

# THE ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

## Christmas Eve Service

Please join us Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>  
for Asbury's Christmas Eve Service  
at 6:00pm.

YOU ARE ALL INVITED!

*A Savior Has Been Born To You...*



## Volunteer Spotlight Corner



Joan Kirby is a tireless worker, afraid of no one and certainly not afraid of hard work. From her work with the Asbury Food Pantry and water giveaways to preparation for Communion during worship, Joan approaches her work as a volunteer with the energy of a much younger person. A shout-out to Joan who is in our volunteer spotlight for this edition of the Circuit Rider.



United Methodist Women Annual Christmas Celebration

## Peace to those God Favors

*He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.*

Luke 1:53

No one that I know likes being called a "Scrooge." This label suggests a level of selfishness that is callous. But this understanding of the label "Scrooge" ignores how this well known Christmas tale ends. Our worship series for Advent and Christmas is titled *God Bless Us Everyone*. Our series is based on the classic story by Charles Dickens about a character named Ebenezer Scrooge. The idea for our series comes from Dr. Marcia McFey of Worship Design Studio who based her ideas for this series on a recent book titled *The Redemption of Scrooge*.<sup>1</sup> The setting for *A Christmas Carol* is 19th Century England and the story accentuates the great divide between the few with wealth and privilege and the masses scraping to get by. This divide is more than economic.

### Neighborhood Connection

Every week truckloads of food and water are delivered to Asbury for distribution. Asbury serves thousands of families each month in our parking lot, but hundreds of families are unable to come to us so we go to them. If you know of a family in need, or have any questions, you may call Reggie at 810-308-8648.

### Asbury Food Pantry...

Every week individuals and families turn to Asbury to help them supplement their food supply. Asbury is a partner with the Genesee County Food Bank where we can purchase at a big discount. WE NEED YOUR HELP with food items, including meats, and diapers. We also need your financial contributions.



### FlintAsbury.org

Join in on the conversation taking place on our blog. Pastor Tommy posts his reflections during the week along with other special guests. Let us know if you have information or other content that you wish to share.

### UMW Cookie Walk

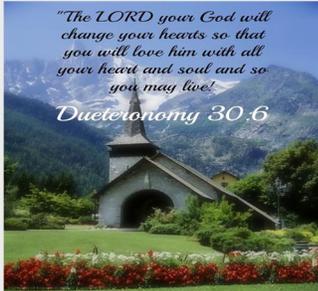
Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 18th for our United Methodist Women's Cookie Walk. The Cookie Walk will be right after each Worship Service in the Parlor.



So what does scripture have to say about this divide? In Luke, Mary sings a song that makes the claim that the poor are blessed and the rich go away empty in the kingdom ushered in by her Son that she carried in her womb (Luke 1:53). This theme is persistent throughout scripture. So, when the angels announce to the nearby shepherds that peace will come to those God favors, what are we to make of this (Luke 2:14)? Who does God favor? Well, we read how God came to the rescue of the Hebrew slaves when they were being oppressed by the wealthier and more powerful Egyptians. Elsewhere, we read that God speaking through the prophet Isaiah had a lot to say about how those who have are expected to share what they have with the have-nots. There is a definite pattern that emerges which suggests that God has a special sense of favor towards the poor.

One story that haunted me as I pursued wealth in my younger years is found in Matthew. This story is about a well-off young man who pushed Jesus enough to get the bottomline that he did not want to hear. "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" the young man asked Jesus (Matthew 19:16-22). But unsatisfied that Jesus had told him straight and perhaps suspicious that Jesus was not taking his question serious (my interpretation), the young man responded that he had kept the commandments that Jesus recited but wanted to know if this made it a done deal. So Jesus gave him the bad news. "You must rid yourself of all the distractions in your life that keep you from worshiping me alone, which in your case is wealth." Ouch! Jesus' statement puts our culture's infatuation with getting ahead, pursuing the "good life" through better economics, in a most uncomfortable place. Not a place that scripture suggests would be "favored" by God.

James Cone in his classic book, *God of the Oppressed*, writes that "the poor have little to lose and everything to gain in Jesus Christ's presence in history. In contrast the rich have little to gain and everything to lose if gain and loss are measured values of this earthly sphere" (p. 87).<sup>2</sup> Alas, Ebenezer Scrooge, in the classic, *A Christmas Carol*, seems to exemplify this paradox. Miserable in his wealth, Ebenezer seems beyond redemption, yet there is something about the spirit and joy of Christmas which leaves no one beyond redemption. And as the story of our historical symbol of greed unfolds we discover that Scrooge is redeemed. This offers great hope for the rest of us and for the world in which we live. Could the label "Scrooge" suggest a redeemed person who once was selfish, allowing their material possessions to get in the way of finding joy, who now has seen the light of Christmas?



### Worship Guide

Traditional Service  
 9:30 AM  
 WELCOME  
 JOYS AND CONCERNS  
 OPENING HYMN  
 CALL TO WORSHIP  
 ANTHEM  
 READING OF SCRIPTURE  
 CHILDREN'S MESSAGE  
 HYMN OF PREPARATION  
 TEACHING  
 PASTORAL PRAYER  
 OFFERING & BLESSING  
 CLOSING HYMN  
 BENEDICTION  
 POSTLUDE

### Change in Worship Service

Starting times for Worship have changed:

Bible Study	10:00 am
Traditional Worship	10:00 am
Coffee Break	11:00 am
New Beginnings	11:30 am

### In Our Prayers

Curtis Young	Rachel Bastine
Norma Buzzard	Carmen Misner
Merle Supernaw	Barbara McIvor
Shirley Moose	Elaine Lamoreaux
Austin & MarySuffle	Shirley Craig
Mary Armstrong	Sarah Tanner
Elizabeth Wright	Judy Tanner
Charlayne Oram	

*FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
 HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE*  
 Sharon George

May this Christmas bring redeeming change for each of us that allows us to give up whatever hinders us from receiving the joy that is found only in the One who came to save us. God bless us, everyone.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Rawle, Matt. *The Redemption of Scrooge*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Cone, James. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

### Asbury as a Place of Hospitality

As Asbury's pastor I am particularly proud of the role that our faith community plays in our neighborhood and beyond. From food giveaways to special events our building is an asset in our community that exists for the benefit of all who care to receive the benefits offered. While pride itself is not considered to be a state that we Christians are to pursue, hospitality is certainly a state of Christianity that scripture lifts up as an important goal to pursue. Perhaps the Book of Hebrews puts it best:

*Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!*

Hebrews 13:2



**United Way Press Conference at Asbury** Last month Asbury hosted a press conference for United Way in our parking lot. This prestigious nonprofit felt that Asbury portrayed the very heart of volunteerism and we already had a food distribution planned for the same day. Presidential appointed CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service and Chief Volunteer Officer for the United States of America Wendy Spencer joined United Way and other government officials for this announcement.

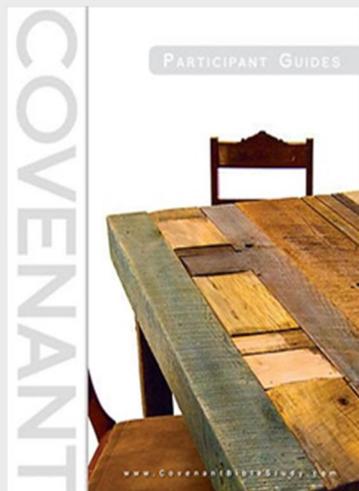
The United Methodist Women of Asbury host a number of events from fund raisers to celebrations. Our cover photo for this issue is from the annual Christmas celebration. People come from other communities to participate in this fun-filled event. Last month the UMW hosted a luncheon after worship to raise both awareness and money to support missions both in Flint and elsewhere. Food and hospitality go hand-in-hand.

December began with Asbury hosting the Crossroads District Annual Christmas party. Over 115 people from churches in Flint and around mid-Michigan were hosted for a great dinner catered by Masonic Temple and



Crossroads District Christmas Party

## Book Club News



We continue with Part 3 of our study, *Trusting the Covenant* through the rest of 2016. The prophets are rich in Biblical tradition and Lamentations are too often ignored. It is always the right time to join in. Your insights and questions are welcomed.

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.

Dec 13 Ezekiel 34-37

Dec 20 Isaiah 40-43, 49-55:13

Dec 27 Vacation

Jan 3 Isaiah 56, 58-61, 63-66

Isaiah offers a lot to cover so we will see how far we get in our first session and adjust our schedule if needed.

worship. The Christmas skit gave us all a few good laughs and a lot to think about. Christmas seems to presume hospitality. It is a reminder that the God we serve is both our Lord and our host who taught us that hospitality is a divine gift and mandate.

Our Christmas events began with our annual Hanging of the Greens on the last Sunday of November. Our church is beautifully decorated for the holidays thanks to all who helped out. The season of Advent when we wait in anticipation of Christmas Eve and the return of Christ is a time of joy and celebration. Be sure to join us each week for worship at either 10 am or 11:30 on Sunday. We meet just outside the Sanctuary for coffee break at 11:00 for snacks and conversation.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for our Community Christmas Concert on December 15 at 6 PM. Asbury will be hosting the Flint Institute of Music for a concert that will feature both their Youth Chorus and their Jubilee Chorale group along with members of our very own Asbury Choir. Tom Allen will accompany on guitar. It promises to be a celebration to remember for all ages. We hope to see you there along with your friends and neighbors.

### *Ways to get involved...*

**Worship** helps us to connect with God through music, scripture, biblical teaching, prayer, reflection, adoration and fellowship.

**Community Gardening** - The Asbury Center for Nutrition has several gardens, orchards and a hoop house that need your attention.

**Neighborhood Connect** is a ministry that assesses individual gifts and passions and looks for ways to bring people together in ways that improve relationships and our community.

**Food & Water Giveaway** - Join us on Thursdays at 8:30 AM to help give away food and bottled water.

**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.

**Student 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 12 for fellowship, food and learning.



## Coming up this week - December

Dec 12	Mon		
Dec 13	Tues	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
		12:30pm	Lois Circle
Dec 14	Wed	10:00am	Food Giveaway
		4:00pm	Youth Recreation
		6:00pm	Elizabeth Circle (Debø)
Dec 15	Thurs	10:00 am	Water Delivery
		10:00am	Nutrition Truck Delivery
		6:00pm	Asbury Christmas Concert
Dec 16	Fri		
Dec 17	Sat	12Noon	Youth Recreation
Dec 18	Sun	10:00am	Bible Study
		10:00am	Traditional Worship
		11:00am	Coffee Break
		11:30 am	New Beginnings Worship
Dec 18	Sun		UMW Cookie Walk following each Worship Service

Look for announcements scrolling on our screen prior to the start of worship. Email announcements by the Friday before to FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

## In our worship service

Greeter	Christine	
Childrenø Time	Rev Tommy	
Candle Lighting	Karen	
Usher	Jim, Anthony, JoAn	
Sound System	Jim	
Nursery	Carolyn	
Coffee Break	Cyndi	
Worship Leader	Catherine	10:00am

## Last Week for Worship

Attendance 50    Offering \$ 6,068

## Coffee Break

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 *New Beginnings*.

## Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel	Pastor
Jim Craig	Church Council Chair Asbury CDC Board Chair
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Kathy Howe	Choir Director
Rebekah Britton	Organist
Phone/Fax	810-235-0016 (call first when faxing)

## WELCOME! - Beinvenidos!

We are happy you are here to worship with us today. Please fill out an information card and place it in the offering plate in order that we may be able to serve you further.

## OUR VISION – Nuestro Vision



*We envision a community in love with God, one another and our neighbors, evidenced through the transformation of ourselves and our neighborhood*

## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS!

**2017Asbury Schedules for:** Liturgist, Childrenø Time, Greeters, Ushers, Sound and Coffee Hour are due before the end of December. Please try to get them to Connie by **December 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

**2017 Annual Local Church Report:** I will be downloading the forms by December 1<sup>st</sup>, so those of you that have forms coming to you to fill out, please look for them in your mailbox or in your mail. Keep in mind the report has to be submitted by January 31<sup>st</sup> but I need your reports **by January 23<sup>rd</sup>** in order for me to enter all data in the computer. If you have any questions, please call the office 235-0016.

**Christmas Food Boxes:** We will be handing out food boxes for Christmas on December 20th from 10am-1pm. Boxes will be put together on December 19th starting at 10am. Please see JoAn if you wish to volunteer.

**No Pastor Book Club:** Please note, there will not be any Book Club on Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendar!



**Please put your cell phone on stun!**

**Por favor poner el teléfono en silencio!**

In order that we may be fully present in worship, please set your cell phone to silent mode. Tweets & Facebook posts are encouraged if they are relevant to our worship.

DECEMBER 2016

Asbury UMC Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Water Delivery 10am Nutrition Truck Delivery 10am Choir Practice 7pm	2 Crossroads District Christmas Party 5-8:00pm	3 UMW Christmas Tea 11:30am
4 Communion Sunday  Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am	5  	6  Pastor Book Club 12pm	7 Distress Truck delivery 10am Youth Rec 4pm  	8 Water Delivery 11:00am Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm Choir Practice 7pm	9  	10 Boy Scouts Christmas Party 2:00-6:00pm
11 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am	12  	13 Recovery Wkgroup at 1938 Howard Ave 9am Pastor Book Club 12pm Washington Neighborhood 7pm	14 Distress Truck Delivery 10am Lydia Circle 12:30pm Youth Rec 4pm Elizabeth Circle 6pm (at Debø)	15 Nutrition Truck Delivery 10:00am Water Delivery 11:00am Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm Christmas Concert 6 pm	16  	17 Youth Rec 12pm
18 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am UMW Cookie Walk following Worship Service	19 Prepare Christmas Baskets 10am  	20 Pick up Christmas Baskets 10am-1pm  Lois Circle 12:30pm	21 Distress Truck Delivery 10am Youth Rec 4pm  	22 Water Delivery 11:00am Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm Choir Practice 7pm	23  	24 Youth Rec 12pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 6pm
25 <b>MERRYCHRISTMAS!</b> Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am	26  	27 No Pastor Book Club	28 Distress Truck Delivery 10am Youth Rec 4pm  	29 Nutrition Truck Delivery 10:00am Water Delivery 11:00am Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm Choir Practice 7pm	30  	31 Youth Rec 12pm  



Asbury United Methodist Church  
1653 Davison Rd. Flint, MI 48506

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



**Church Staff:**

**Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel**  
**Connie Portillo, Office Secretary**  
**Kathryn Howe, Choir Director**  
**Rebekah Britton, Organist**

**Church Office Hours:**

**Monday and Wednesday - 9:00am to 3:00pm**  
**Friday - 10:00am to 1:00pm**  
**Phone: (810) 235-0016**  
**Fax: (810) 235-0016 (Call first before faxing)**

**Worship Sunday:**

**Bible Study 10:00am**  
**Traditional Worship 10:00am**  
**Coffee Break 11:00am**  
**New Beginnings Worship 11:30am**

**Pastor Book Club: Tuesday 12:00 Noon**  
**[FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com](mailto:FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com)**  
**[www.FlintAsburyUMC.org](http://www.FlintAsburyUMC.org)**

**PRAYER**

**is not a substitute for**

**ACTION**

**It is an Action for which**

**there is no substitute**