

THE ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

UMW Cookie Walk

Don't forget the Cookie Walk **TODAY** through the United Methodist Womens. The Cookie Walk will be right after each Worship Service in the Parlor.



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.



One Candle for Each of the Four Sundays before Christmas & a Christ Candle

The Candles of Advent

They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people."

Luke 2:9b-10

Asbury celebrates the four Sundays before Christmas by lighting one candle for each Sunday that signifies our life together in Christ. There is no prescribed meaning to the candles although a popular notion are peace, hope, love and joy. On the first Sunday, we light a candle signifying peace. On the second Sunday we light the same candle as the first Sunday and then we light a second candle signifying hope and so on. We then light a fifth candle on Christmas Eve that we call the Christ Candle.

But there is much more to this ritual than lighting candles that mean words which are themselves ambiguous. What does it mean to have peace? When we talk about the peace of Christ or when we say that rebirth is often accompanied by a peace that is beyond understanding what does this mean? Even more important, how does this affect what we do the rest of the week? We usually read a

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.

Training Class at Asbury

Water Filtration Training: There will be a water filter training class at Asbury on Tuesday, December 20th at 2:00pm. The training is free and is being offered by DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality). If you have any questions, feel free to call Kevin Croom at 810-625-6115.

short explanation or reflection each Sunday to help answer these questions. It is important to keep this simple ritual meaningful. Otherwise, there is little reason to do it and sooner or later a bright youngster will ask the obvious question, "Why bother?"

We bother because this simple ritual has so much meaning. So much so that it is worth living with the ambiguity. In fact, it may be the ambiguity that makes this ritual so rich. By making statements of faith about what it means to have peace, hope, love and joy we are able to come together around what it means to be Christian. What it means to follow Christ in a world where Christian too often means hypocrite. A label that Christ Himself used to describe persons in power who had a problem with Him. How we live out lives that embody peace, hope, love and joy matters a great deal. What they mean to us has eternal impact.

Matt Rawle offers food for thought on the topic of peace in particular questioning whether our usual definition of peace as tranquility or calm really fits. For example, when we say that Jesus is the Prince of Peace as we read in Isaiah 9:6 are we saying that there is no conflict? What if we think of peace as the opposite of fear? The angel announcing Jesus' birth to the shepherds said not to fear for the good news sang out by the angelic chorus was that peace was being brought to them and to us (Luke 2:8-15). Might we light a candle that signifies peace and its light calm our fears of what it means to follow Christ? ¹

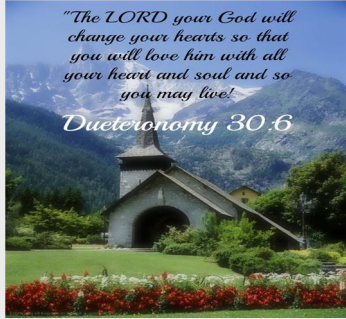
This year on the second Sunday of Advent the candle that we lit signified hope. Hope keeps us moving toward God's light. Hope is our destination and so we live with purpose instead of wandering as though we are lost. ² The third Sunday our candle stood for the love that we are to have for God and one another. While our word was love our meaning was about transformation that requires that we let go of our obsession over material things and consider what God wants. It takes some pretty serious transformation for us humans to move from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. This is love on a whole new level.

The candle that we light the Sunday before Christmas Eve is a symbol of our joy. When we sing *Joy to the World* we, like the angels singing to the shepherds, are announcing that God is with us. And because God is with us we are blessed. Everyone of us. Merry Christmas.

Pastor Tommy

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

² McFey, Marcia. *God Bless Us Every One: The Redemption of Scrooge*. © 2016 WorshipDesignStudio.com.



"The LORD your God will change your hearts so that you will love him with all your heart and soul and so you may live!"
Deuteronomy 30:6

Worship Guide

- Traditional Service
- 10:00 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 Nancy Elston
- Austin & MarySuffle Shirley Craig
- Mary Armstrong Sarah Tanner
- Elizabeth Wright Judy Tanner
- Charlayne Oram Mary Lyons

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

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 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 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.



Crossroads District Christmas Party

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

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 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.

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.

Video & Sound Support We are looking for persons willing to support worship and other events by running our media control center. Training available.

Music Ministry Join the Asbury Choir or Praise Team. We are looking for vocalists and musicians.

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.

What's coming up...?

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

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

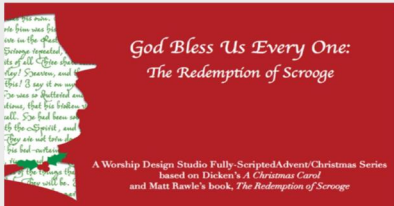
YOU ARE ALL INVITED!

A Savior Has Been Born To You...



God Bless Us Every One! Advent & Christmas Series

God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. Luke 1:53



In our worship series for Advent and Christmas we will take a look at how living in God's economy of grace and justice is the complete opposite of the life-threatening addiction to money, success, exclusion and looking out for ourselves. The chimes of the clock-tower bells in Dickens' classic A Christmas Carol provide a wake-up call for Ebenezer Scrooge. Before the night is over his night-mare turns into an inspiring dream that helps to take him on a journey from resentment, fear and isolation to a new life based on grace, hope, love and joy. Just as God's presence was born anew into this world, we too can be born anew, awakened and redeemed into renewed life, joy, passion, generosity, humility and love.



Dec 18 Notes & Reflections – From Death to Joy

Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

Romans 5:7-8 MSG

Series of horizontal lines for handwritten notes.

Coming up this week ...

Dec 19	Mon	10:00am	Prepare Christmas Boxes
Dec 20	Tues	10:00am	Pick up Christmas Boxes
		12Noon	Pastor Book Club
Dec 21	Wed	10:00am	Food Giveaway
		4:00pm	Youth Recreation
Dec 22	Thurs	10:00 am	Water Delivery
		7:00pm	Choir Practice
Dec 23	Fri		
Dec 24	Sat	12Noon	Youth Recreation
		6:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 25	Sun	10:00am	Bible Study
		10:00am	Traditional Worship
		11:00am	Coffee Break
		11:30 am	New Beginnings Worship

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!!

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	Richard
Children's Time	Jessica
Candle Lighting	Karen
Usher	Kathy, Michael, Jim, Richard
Media Support	Jim
Nursery	Carolyn
Coffee Break	UMW Executive Board
Worship Leader	Cyndi 10:00am

Last Week for Worship

Attendance 35 Offering \$ 574

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! - Bienvenidos!

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!

2017 Worship Schedules: If you are responsible for creating a worship support schedule - Please try to get them to Connie by December 23rd. If you are interested in leading worship or supporting worship through video and audio technology support talk to Pastor Tommy.

2017 Annual Local Church Report: *These reports have all been mailed out, so if you have a report to do and you didn't receive it by now, please let me know.* Keep in mind the report has to be submitted by January 31st but I need your reports **by January 23rd** 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 Book Club on Tuesday, December 27th. 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.