

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 6

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JULY 12, 2026

Entrusted (Mortgaged)



Over these past two weeks, many of us have been trying to stay cool during long stretches of dangerous heat. And we're fortunate. Elsewhere, it seems like every week brings another weather emergency. One community is overwhelmed by floodwaters after receiving months' worth of rain in a matter of hours.

Another watches tornadoes tear through neighborhoods. Out West, drought dries the land until a single spark becomes a wildfire that consumes thousands of acres.

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Together (Truth)



We come to our final episode of this series as our nation celebrates the Declaration of Independence, adopted 250 years ago. For the most part, our experiment in representative democracy is working, despite some daunting challenges along the way.

However, it feels as though something precious, something protected by the Declaration, although it isn't specifically named, is slipping away.

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This will be up for auction at our Art Fair..

See pg 20 for more information....



DONATE

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Common sense tells us that we're seeing more than isolated events. We're watching a pattern emerge that has gotten progressively worse over the past decade.

What's left of the National Weather Service and NOAA continue to warn of elevated risks of extreme heat across large portions of the United States this summer, with heat index values exceeding 105 degrees in many places. Meteorologists are also warning that the same weather patterns bringing prolonged heat are contributing to heavy rainfall and flash flooding in some regions, while drought intensifies in others.

Despite what a handful of political leaders may be saying, science is not ambivalent about the cause. In fact, there is an undisputable consensus that our planet is warming because of human activity. There is no longer any doubt that a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, intensifies heavy rainfall, lengthens heat waves, dries forests and grasslands, and creates conditions that fuel many extreme weather events.

While it doesn't matter whether climate change created every tornado or every wildfire. It matters a great deal that these disasters are occurring more frequently as a result of warmer, more volatile conditions driven by our choices.

And policy matters. Over the past year, our nation has moved away from many of the policies designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate the transition to cleaner sources of energy. Environmental regulations have been rolled back, renewable energy incentives have been reduced or eliminated, and the expansion of fossil fuel production has once again become a central national priority.

A question that will come up over and over again during this series is this: Are we leaving behind a harvest—or a bill?

When it comes to climate change, we're racking up charges quickly. Future generations will inherit much of the cost, but the bill has already begun to arrive. Families whose homes are flooded, communities threatened by wildfires, farmers watching crops fail, workers losing wages during dangerous heat, and people struggling to pay rising insurance premiums are already paying for choices that benefited others. The heaviest burden continues to fall on those least able to afford it.

Since key decisions affecting climate change will be debated in Congress and in the courts, every vote matters. But this issue also raises a deeper question for people of faith. What kind of future are we choosing to build?

Every public policy reflects what we value. Every budget is a moral document. Every generation decides whether it will leave creation healthier or more fragile for those who come after us.

Creation doesn't vote. Children not yet born don't vote. Future generations don't vote. Stewardship requires us to care for those who have no voice in today's political debates.

This mandate for Christians is also critical because suffering is not distributed equally.

Families with financial resources often have insurance, savings, air conditioning, transportation, and somewhere else to go. But the poor usually don't. The elderly living alone don't. Hard-working families who can't afford to miss a paycheck don't. Small farmers watching crops wither don't.

And yet, much of our public conversation seems to move on almost immediately. We argue over politics. We debate costs. We defend ideologies. Meanwhile, families bury loved ones, clean mud from their homes, or wonder whether they'll ever be able to rebuild.

As Christians, our first question shouldn't be, "Who is to blame?" But we know there is at least one lingering question

IN OUR PRAYERS

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



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux Norma Buzzard
 Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK: JULY 13 — 19

July 13	Mon		
July 14	Tue	9:00am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		12N-6pm	Taco Tuesdays—in Fellowship Hall
July 15	Wed	11am-1pm	Angel Closet at SFSK 3410 Fenton Rd Flint
July 16	Thu		
July 17	Fri		
July 18	Sat	1:00-4:00pm	Asbury CDC Art Fair at 1613 Jane Ave (pg 20)
July 19	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 "Mortgaged"



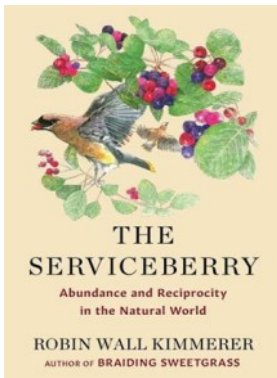
Most of us think of a mortgage as a loan on a house. We receive something valuable today and agree to pay for it over time. At its best, a mortgage helps build a future. A family finds a home. A community grows stronger. An investment today creates something of lasting value tomorrow.

But not every mortgage builds the future.

Sometimes we trade what matters most for what matters now. We sacrifice lasting goods for temporary pleasures. We exchange truth for convenience, relationships for success, stewardship for profit, and contentment for endless accumulation. We consume gifts we did not create and borrow against tomorrow, leaving someone else to pay the bill.

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Book Club News



Beginning July 12, we begin a new worship series titled *Mortgaged*.

You likely already know what a mortgage is. We

borrow from the future in order to enjoy something today. Sometimes that borrowing helps us build some-

thing lasting. A home mortgage, for example, may create stability and opportunity for generations.

But not all mortgages work that way. Throughout this series, we'll explore a simple but important question: What are we borrowing from the future, and what are we leaving behind?

To accompany our conversations, we will be reading *The Serviceberry: Abundance*

and *Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Many of you may recognize Kimmerer as the author of the bestselling book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. A botanist, teacher, and gifted storyteller, she invites readers to look at the natural world not merely as a collection of resources to consume, but as a community of relationships built on gift, gratitude, and mutual care.

At the center of the book is a simple observation.

When a serviceberry tree produces fruit, it does not create scarcity. It creates abundance. Birds eat. Animals eat. People eat. Seeds spread. New life grows. The tree participates in a cycle of generosity that benefits the entire community.

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Cyndi	Worship Leader
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Upcoming Worship Series — “Mortgaged”

Whether we realize it or not, every life leaves an inheritance.

The question is not simply whether we are borrowing. The question is: What are we leaving behind?

Scripture begins with a gift. Before there was work, there was a garden. Before there was ownership, there was trust. Before there was abundance to enjoy, there was abundance to steward.

Everything we cherish—our lives, our families, our faith, our communities, even the earth itself—has been entrusted to us by God. We did not create these gifts. We received them.

Every generation must answer the same question: What will we do with what we've been given? Beginning July 12, we'll explore that question together in *Mortgaged*, a new worship series about stewardship, inheritance, gratitude, community, and joy. Together we'll wrestle with questions that touch every part of life:

What has God entrusted to us?

How much is enough?

What do we owe one another?

Can we love a future we may never see?

What kind of life bears fruit?

Along the way, we may discover something surprising. Stewardship is not primarily about giving things up. It is about discovering a better way to live.

Our culture often promises that joy can be purchased through more—more wealth, more possessions, more influence, more success. Yet Jesus points us toward a different kind of abundance. The deepest joy is found not in what we accumulate, but in what we cultivate. Joy grows in relationships. It grows in gratitude. It grows when we participate in God's work of bringing life, hope, and healing into the world.

That is why one question will guide us throughout this journey:

Are we leaving behind a harvest—or a bill?

Upcoming Worship Series — “Truth”

Our companion book for this series is *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

You did not choose me ... I choose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures.

John 15:16

Drawing on the life of the humble serviceberry tree, Kimmerer invites readers to imagine an economy shaped not by endless consumption, but by gratitude, reciprocity, and shared abundance. Though not written as a Christian book, it beautifully complements our exploration of biblical stewardship and the common good.

Whether you join us for worship, participate in a Life Group, read the companion book, or simply come with an open mind and heart, we invite you to become part of the conversation.

Summer is a season of gardens, orchards, berries, and harvests. It reminds us that every seed matters, every season has its purpose, and every harvest begins with someone willing to plant.

What kind of future are we cultivating?

Are we leaving behind a harvest—or a bill?

Here is our schedule of episodes for our series. Sometimes details change based on what's going on in the world or simply because God has a better idea:

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	July 12	Entrusted	Genesis 2:4–15
Two	July 19	Enough	Luke 12:13–21
Three	July 26	Inheritance	Deuteronomy 34:1–12
Four	August 2	Common Good	Acts 2:42–47
Five	August 9	Harvesting	John 15:1–17

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

Our companion book for this series is Robin Wall Kimmerer. *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*. New York: Scribner, 2024.



“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:

God placed humankind in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

Genesis 2:4–15

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Genesis 2:4–15 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Entrusted.
2. This week, let's try looking at life a little differently. When you walk out the front door...When you go to work...When you pay your bills...When you care for your garden...When you speak to a neighbor...Try asking yourself one simple question; What has God entrusted to my care today?
3. How can your group members help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to be blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



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Kimmerer asks what might happen if we learned to see our lives through a similar lens. What if fulfillment comes not from accumulating more, but from participating more fully in relationships of generosity? What if the things we value most cannot be bought or sold? What if the future is something we are called to nurture rather than consume?

These questions lie at the heart of our faith as well. Scripture consistently reminds us that life is a gift, that creation is entrusted to our care, and that our neighbors are not competitors but companions. You do not need to read any or all of this book to follow our series. However, the book is a short and accessible read. We simply invite you to read along as we explore these themes together. Here is a suggested reading schedule:

Sunday's	Chapter (s)
July 12	Intro & Ch 1
July 19	Ch's 2 & 3
July 26	Ch 4
August 2	Ch's 5 & 6
August 9	Ch 7 & Invitation

Whether you read every page or simply join us for worship, we hope this book expands your imagination and helps us ask a deeper question together:

What kind of future are we creating for those who come after us?

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$10 each. Additional copies of the hardcover edition are available through Amazon for \$11. This book is available in paperback, but at a slightly higher cost on Amazon. You should also be able to find this book at the local library.

Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that week's chapters or themes. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. You can purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

Robin Wall Kimmerer. *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*. New York: Scribner, 2024.

Most Americans still believe in hard work. They still believe that people deserve an opportunity to build a good life, raise a family, contribute to their community, and retire with dignity. They may disagree passionately about how to accomplish those goals, but beneath those disagreements is a shared longing for something we have always called the “American Dream.”

That dream has never been about guaranteeing equal outcomes. It has been about preserving the possibility that ordinary people, through opportunity, responsibility, and perseverance, might flourish. It depends upon something larger than individual success. It depends upon the belief that we're in this together.

Think about a bridge. Most of us cross bridges without giving them a second thought. They quietly carry thousands of people every day—young and old, rich and poor, Republican and Democrat, lifelong citizens and first-time visitors. A bridge doesn't ask who deserves to cross. It simply does what it was built to do. Of course, bridges aren't free. They exist because generations before us believed that some things are worth building and maintaining together.

Our companion book ends by reflecting on that very idea. Walter Isaacson observes that

the economic assumptions guiding our nation over the past several decades have created extraordinary prosperity for some while leaving many others wondering whether the American Dream is still within reach. Whether one agrees with every aspect of his analysis is less important than the question it raises:

Who should our economy serve?

That is a question worthy of honest debate. Yet increasingly, honest debate seems to be giving way to something else.

Rather than carefully weighing ideas, we are encouraged to dismiss them with labels. Instead of asking whether a proposal is wise, truthful, or serves the common good, we are told what to call it. Labels become substitutes for thinking. They are often chosen, not to invite conversation, but to end it before it begins.

Truth suffers whenever language is used that way.

That should concern every Christian. The Ninth Commandment does not merely prohibit lying in a courtroom. It calls God's people to bear truthful witness about our neighbors. Surely that includes refusing to misrepresent one another's motives, beliefs, and ideas for the sake of winning an argument or holding onto power.

The result is that most of us feel unheard. We work hard. We contribute to our communities. We care for aging parents, teach children, repair roads, grow food, start businesses, serve in hospitals, factories, and churches. Yet most of us wonder whether the leaders and institutions meant to serve “the people” still remember the people they were created to serve.

We rarely notice a bridge as it faithfully carries us across the river. We only notice it when it begins to fail. Perhaps the same is true of the common good. We rarely think about it until we begin to lose confidence that it will still carry us.

Perhaps that is why so many today are searching for leaders who speak about the common good rather than simply appealing to our fears or our grievances. Perhaps people are hungry for a public life where truth matters more than slogans, where ideas are judged honestly, and where our deepest disagreements are met with integrity rather than distortion.

What if our hunger is telling us something?

What if the deepest crisis we face is not simply political or economic?

What if we have forgotten what it means to belong to one another?

The American experiment did not begin God's story. It became another chapter in humanity's long struggle to learn to live together for the common good, continuing a story that began at creation's very beginning and was shared with us in scripture.

Not because America was set apart by God above every other nation. And not because our founders agreed on what Scripture says. But because every generation must wrestle with the same questions: How do people live together? How is power used? Who belongs? What does justice require?

Thousands of years ago, God's prophets spoke to people about God's vision for a different kind of community. A community where justice was stronger than power and peace was stronger than fear. Through the prophet Isaiah, God declared: "The effect of righteousness will be peace. The result of righteousness will be lasting security forever." (Isaiah 32:17)

Peace, in the Bible, is never simply the absence of conflict. It is the presence of right relationships—with God, with one another, and with creation. The Hebrew word *shalom* describes a community where people flourish together because justice and truth are allowed to take root.

Jesus brings that same vision to the present. When asked to summarize God's law, He did not

speak first about individual success or personal achievement. He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment." But then Jesus added, "The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:37–39).

It's critically important that we not forget that love of God and love of neighbor cannot be separated. The health of our relationship with God is revealed by the way we treat one another.

Paul also writes about God's vision in a letter to the church in Ephesus. Paul was writing to a church divided by history, ethnicity, religion, and culture, when he announces something extraordinary: "For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies" (Ephesians 2:14).

Notice what Paul does not say. He does not say that one side defeated the other. He does not say that one group finally gained enough power to impose its will. He does not say that peace comes when everyone thinks alike.

Paul says that Christ tore down the wall. And whenever a wall comes down, the possibility of building a bridge appears.

You see, a wall divides. It separates. A wall teaches us to fear those on the other side. But Christ came, Paul reminds us, to remove walls, not reinforce them.

Paul's letter continues: "So then, you Gentiles are not foreigners or strangers any longer. You are now fellow citizens with God's people and members of the family of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

For centuries, Israel understood itself as God's covenant people. Their story was the story of God's faithfulness—from slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness, into the Promised Land. But now Paul announces something almost unimaginable. Through Christ, Gentiles are no longer outsiders looking in. They, too, have become fellow citizens and members of God's family.

Paul reminds us that Gentiles, including us, are fellow citizens and members of God's family. We are people who belong together.

That is the gospel, church.

According to scripture, God's purpose isn't merely to save isolated individuals. Although this is clearly an important part. More importantly, God's purpose has always been to create a people—a community shaped by truth, justice, mercy, and love. This is why we can view the American experiment as another chapter in humanity's ongoing struggle to learn how to live together.

And since Christ has declared us to become one people, then every question we ask about our common life begins here: How do we live together as people who already belong to one another?

What if we believe that Christ has really torn down the walls that divide us? What if we stopped treating those who disagree with us as enemies to defeat and began seeing them as neighbors to understand?

Imagine what that might look like.

Imagine becoming known as people who build bridges instead of walls. Not because bridges are easy to build. They aren't. They require patience, sacrifice, trust, and a willingness to meet someone halfway. But every bridge says something walls never can: there is another way.

It is through Christ that all of us are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of God.

Ephesians 2:14-22

Imagine a country where truth mattered more than slogans. A nation where we judge ideas by their wisdom rather than by the labels attached to them. Where disagreement is not viewed as betrayal, but as an opportunity to learn.

Imagine an economy measured not only by the wealth it creates, but by the opportunities it provides. A society where success is celebrated, not because a fortunate few have prospered, but because ordinary families can work hard, care for one another, and still believe the future will be better for their children.

Imagine leaders who understand that public office is a public trust, not a pathway to personal glory.

Imagine citizens who refuse to reward lies, no matter who tells them, and who insist that truth is never negotiable because democracy itself depends upon it.

Imagine Christians becoming known, not for winning arguments, but for refusing to bear false witness. People who speak truth with humility, who listen before judging, who seek justice without hatred, and who remember that every person they meet bears the image of God.

This vision is not naïve. It is the vision of Isaiah. It is the vision of Jesus. It is the vision Paul describes when he tells us that Christ has made us one people.

Perhaps the greatest gift we could give our nation in its 250th year is not louder voices or stronger opinions. Perhaps it is a community willing to live as though we truly believe...We're in this together.

Over the past six weeks, we have explored some of the most important words in our faith and in our democracy. Us. Evident. Equal. Dignity. Pursuit. And today...Together.

Each week has reminded us that truth is more than getting our facts right. Truth shapes how we see one another. Truth decides whether power serves itself or serves the common good. Truth determines whether we build walls or bridges.

Walls protect us from people we fear. Bridges connect us to people we have yet to understand. Christ chose the bridge.

The day marking the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence is over. Soon, the fireworks will be over. The flags will be folded away. And the celebration will begin to fade.

But the experiment continues.

Every generation must decide whether those words—all are created equal—will remain merely something we celebrate or become something we practice.

The church has a unique calling in that decision.

Long before there was an American experiment, God was already forming a people whose lives would bear witness to a different way of living together. A people shaped by truth instead of fear. By justice instead of favoritism. By mercy instead of vengeance. By love instead of power.

That calling now belongs to us.

Not because America is God's chosen nation. But because we are God's people. And wherever God's people are found, they are called to tell the truth, seek justice, love their neighbors, and work for the common good.

The Declaration gave our nation an extraordinary vision. Christ gives the Church its enduring mission. May we have the wisdom to hold both with gratitude.

And may future generations be able to say that, when truth was tested, we chose to stand together.

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 article is part of 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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that must be asked: "How are we caring for what God has entrusted to us?" Because before Scripture ever speaks about governments or economies, it speaks about a garden. Before humanity was given power, humanity was given responsibility.

The earth that sustains us is not ours. According to scripture, the earth has been entrusted to us.

When we read about creation in Genesis, we notice that the Bible doesn't begin with an argument about money. It doesn't begin with government. It doesn't begin with the economy. It begins with a garden. God creates the heavens and the earth. God forms humanity from the dust of the ground. Then God plants a garden and places the human there "to till it and keep it."

God placed humankind in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.

Genesis 2:4-15

Those words matter.

The first human calling wasn't to conquer creation. It wasn't to exploit creation. It wasn't even to own creation. It was to care for it. From the very beginning, humanity is introduced not as owners but as caretakers.

If we missed that in Genesis, God makes it unmistakably clear throughout the scripture.

Speaking to Israel about the Promised Land, God says, "The

land must not be sold on a permanent basis, because the land is mine. You are only foreigners and tenants living with me."

Imagine hearing those words after finally entering the land your ancestors had dreamed about for generations. "The land is mine." Not Pharaoh's. Not Israel's. All land belongs to God.

In other words, after receiving the Promised Land, Israel never became its ultimate owner. They remained tenants, living on land that belonged to God.

That has something to say to us. We sing, "This land is your land. This land is my land." We debate immigration, borders, citizenship, and property rights. Those conversations matter. But Scripture reminds us of an even deeper truth. Before God, every one of us lives as a guest on land we did not create and can never truly own. Everything we have is held in trust.

The prophets never forgot that truth. Through Haggai, God declares, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." Yes, you heard this correctly. The money you have in the bank, the shares of stock your broker says you own, and even the shirt on your back, belong to God. They have been entrusted to your care.

And in Deuteronomy, Moses warns the people not to deceive themselves when prosperity comes. Don't say, "My own power and my own strength have produced this wealth." Remember the Lord, because it is God who gives you the ability to produce wealth in the first place.

Do you hear the pattern? The garden is God's. The land is God's. The silver is God's. The gold is God's. Even our ability to earn a living is God's gift. Scripture tells one consistent story. What we call "ours" has always belonged to God. We have simply been entrusted with it for a little while.

That changes everything.

If the earth belongs to God, then caring for creation is an act of worship. If our resources belong to God, generosity isn't losing something. It's faithfully managing what was never ours to begin with. If our lives belong to God, then the question isn't, "What can I keep?"

The question is, "How can I faithfully care for what God has entrusted to me?"

While Genesis gives us God's vision, Robin Wall Kimmerer, in our companion book for this series, helps us imagine what that vision might look like in everyday life. She begins by observing that a service-berry tree never sends an invoice to the birds that feast on its fruit.

It simply gives.

The birds don't repay the tree. Instead, by living as birds-carrying seeds, nourishing their young, becoming part of a larger web of life—they pass the gift along.

That's a very different kind of reciprocity.

Not, "You owe me." But, "You've received a gift. Now become a gift."

Years ago, our own community wrestled with that same question.

How do you create a community where everyone has something to contribute? The idea didn't come from me. It came from our neighborhood.

One day, a man named Chris, who was struggling with too many bad decisions, shared something that changed how many of us thought about ministry. Chris shared that he was having a meal at one of our neighborhood's food ministries. After the meal, he said, "Someday, the people who come to eat should be the ones serving food to you all." Seeing the doubt in the faces of the hosts, Chris added, "We don't have money, but we're not incapable of contributing."

This led to an idea that our nonprofit, Asbury CDC, implemented. Flintstones were simple wooden coins. Volunteers received them as a way of recognizing the gifts they were already sharing. The wooden coins could be exchanged for fresh produce from our farm or meals in the Asbury Café.

Something beautiful happened. Those who came to eat at the Asbury Café and couldn't afford the suggested donation could trade Flintstones for their meal. They were no longer simply receiving help. They were participating in a community that shares their gifts with one another.

Chris became one of our volunteers, working in our Help Center almost every day during COVID. And when cancer took his life, he didn't die alone. Chris left this world, knowing that he was loved and appreciated by the people around him. He had become part of our family.

This is what can happen when we stop being fixated on "What do I own?" and start asking, "What have I been entrusted to share?"

Cyndi and I planted a serviceberry tree in our orchard. It won't feed birds this year. It can't offer much shade. But we didn't plant it just for ourselves. We planted it because someday someone—or something—will benefit from a gift they didn't create.

Stewardship, at its best, consists of small acts of kindness towards others and creation.

Let's face it, most of us will never change the whole world. But every one of us has a little piece of God's garden. Maybe it's your backyard. Maybe it's your finances. Maybe it's your family. Maybe it's your neighborhood. Maybe it's this church.

The question isn't whether you've been entrusted with something. You have. The question is what you'll do with it.

This week, let's try looking at life a little differently. When you walk out the front door...When you go to work...When you pay your bills...When you care for your garden...When you speak to a

neighbor...Try asking yourself one simple question: "What has God entrusted to my care today?"

Because the earth is not ours. Our money is not ours. Our lives are not ours. Everything is God's gift. And we have been entrusted with it...for just a little while.

Are we leaving behind a harvest—or a bill?

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 article is part of 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

Our companion book for this series is Robin Wall Kimmerer. *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World*. New York: Scribner, 2024.

JOIN US AT OUR ART AUCTION: "PLANTING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE"

ART AUCTION

Planting Seeds for the Future

SATURDAY, JULY 18TH



LOCATION:
1613 Jane Ave,
Flint, MI. 48506



TIME:
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm



**SILENT AUCTION
ENDS AT 3:00**



REFRESHMENTS
& APPETIZERS



MUSIC



COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
PARTNERS

Bid on art. Support community. Grow the future.

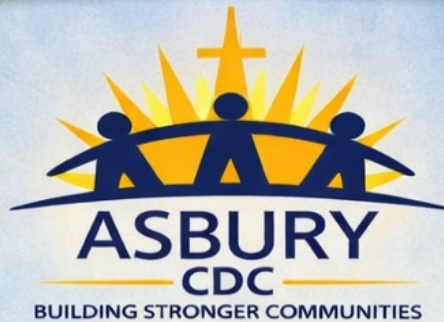
Happy 15th Anniversary to **ASBURY** **CDC**



Here's to many more!
To Give



Asbury CDC Celebrates 15 Years of Impact!



Asbury Community Development Corporation (Asbury CDC) is a nonprofit 501c(5) organization located on Flint's east side, dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents. through food access, community development, and workforce opportunities.



In partnership with **The Ally Challenge** — Supporting Community Growth

Together **supporting** Urban Farming & Youth Workforce Development!

Through initiatives such as Asbury Farms, South Flint Soup Kitchen, The Help Center and Food Pantry, and the Sizzling Culture Youth Workforce Development Program, Asbury CDC provides fresh produce, nutritious meals, emergency assistance, job training.

The Ally Challenge Events

- **Family Fun Night**
Thursday, August 27 • 5:00PM - 7:30PM
- **Folds of Honor Friday**
Friday, August 28
Opening ceremony & Parachute Jumper
- **Concert @17** presented by
Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort
Estimated start time: 6:30PM
(featuring Wildflowers)
- **Ally Community Concert**
Saturday August 29
- **Zhenders Chicken & Waffle Brunch**
Sunday, August 30
Free for Sunday Ticket Holders

DONATE NOW:

theallychallenge.com/chipin

CELEBRATE 15 YEARS OF IMPACT WITH ASBURY CDC— YOUR GIFT GOES FURTHER TODAY!!

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This year, Asbury Community Development Corporation (Asbury CDC) proudly celebrates 15 years of serving the Flint community through food access, youth development, urban agriculture, and neighborhood revitalization. As we reflect on the lives impacted and the milestones achieved, we invite you to be part of the next chapter of our story.

We are excited to announce our participation in **The Ally Challenge Chip In for Charity Program**, giving you an opportunity to make an even greater impact. Through this special partnership, **The Ally Challenge will contribute an additional 10% to every donation made to Asbury CDC**, increasing the value of your gift at no additional cost to you. Plus you can join in on any of The Ally Challenge events. Join us in person at the Family Fun Night, Thursday, August 27th from 5:00pm to 7:30pm..

Give Today:

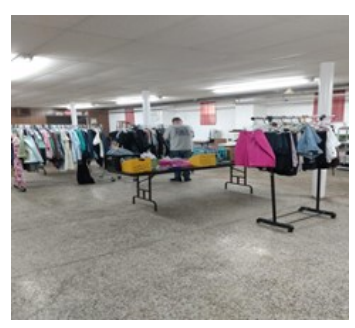
<https://theallychallenge.com/chipin>

Use the drop down menu and select Asbury CDC. We are 1st on the list!

DONATE

DONATE

DONATE



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Our mailing address is:

Asbury Community Development Corporation 1653 Davison Rd Flint, MI 48506-3550 USA

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FREE MEALS AT FLINT ASBURY UMC!!

**FREE MEALS
ALL SUMMER LONG**

(For all kids under 18 years old)



WHERE: Flint Asbury UMC 1653 Davison Rd

WHEN: June 22, 2026 through August 22, 2026

TIMES: 12:35pm—12:55pm (Monday-Friday)

MEALS: Lunch (Food Truck)



(Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is an equal opportunity provider)

FREE MEALS
ALL SUMMER LONG
(For all kids under 18 years old)

WHERE: South Flint Soup Kitchen 3410 S. Fenton Rd Flint

WHEN: June 22, 2026 through August 22, 2026

TIMES: 1:00pm—1:20pm (Monday-Friday)

MEALS: Lunch (Food Truck)

(Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is an equal opportunity provider)





TACO TUESDAY FUNDRAISER

DATES IN JULY:
July 7, July 14, July 21, July 28.

TIME:
Noon to 6PM

PRICES START AT \$2

LOCATION:
Asbury United Methodist Church
1653 Davison Road, Flint 48506

SUPPORT OUR DANCERS & DRUMMERS

FOR MORE INFO:
CONTACT BABA KEVIN COLLINS
AT (810) 394-3880

AFRICAN DRUM & DANCE PARENT ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

NORTH END MUSIC FESTIVAL 2026

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2026

4501 CLIO ROAD, FLINT, MICHIGAN 48504 (IN THE PARKING LOT)

NOON TO 9:00 PM



FEATURING:

LIVE MUSIC (BANDS TBA)

AFRICAN DRUM AND DANCE PERFORMANCE

BOUNCE HOUSES

BRING LAWN CHAIRS

This program is sponsored by the Greater Flint Arts Council
Share Art Genessee Grant Program made possible by the
Genesee County Arts Education and Cultural Enrichment Millage funds.
Your tax dollars are at work!



FOR INFORMATION: CONTACT KEVIN BABA COLLINS
810-394-3880 | babacollins14@gmail.com