

THE ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Mark Your Calendar...

All members of Asbury Church should plan to attend a **Special Church Conference on Sunday, August 20 at 1:00 PM**. At this meeting you will be asked to cast your vote to approve our Strategic Plan. Our weekly Circuit Rider newsletter will feature articles each week that look at our plan in more detail. On Sunday, August 13, there will be a town hall meeting to answer questions at the end of the first worship service - 11:00 am, in the Sanctuary. If you usually come for the 2nd service, plan to arrive early, grab your coffee and join the discussion.



Asbury Neighborhood Connection Delivering Water/Food

Our Community Center team serves thousands of families each month, but still hundreds of families are unable to come to us so we go to them. If you know of a family in need, whether it be food or water delivery or have any questions, you may call Kevin at 810-625-6115 or call Asbury Church at 810-235-0016.



INSPIRATIONAL WORSHIP

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary...Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals...Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord!

from Psalm 150 (NLT)

A diverse group gathered in the upstairs meeting room for a conversation with Tom Bandy regarding our strategic goal to become a center for worship and spiritual growth for our community. Tom is helping the churches in our Conference who are

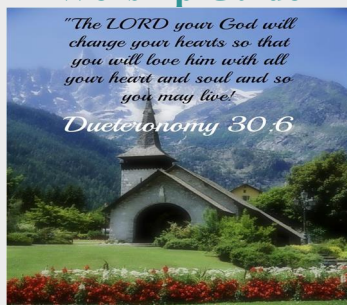
implementing vital church initiative prescriptions to utilize a wealth of information available to us to make good decisions. Our task was to review this information to help us better understand who lives in our community. That is, what are the challenges, points of view and other factors that should shape what and how we design and offer opportunities for worship and spiritual growth. Note that our focus is not on our personal preferences. Rather our focus is on our neighbors. This is not the first time that the topic of designing a worship experience that is most likely to bless our neighbors has been discussed and we are not finished.

We come into this process already aware that without significant change we will continue to miss the mark. There is not a single member of Asbury who is not painfully aware of the substantial decline that we have experienced over the past two decades. While denial is a popular remedy among all humans the reality is clear. Change or die. Asbury is not unique in the challenges that we face and we are not the first persons to wonder whether we are willing to change despite our core belief that through the power of the Holy Spirit we are being constantly transformed into new creatures. Our group was a cross-section of long-time and new members with one shared viewpoint. Everyone of us are willing to put our personal preferences aside for the sake of the gospel. That is, our focus was on what and how we can reach a greater number of persons in our community with the good news.

A center for worship and spiritual growth is more than music and preaching. Much of our conversation centered on hospitality. From greeters to ushers to "minglers" and prayer teams we considered snacks, coffee, condiments and conversation among other things. For example, we concluded that it is very important to offer coffee and refreshments 30 minutes before and after worship as well as during worship. We also considered worship themes, the use of technology and yes, we talked about music. We also talked about worship times. There is a lot of work left to be done and we will need to adjust and change along the way as we look for the most effective way to bless our community.

The style of worship that emerged as our goal is called "inspirational." While we might use this word to describe any worship experience that touches our heart the term is used here to describe a style with specific characteristics. It is a style that has emerged over the past couple of decades as many churches have learned how to connect with people on their terms. Inspirational worship is characterized by contemporary music, a faster pace, no dead-time and sensory rich content. We have work to do. While our New Beginnings worship service provided an opportunity to experiment with music, technology, flow and

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

Worship Service Times

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 Merle Supernaw
 Barbara McIvor Jonathon Misner
 Nancy Auger Austin & MarySuffle
 Shirley Craig Mary Armstrong
 Sarah Tanner Elizabeth Wright
 Judy Tanner Mary Lyons

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

Sharon George Elaine Lamoreaux
 Mary Nations Mary Russell
 Shirley Moose Charlayne Oram
 Carmen Misner Phyllis Roberts

the like, the style of worship makes a difference only within the context of the other pieces that together bless our community.

There will be lots of questions about this strategic goal. Are we staying with two services? What changes will be made to the sanctuary? Will we continue to offer Sunday School? Will children's time be a part of our service, and more? I cannot over emphasize that if your goal is to "have it your way" or the deceptively less self-centered version "hold onto our traditions" then the answer to will there be significant change is YES. But if your goal is to live out your faith in helping to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and ourselves, the answer to the question will there be significant change is still YES. But the second yes should be the sweet, sweet sound of the Holy Spirit guiding you on your own spiritual journey towards a likeness of Christ.

To learn more speak to any of the persons who have been a part of our conversations on how we achieve this strategic goal: Christine Heck, Jim Craig, Norma Nattress, Joan Kirby, Michele Weston, Tom Allen, Mark Vorenkamp, Emily Presley, Cyndi McDoniel or Pastor Tommy.

Pastor Tommy

Book Club News



We finished our discussion of the book *What Happens When You Attend* during our July 11th meeting. Ask an usher for a copy if you haven't read it. We each learned a lot about the benefits of regular church attendance. On Tuesday, July 18, we watch another video from the NOOMA collection. The following week we will begin a discussion of a book titled *Soil and Sacrament*. Parker J. Palmer writes this about our next book: "Fred Bahnson believes that faith is expressed in the work of our hands as well as our minds and hearts, and that in community we can meet the needs of a hungry world. After reading his beautifully written book, I believe these things, too, and see new ways to put my beliefs into action. *Soil and Sacrament* is about new life—for ourselves, our descendants, and the earth on which we all depend. A couple words of caution as we begin this next book. First, you do not have to read the book to attend, but it does help with the discussion and what you receive back from it. However, I will strive to copy sections of the book for persons who really don't intend to put in the time and money I do need \$10 from each person who takes a book - I have only 10 copies so far due to the lack of availability of used, affordable copies.

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.

*Bahnson, Fred. *Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013

Ways to get involved ...

Donate ó Your financial support is greatly appreciated. You can donate online at FlintAsbury.org/donate

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

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

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

Community Gardening ó 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 ó 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 Noon for fellowship, food and learning.

Sunday Bible Study meets each week at 10 am to review & discuss scripture.

Coming up this week ...

Neighborhood Deliveries /water-food

Meet Up and Eat Up: Breakfast & Lunch - Monday-Friday
8:00-9:30am & 12Noon-1:00pm

July 31 Mon

Aug 1 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club

Aug 2 Wed

Aug 3 Thur

Aug 4 Fri

Aug 5 Sat

Aug 6	Sun	10:00am	Bible Study
		10:00am	Traditional Worship
		11:00am	Coffee Break
		11:30am	New Beginnings

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
Children's Time	Rev Tommy
Candle Lighting	Karen
Usher	Richard, Kathy, Jim
Media Support	Jim
Nursery	Norma
Coffee Break	Craigs Family
Worship Leader	

Last Week for Worship

Attendance 46 Offering \$ 719

Coffee Break

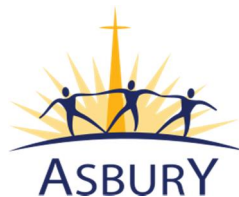
Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday after the first service for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for *New Beginnings*.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel	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 – Anuncios de la Semana

Volunteers Needed ASAP: We have a need for volunteers to help in cleaning, weeding, picking and watering of our Asbury Farm Gardens and the Hoop House. We have a staff oversees these areas, but the heavy growing season we are in right now leaves them so busy they can't spend a lot of time in the gardens. If you can spare a couple of hours here and there, please contact me to see where and when your help can be utilized for this beautiful project that Asbury has in our very own community. Michele Weston: 810-624-1184 or mweston38@att.net.

Hoop House Blessings! Last Sunday at Coffee Hour, we were served wonderful, fresh donuts. My very favorite sweet rolls just jumped into my hand before I knew it and it disappeared! I didn't even consider the beautiful salad that the McDaniels prepared for us also. However, after the second service I learned all the salad fixings came from our Hoop House Garden! I was offered a bag of freshly picked greens to take home. I will never go back to plain iceberg lettuce again. I have been enjoying daily from that bag of 3 different leaf lettuces and 3 varieties of radishes, as well as the tasty, fragrant herbs of basil, tarragon, oregano and thyme. What a blessing are becoming to our members and our neighbors by being able to access fresh, healthy and nutritious greens. I am looking forward to the tomatoes coming in and other wonderful fruits and veggies from our very own gardens.

God has been very good! Michele Weston

Bus Rides for Breakfast and Lunch: Asbury will be picking up families in the neighborhood that are without transportation to come to our Meet UP and Eat Up Summer food program. Breakfast times are 8:00-9:30am and lunch at 12N-1pm. There is a sign up sheet downstairs and also upstairs on bulletin board for you to fill out your information. But please, only fill out one sheet. Any questions, just call the church office 235-0016 or call Kevin 810-625-6115.

Please put your cell phone on stun!

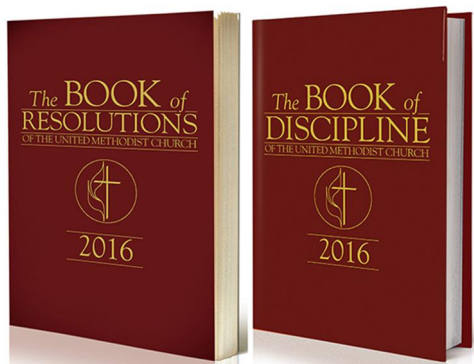
Por favor poner el teléfono en silencio!

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.

Methodism Core Values

Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, He said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do....Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

from Matthew 9:10-13 (NLT)



It can be challenging to identify the core values for a group of people, but since we are a local church that belongs to a long tradition called Methodism our task is helped greatly by scripture and tradition. Jesus Christ is at the center of our values. Therefore, we have a historical and still living role-model for reference. Out of tradition most Methodists point to grace as a fundamental value that we cling to in common. Out of grace comes our "open table" meaning that all

are invited in communion with us. We take very seriously Jesus' teachings that we are to go out into our community and invite those who do not have a relationship with the living Christ without judgment. We are blessed and we seek to share this blessing with others.

Throughout scripture there is a theme of God's love for the outcast, the struggling. It is clear from scripture that Jesus focused most of His time and energy on persons that did not "have it all together." The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, continued this practice doing more preaching outdoors and visiting places where people gathered that seemed to be outside the mainstream. Methodism emerged over a couple of centuries as the people called "Methodist" reevaluated their beliefs and core values generation after generation collecting their thoughts in two documents: *The Book of Discipline* and *the Book of Resolutions*. One focused more on structuring our life together and the second on how we interact with the world around us. Both contain a copy of our "Social Principles" which articulate the core values that we ascribe to as a denomination. The preamble of our Social Principles begins with:

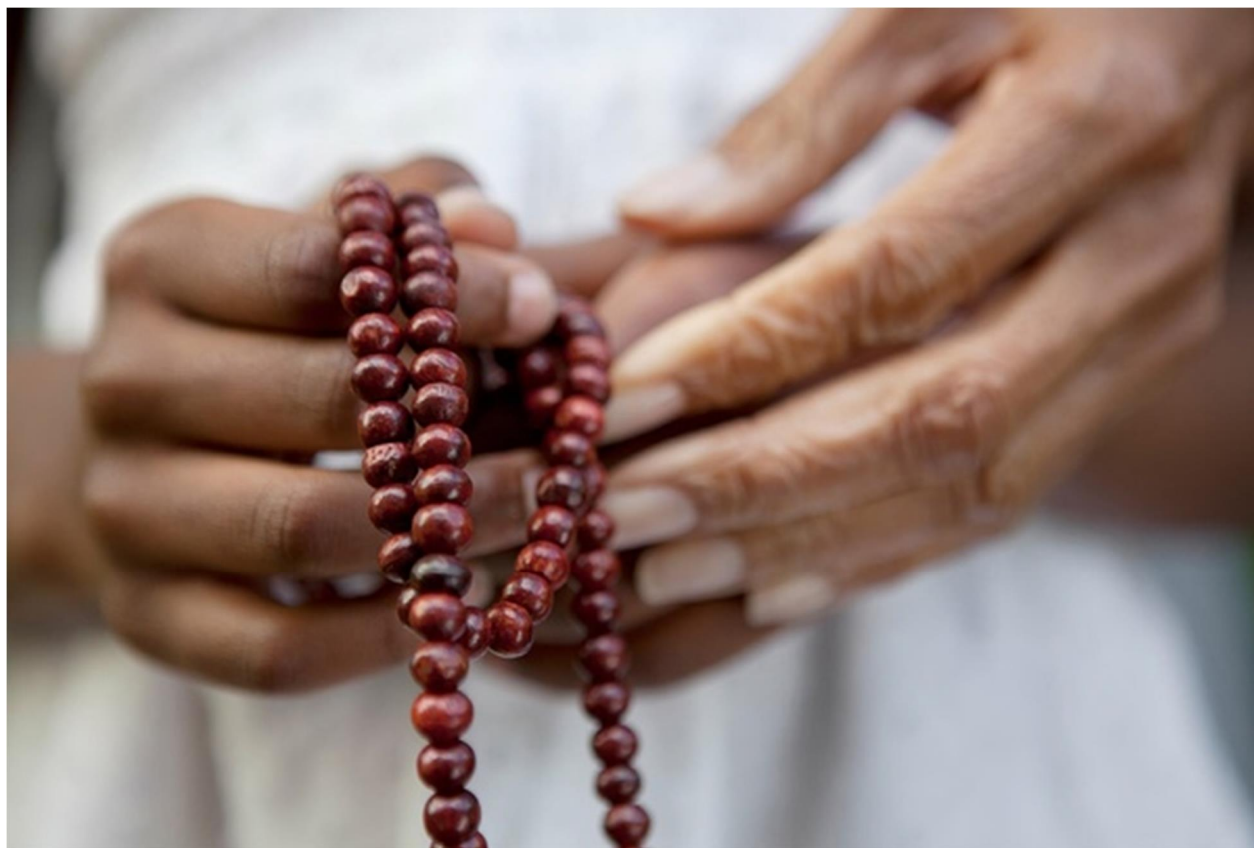
We, the people called United Methodists, affirm our faith in God our Creator and Father, in Jesus Christ our Savior, and in the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Guard. We acknowledge our complete dependence upon God in birth, in life, in death, and in life eternal. Secure in God's love, we affirm the goodness of life and confess our many sins against God's will for us as we find it in Jesus Christ. We have not always been faithful stewards of all that has been committed to us by God the Creator. We have been reluctant followers of Jesus Christ in his mission to bring all persons into a community of love. Though called by the Holy Spirit to become new creatures in Christ, we have

*resisted the further call to become the people of God in our dealings with each other and the earth on which we live.**

Our Social Principles begins in a spirit of confession. We acknowledge that we too belong in the category that Jesus called *ōsinnersō* which we also strive to overcome while realizing that this is an impossible task on our own power. Perhaps it may be helpful to remember that the table we set for communion is not our table. We too are the unworthy guests whom Jesus welcomes despite our unworthiness. We are the *ōscumō* that the Pharisees complained about but we are also the welcomed guests of God's only Son, the Messiah who is Christ the Lord. So we are blessed and called to invite the others who like us, know that they fall short and do not have it all together.

The vision adopted by Asbury in 2010 lies before us. It is a vision of transforming love that we believe represents the successful attainment of our mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world. As a local church our world consists of those living around us and our call is to go out among them to share the good news in ways that resonate with their lives, putting aside our own bias, our own needs and our wants. May our words, thoughts and actions be pleasing in Your site, O God our help in ages past and our hope for years to come.

* *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*. The United Methodist Publishing House.



God's Strategic Plan for Asbury

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of [Flint] reigns!

Isaiah 52:7 (NLT) - ðFlintö substituted for ðIsraelö

I need to get real serious for a few minutes. On Sunday, August 20, if you are a member of Asbury Church, you are being asked to vote yes to ratify a strategic plan for Asbury. This would be easy if it were not for the fact that to vote yes means that you are willing to put the needs and wants of the people in our community who are not yet a part of Asbury ahead of your own needs and wants. While our shared beliefs that we are to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ should make this easy we are human and therefore this is usually harder than we care to admit. We are all experts at restating the needs of others in ways that we can get what we want. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit can open our hearts and eyes in ways that make this possible despite our humanness.

We are getting requests for the written plan and we will distribute a plan the Sunday prior but in the meanwhile and even on the Sunday before we will continue to break down the pieces in an effort to provide clarity. Keep in mind that this is a strategic plan and as such there is a lot of detail that will only emerge as the leaders we entrust to carry out our plan are able to discern where God is leading us. Missteps and mistakes will be made. We are imperfect humans trying our best to follow a perfect God who sees the big picture with clarity while we are blessed when we can see the next step. We will try things that don't work and we will reassess our discernment, adjust our game plan and move on, trusting that God is ultimately in control and will provide for our needs while removing every obstacle in our path.

At the highest level our plan is rather straightforward. We prayerfully discerned four strategic goals that God is guiding us towards in order to achieve our mission and live into God's vision for Asbury. These strategic goals are based on a very critical assumption. That the needs and desires of our neighbors take priority over our own. Doesn't this sound a lot like Jesus? You have read about these strategic goals before and you have heard them. Here they are again:

- We will become a visible and vibrant center for worship & spiritual growth
- We will become known as the source of connections for building community
- We will become a visible and trusted partner in life solutions for health & wellness
- We will fund our vision at a sufficient level to meet our annual goals

The reality is that we have been working towards these strategic goals for the past few years. We approved implementing our Vital Church Initiative (VCI) prescriptions in a special church conference two years ago. These prescriptions call for our plan to be ratified by a vote of our members in another special conference. Several of our church leaders worked diligently to discern how what God has been leading us to do over the past few years and what God appears to be leading us towards in the future. This written plan is a culmination of these efforts. The key point here is that we have already been moving this direction the past few years without a formalized plan. Your vote, however, ensures that church leaders going forward are expected to stick to the plan. This is another reason why the plan does not have too much detail. It is important to have room for the creativity of the Holy Spirit to carry out the actual details through our efforts.

Another struggle that each of you will have is to avoid being misled by untruths, stories based on denial, rumors and veiled attempts by persons putting their wants and desires first. Some of you may want to be in on the decision making for areas that you are most passionate about. Great. We need your help. However, arm-chair coaching, naysaying, rumor spreading and criticizing what others who are involved decide on is destructive, not helpful and frankly not appreciated by those doing the work. The elephant in the room is that we have way too much of this. In the name of Jesus I rebuke such behavior. We were created for more than this.



The bottom line is that over the past two decades Asbury has failed to respond to the significant changes taking place in our city and in our neighborhood. While much of our decline can be attributed to lost jobs and thus a declining population as families moved away, the cold reality is that institutions that do not change decline and eventually die. Since this has been a widespread problem for mainline churches it may feel normal. However, there are an increasing number of examples where other UM Churches have rebounded. But in all cases the leadership made the very hard decision to make needed changes in all aspects of ministry. The church universal has undergone radical change in nearly every generation since the times of Paul. Fortunately, we are never alone. Jesus says in Matthew 28 that He is with us in our pursuit to share the good news with others.

May you seize this very moment to stop and take in the blessing that is life itself and may you experience the joy of gratitude. May God bless you, may Jesus Christ walk with you and may the Holy Spirit fill you with good things.

Pastor Tommy

AUGUST 2017

Asbury UMC Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Recovery Wkgroup at 1938 Howard Ave 9am Pastor Book Club 12N	2	3	4	5
6 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am	7	8 Water Resource Workgroup 9am (at Food Bank) Pastor Book Club 12N	9	10 Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm	11 Fresh Produce Giveaway 10-2pm	12
13 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am Town Hall Meeting (in the Sanctuary) 11am	14	15 Recovery Wkgroup at 1938 Howard Ave 9am Pastor Book Club 12N Washington Neighborhood Assoc 6pm	16 Urban Ministry 9am	17	18	19 
20 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am Special Charge Conference Vital Church Initiative 1pm	21 Church Council 6:30pm	22 Water Resource Workgroup 9am (at Food Bank) Pastor Book Club 12N CDC Meeting 2pm	23	24 Water Response Coordination Mtg 3 pm	25 Fresh Produce Giveaway 10-2pm	26
27 Bible Study 10am Traditional Worship 10am Coffee Break 11am New Beginnings 11:30am	28	29 Water Resource Workgroup 9am (at Food Bank) Pastor Book Club 12N	30 <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 10px; border-radius: 15px;"> <p>MEET UP AND EAT UP- Asbury, along with the Food Bank will be serving breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday in the Fellowship Hall. Breakfast will be served from 8am-9:30am and lunch from 12N-1pm. Instructional classes on nutritional preparation and fun feeding will take place between breakfast and lunch on Wednesdays. Any questions, please call Kevin 810-625-6115.</p> </div>			