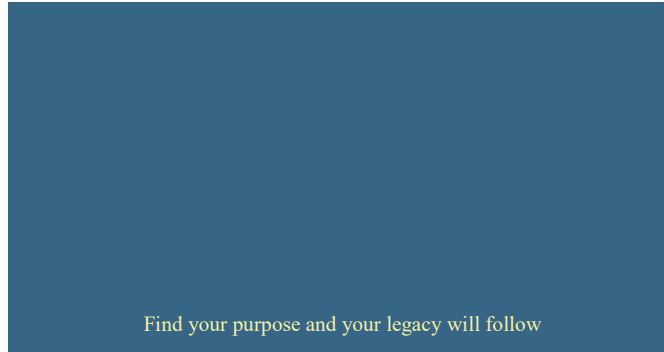


ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Legacy (What is your purpose?)

Legacy is for old people. This is what I thought when I was a young adult. It was not that I was not ambitious. Quite the opposite. And my ambition determined the legacy that I was building. It always does. Your legacy is what people say about you when you are not around. As legacy ages, it becomes more narrowly focused. The details fade away. Only the headlines remain until, eventually, there is only one headline left. Your legacy.



There is a thought that we should not worry about legacy. Indeed, our beliefs about Jesus Christ may lead us to conclude that following Him is all that matters. Could this be our legacy? What we are remembered for. "What was Sally like." "Sally? Oh, she

Was a Christ-follower. That's what you need to know about Sally." This sounds like enough, doesn't it? I can end this article right here. Be a Christ-follower.

But first, I need to write about you and I. You know? Those of us who

Page 2

Volume 19 Issue 15

December 15, 2019

Special points of interest:

>>> Leadership Team will meet on Monday, December 16th at 6pm.

Tipping Point (What does it take?)

This series was inspired by a poetic statement, an article about balance, and Psalm 144. These inspirations were made more potent by research that I was doing for ushering in the New Year. Traditionally, people will attend church on Christmas Eve, even if a church is not a part of their tradition at other times. And this year at Asbury, we are anticipating a lot of first-time visitors. Who does not want to hear the

greatest story ever told in song and in a fresh new way? And we want everyone who comes to leave with a good



reason to return the following Sunday.

A while back, I was asked whether I believe that our community is on the road to recovery. While I wanted to respond with a convincing yes, I hesitated. I am usually an optimist. I know how to choose words that inspire confidence. But I'm also helplessly honest. I prefer the raw truth over a cover-up. Although I chose my words carefully, I that it was essential, to be honest.

Page 2

Inside this issue:

Legacy	1
Tipping Point	1
In Our Prayers/Coming up this Week	3
Asbury Worship Series— Pono	4
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Asbury Worship Series	5
Legacy	6
The Daniel Plan	7
Small Group Questions & Notes	8
Tipping Point	9
Legacy	10

Tipping Point (What does it take?)...cont. from page 1

Our neighborhood is struggling on whatever road we are on, and the truth is, we are on a lot of different routes. There is an overpowering sense of scarcity. Our focus is much more on need than on possibilities. Even our most optimistic perspectives, when we are honest, are colored with shades of gray, and our rainbows are not as bright as we hoped.

"What is missing?" she asked. "A tipping point," I responded. Malcolm Gladwin defines "tipping point" as that mysterious point in time when "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, and the boiling point" occurs. The tipping point is that a place where momentum changes quickly and dramatically. It is a breakthrough. While tipping points can be bad news, such as in climate change caused by the warming of our planet, this article is about a good tipping point. In other words, an event where momentum changes from scarcity to abundance.

In Psalm 144, we find promises of abundance. Barns full of produce, livestock multiplying, shipments full, reduced crime, fewer arrests, and overwhelming joy. Psalm 144 describes the other side of a tipping point. An intersection where beauty overcomes violence, emerging all around. A point where there is a shift from scarcity to abundance.

Pono" is a word from the indigenous language of Hawaii. Pono is an attitude, a statement of cohesion, a balance of self-care, and hospitality. Pono is a way forward that leads to a tipping point. During this season of Christmas, we reflect on a particular time when God delivered a tipping point for all of humanity. A time when God illustrated in the flesh what pono looks like, amid a violent reception.

The birth of Christ was, in my opinion, the most breath-taking example of the intersection of violence and beauty that the world has ever known. In the middle of a Roman-occupied village, ruled by violence, a child is born. But, not just any child. While all births are miracles, this birth would usher in a tipping point that would change the relationship between humanity and God forever.

**May our barns be filled with
crops of every kind.**

Psalm 144:13

But before we celebrate Christmas Eve, let's begin with where we are today. Asbury is part of a community that desperately wants to redefine itself, but doesn't have the resources to pull it off. Or do we?

Michal Mather, in his book, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything*, begins with a confession. As a pastor, he saw his role as bringing good news to people who were lacking. A prophetic voice of hope in a community of scarcity. What Pastor Mike discovered, however, was more powerful, sharing that, "Now I often feel overwhelmed by the abundance I see, riches where I had thought there was nothing."

This change of attitude became a tipping point for Pastor Mike. A game-changer. No longer did my friend only see scarcity and violence. He could now see the beauty that was too often hidden by layers of systemic injustice and neglect. Pastor Mike discovered that the violence of systemic injustice could never annihilate beauty.

There is no denying the aftermath of violence that we witness every day. Streets littered with trash from plastic packaging that once offered barriers to consumption, now discarded and adding to the camouflage that hides the land. Houses that were once homes for families left for the weather and vandals to rip at their flesh until they are no more than piles of trash. The list of blemishes and scars is exhausting.

Page 9

Legacy (What is your purpose?)...cont. from page 1

want to be Christ-followers, but we mess up from time to time. We lose sight of Jesus at times and wander off the path that we last saw Jesus on. What is our legacy? "Jeffrey? Oh, he was sort of a Christ-follower. You know? I think he tried. But, he was really more of a...what's the word? Oh, he was more of a poser." In other words, Jeffery pretended to be what he wanted to be but couldn't quite be.

Are you a poser? Too personal? I know that at times, I am a poser. I try to follow Jesus, but something gets in the way. I may point to other people when this happens. « It's their fault, » I say to myself. « They pushed too far. » But I feel blessed that there is a voice in my head telling me that I simply turned the wrong way. It is not a condemning voice. It seems to be an understanding voice. A voice that was full of grace. This is how I know that the voice comes from Christ.

Of course, there are other voices. The one that agrees with me is the loudest. "Yeah! Your right. It's their fault. You stand up for yourself. We're not taking the fall." But when I consider that the loudest voices do not sound like the one I long to hear, and I listen more intently, I hear it. Sometimes it is only a whisper, but it is always there.

Page 6



In our Prayers

Curtis Young	Miriam Watson
Rachel Bastine	Shirley Craig
Norma Buzzard	Christopher Lewis
Mary Lyons	Sarah Tanner
Barbara McIvor	Elizabeth Wright
Austin & Mary Suffle	Judy Tanner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Mary Nations	Mary Russell
Elaine Lamoreaux	

DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND OUR
CHRISTMAS PLAY ...

DUSTY 2.0
THE DONKEY IS BACK!
ON CHRISTMAS EVE
STARTING AT 6:00pm

SO INVITE YOUR FAMILY,
FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS!
IF YOU ENJOYED IT LAST YEAR, IT
WILL BE BETTER THIS YEAR!!



Coming up this week



Dec 16	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		6:00pm	Leadership Design
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Dec 17	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
Dec 18	Wed	12Noon	Book Club
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
		6-8:00pm	Rec Nite
Dec 19	Thu	10am-1pm	Pick up Christmas food boxes—families from Potter School
		6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Dec 20	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Dec 21	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Dec 22	Sun	8am-10am	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
		9:30am	Café Open
		10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship

Asbury Worship Series Pono

According to Wikipedia, the word Pono is from the native language of Hawaii. A common English synonym for Pono is "righteousness." For example, the motto of the state is *Ua Mau ke Ea o ka ʻĀina i ka Pono*. This motto is translated as "The sovereignty of

the land is perpetuated in righteousness."



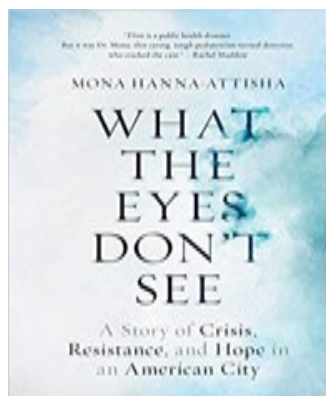
The word righteousness is not used that much anymore. The

word is steeped in religiosity. To be righteous is to be obedient to God's will. To be free of sin, or at least, trying our best not to sin. For that matter, sin is another word that comes out of religious dogma. The word sin is not commonly used, except for describing a particularly tasty dessert that is so good it must be sinful.

Page 5

Book Club News

On November 13th our group started discussing a book written



by a local hero. Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha is the courageous, children's doctor who risked

her reputation and her career to bring to light that our public water was poisoning us. Being a whistleblower in the midst of desperate people willing to destroy anyone who disagrees with them requires

courage, and other people willing to stand with you. This is Dr. Mona.

What the Eyes Don't See is a story about all of us. It is a personal story. We know the names in the book, or at least most of them. We know a lot that is not in her book. And we can feel the anger, helplessness, disgust, and regrets, that Dr. Mona shares in her testimony. More important, we have an opportunity to learn from the past, and to work together for a stronger Flint. But what does this look like to you?

Dr. Mona's book will challenge you to get involved, just as we challenge each other. And as we

reflect on the events that rocked our community, you can anticipate new ideas and discussions that could shape how you view our circumstances. And what you may feel called to do about it.

I encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group is a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday at Noon. There are a couple of books available. You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org. Please consider making a donation to cover the cost of books.

Leadership in Worship & Service

Welcome Team	Tony, Mirium
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Jonathon, Terrance
Children	Patrice & Mirium
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Café	Christine & Norma

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Operations
Blair Neifert	Farm Manager
Israel Unger	Function to Funding

Asbury Café

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

Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share. And we are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Pastor Tommy

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts

Asbury Worship Series—Pono... Coming December 8th...Cont. from page 4

Our next series takes place during the Christmas season. A time of anticipation, celebration, deep discount sales, generosity, parties, and remembering God's grace. At Asbury, we will be performing the musical, *Dusty*, again this year. I'm sure there will be some tweaks to the lines and the songs, along with some new faces and voices. Think *Dusty* 2.0 — even better than version 1.0.

While our series title is a Hawaiian word for righteousness, our subtitle may seem like a different direction — *The intersection of violence and beauty*. I read this phrase, which I believe to be poetry, in a book which inspired this series.¹ Once again, God is working through other people and through art. I was so moved by this line of poetry that I stopped reading immediately and went to prayer. Thank You, Lord, for inspiring me. Your mercy and love never end.

What does this phrase even mean? I instantly felt an urge to explore this poetic line, deeper, before reading on. I didn't want the author to tell me what it meant before I had a chance to reflect on what it meant in prayer. Perhaps a habit I picked up in seminary. I want to know what God has to say to me about essential subjects before the writer tells me what God told them.

The intersection of violence and beauty. This poetry speaks to me because I feel it. it right away. I'm feeling it right now. The intersection of violence and beauty sounds like a title for a play or a book. Perhaps the title of a song or a poem. Maybe the title for a Christmas season worship series? Lord, what do You want us to know about this observation of Your city? Help us to see this intersection through Your eyes, Lord. I see violence when I see the blight in our neighborhood. I see violence

perpetrated by weather, by fire, and by people. I also see beauty. I see potential in the people. I know that God loves them dearly. I know that God has uniquely gifted them for work in the kingdom. But what work? While there is beauty in the gifts of our neighbors, there is violence in the lack of employment. Violence comes out of scarcity. Beauty comes out of gifts. As does abundance.

I once came across a man tearing the siding off of the walls of what was once a home. He was using a snow shovel. I wondered if there was something deeper going on in the ripping off of the siding. Anger, I understand, is a kinetic feeling. We dissipate anger by physical movement. I wonder whether the man was less angry after he had finished taking off the siding.

This is where the word *pono* came from. Well, not directly. I read an article in *Psychology Today* about anger. The article used this word *pono*. But instead

May our barns be filled with crops of every kind. **Psalm 144:13**

of righteousness, perhaps the more common translation, the writer focused on the results of *pono*. The beauty of finding balance in the community. Hurt and hopelessness finding forgiveness and abundance. Giftedness finding purpose.

The story of Christmas is a tale that offers insight into this poetic line. We imagine the beauty of pregnancy. The miracle of a tiny egg and seed becoming a child carried in the womb of His mother until the time is right for His birth. We imagine the violence of an empire requiring this family to travel from their village, tucked away in the northern highlands. Only to arrive in a place where they would not find shelter other than a stable. It was in that intersection of beauty and violence that a Savior was born.

But the violence wouldn't end. Nor would the violence be replaced by beauty. Not yet. Shortly after the child's birth, after the shepherds went back to tend their flocks, and after the travelers from the far east had returned to their native land, the holy family was in danger. Unimaginable violence was taking place around them. They were not safe. Even the Son of God could not escape the violence of the city.

Dr. Matt James writes, "Pono is when you feel centered and comfortable in your own skin. You feel connected to nature, your community, your friends and family, and yourself. You feel at peace. You feel balanced and a sense that all is well. When you feel *pono*, your decisions and actions are driven by integrity and awareness of what is good for the whole. And when you feel *pono*, you feel energetic, focused, and effective."¹

May the Christmas season give you feelings of *pono*. May you feel more connected to your community and to the earth. May your decisions and actions be driven by integrity and awareness of what is right for our community.

I pray that you will join us during this season of Christmas each Sunday. And on Christmas Eve, when we will unwrap the gift of Christmas by sharing a unique retelling of this story at the intersection of violence and beauty.

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. *Dusty*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. Auditions are coming very soon, so be sure to get involved. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

One of the most read books this century is *The Purpose Driven Life* by Pastor Rick Warren. If the name sounds familiar, this is the same writer who co-authored *The Daniel Plan* that inspired our worship series for the start of 2020.

But before we write a New Year's Resolution as part of the Daniel Plan, we should take in the Christmas season. We should let God speak to us about what is essential about each of us that we should know.

Most of us are aware that the birth of Jesus was foreshadowed in ancient scripture, centuries before His birth. These Biblical prophecies led the descendants of the people of the Exodus to anticipate the birth of a Messiah. While we can look at these prophecies from our comfortable position long after, there was a lot of uncertainty in what God had in mind.

Isaiah spoke about the birth of a child who will be called Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14). And Isaiah also includes information about a "suffering servant" who would be with and for the people (beginning with Isaiah 52:13). God promised through this prophet, and others, that this child will lead with perfect fairness and justice, and bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world (Isaiah 9:7).

In the Gospel of Luke, Mary sings a song that has roots in Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 1:46-55). But Mary knew very little about the details. Only that she was pregnant and the promises made by an Angel. This became Mary's purpose in life. She would be the mother of Jesus. The Messiah. This would be her purpose. This would be her legacy. This is what the world would say about her long after her purpose in this life was

done. But did Mary know how to be a mother to Jesus?

**A young woman who is pregnant
will have a son and will name him
Emmanuel. Isaiah 7:14**

Mary was unique. But so are you. Mary's purpose was foretold in ancient scripture. And so was yours. But you don't know for sure what this may mean for you. Never did Mary. Some of us are blessed to see our children grow older and have children of their own. Mary watched her son be executed. I don't think she was expecting this. I like the first ending better. And fortunately, so does God. This is why Jesus came, died, and is forever with us.

The very best possible legacy for any of us to leave begins with our divine purpose. Find your purpose, and your legacy will follow. Legacy is not about leaving behind an estate or having a building named after you, although these are examples for a small few of us. Your legacy is what you leave behind as you fulfill the purpose that God created you to do. A legacy that endures comes out of calling.

One of the most frequent objections I hear when I ask for someone to step up and take on a project for our community is, "I don't know how." This is 2nd only to "I have never done anything like that before." I get it. When it was clear that following Christ for me required me to go back to school, and later to move to Flint, I had not done anything like this before. I did not know how to do or even what to do.

I've learned that this is precisely where God likes to take me. This is when my only reasonable course of action is to turn to Christ and say, "Lord, I'm in. But I don't have a clue where to begin." And this is the sort of reply I get in return, that helps me to know that it is His voice. "I know." "OK?" I sometimes say out loud in response. "But now what?"

One time, the response that came back made me a little angry. It was not an audible voice, but it was a voice, alright. Loud enough for me to hear and clear enough for me not to misunderstand the point. It went something like this, "Remember when you took your first job at a software company? You left the technical side of the business to accept a position opening a new sales office. You did not know how to begin, so you asked people who had done it before. Do that."

What? I left an industry that took me years of school and more years of working my way up so that I could go back to the beginning and start over? This is what made me just a little angry. Worse, it took me years to realize that software wasn't my purpose. I was not doing what God created me to do. I was miserable most of the time. I don't want to go back.

"But I created you for such a time as this," Jesus said. I did not worry that you had moved so far

THE DANIEL PLAN

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR YOUR HEALTH

Coming December 29, 2019

What is your New Year's Resolution? Are there any big changes that you hope that you have the resolve to undertake? If 2020 is like past years, the number of fitness club and gym memberships will spike during January. And, if the patterns of past years hold true, most new memberships will come to an end within 24 weeks. Well, 6 months of working on fitness is better than none at all.

You are invited to join a different kind of fitness club this year. A club without a monthly fee. We are calling it the Daniel Club, after the person who inspired it. Daniel was a prophet during the time that the people of Judah were in exile. Daniel challenged the temptations of all you can consume buffets and prevailed. But Daniel didn't do it alone.

The Daniel Club is comprised of people who are following a proven recipe for improved fitness and health called the *Daniel Plan*. While there are multiple variations on this theme we chose a plan developed by physicians in partnership with Saddleback Church in Southern California. This plan is based on five pillars that make it possible to achieve goals that are ordinarily impossible for most of us: faith, friends, food, fitness, and focus.

Our series that ended with Thanksgiving considered what it means to say that *Food is medicine*. In that series we learned that our bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit. So how we treat our bodies matter a great deal. For the Christmas season, our series is called *Pono, The Intersection of violence and beauty*. These themes come together in our first series for 2020, titled, *The Daniel Plan*.

The Daniel Plan
Faith, Friends, Fitness, Food and Focus

We will begin on Sunday, December 29, by writing down a resolution for 2020. For most of us, our resolution will be the same. "In 2020 I will make my health and well-being a priority by participating in the Daniel Plan." During the first five weeks of 2020, we will learn about each of the pillars of success, set goals for ourselves, and meet regularly with others who have made this same New Year's Resolution.

We are hoping to include options for each of us to find a fitness program that works for our circumstances. More information is coming. The Asbury Café will support us with menu selections and classes on how to prepare foods that add to our well-being.

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. *Dusty 2.0*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. We are praying for a big turnout, and that most of our visitors will return to participate in the Daniel Plan.

Pastor Tommy

¹ *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places*. Rev Michael Mather. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018.

² "The Energy of Anger," Matt James, PhD. © 2019, Psychology Today.

Life Group Questions & Notes

Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Isaiah 7:14. Who is this text taking about? We can look back at ancient scripture and see foreshadowing of the birth of Jesus, but is it really all that clear? Imagine what it may have been like for Mary when she learned that her purpose in life was to be the Mother of Jesus. How much did Mary know about what this meant? Read Luke 1:46-55. Now how much did Mary know about the details of what life would be like for her?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Legacy*. Have you thought about what you hope people will say about you when your time is finished in this life? What would you hope people would say? Why would they say that? Would you like to change what people would say? To what? How much do you know about the details of what will happen as you fulfill your purpose?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God?

But our tipping point is not found in following each other with trash bags. Nor is our game-changer found in the latest funding to remove blighted housing, although these are all essential tasks for us to do. But if they were themselves, a tipping point, we wouldn't still be writing grant proposals and gathering neighbors together to clean trash out of abandoned lots. These are important tasks that we must do, but we also need something else that has escaped our grasp.

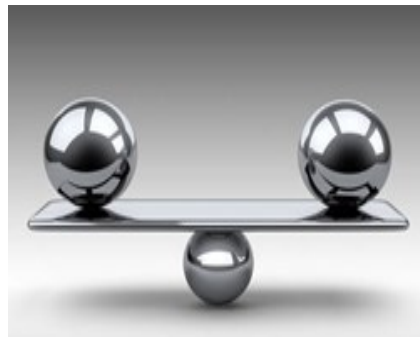
God's presence is always a game changer, but God knows not to do things for people who can do things for them-

People of faith anticipated the arrival of the Christ child for Thousands of years. Prophets, such as Isaiah, made God-inspired pronouncements that we believe pointed to this holy tipping point. For example, the Gospel of Matthew references one such prophecy that "a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). This child will be called "God is with us" is a very provocative statement. If God is actually with us, a part of our clean-up team, attending our block club meetings, and at our neighborhood planning meetings, this is indeed a game-changer. Enough of us realizing God is with us is a tipping point.

God's presence is always a game-changer, but God knows not to do things for people who can do things for themselves. Avoiding

doing things for others that they can do for themselves is a critical lesson that my friend, Pastor Mike, shared with me when I first met him in 2011. "Don't do things for people that they can do themselves," my friend blurted out when I asked about responding to the overwhelming need in our community. Mike's advice is not a "never" statement, but a guiding principle for offering assistance to a community of people who see their community through the eyes of scarcity.

But what if this Christmas we unwrap a gift that is a game-changer that we can use right away. This gift does not require batteries, nor is some assembly required. This gift is powerful. It is like X-ray glasses that allow us to see past the trash, to see past the systems that put our community into the tailspin that caused us to crash. It is the gift of seeing beauty where violence once ruled the moment.



Simple logic tells us that a newborn child in itself cannot be a tipping point. Yet, God's presence and participation in transforming our community is arguably just the game-changer that we need. Sometimes, perhaps most times, the tipping point comes after a small, incremental change. Or at least,

the amount of movement seemed insignificant at the time. But the consequences are enormous.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday as we explore the intersection of violence and beauty. Be sure to make your calendar for Christmas Eve at 6 pm. Dusty 2.0 promises to be an enjoyable time for all. Check with Terrence if he has any parts in the play still available if you are willing to participate on stage. Dusty 2.0 is truly a neighborhood event.

Since we are speaking about game-changers, we will kick off the New Year with a community-wide program that is commonly called the Daniel Plan. On December 29, we will begin by preparing our resolutions for the New Year. Have you tried to keep New Year's resolutions before and failed. When we depend on our willpower to succeed in making significant changes, we may succeed in the short term, but we ultimately fail. Join us and learn how God can be a part of your success plan.

Here at Asbury, we worship each Sunday at 10:30 am, and I believe that God is calling you to join us. Come and participate in worship, not as a spectator, but as someone who belongs to God. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

Welcome to the Asbury Community

1653 Davison Rd
Flint, MI 48506



Phone: 810-235-0016
Fax: 810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)
E-mail: FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com
CircuitRider@FlintAsbury.org

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FLINT, MICHIGAN
PERMIT #151

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.

Legacy (What is your purpose?) ...cont. from page 6

away from where I wanted you to be, because you were learning to do things that I needed you to do for me later. And now, here you are. With me. Welcome home, Tommy."

Most of my adult life, the only two people who called me Tommy was my mother and the person who signed my paycheck. Most of the people I know changed my name to suit them, and I was just Tom. I was OK with this until I realized that I was given a name at my baptism that wasn't by accident. I remembered that Tommy is the name that Jesus used for me. He knew me before I was born, and He named me when the world was created. And He gave me purpose.

And this, God willing, will be my legacy.

What will our legacy be: I don't ask this question to bring you down, I ask this question to inspire you. I want you to seek and fulfill your purpose. If the obstacles in front of you seem impossible to overcome, then God is likely involved. But God prepares us for whatever God has in mind for us. And when we put our trust in God, the way forward will seem a little less impossible, as long as we realize that it is the power of God that is carrying us

through the rough patches. And not our own abilities.

Scripture tells us that each of us is wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). We also learn that each of us is given gifts and talents that allow us to fulfill our purpose. Paul writes about some of the different abilities that each of us is given to do what we need to do to fulfill our purpose, all from the same power that created us (1 Corinthians 12:6).

And this is where beauty emerges out of the ashes left behind by violence. This is the intersection of beauty and violence. The emergence of divine purpose when our giftedness meets the legacy that God has in mind for us. This is a basic human right. To have the freedom to respond to God's calling to do that which God created us to do. Just do it.

Sometimes our health gets in the way of moving forward. Sometimes we can't do anything to change our shortcomings. The world is full of diseases that can cripple us. More often, we simply do not do what is needed to care for ourselves. The world is also full of temptations to eat what we shouldn't eat and to do what we shouldn't do. And this affects our energy and our ability to do that which God created us to do.

One lesson that I learn over and over is that we need to take care of ourselves while fulfilling our purpose. Our minds and our bodies belong to God. Let's set a goal for ourselves to do a better job in 2020 of taking care of ourselves so that we can give God our best in fulfilling our purposes.

Join us in beginning the New Year with a community-wide program that is commonly called the Daniel Plan. On December 29, we will start by writing down our resolutions for the New Year. Have you tried to keep New Year's resolutions before and failed? When we depend on our will power to succeed in making significant changes, we may succeed in the short term, but we ultimately fail. Join us and learn how God can be a part of your success plan.

Here at Asbury, we worship each Sunday at 10:30 am, and I believe that God is calling you to join us. Come and participate in worship, not as a spectator, but as someone who belongs to God. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy