

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 6

Issue 7

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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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Evident (Truth)



Like thousands of other boys before me, I was a Boy Scout.

I loved it. I loved camping and building things. I loved making do with what I had. My favorite merit badge was Pioneering. Give me some rope, a few poles, and a challenge to solve, and I was happy. For me, it wasn't enough to survive in the

wilderness. I wanted to thrive.

One of the skills every scout learns is how to use a compass. Back then, there was no GPS in your pocket. If you got turned around in the woods, you needed to know how to find your direction.

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Asbury Farm

Happenings



DONATE

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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: JUNE 8 — 14

June 8 Mon

June 9 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 10 Wed

June 11 Thu 1:00pm United Women in Faith

June 12 Fri

June 13 Sat

June 14 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"

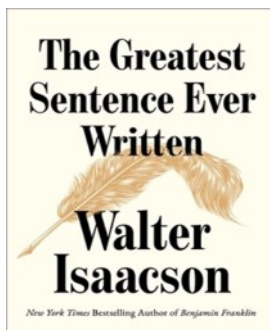


As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, Americans are once again arguing about who we are, what we value, and whether truth itself still matters. Nevertheless, our experiment in representative democracy has been the model to which other nations strive. Unfortunately, we are living through a moment when public trust is collapsing. Driven in large part because the truth is increasingly treated as flexible.

Facts are dismissed as inconvenient. Conspiracy theories spread faster than wisdom. Cruelty is rewarded as strength. Neighbors become enemies. Fear becomes a political strategy.

Sadly, too often, the language of faith is twisted into a tool for power, exclusion, and control. And we're often watching this happen publicly in the name of Jesus. **Page 5**

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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Leadership in Worship & Service



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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:

I was born and came into the world for this one purpose: to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me.

John 18:37-38

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read John 18:37-38 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Evident.
2. This week, before sharing a story, ask whether it is true. Before repeating a claim, ask whether it is accurate. Before judging a neighbor, ask whether you have listened long enough to understand them.
3. Spend time with Jesus. The more time we spend listening to His voice, the easier it becomes to recognize north when other voices compete for our attention.
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.

What fascinated me was how simple a compass seemed. No batteries. No screen. No moving parts except a tiny needle. Yet that little needle could help you find your way through miles of unfamiliar terrain.

The secret, of course, is that the compass isn't creating north. The compass is responding to north. North already exists. For a compass, north is self-evident. The compass simply points toward it.

When you're hiking through dense woods, however, it is not unusual to question the compass. The sun may be hidden by the trees. Clouds may cover the sky. Darkness may be setting in. Every instinct may tell you that you should be heading one direction while the compass insists on another.

In moments like that, the temptation is not to doubt yourself. The temptation is to doubt the compass. But the compass has no reason to lie.

It doesn't care where you want to go. It doesn't care what you hope is true. It doesn't care what is convenient. It simply points north.

These experiences helped me to learn something that has stayed with me all these years: direction matters. You can have plenty of energy. You can work hard. You can walk fast. But if you're headed in the wrong direction, none of those things will get you where you want to go.

You first need to know which way is north.

And that lesson feels especially important today.

Many of us have reached a point where we no longer know

what to believe. Every day, we're bombarded with competing claims, competing narratives, competing explanations, and competing versions of reality.

The problem isn't simply that people lie. The truth is that human beings have always lied.

A child breaks a lamp and immediately begins crafting an explanation. A teenager presents only the facts that support their case. An adult tells a story in a way that makes them look a little better, and someone else looks a little worse.

We all know what it is like to shape a narrative. Most of the time, the consequences are small. Sometimes they are devastating. Either way, we have wandered from the truth. In compass language, we have ignored north.

But there is a second level of deception that is more dangerous.

A fact can be technically accurate and still be presented in a way that leads people toward a false conclusion. Important details can be omitted. Quotes can be removed from their context. Arguments can be framed so that listeners arrive exactly where the speaker wanted them to go.

Children do it. Advertisers do it. Political campaigns fill the airwaves with it. News organizations do it. And yes, sometimes even preachers do it.

This is why fact-checking matters. It is not merely an exercise in proving someone wrong. Fact-checking is a way of asking whether the compass is still pointing north.

Yet there is a third level of deception that is even more dangerous. The greatest threat is not a lie. The greatest threat is forgetting which way is north.

A child may ignore the compass. A politician may try to bend the needle. But the greatest danger comes when a culture loses its shared understanding of what north even means.

In his recent book *All We Say*, Ben Rhodes argues that much of American history can be understood as a continuing argument about who "we" are as a people. The speeches he highlights reveal that our deepest conflicts are not simply about policy. They are about identity. They are about belonging. They are about what story defines us as a nation.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, those questions matter more than ever.

For nearly two and a half centuries, the Declaration's claim that all people are created equal has functioned as a kind of American true north. Not because we have lived up to it. Clearly, we have not. But generation after generation has appealed to those words as a standard against which the nation should be measured.

The abolitionist appealed to it. The suffragist appealed to it. Civil rights leader appealed to it. The reformer appealed to it.

The question was never whether America had arrived. The question was whether America was still moving toward its own ideals, and how to keep us going in the right direction.

The first lie points us in the wrong direction. The hundredth lie makes us forget there ever was a north. And we've been told thousands of lies. When truth bends, trust breaks. Let's face it. Trust broke a long time ago for the vast majority of us.

So that raises a question that is just as urgent today as it was two thousand years ago: How do we recognize the truth when we have lost our bearings?

The good news is that God doesn't abandon people who have lost their way. Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly sent prophets to people who had forgotten which way is north.

Again and again, leaders become convinced that power matters more than justice. Nations become convinced that prosperity matters more than righteousness. Religious people become convinced that ritual matters more than compassion.

And each time, God sends someone to remind them of what they already know but have chosen to forget.

Isaiah calls the people back to justice. Amos calls the people back to righteousness. Micah calls the people back to humility. Jeremiah calls the people back to faithfulness.

Prophets are not fortune-tellers predicting the future. Profits are truth-tellers, reminding people of the truth they already know.

In a sense, prophets are human compasses.

When kings, priests, presidents, and nations lose their bearings, the prophets point north. Not because the truth has changed. Because the people have.

This is why the words of Isaiah remain so powerful: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way. Walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:21).

God has always been, and continues to be, in the business of helping lost people find their way home. Yet there is a difference between pointing toward the truth and standing in the presence of Truth itself.

That difference brings us to Jesus.

In the final hours before Jesus' crucifixion, He was arrested and abandoned by many of His followers. He was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor with the authority to decide whether Jesus would live or die. From a human perspective, Pilate held all the authority.

After all, he commanded soldiers. He represented the empire. He controlled the courtroom. And, he issues orders that change lives.

Jesus stood before Pilate as a prisoner. At least that is how it appears.

But John's Gospel invites us to see something deeper. John helps us see that while Pilate possesses power, Jesus possesses truth. And those are not always the same thing, despite claims to the contrary.

When Jesus says to Pilate, "The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice," Pilate responds with one of the most famous questions in all of Scripture: "What is truth?"

It is a remarkable question. People never stop asking it. What is truth? Whose truth? Can truth even be known? Does truth belong to those with the loudest voices, the greatest influence, or the most power?

Pilate's question sounds surprisingly modern. Yet John's Gospel reveals a tragic irony. Pilate asks the question while looking directly at the answer.

Truth is standing right in front of him. The compass is working perfectly. The problem is not the compass. The problem is that Pilate doesn't trust where it points.

Like so many leaders before him, Pilate became oriented toward power rather than truth. His decisions were shaped by political pressure, public opinion, and self-preservation. Pilate can recognize power, but he can't recognize truth.

And that may be the greatest danger we face.

I was born and came into the world for this one purpose: to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth listens to me.

John 18:37-38

Most people do not wake up one morning and decide to reject the truth. Instead, we slowly begin trusting other voices more than the compass. We trust our fears. We trust our tribe. We trust our assumptions. We trust leaders who tell us what we want to hear.

Eventually, we find ourselves arguing with North itself.

The story of Jesus and Pilate is not merely about a Roman governor and a Jewish teacher. It is about every moment in history when truth and power stand face to face. And it is about a question each of us must answer for ourselves: When the two point in different directions, which one will we follow?

If Pilate's question is, "What is truth?", then perhaps our next question should be, "How do we recognize it?"

As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Walter Isaacson's *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written* offers a fascinating clue. Isaacson notes that Thomas Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration did not say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." Instead, Jefferson wrote, "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable."

Benjamin Franklin made a suggestion. He crossed out Jefferson's words and replaced them with two others: self-evident. At first glance, the change seems minor. It was anything but. Franklin was not rejecting faith. Nor was he claiming that sacred things are unimportant. Rather, he was pointing toward a different way of understanding truth.

A self-evident truth doesn't become true because a king, dictator, or president declares it. It doesn't become true because a church teaches it. It doesn't become true because a political party endorses it. Nor does it become true because a majority votes for it. It is true whether powerful people acknowledge it or not.

Franklin believed that human equality belonged in that category. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." The remarkable thing about those words is not that America immediately lived up to them. We did not. The remarkable thing is that generation after generation kept returning to them.

When slavery contradicted the promise of equality, abolitionists pointed back to the Declaration. When women were denied the right to vote, suffragists pointed back to the Declaration. When segregation denied equal treatment under the law, civil rights leaders pointed back to the Declaration.

They were not inventing a new compass. They were pointing to the one the nation already possessed. In effect, they were saying, "If this is our north, why are we heading somewhere else?"

That question matters just as much today as it did then.

Every generation faces the temptation to adjust the compass to fit its preferred destination. Every generation is tempted to divide people into categories of greater worth and lesser worth, insiders and outsiders, those who belong and those who do not.

Every generation finds ways to justify inequality while still speaking the language of equality.

The challenge is not merely to say that all people are created equal. The challenge is to live as though it is true.

That is where Jesus becomes so important. Long before the Declaration was written, Jesus lived as though human dignity was already self-evident. He touched those others refused to touch. He welcomed those others refused to welcome. He spoke with people others refused to see.

Again and again, Jesus crossed boundaries that society considered fixed and unquestionable. The poor. The sick. Women. Samaritans. Immigrants. Sinners. Those who respectable society pushed to the margins.

Jesus treated them all as people created and loved by God. He did not simply teach human worth. He demonstrated it. He embodied it.

In Jesus, we discover that truth is not merely something we believe. Truth is something we practice. Truth is something we live. Truth is something we recognize in the face of another human being.

Perhaps that is why self-evident truths matter so much.

They remind us that some things remain true whether they are convenient or inconvenient, popular or unpopular, politically useful or politically costly.

The compass keeps pointing north. The question is whether we have the courage to follow it.

A compass is only useful if we are willing to follow it. Knowing where north is and walking toward it are not the same thing. That is true in the woods. It is true in our nation. And it is true in our spiritual lives.

Pilate stood face-to-face with Truth itself and still chose another path. The tragedy of his story is not that he lacked information. The tragedy is that he lacked the courage to follow where truth was leading.

The same temptation confronts us today.

Every day we are invited to follow voices that appeal to our fears, our prejudices, our anger, or our desire for certainty. Every day we encounter stories designed to reinforce what we already believe and dismiss those who disagree with us.

Yet Jesus calls us to something deeper. He calls us to become people who love the truth more than our assumptions. People who value honesty more than victory. People who care more about being faithful than being right. People who recognize the image of God in others, even when it would be easier to place them into categories of "us" and "them."

Perhaps that is where we begin. Before sharing a story, ask whether it is true. Before repeating a claim, ask whether it is accurate. Before judging a neighbor, ask whether you have listened long enough to understand them.

Truth grows wherever humility and curiosity take root. And perhaps there is a second step. Spend time with Jesus.

The more time we spend listening to His voice, the easier it becomes to recognize north when other voices compete for our attention.

The prophets pointed toward truth. Jesus embodied truth. And the Holy Spirit continues to guide us toward truth today.

That does not mean we will never get lost. It does mean we do not have to stay lost. A compass does not prevent wrong turns. It helps us find our way again.

This is episode two of our series, *Truth*, which concludes the day after we celebrate 250 years of following our "true North," found in our Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident..."

May we begin our 251st year in pursuit of the truths we believe to be self-evident, that each of us deserves an equal opportunity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In a world filled with competing voices, may we have the wisdom to recognize north. And having recognized it, may we have the courage to follow.

Because when truth bends, trust breaks.

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.



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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.

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To Give



Lifting Others Through Health: Turning Your Passion into Advocacy



If you care deeply about wellness, you're already holding a key that can unlock real change for others. Health is more than personal—it's communal, cultural, and systemic. When you let your commitment to well-being extend beyond yourself, you become a force for advocacy, visibility, and reform. Whether you're helping a neighbor or taking on national health policy, your passion can inspire transformation that goes far beyond your own habits.

Volunteering as a Foundation

When you donate your time to health-related causes, you begin to see firsthand how uneven the playing field really is. Community clinics, food pantries, and mental health nonprofits are often under-resourced but over-

burdened with need. Your willingness to show up—even just a few hours a week—can be the difference between someone receiving care or slipping through the cracks. This kind of grassroots engagement not only helps others but deepens your own understanding of where the biggest gaps exist.

Sharing What You Know Loudly and Often

In an age overloaded with information, clarity and consistency matter. You don't need a doctorate to make an impact—just a strong understanding of evidence-based health knowledge and a willingness to share it. Through blog posts, informative social media posts, or community workshops, you can bust myths, spotlight critical issues, and connect people to the resources they didn't know existed. Your voice, especially if you're speaking from lived experience, has the power to guide others toward healthier choices and better support.

Changing Careers to Serve the Underserved

Sometimes, passion means stepping into a new lane altogether. If you're feeling pulled toward a deeper purpose, switching careers to focus on improving the health of underserved communities might be your most powerful move. Whether you're coordinating community outreach, becoming a health navigator, or working in preventative care, the impact is real and immediate. Earning a healthcare degree can equip you with the knowledge and credentials to make a lasting difference in the health of individuals and families. With online learning, this is a good one to explore since you can grow your skills without having to leave your current job behind.

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Turning Your Job into a Mission

Maybe your day job already has a health angle, or maybe you're dreaming of a shift. Either way, aligning your profession with your passion for well-being turns your hours into impact. This could look like becoming a health coach, setting up a nonprofit, designing accessible health tech, or even handling logistics at a clinic. Your professional skills—whether in marketing, admin, or tech—are needed just as urgently as medical expertise in the broader health ecosystem.

Building a Business That Heals

Entrepreneurship doesn't have to be just about profit—it can be about purpose. If you've spotted a need in the health space, whether it's better access to healthy meals, mental health tools, or inclusive fitness programs, you might be the one to fill it. Small businesses rooted in wellness have the power to serve niche populations often ignored by traditional systems. Plus, you get to build something from the ground up that reflects your values and vision for a healthier world.

Using Fundraising to Fuel the Mission

If you've got organizing chops or a knack for storytelling, fundraising can be your advocacy weapon. Health-related causes—from rare disease research to community mental health programs—often rely on private support to keep going. Running a charity race, hosting a benefit dinner, or starting a crowdfunding campaign can bring in not only money but also awareness. When you link your name to a cause, you become part of its momentum, and every dollar raised becomes a signal that someone else cares, too.

Making Noise Where It Matters Most

You don't need to be in office to change policy. Advocacy at the local and national levels can begin with something as simple as writing to your representative, attending your local town hall meetings, or joining a grassroots coalition. Many major health victories—like anti-smoking laws, clean water initiatives, or mental health funding—started with a few people refusing to stay quiet. Your voice, backed by data, passion, and a lived sense of urgency, can help rewrite the rules so that more people get what they need to thrive.

Turning your commitment to health into advocacy isn't just a noble pursuit—it's necessary. Millions of people go without basic care, accurate information, and supportive environments, and your willingness to act could be the link that changes that. You don't need to do everything at once, and you don't need to be perfect. All you need is a genuine belief that health should be a right, not a privilege, and the courage to do something about it. Let your passion ripple outward and create a better, more caring world for the people who need it most.

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Submitted by Jason Lewis at jason_lewis@strongwell.org)

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