



ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Welcome to the Asbury Community

Decisions by Mission Doers

During our Annual Church Conference a decision was made to “table” the recommendations of the Lay Leadership Nominations Team to give more time for our members to understand the recommendation to restructure our church leadership. This decision requires that we hold a Special Church Conference for the purpose of ratifying this recommendation sometime before the end of the year. The recommendation was made to hold a town hall meeting so that relevant questions can be asked about how the new leadership structure will function. This article is intended to offer some basic context as the Lay Leadership Team discerns where we go from here.

First, the new leadership structure is based on the assumption that decisions should be made by leaders directly involved in our ministries. In other words, the decision-makers are the doers, and doers are the decision-makers. Asbury has become a flurry of missional activity and there are a relatively small number of our church leaders who are

actively involved in this mission work. It only makes sense that this group be able to make key decisions regarding mission.

Second, the decision to restructure leadership was already made and ratified as part of our Special Church Conference held in August of this year to go forward with our Strategic Plan.

The specific approval reads as follows:

Select and empower a transformative leadership team with a track record of spiritual maturity, forward looking and an ability to make and implement substantial change.

Our Strategic Plan includes a background narrative that helps with clarifying the thinking of the team that developed our strategic plan. While not intended to be as specific as the actions that take place as a result of the plan they are clarifying statements. The narrative that helps to clarify what the planning team intended by the

above goal reads as follows:

The churches that have gone before us in implementing their VCI prescriptions have realigned leadership in more effective ways to ensure both accountability and efficiency.

In particular, the merging of multiple teams including Trustees, Church Council, Staff-Parish Relations and Finance into a single group of leaders who are empowered by the Church members to do the necessary work of the church. Leaders are selected based upon a number of factors including spiritual maturity and their willingness and ability to lead transformative change. In this way decisions for change can be made in a timely manner and leaders can be empowered to make decisions without the fear of undue criticism and second guessing.

Page 2

Breaking Down Walls

The most basic definition of a wall is simply a barrier that restricts movement. Walls, like anything else, are built with a particular function in mind. Walls have been utilized since ancient times to fortify places where persons live and play to keep out the unwanted. The wall around Jerusalem and other cities like it, were built to

defend the city from attack by other nations intent on taking what was not theirs. The walls around Jerusalem were large enough that soldiers could organize defensive maneuvers on top of the wall.

All walls have vulnerabilities. One of the most vulnerable section of any wall was the city gate and for large cities like Jerusa-

lem there were multiple gates that allowed residents and welcomed guests to come and go throughout the day. Without gates the walled-in city became more of a prison than a home. Whether protecting cities or dividing nations walls continue to be a part of a defensive strategy today. We build walls to divide, to keep out, and we justify our building walls as necessary to protect the homeland.

Page 2

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Special points of interest:

- > Neighborhood Connection is delivering bottled water. Call the City of Flint at 810-410-1138 for information. This service is for persons who are disabled and/or unable to receive water in any other way.
- > Food or nutrition concerns? Want to learn how to prepare better tasting & ore nutritional meals? Call Kevin at 810-625-6115 or the church office for information, 235-0016
- > Beginners Bible Study meets every Wednesdays at 6:00pm in the Library. Any questions, please see Richard Oram.

Inside this issue:

Decisions by Mission Doers	1
Breaking Down Walls	1
New Worship Series	3
In our Prayers	3
Pastor's Book Club	4
Leadership in Worship & Service	4
Coming up this Week	5
New Beginning	6

Breaking Down Walls ...continued from Page 1

Walls are built based upon their initial purpose but also come with other, unintended, consequences. Walls also require energy and effort to maintain them. Otherwise, the enemy simply breaches the wall. Some walls require substantially more energy and effort to keep them doing what they were intended to do than other walls. All walls require effort to maintain.

Once walls are in place there is a planned and often consequential segregation that takes place. High priced homes located in gated communities create a socioeconomic barrier between the haves and the have-nots. The residents come and go as they choose but laborers who are depended upon to maintain their beautifully landscaped lawns are allowed to come and go only as it pertains to the request of the residents who need their labor to maintain their home and of course their walls.

When building a wall the choice of cornerstone determines the durability and strength of the wall. Choose a cornerstone that is not up to the job and the wall is easily breached

and will not last. Whether you are building a wall that is part of a building or a wall that is standalone there are certain places where the pressure is greater. Builders take special care to choose a cornerstone.

In Psalm 118:22 we read that “The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.” What an odd twist. The builders of the walls were so careful in choosing the best stone for the corner and without their approval or permission the stone that they thought was not suitable has taken His rightful place as the rock upon which all life begins and is sustained. No other stone is suitable.

As Christians, we know that the Psalmist is talking about Jesus Christ who would be rejected by the leaders of His time. They thought they had it all figured out. After all, they were heirs who expected to inherit their rightful place based on their lineage. Yet, the prophets before Him had prophesied that the proud would be laid low and the meek would be the rightful inheritors of the Kingdom. Those who are kept out by walls are invited to become insiders.

What would a world look like where the only walls in place are not built to keep out people but for practical reasons such as shelter from the weather? We have so many walls in place it may be difficult to imagine a world with fewer walls. How about a world where barriers are for practical uses such as knowing that a lane is closed on a highway or to divide traffic flowing in one direction from the traffic flowing in the opposite direction? Still hard isn't it?

Page 5

Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.

Isaiah 28:16

Decisions by Mission Doers...continued from Page 1

Our strategic plan expects leaders to be nominated based on all three of the traits originally approved:

- *A track record of spiritual maturity*
- *Forward looking*
- *An ability to make and implement substantial change*

The objections that were raised during our Annual Church Conference that this narrative is “not a part of the plan” are not based in fact. Also, the decision to adopt our strategic plan was ratified by an overwhelming majority. The clarifying narrative was used by the Lay Leadership Team in developing their recommendations for restructuring our leadership as mandated. And the strategic goal, as it was approved, was used in selecting church leaders. Our strategic plan expects this team to nominate persons who possess all

three of the traits listed.

It is important to consider in what ways potential candidates for leadership are both demonstrating and pursuing the gifts associated with spiritual maturity. Paul addresses this subject in his letter to the Church in Galatia by listing the “fruits of the Spirit.” We are reminded of these fruits each Sunday by our Worship Leader in order to focus our attention on what should be the desire of our hearts and prayers. Paul writes:

...the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

While the members of the Lay Leadership/Nominations Team were quick to offer grace it was important to consider in what ways potential candidates for leadership are both

the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23

demonstrating and pursuing these gifts through examples of behavior, study and participation in small groups who engage in the study of Scripture and/or prayer. The list of possible candidates based on this criteria was quite long. This speaks well for our church.

Page 3

Decisions by Mission Doers...continued from Page 2



The other two criteria resulted in far fewer potential nominees. There is no doubt that many of our existing church leaders dwell in the past hoping that in some way we can keep the past alive by making as few changes as possible. Individuals who are "forward looking" are just that: forward looking. Their language and their proposals look forward to a new beginning - a new Asbury.

Last, but just as important as the first two traits that we agreed as a church was critical to our success was to affirm leaders who have demonstrated "an ability to make and implement substantial change." Note the qualifier

"**substantial**" that appears in front of the word change. The demonstration of this trait is very easy to discern. The team asked questions like:

Who appears to be leading change rather than fighting change?

Which persons are supporting our vision rather than attacking our vision?

Which persons demonstrate the courage to stand up to the bullies who criticize anyone and everyone who is supporting substantial change?

The lay leadership team prayerfully discerned the nominations that are before us. Our team members believe that the church members who have been nominated are called to this work to provide both spiritual and practical leadership into the future. I encourage you to plan to attend our Special Church Conference and vote in favor of approval should this proposal come before you.

May each of us prayerfully consider how we may grow in the love of Christ in ways that the fruits of the Spirit are seen by all who we encounter.

Pastor Tommy

ASBURY UMW FAMILY CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON!

UMW will be hosting a family Christmas luncheon at Asbury UMC on Saturday, December 9th at 12Noon. It will be potluck style. You may call in your items to Norma Natrass at 810-235-1116 by Wednesday, December 6th. Please also indicate the number of people that will be coming with you. Hope to see a lot of you here!!

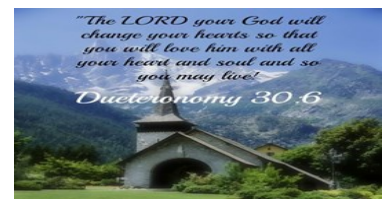


In Our Prayers

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

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Sharon George | Shirley Moose |
| Elaine Lamoreaux | Carman Misner |
| Mary Nations | Mary Russell |



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Thankfulness & Love

The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.
Psalm 28.7

Thomas Merton in his book of reflections titled *Thoughts in Solitude* writes about the topic of gratitude, calling out our hypocrisy and superficiality. It is crystal clear that most of our criticism of each other is veiled projections of past hurt. But there is good news indeed. The Holy Spirit is waiting for us to sur-

render our hurt and be healed so that we can know the love that is Jesus Christ our Savior.

As you read these excerpts from one of Merton's reflections consider the question, "What are you grateful for?"

Our knowledge of God is perfected by gratitude; we are thankful and rejoice in the experience of the truth that He is love. There is no neutrality between gratitude and ingratitude. Those who are not grateful soon begin to complain of everything. Those who do not

love, hate. In the spiritual life there is no such thing as an indifference to love or hate. That is why tepidity (which seems to be indifferent) is so detestable. It is hate disguised as love.

Tepidity, in which the soul is neither "hot or cold" - neither frankly loves nor frankly hates—is a state in which one rejects God and rejects the will of God while maintaining an exterior pretense of loving Him in order to keep out of trouble and save one's supposed self-respect. It is the condition that is soon arrived at by those who are habitually ungratefully for the graces of God.

Book Club News

We finished our discussion of the book *Soil and Sacrament*. This book took us on a spiritual journey by sharing the spiritual journey of its author. We learned how working with the soil is both biblical and draws us closer to God.

Our next book will take us on a journey of a different nature as we focus our attention on the Holy Spirit. Our guide will be pastor, author and church planter Francis Chan, founder of Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, California. He is also the founder of Eternity Bible College and sits on the board of Children's Hunger Fund. Recently, Francis is planting churches in the San Francisco area and recently launched a countrywide discipleship movement called *Multiply with David Platt*. Francis and his wife Lisa live in Northern California with their five children.

Francis writes "as Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit—the

Helper—so that we could be true and living witnesses for Christ. Unfortunately, today's church has admired the gift but neglected to open it." Pastor Chan contends that we've ignored the Spirit for far too long, and we are reaping the disastrous results.

You do not have to read the book to attend, but it does help with the discussion and what you receive back from it. Used copies of this book are available from the office for \$7.

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.

*Chan, Francis. *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*. Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2009.

How can you think of saying, "Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye," when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

Luke 6:42



Leadership in Worship & Service

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

Mark Vorenkamp	Children & Youth
Jim Craig	Church Council Chair Asbury CDC Board Chair
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Kathy Howe	Choir Director
Rebekah Britton	Piano & Organ

Asbury Café

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

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor

We will be filling Thanksgiving baskets for families from Potter School and our neighborhood on Monday, November 20th and passing them out on Tuesday, November 21st from 10am-12Noon. If anyone can help, please call Kevin at 810-625-6115.



Breaking Down Walls...continue from page 2

Let's shrink the world that we are trying to imagine. How about a church where there are no barriers to entry? There are persons in our community and all over this world who would argue that we have all kinds of barriers that keep them from coming into our church. How do I know?

They are not here and I have personally invited them in large numbers. And I know that some of you have as well. After all, when we truly love our church we want to share our church with others so we invite them to come see for themselves why we love our church so much.

Jesus said that it will be easy to spot those who love Him. Jesus also said there would be many who would call His name but He will not know them because when He was thirsty, hungry, naked, sick or in prison these imposters were no where to be found. Our walls - our barriers - our unwillingness to reach beyond that which makes us comfortable are signs of fruitlessness.

Instead, we are called whenever we discover a wall that divides anyone from the love of God in Jesus Christ to break down that wall in the Name that

we are invited to turn to whenever we feel walled out.

Pastor Tommy

"Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?' 'And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.'"

Matthew 25:44-45

Coming up this week

Neighborhood Deliveries/Water/Food

Nov 13 Mon

Nov 14 Tues 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6:30pm Washington Neighborhood

Nov 15 Wed 6:00pm Beginners Bible Study

Nov 16 Thurs 6:30pm Choir Practice

Nov 17 Fri 10am-2pm Fresh Produce Giveaway

Nov 19 Sun 9:00am Traditional Worship
10:00am Connect Break
10:30am Contemporary Worship
12:00 N Café Closes

Last Week for Worship Attendance 46 Offering \$ 1,135

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

Email announcements by the Friday before to:

FlintAsburyUMC@gmail.com

Ways to Connect

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

Music Ministry -We are looking for vocalists and musicians.

Community Gardening - The Asbury Farm needs volunteers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are in need of some TURKEYS!!

As we are approaching Thanksgiving, we have baskets to fill for our families in need and we are in need of turkeys with the fixings..



If you are able to buy one to fill our baskets, you may see Jim or Kevin. We will need them by Wednesday, November 15 ...



Prayer is at the heart of our beliefs

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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

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Neighborhood Connection



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

Our goal is a revitalized community where

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.

Thankfulness & Lovea new worship series

True gratitude and hypocrisy cannot exist together. They are totally incompatible.

Gratitude of itself makes us sincere—or if it does not, then it is not true gratitude.

To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us—and

He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful

man knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.

Rev Tommy

Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*. 1956, 1958 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1st eBook Edition, 2011. Originally published in 1958. Relection VIII.

CALLING ALL MUSICIANS

Do you play an instrument such as drums, guitar, violin or keyboard? Do you play a trumpet or saxophone? Our New Beginnings team of artists are looking to expand to include a variety of instruments and vocalists.

See our Worship Leader Cyndi if this sounds like you.