradictions. He examines how those words emerged, why they mattered, and how generation after generation has struggled to live up to them.

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Asbury Staff



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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
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	South Flint Soup Kitchen

Leadership in Worship & Service



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Cyndi	Worship Leader
Anthony & Jim	Ushers
Jonathon & Terrance	Production Team
Yasheah & Mirium	Nursery
Christine	Cafe

Upcoming Worship Series — “Truth”

The bending of the truth for personal gain by those in authority is not new. The prophet Isaiah described a similar moment long ago: “Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place” (Isaiah 59:14).

This summer at Asbury, we invite you to join us for a new worship series called *Truth*. Over six weeks, we will explore some of the deepest questions facing our nation, our communities, and our faith:

What happens when people stop trusting one another?

What does Scripture say about truth in an age of manipulation and outrage?

What becomes of a society that proclaims equality while practicing exclusion?

What could happen if we allow Christian nationalism to replace neighborly love?

How do followers of Jesus remain faithful when political movements demand unquestioning loyalty?

This series is inspired in part by Walter Isaacson's latest book, *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. In his book, Isaacson reflects on the enduring and often controversial words of the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...”

Those words have inspired generations. They have also been ignored, distorted, and denied throughout much of our history. And “these truths” are, once again, under attack. This tension is not new.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, a political leader more concerned with preserving power than pursuing truth, Jesus declared that He came to speak about truth. And Pilate responded with a question that still echoes today: “What is truth?” (John 18:37-38).

We continue to live with the consequences of that question.

What is new is how openly deception, grievance, and the pursuit of power have begun reshaping public life — often with religious language wrapped around them. The result is a culture that is growing more cynical, more divided, and less capable of recognizing the truth when it appears.

When truth bends, trust breaks.

And when trust breaks, communities fracture. Democracies weaken. Churches lose credibility. Human beings made in the image of God become easier to dismiss, fear, or dehumanize.

Yet Scripture points us toward another way.

Upcoming Worship Series — “Truth”

No more lies, then! Each of must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:25

The prophet Zechariah writes: “Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace” (Zechariah 8:16).

And perhaps that work begins with a simple but difficult commitment: “No more lies, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body

of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:25).

Scripture calls people of faith in another direction.

Jesus did not call his followers to dominate culture. He called them to embody truth through humility, courage, mercy, justice, repentance, and love of neighbor. In a world filled with noise, distortion, and outrage, Christians are called to become trustworthy people again.

This series will not ask whether America was ever perfect. It wasn't. Nor will it pretend our divisions are simple.

Instead, we will ask harder questions: What truths are worth holding onto? What kind of people are we becoming? And what does faithfulness require from us now? We hope you will join us this summer for *Truth*.

From the Sunday following Memorial Day until the Sunday after our celebration of 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we'll celebrate our mutual anniversary by looking at the truth of what is arguably the “greatest sentence ever written.”

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	May 31	Us	1 Corinthians 12:12–27
Two	June 7	Evident	John 18:37–38
Three	June 14	Equal	James 2:1–9
Four	June 21	Dignity	Acts 17:22–28
Five	June 28	Pursuit	John 10:10
Six	July 5	Together	Ephesians 2:14–22

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

*The series concept and some content come from: Walter Isaacson. *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2025.*



“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:

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. If one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:12–27

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Us.
2. This week, challenge yourself to resist shrinking "us" in practical ways. Listen to voices different from your own without immediately dismissing them. Refuse language that dehumanizes people, even when it comes from leaders or commentators you agree with. Pay attention to who is being excluded, ignored, mocked, or treated as disposable.
3. And exercise your right to participate in the life of the community — including voting — not merely as a political act, but as an act of responsibility toward the common good.
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.



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The book does not ask readers to worship the founders. It asks us to wrestle honestly with the ideals they claimed.

That is precisely why it makes such a meaningful companion for this series.

As Christians, we believe truth is more than a slogan, a political strategy, or a social media weapon. In Scripture, truth is connected to faithfulness, integrity, justice, mercy, and trustworthiness. Truth shapes relationships. Truth shapes communities. Truth shapes whether people can live together at all. But when truth bends, trust breaks.

Over these six weeks, we will explore themes such as shared humanity, equality, dignity, liberty, and the common good. Along the way, we will ask difficult but important questions: What truths still hold us together? What happens when trust collapses? And what does it mean for followers of Jesus to live truthfully in a world filled with distortion, outrage, and fear?

You do not need to agree with every conclusion in the book to participate. In fact, thoughtful disagreement is part of the point. Our hope is not simply to revisit American history, but to reflect together on the moral and spiritual values necessary for any community to flourish. We hope you'll join us this summer for *Truth*.

Here is a suggested reading schedule:

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Chapter(s)</u>
May 31	We
June 7	Self-Evident Truths
June 14	All Men & Created Equal
June 21	Endowed by Their Creator
June 28	Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness
July 5	Common Ground & Going Forward

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$11 each. Additional copies of the hardcover edition are available through Amazon for \$11.64. It appears that this book isn't available in paperback. It may be too new for this book to be available at the local library, but it's worth asking.

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

Walter Isaacson. *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2025.

Years later, in college, three friends and I made a deal. Every Friday afternoon, we went to the library. We stayed there until all our assignments were finished for Monday. Sometimes we stayed until evening. But once the work was done...we were free.

We had discovered something important: focus creates freedom. There is sound science behind our discovery.

Researchers now tell us something many of us suspected long before studies confirmed it: human beings are not especially good at multitasking. What we often call "multitasking" is usually rapid task-switching. Our brains bounce from one demand to another, attempting to keep up with competing priorities. Every switch costs us something — attention, energy, clarity, and peace.

When I was in graduate school studying computer science, I worked on developing a new operating system. Ironically, my assignment involved coding part of the multitasking function. Most people imagine computers doing many things simultaneously. But that was before parallel processing, so computers handled one task at a time. Fortunately, the central processor switched tasks so quickly

that it created the illusion of simultaneous activity. Yet every switch required work. The system had to store the current context, load the next context, redirect attention, and repeat the process again and again.

Computers became incredibly fast at task-switching. Humans did not.

And yet modern life demands more switching from us than ever before. Notifications interrupt conversations. Headlines interrupt thoughts. Fear interrupts prayer. Breaking news interrupts rest. We move from text messages to emails, from social media to television, from one crisis to another, without ever fully processing what came before.

The average person is bombarded with more information in a single day than previous generations encountered in weeks. Much of that information arrives emotionally charged — urgent, angry, fearful, and designed to provoke an immediate reaction rather than thoughtful reflection. Even journalists whose full-time job is following current events admit they cannot keep up with the constant flood of developments. Before one crisis can be investigated, another one appears, demanding attention.

After awhile, the chaos begins shaping us.

Not because we agree with what is happening around us, but because constant fragmentation changes the human spirit. It becomes harder to think clearly, harder to listen carefully, harder to pray deeply, harder to love generously, and harder to remain hopeful. Perhaps most dangerously, it becomes harder to distinguish noise from truth. The world scatters.

This is not just a political problem or a technological problem. It is a moral and spiritual problem.

There is a difference between necessary responsibility and destructive fragmentation. Parents raising children understand this well. Nurses, teachers, caregivers, and pastors understand it too. Some responsibilities naturally overlap because life itself is complicated. The problem is not responsibility. The problem is becoming internally divided — pulled in so many directions that we lose the ability to become fully present anywhere.

Some moments require undivided attention. A grieving friend. A child sharing something important. Worship. Prayer. Communion. Discernment. Love. These moments cannot thrive under divided attention.

Perhaps the greatest danger of constant distraction is not

merely exhaustion. Perhaps the greater danger is spiritual unavailability.

Scripture consistently describes the Holy Spirit as a gift. And gifts must be received. Not forced. Not earned. Received. But receiving requires some degree of attentiveness. If our minds and hearts are endlessly fragmented, we may still hear noise all around us while missing the invitation hidden within it.

Which makes the story of Pentecost far more relevant than we often realize.

The story of Pentecost in Acts is one of the strangest and most beautiful moments in scripture. Luke tells us that the followers of Jesus were gathered together when suddenly a sound “like the blowing of a violent wind” filled the house. Then came what appeared to be “tongues of fire” resting on each person present. They began speaking in different languages as crowds from all over the known world gathered in amazement and confusion. Some were astonished. Others were skeptical. A few dismissed the entire scene by accusing the disciples of being drunk.

At first glance, Pentecost feels chaotic. Voices overlap. Languages collide. Fire appears. Crowds gather in confusion. It hardly resembles the quiet, orderly worship services many of us have come to expect in church.

But perhaps that is exactly the point.

Pentecost is not the Holy Spirit creating chaos. Pentecost is the Holy Spirit transforming chaos into shared understanding. The miracle is not simply that people spoke. The deeper miracle is that people understood one another. People from different regions, cultures, and languages suddenly found themselves hearing the same message clearly. In a world divided by geography, politics, economics, fear, and identity, the Holy Spirit gathered scattered people into a shared experience of grace.

Scripture consistently describes the Spirit this way.

In Genesis, creation begins in chaos. The earth is described as formless and empty while darkness covers the deep waters. Yet the Spirit of God hovers over the chaos, and from that disorder God begins creating rhythm, beauty, life, and order. The world scatters. The Spirit gathers. The Spirit creates. The Spirit restores. The Spirit brings life where fragmentation once ruled.

That same pattern appears again at Pentecost.

Before the Spirit creates harmony, the moment itself appears overwhelming and disorienting. From the outside, the scene looks noisy and confusing. Yet underneath the noise, God is forming a new community. The Spirit is gathering people who had been separately by language, fear, and suspicion into one body.

We are living in a fragmented age. Families struggle to listen to one another. Communities divide easily. Outrage has become a political strategy. Social media rewards reaction instead of reflection. Many of us consume so much noise every day that we no longer know how to sit quietly long enough to hear anything clearly. And yet the Holy Spirit still gathers.

The Spirit gathers our scattered attention. The Spirit gathers wounded communities. The Spirit gathers anxious hearts. The Spirit gathers people who have forgotten how to listen.

This is why scripture connects the Spirit with peace, wisdom, discernment, unity, and love. The work of the Spirit does not end in fragmentation. The Spirit brings reconciliation and restoration.

That does not mean the Spirit removes passion, energy, or conviction. And it certainly doesn't remove diversity. Pentecost itself is loud, emotional, and disruptive. But there is a difference between holy disruption and destructive chaos. One scatters people apart. The other gathers people together around truth, grace, and love.

The disciples were not multitasking their way into Pentecost. They were gathered together, waiting, praying, attentive, and open to receive what God was giving.

Perhaps that matters more than we realize.

Since the Holy Spirit is a gift, like all gifts, the Spirit must be received. Not forced. Not earned. Received. But receiving requires attentiveness. If our lives are endlessly fragmented, we may still hear the noise surrounding Pentecost while missing the invitation hidden within it.

Maybe that is why the Spirit so often speaks in moments of gathered attention — prayer, worship, silence, communion, listening, rest, and community. These are the moments when the noise begins to settle enough for truth to be heard again.

Pentecost reminds us that God gathers what the world scatters. Imagine what might happen if the church became one of the few remaining places in society where people were fully present.

Not perfect. Not uniform. Not always in agreement. But present. Listening deeply instead of reacting instantly. Learning to discern instead of simply consuming outrage. Refusing to let fear and fragmentation shape the human spirit.

That vision sits at the heart of Pentecost.

The miracle of Pentecost is not that everyone suddenly became the same. Different languages remained. Different cultures remained. Different perspectives remained. Yet somehow the Holy Spirit created understanding instead of division.

Human empires often demand sameness. The Holy Spirit creates unity without destroying uniqueness.

That truth continued throughout the life of the early church. The Apostle Paul later described the church as one body with many parts, empowered by the same Spirit but gifted in different ways. Diversity was not a problem for the early church to eliminate. Diversity became evidence of the Spirit's creative work among the people.

Amazed and confused, they kept asking each other, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:1-13

The Holy Spirit consistently breaks down rigid barriers that human beings build to separate themselves from one another.

Years ago, one of my seminary professors shared a quote I have never forgotten: "The Holy Spirit is the force that removes the bolts holding down the pews." I have always loved that image because the Spirit does disrupt things.

The Spirit disrupts injustice. It disrupts racism. The Spirit disrupts oppression. Pentecost certainly disrupted things. But there is a difference between holy disruption and destructive chaos.

Destructive chaos scatters people apart.

Holy disruption gathers people toward deeper truth, deeper compassion, deeper courage, and deeper community.

When Jesus teaches us to love our enemies, welcome strangers, forgive freely, and care for those society overlooks. He is not asking us to violate the design of creation. He is teaching us how creation itself was meant to flourish. The Spirit does not fear diversity. The Spirit organizes diversity into community. The fruits of the Holy Spirit include diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Perhaps that is why Pentecost still feels so relevant today. We are surrounded by systems that profit from outrage, fear, division, and constant distraction. Entire industries compete for our attention because attention has become one of the world's most valuable resources. But the Spirit calls us toward another rhythm — one shaped by attentiveness, reconciliation, wisdom, compassion, and shared humanity.

Imagine a church where people gave one another their full attention. Imagine conversations where listening mattered more than winning. Imagine families reclaiming meals without screens. Imagine worship becoming a place where exhausted people could finally breathe again. Imagine communities where strangers are treated as neighbors instead of threats.

Imagine people learning once again how to sit quietly long enough to hear the voice of God beneath all the noise.

That kind of life may appear strange in a fragmented world. Then again, the first Pentecost looked strange too.

At the end of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer offers practical suggestions for slowing down and recovering healthier spiritual rhythms. That matters because rhythms are rarely formed accidentally. The patterns shaping our lives are usually the patterns we repeatedly practice.

Most of us cannot simply walk away from work, family responsibilities, technology, or the realities of modern life. Nor should we romanticize some imaginary past that never truly existed. The goal is not abandoning responsibility. The goal is learning how to live with greater attentiveness and less fragmentation. Perhaps that begins with small choices.

Turning off notifications for a period of time each day. Driving somewhere without constant noise in the background. Sharing a meal without screens. Praying before opening social media. Giving another person undivided attention during a conversation. Allowing silence to exist without immediately trying to fill it.

Practicing Sabbath rest.

Learning once again how to become fully present in the moment we are actually living. These practices may seem small, but small rhythms shape human lives over time.

The disciples did not multitask their way into Pentecost. They gathered together. They waited. They prayed. They became attentive enough to receive what God was giving.

Perhaps the same invitation still exists for us today.

The world around us constantly pulls our attention in a thousand different directions. Fear scatters. Outrage scatters. Anxiety scatters. Endless distraction scatters. But the Holy Spirit gathers. The Spirit gathers scattered hearts. The Spirit gathers divided communities. The Spirit gathers wounded people. The Spirit gathers our attention back toward truth, compassion, wisdom, and love.

Pentecost reminds us that God still gives the Spirit freely. The question is whether we are present enough to receive it. God gathers what the world scatters.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's](#) homepage. [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to our [YouTube channel](#). You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsburyChurch.org.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com, or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

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



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The struggle to widen the meaning of “us” is not merely a political issue. It is deeply biblical. From the very beginning of scripture, God repeatedly moves toward those without power.

Again and again, the story of the Old Testament reveals a God who hears the cries of oppressed people, intervenes on behalf of the vulnerable, and calls nations to account for how they treat those pushed to the margins. The laws given to Israel repeatedly protected the poor, the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan. They represented anyone who could easily be excluded from the community’s concern.

Years ago, during a Bible study, an elderly church member asked me a thoughtful question. She noticed how often scripture focused on the poor, the vulnerable, and those without power. Finally she asked, “Does God only favor the poor?”

I told her no. God loves all people equally. And I believe this with all my heart.

But throughout scripture, God continually moves toward those who are hurting, excluded, forgotten, or lacking protection because God desires a community where people care for one another rather than exploit one another.

That is not favoritism. That is love repairing what human selfishness breaks.

God’s vision for society was never built around protecting the privilege of a few. It was built around justice, mercy, shared responsibility, and human dignity.

That same vision continued through the ministry of Jesus. Jesus constantly widened the circle. He crossed social boundaries. He touched those considered unclean. He welcomed outsiders. He elevated women. He ate with sinners. He told stories where foreigners became heroes and religious insiders missed the point entirely.

Again and again, Jesus challenged systems that concentrated power while excluding people from belonging.

That is what made moments like the Voting Rights Act so important in our nation’s history. However imperfectly, it represented an attempt to widen the circle of participation and strengthen the common good. It acknowledged that democracy only works when every voice matters. That no group should be pushed to the margins. That “We the People” must truly mean all the people.

And it is precisely here that Paul speaks to the church in Corinth.

Corinth was a divided city shaped by status, wealth, hierarchy, and competition. People were valued based on what they possessed, who they knew, and where they stood in society. Even the church had begun reflecting those same divisions. Some Christians

considered themselves more important than others. Certain spiritual gifts were elevated above others. Wealthier members received honor while poorer members were overlooked.

Into that fractured community, Paul offers one of the most radical visions found anywhere in scripture: “The body does not consist of one member but of many.” Paul compared the church to the human body. Every part is different. Every part serves a different purpose. Every part depends on the others in order to live.

Paul reminds us that our eye cannot say to our hand, “I don’t need you.” Nor can our head say to our feet, “You do not belong.”

And those parts of our body that society is most tempted to dismiss, Paul says, are indispensable. Did you catch the word that is often used to interpret the Greek word Paul uses in his letter? Different Bible translations use slightly different words here. Some say “necessary.” Others say “indispensable.” But they are all reaching for the same truth: the people society is most tempted to overlook are not optional to the health of the community.

Because that word matters: Indispensable. Not tolerated. Not permitted. Not merely accepted. But needed.

Paul’s vision leaves no room for human hierarchies that rank people according to wealth, race, nationality, political influence, social status, or usefulness. Every person bears dignity because every person belongs within the body.

This is not simply a lesson about church unity. It is a declaration about how God sees humanity itself. The world constantly teaches us to ask: Who matters most? Who deserves power? Who belongs? Who can be ignored?

If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. If one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of you are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Paul asks a different question: What happens to the whole body when parts of it are wounded, silenced, excluded, or treated as unnecessary? The answer is simple. The whole body suffers. When immigrants are dehumanized, the whole body suffers. When racial divisions are exploited for political gain, the whole body suffers. When wealth and influence determine whose voice matters most, the whole body suffers. When voting rights are weakened, and trust in democratic participation erodes, the whole body suffers.

Because God never intended human beings to survive as isolated individuals fighting for dominance over one another. We were created for interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual care.

That is the deeper meaning behind both "We the People" and Paul's vision of the Body of Christ. We belong to one another. And when truth bends enough to convince us otherwise, both democracy and discipleship begin to break apart.

What might happen if we actually began living as though "us" included everyone? What might change if Christians became known not for narrowing the circle of belonging, but for widening it?

Imagine communities where immigrants are treated as neighbors rather than political talking points. Imagine a nation where diversity is seen not as a threat to overcome but as a reflection of God's creativity.

Then, perhaps, we can imagine a nation where voting is protected not because one party benefits, but because democracy itself depends upon broad participation and shared trust. Imagine political conversations shaped less by fear and outrage and more by truth, dignity, and mutual responsibility.

Paul's vision of the Body of Christ is not sentimental. It is demanding. Because it requires us to see one another differently. Not as competitors. Not as enemies. Not as demographic groups to manipulate. Not as disposable people standing in the way of our own comfort or success.

But as indispensable.

That word changes everything. Paul does not say the vulnerable are merely welcome. He says they are necessary. Essential. Part of the body itself.

And whenever society teaches us that certain people do not matter...that certain voices can be ignored...that certain communities are less deserving of dignity or participation...the body begins tearing itself apart.

The good news of the gospel is that God continually works against that fragmentation. Jesus widens the table. The Spirit gathers divided people into one body. And the church, at its best, becomes a living witness that another way of being human is possible. A way where truth matters. Where dignity matters. Where belonging matters. A way where "us" becomes larger instead of smaller.

The Declaration of Independence begins with a collective identity: "We." Paul describes the church the same way: one body made up of many members. Both visions depend on a shared commitment to one another. And both begin to collapse when truth bends enough to convince us that some people no longer belong inside the circle of concern.

That is the danger facing both democracy and discipleship today. Not simply disagreement. Not even division. But the slow shrinking of "us."

This week, I want to challenge you to resist that shrinking in practical ways. Listen to voices different from your own without immediately dismissing them. Refuse language that dehumanizes people, even when it comes from leaders or commentators you agree with. Pay attention to who is being excluded, ignored, mocked, or treated as disposable.

And exercise your right to participate in the life of the community — including voting — not merely as a political act, but as an act of responsibility toward the common good.

Because the truth is this: We belong to one another. And when any part of the body is treated as unnecessary, the whole body suffers.

But when we widen the circle...when we protect truth...when we honor the dignity of every person...the body begins to heal.

And perhaps that is where real freedom begins.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's](#) homepage. [Click here to watch.](#) This button takes you to our [YouTube channel](#). You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsburyChurch.org.

This is a reminder that we publish a weekly newsletter called the Circuit Rider. You can request this publication by email by sending a request to FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com, or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

The series concept and some content come from: Walter Isaacson. *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2025.

Happy 15th Anniversary to **ASBURY CDC**



Here's to many more!
To Give



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 foundation 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, across, 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-placed, 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 say 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.

(Submitted by Jason Lewis at jason_lewis@strongwell.org)



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