

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

The Little Red Tractor

“God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Matthew 5:11-12

“Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

Jeremiah 29:7

Francis Chan in the companion video that our Tuesday study group watched in preparation to discuss the last chapter in his book, *Forgotten God*, tells the story of a “quasi-make-believe” village. While the village itself was made-up the story is so real it is hard not to imagine that this make-believe village exists. It is not hard to imagine that this

made-up village is not a veiled description of our own experiences. I share a version of Rev Chan’s story here but the video of his telling the story complete with animation will be shown during worship this week.

The Little Red Tractor and His Little Village

Once upon a time there was a village full of caring people who worked well together and in that village was a tractor that had belonged to one of the families for generations. Each Spring the people of the village would get together to plow their village garden using the tractor. It would take the entire village, women, children and men working together to push and pull the tractor up and down the rows. But they would work long hours day after day for a month or more to ensure that the field would be ready for planting.

Each year the village people were able to get their garden plowed and planted and each year there would be enough for every family in the village to have fresh produce for their meals. The people of the village were content. The little red tractor was their prized possession because it never failed year after year to plow the field thanks to the hard work of the people.

One evening the farmer whose family had donated the tractor was cleaning out his attic when he came across a book he had never seen. The book had a picture of the little red tractor on the front cover and the title was *User Manual*. He couldn’t wait to read its contents and he did right there in the attic. The contents was fascinating. It told how if the little tractor was properly working it could move on its own power and plow a field the size of the village garden in a single day!

passers-by who were touched by his story.”

There is something in all of us that is moved and inspired when we see someone do something that benefits someone else. Especially when it’s unexpected. Especially when it’s out of the ordinary. And especially when they could have easily made a selfish decision instead.

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Volume 17 Issue 50

December 10, 2017

Special points of interest:

> **Neighborhood Connection** is delivering bottled water. Call the City of Flint at 810-410-1138 for information. This service is for persons who are disabled and/or unable to receive water in any other way.

> A **Special Community Christmas Concert** will be held at Asbury on **Thursday, December 14 at 6 pm** featuring adult & youth choirs from the Flint School of Performing Arts.

> Asbury will be holding a **Town Hall Meeting TODAY Sunday, December 10th at 2:30pm** in the Fellowship Hall.

> Please pick up your 2018 Offering Envelopes that are in the Asbury Café. If you don’t see yours, call the church office.

> A **Special Church Conference** will be held on **Sunday, December 17, 2017 at 12Noon** in the Fellowship Hall.

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Out of the Ordinary

There was a December 2012 article in England’s Manchester Evening News titled “Home For Christmas” about a homeless man named Alan Dent who found a purse on the street. The purse contained numerous bank cards and a lot of cash.

Instead of keeping the money, Dent promptly returned the purse to the bank of its owner. He quickly became a local hero. According to the article, “Back at his usual pitch on Market Street, he received many donations of money, food, and hot drinks from

Out of the Ordinary ...continued from Page 1

I would like to ask each of you today to either give a one-time, above-the-usual gift to Asbury, or to set up recurring, online donations that will ensure that your generosity continues throughout all of next year. We will use that money to reach people who aren't in church: some who never thought they would ever be in church. We will use that money to reach outsiders and let them know that they're welcome inside.

As your pastor, spiritual leader, neighbor and friend, I am asking you to take action. We want to see God move, so let's get moving ourselves.

Whether you're married with kids, a single mom, or a student, you can do something and be proud of who you helped. This means that I am asking you to trust God. Your gift makes a difference and connects your life to a

bigger purpose.

So if you haven't gone digital yet with your generosity, this is my request: will you set up recurring, online donations TODAY? It's so easy and fast. And you can be confident each month knowing that your gift is sent. No amount is too small. If you cannot give every month I ask that you consider making a one-time gift. But our biggest goal is for you to experience the benefits of generosity year-round while we all join forces to help and reach more people.

So please JOIN US! Please get out your phone, go to our website, FlintAsbury.org, click on the GIVING button, and set up your offering to be automatically deducted each month. Or, make a one-time donation.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Thanks for being a part of God's plan to transform this community.

Rev Tommy



The Little Red Tractor ... continue from page 1

It seemed too good to be true and that is exactly the sentiment of the people of the village when the farmer told them about his discovery. One by one the farmer was told "We have always done it this way." So the people of the village decided to continue plowing their community garden by pushing and pulling the little red tractor around the field. They knew in their hearts that if they would only continue to do what they knew, then their hard work would pay off, and if not, well at least they knew that whatever gets done it was by their own power.

Night after night the farmer stayed up late working on the little red tractor according to the book he had found in his

attic. One night he was ready to test it out. The tractor moved forward just as the book said it would and the farmer was so excited that he drove out to the community garden and plowed the entire field without stopping in a single night! The farmer was exhausted from so many nights with little sleep that he fell asleep sitting on the tractor.

The next morning as the people came out to the community garden for another day of hard work they discovered that the field had been completely plowed. They seemed to gasp in unison. One man said "It must be the work of angels" while a woman said "It must be aliens from another planet." Suddenly, a small boy said "It was neither. It was

him" as he pointed at the farmer fast asleep on top of the tractor. Although the people were stunned and still had lots of questions they were certainly happy not to be pushing and pulling the tractor. Well at least most of them were.

That year and every year after that, the people of this village plowed even more land which produced even more food. There was enough food harvested that they were able to share their food with other villages.

The Little Red Tractor ...continued from Page 2

Their fame travelled throughout the land and they all lived happily ever after. At least most of them did.

THE END

Our Tuesday study group discussions these past several weeks have focused on the possibility that we have forgotten how important it is as Christians to live under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We completed the last chapter of Francis Chan's book this past week. We recognized that like the people of the village in this story, the world is likely to scoff at any idea that we can produce more than we ourselves are capable of doing. But we are also comforted by the blessings found in Matthew's account of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad!"

Once the village began using the tractor the way it was intended to be utilized they not only provided food for themselves but they were able to feed people in other villages as well. This story is a powerful reminder of our own situation. There will always be some people who will scoff at the idea that there is another way. In most cases, they are simply not familiar with the Book and many will resort to the same mantra as the people in our story: "We have always done it this way." They will not believe until they see it with their own eyes. But even then, revelation is a gift from God and oftentimes it is our own blindness that keeps us from recognizing God's truth. Meanwhile, the unbelievers will scoff at the believers who hold fast to our own User Manual, the Bible.

So we must hold fast to our faith that God will do as God promises in the Book of Life. And each year we will produce even more fruit. But it will not be our

fame that will travel throughout the land for we will know that it is the grace of Jesus Christ that gives us all that we need and abundantly more. And many more will come to know this truth. Amen.

Pastor Tommy

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Join us on Thursday, December 14 at 6 pm for a special concert featuring children, youth and adults choirs from the Flint School of Performing Arts. Enjoy special selections by Sylvia Pittman, Chair of the Vocal Arts Department at the Flint Institute of Music.



In Our Prayers

- Curtis Young
- Rachel Bastine
- Norma Buzzard
- Merle Supernaw
- Barbara McIvor
- Jonathon Misner
- Nancy Auger
- Pam Brotemarkle
- Austin & Mary Suffle
- Shirley Craig
- Christopher Lewis
- Sarah Tanner
- Elizabeth Wright
- Judy Tanner
- Mary Lyons

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

- Sharon George
- Elaine Lamoreaux
- Carmen Misner
- Shirley Moose



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Simplify Christmas Spend Less



Simplify Christmas - Advent 2017

“Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

Jeremiah 29:7

Book Club News

Hold onto your hoodie and slip on your Air Force One's. Our next topic for Tuesday's study group is the mysterious world of hip-hop. Here is what Amazon's website says about our next book, *The Hip-Hop Church*:*

Hip-hop is here. The beats ring out in our cities. Hip-hop culture is all around us: in the clothes youth wear, in the music they listen to, in the ways they express themselves. It is the language they speak, the rhythm they move to. It is a culture familiar with the hard realities of our broken world; the generation raised with rap knows about the pain. They need to know about the hope. Enter the hip-hop church.

Like the culture it rises from, the hip-hop church is relevant and bold. And it speaks to the heart. In this book, pastors Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson show the urgency of connecting hip-hop culture and church to reach a generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ. They give practical ideas from their urban churches and other

We have all heard the slogans encouraging us to support local businesses by going to them first before we jump online or look at big box chain stores. While there is a lot of wisdom in doing so it is hard to resist the discounted prices offered by Amazon and other large retailers. While it may be a stretch to think that God had in mind buying local when speaking through the prophet Jeremiah to command the people of the covenant to “work for the peace and propensity of

hip-hop churches about how to engage and incorporate rap, break dancing, poetry and deejays to worship Jesus and preach his Word.

Hip-hop culture is shaping the next generation. Ignoring it will not reduce its influence; it will only separate us from the youth moving to its rhythm. How will they hear Christ's message of truth and hope if we don't speak their language? And how can we speak their language if we don't understand and embrace their culture? Hear the beat. Join the beat. Become the beat that brings truth and hope to a hungry, hurting generation.

The authors of our next book are Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson. As President and CEO of World Impact and advocate for urban ministry, Efrem Smith is committed to church-planting in the city. Phil Jackson is the founder and lead pastor of the House Covenant Church (The House) known for offering Chicago's first Christ-centered, hip-hop worship has

the city where I sent you” there is a clear connection. The people were in exile. They were in a place that they would rather not be. Nevertheless God reminded them that the city where you are planted will determine your welfare.

But thinking of others does not need to be expensive. Jesus was born into a family who struggled to make ends meet. Jesus experienced homelessness. He knew what it was like to rely on the generosity of others. Jesus was one of us. Yet He was God.

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service. For more than two decades, Phil has served God full-time on the front lines of urban youth ministry. You do not have to read the book to attend, but it does help with the discussion and what you receive back from it. Used copies of this book are available from the office for \$6.

Our goal is to continue to widen our circle and so we hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Tuesday at Noon. Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share. We are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

*Efrem Smith and Phil Jackson. *The Hip-Hop Church—Connecting with the Movement Shaping our Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium, Christine
Children's Time	Cyndi
Candle Lighting	Karen
Ushers	Bob, Carolyn, Jim
Production Team	Bob
Nursery	Carolyn
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Coffee Hour	Craig Family

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor
Mark Vorenkamp	Children & Youth

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Kathy Howe	Choir Director
Rebekah Britton	Piano & Organ
Kevin Croom	Farm to Table
Israel Unger	Business Development

Asbury Café

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday after the first service for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for 2nd service.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

ASBURY WILL BE HOLDING
A TOWN HALL MEETING ON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2017
AT 2:30PM IN THE ASBURY
FELLOWSHIP HALL.

SPECIAL CHURCH
CONFERENCE WILL BE
HELD ON SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 17TH AT 12N

Simplify Christmas Spend Less ... *continued from page 4*

He had a choice and He chose to hang out in the poor neighborhoods with people like us. And Jesus teaches us that heaven can exist right here. The Kingdom of God is not some far off place for the rich and famous. It is for us.

Whatever we have is enough. This Christmas, why not give only what you have rather than borrow against the future. Simply your Christmas by giving yourself. By sharing the gifts that God has given you with others. Jesus promises that you will always get more than you give. It depends on what you are looking for. The treasures that we cherish the most are the relationships. Come join us and build relationships that make a difference.

Dec 3 - Think Local

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help... Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken...

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Whether we are talking about sports or neighborhood improvement more gets accomplished when we work together. Think local is- more than a slogan and it is more than where we shop. Nevertheless, in this time of giving and spending, think about the peo-

ple you can bless with the shopping that you already do.

There are many people who own small businesses, their own families counting on increased Christmas season sales in order to have a happy holiday themselves. When you're considering the gifts that you need to buy for family members, consider buying them from people instead of corporations, using this holiday not only to bless your own family but also to bless another family. Some examples include food from local farmers and art from local artists.

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Dec 11 Mon

Dec 12 Tues 12N Pastor Book Club

Dec 13 Wed 6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

Dec 14 Thurs 6:00pm Christmas Concert
No Choir Practice

Dec 17 Sun 12N Special Church Conference
9:00am Traditional
Worship
10:00am Connect Break
10:30am Contemporary
Worship
12:00 N Café Closes

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 47 Offering \$ 1,058**

Look for announcements scrolling on the our screen prior to the start of worship.

Email announcements by the Friday before to:
FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

The End of the Year Local Church Report will be due January 30, 2018. I have in your mailboxes your forms. Please work on it accordingly and try to get it back



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to me by January 15, 2018. If anyone has any questions, or need extra forms, call the church office 235-0016.

Ways to Connect

Donate –You can give online at FlintAsbury.org/donate

Music Ministry –We are looking for vocalists and musicians.

Community Gardening – The Asbury Farm needs volunteers.

Pantry - We need food items, including meats, paper products; personal items diapers, and financial support.

Social Media allows us to tell others about the work that God is doing. All of us can

help enhance our presence in the social media by posting on our Facebook and utilizing our website for blogging.

Housing - the Asbury House offers local college students a way to use their gifts and passions together with their faith in building a better neighborhood.

Women's Circles - The women of Asbury meet regularly in small groups.

Pastor's Book Club meets each Tuesday at 12Noon for fellowship, food and learning.



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Neighborhood Connection



We envision a community in love with God, each other, and our neighbors evidenced by the transformation of ourselves and our neighborhood. We are a center for worship & spiritual growth, a center for connections and a center for health & wellness.

Our goal is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions

for the common good, where children grow into citizens who contribute to building and maintaining a vibrant neighborhood, and all residents are able to enjoy safety, good health, a culture that fosters life long learning and satisfying lives.

We believe that such an ambitious goal can never be attained without God's grace and abundance and Christ calls each of us to be disciples willing to share our witness through words and acts.

Simplify Christmas Spend Lessa new worship series

cont. from page 5

Dec 10 Spend Less

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy any where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21

Who doesn't like to open a gift under the tree with our name on it? But whether it is a new iPhone or socks the stuff that we buy for each other just doesn't last. It also doesn't really satisfy us for very long. The iPhone X comes out and our existing phone seems out of date. Our favorite pair of socks wears out. We were created for more than socks and phones and Jesus Christ wants us to experience the joy that comes in knowing our Creator as a friend.

Dec 17 Give More

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap.

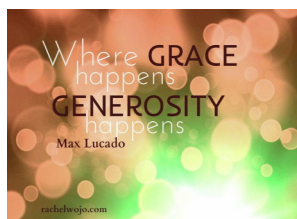
Luke 6:38

We enjoy being around generous people. There is something special about an aunt who always has kind words or a hug just when we need it. Material generosity can be a veil for someone who craves attention and hasn't learned that love is not about the gifts we open. Love is about giving more of ourselves so that we can build authentic friendships that withstand the times when we don't have a way to give anything more than our love. Christmas is a time when we remember the gift that God gave to the world. The most precious gift of all. God gave Himself.

Dec 24 Extend Grace

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matthew 5:7



Many of us will be spending time this Christmas with members of our family that we don't see too many other times during the year. Sometimes this includes people we would rather not be spending our time with. The bible is clear about how we are to handle people with regard to grace. So, instead of just handing over the card containing the gift card and giving a halfhearted "Merry Christmas," why not give a more worthwhile gift that God has given to each of us. Grace.

Dec 24 Christmas Eve

Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.

Luke 2:10

Be sure to join us on Christmas Eve for a special celebration. The true meaning of Christmas is quite simple. God loves us so much and each one of us is special in God's sight.

Let us thank God for the greatest gift of all time. A gift that will last forever.

Pastor Tommy