

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Generosity (Don't harvest to the edges)

As we continue our series, *Food as medicine*, I anticipate some questions. Particularly, questions on what generosity has to do with food or medicine, or with health at all. A few doctors write prescriptions for healthy meals, but a prescription for generosity would be a rare illustration of a doctor stepping way out of the medical industry box.



But similar to the gifts of faith and humility, we were created by God who

who offers holistic healing. The medical industry only mentions the importance of spirituality in describing the components of a healthy lifestyle. My role as a pastor is to help you all with that missing but critical piece. Believers know that God is generous. And to be created in God's image suggests that there is an essential building block of generosity in each of us.

Our sub-title this week flies in the face of much of the world's view of how things work. This sub-title comes out of an ancient, seldom referenced text, found in the Book of Leviticus. The book of the law. Given the importance that litigation plays in our culture, this seems odd that some laws disappear into

the darkness of a page seldom seen. Perhaps given the amount of bookshelf space needed to hold all of the laws just in our country, ancient law necessarily is rendered to the outdated section. And in many ways it is.

There is another text from Leviticus that is perhaps better known that is found in the same chapter. The law reads, "love your neighbors as you love yourself." This particular law never grows old. Nor is this law obsolete. Even if it is rarely practiced among Christians. My point is that we can and often do lift up ancient laws that we

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Special points of interest:

➤➤ **THERE WILL BE NO BOOK CLUB THIS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH.**

➤➤ **Worship Design will meet on Monday, November 25th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.**



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Abundant Living (Replacing diets with abundance)

I really don't like diets. You would be amazed at how many diets I have been on. And most of my experiences proved successful. On the other hand, I have quit doing a lot of things that I knew were not good for me — lots of times. It's time for another diet, but I believe God has a better idea in mind.



How about you? Have you ever tried losing weight, or eating healthier, by cutting out some of

your favorite foods — the foods that you were having too much of? The problem that most of us have is that if we try giving up chocolate, then that's all we can think about. Try to give up ice cream, and we suddenly notice that our favorite brands are on sale. Maybe next week.

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Abundant Living (Replacing diets with abundance) ...cont. from page 1

As we come to the end of our current worship series, *Food as medicine*, we transition to our next worship series that begins December 8. Our current series has explored the importance of what we put into our bodies, why awareness is crucial, and practices from scripture that help us to be healthier.

It is essential not to confuse food as medicine with dieting since they are opposites. For food to be medicine is must be taken in and processed by our bodies. Dieting is the opposite. Dieting is more about not eating certain foods. Food as medicine focuses on abundance, while dieting focuses on scarcity. Food as medicine is about enjoying creation. Dieting is about avoiding creation.

Confused? To clarify my claims, I need to first talk about scarcity. When we talk about our neighbor-

hood, it is hard not to think about scarcity. We seem to be lacking in so many things. It's like we are on a grueling diet. There are not enough jobs, not enough safety, not enough money. You get the point. We all get the point.

Scarcity is what we feel when we are dieting, and we long for something we don't have. A quick trip to the store can take care of our scarcity if we have enough money. A 2nd trip to refill our plate just to make sure that we leave a bit over-full. Why not two pieces of chicken rather than one? Why not three? Dieting replaces this sense of "I can have more," with "no you can't". This is scarcity.

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Generosity (Don't harvest to the edge) cont. from page 1

cannot outgrow. We can never be too sophisticated or too advanced that common sense, like being kind to somebody else, becomes obsolete.

"When you harvest your fields," we read in chapter 19 of Leviticus, "do not cut the grain at the edges of the fields." This practice leaves behind an easily accessible area of your wheat field that others can access who cannot afford to buy grain. There is more. "Do not go back to cut the heads of grain that were left." In other words, the farmer is expected to let whatever stalks that were missed during the harvest stay unharvested.

When you harvest your fields, do not cut the grain at the edges of the fields, and do not get back to cut the heads of grain that were left.

Leviticus 19:9

"Gleaning" is a term that is sometimes used for programs that reclaim unused food. Gleaning is the process of going back over a field that has been harvested to gather what was missed. There is a practical side to this.

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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

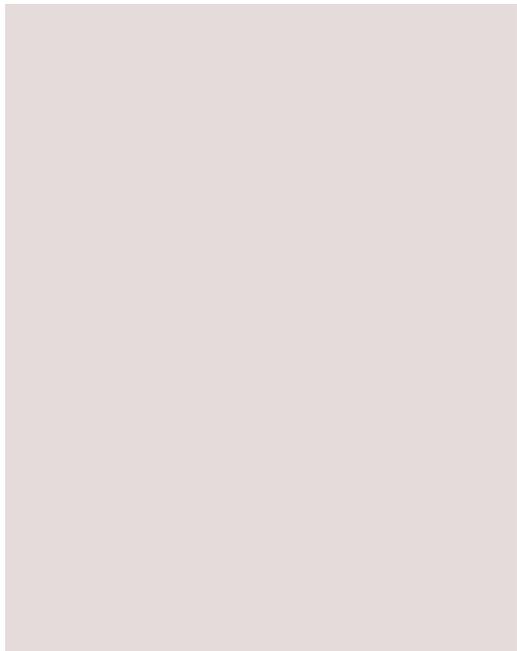
FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Mary Nations	Mary Russell
Elaine Lamoreaux	

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

DUSTY THE DONKEY IS BACK !!

CHRISTMAS EVE—more info to follow ...



Coming up this week

Nov 25	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		6:00pm	Worship Design
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Nov 26	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
Nov 27	Wed	NO BOOK CLUB TODAY	
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
Nov 28	Thu	6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Nov 29	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Nov 30	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Dec 1	Sun	8am-10am	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
		9:30am	Café Open
		10:30am	New Beginnings
			Contemporary Worship



Asbury Worship Series Pono Coming December 8, 2019

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 'Āina i ka Pono*. This motto is

translated as "The sovereignty of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."



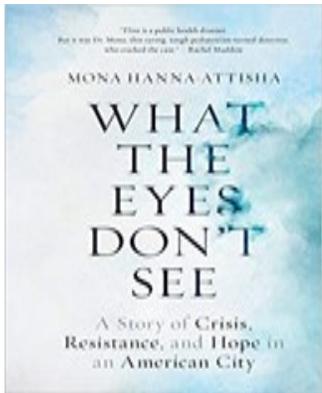
The word righteousness is not used that much anymore. The

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.

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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
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 Staff

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

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 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

Harvesting is labor-intensive, and going back over a field is not a very good use of resources. Some of the harvest gets missed. Leave it.

There is, more importantly, a philanthropic side to this idea. There are people who are in need. Leaving the edges unharvested is an act of generosity. If the farmer needs the outer row to make ends meet, plant an extra row that is not part of the forecasted harvest. Leave it out of the calculation altogether. Plan on leaving harvest for others in need. Make this a part of how you live, so it doesn't take a lot of extra mental gymnastics.

The idea of tithing comes out of this line of thinking. A tithe is an amount that is set aside for generosity. In other parts of scripture, the amount is stated to be 10%. I don't know if this is the approximate percent of a harvest that gets left in the field when a farmer follows the ancient laws, but it could be. The point of a tithe is like the harvesting law. Make this practice a part of who you are. This is easier than performing a bunch of mental gymnastics when you are trying to calculate whether you have enough left over for a Coney dog or a pack of cigarettes.

The ancient text that introduces this idea is found in Deuteronomy. Another one of the first five books of the Old Testament, where the 613 laws of Moses are spelled out, illustrated, followed, broken, and rediscovered again and again. "Set aside a tithe—a tenth of all that your fields produce each year." To set aside means just what it says. Before you

count your paycheck or your SSI check, set it aside, so it doesn't get confused with your gas money.

The text goes on to address what to do with our tithe. We are to take it to the place where God has chosen for us to worship. This is a bit more dramatic for many of us. We aren't that certain where God has in mind. Many of us would rather choose for ourselves. But God always has a place in mind for each of us, and life is much less dramatic if we go along with it.

Make it a part of who you are rather than perform a bunch of mental gymnastics when you are trying to calculate whether you have enough left over for a coney dog or a pack of cigarettes.

This text continues by explaining that when we do, one benefit is that we learn how to honor God. In last week's message, I shared that my choice to become a vegetarian was not about my concern over eating meat. I was certain that God wanted me to learn to be obedient. My doctor was ecstatic. Perhaps this is why I have confidence in him. He seems genuine in his wanting to help me prevent illness rather than treat it afterward. Tithing is like this. It is first an act of obedience, but it ultimately leads to a tremendously better life. God's wisdom has proven superior to our collective smarts every time.

So now I've done it. I've fallen into the ditch that many of us accuse pastors of doing. "They just want my money," is the worn-out excuse for not getting involved in a church community. What gets missed in this exchange is the importance of God's abundance. We tithe because we love God. And God doesn't let us down.

We anticipate a harvest that doesn't just replace our tithe. Our tithe is multiplied.

Do you believe this? If so, you are blessed because you didn't learn this from other people. This is a divine insight that is truly a gift. If you don't believe that this is true, it is not because God has abandoned or given up on you. It is not too late. Don't start by throwing money at the situation. Begin with prayer. Ask God to help you believe, and to trust in God's absolute love.

This week's message is not a fundraiser. Rather, my concern is for your well-being. Wholeness requires a holistic lifestyle. *Food as medicine* includes both physical and spiritual nourishment. I encourage you to move from the "junk food" diet that the marketplace offers to the menu that gives life. Jesus is on this life-giving menu. So is trusting in God's abundance. You don't have to believe me. There are thousands if not millions of testimonies from people who have discovered that God delivers.

Asbury Farm to Table



While turning blight into beautiful and productive landscape is good on its own, transforming a food desert into abundance is life giving. But Asbury wants to make sure that produce is available on the tables of our residents. Our culinary arts and nutritional education programs offer residents the know how just as our farms offers nature's bounty. In addition, the Asbury Café is a culinary experience accessible to our neighbors and anyone with an appetite. Our "pay what you can" approach means that no one is turned away. Those who can help either on the farm or in the café are offered special MyFlintStones tokens that can be used either in the Asbury Café or in exchange for produce to prepare at home.

We proudly accept MyFlintStones



**The Asbury Café is open
Fridays 11 am to 2 pm and
Sundays 10am to 12 Noon**



ASBURY CAFÉ MENU

Open Fridays 10am to 2pm

Pay what you can

DELI SUBS

Lettuce, onions, tomato plus
choice of ham, turkey or beef

STIR FRY

Local grown garden vegetables
sautéed with love and herbs

GARDEN SALAD

Local grown greens &
vegetables. Ham, turkey or beef
upon request

WRAPS

Lettuce, onions, tomato plus
choice of ham, turkey or beef

MUFFINS

Chef Kevin's special recipe with
fruit, love and other delights
baked in.

SMOOTHIE

Assorted flavors of the day

COFFEE

Regular or decaf

Like us on Facebook~ under "Asbury Farms"



Life Group Questions & Notes

I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit.

John 15:5 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read John 15:5. What does it mean for you to be connected with Jesus Christ? What are some ways that your days are different as a result of your connection? If you don't feel connected, what are some obstacles for you? How might others help you get connected?
2. Read this week's article titled *Abundant living*. Are you at a weight that is healthy for you body type and size? Do you have any experience with dieting? Do you see scarcity around you? Do you see any examples of abundance? Can these two ways of seeing the world co-exist in the same space?
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?



Abundance. Now we're talking. Abundance knows that even if we don't make that 2nd trip to the buffet, and if we take only one piece of chicken, we can get more the next time we are hungry. We don't have to store it up just in case.

Abundance requires a lifestyle change that results in a new way of seeing the world.

Abundance requires a lifestyle change that results in a new way of seeing the world. And our next worship series will focus on how this change is possible. And, beginning with the New Year, we are all invited to experience dramatic, lifestyle, transformation, during our first worship series of 2020. Stay tuned for more information.

I need to be very clear on one fact of body biology that comes with how we were created. When we consume more calories than we utilize, our bodies store the unused calories for later. And some of this excess energy is stored in organs that negatively affect how well our bodies function. In other words, our health is adversely affected. A worship series or a new program cannot change this.

But if like me, you struggle with taking in more calories than your body needs, then you may

be ready for a change. There is good news. We can all change. This is the power of the gospel, and the good news is for all of us. Life does not have to be steeped in scarcity. Our God is a God of abundance.

Perhaps you are one of those "lucky people," well those of us who struggle with carrying too much weight, think that you are lucky. Maybe your struggle is not about consuming more calories than your body can burn. But are you the perfect example of good health? Likely not.

I am the vine, and you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit.

John 15:5

Food as medicine considers our spiritual well-being as well as our physical bodies. Holistic health affects the mind, body, and spirit. To be healthy is to be integrated and connected. This, my friends, is the language of abundance. This is what it means to live abundantly.

Living abundantly is not about multiple trips to the buffet, eating more chocolate than we should, or filling our plates until they overflow. To live abundantly is to be connected with Christ in such an intimate way that He is our constant

companion. Jesus used the metaphor of a grapevine in explaining the importance of our connection to Him. When we are connected, we produce abundant fruit. This is the essence of abundant living.

And when we live abundantly, we no longer worry about, and seldom think about, getting our fair share, or more than we need. We focus more on how we can be fruitful in a world that is trapped by scarcity. We see the potential for beauty where others see only the results of violence. We live abundantly rather than in scarcity.

Speaking of opportunities for abundant living, auditions are underway for the musical *Dusty 2.0*. This delightful retelling of the story of Christmas through the eyes of Mary's donkey will leave you laughing while reminding you that God is love. Put Christmas Eve at Asbury on your calendar. We start at 6 pm.

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

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CircuitRider@FlintAsbury.org

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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 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.

Generosity (Don't harvest to the edges) ...cont. from page 6

May God show you the proof that you need to believe in what you cannot see. May the Holy Spirit of God fill you with the faith and trust that will allow you to give up your anxiousness and rest in God's love and grace. May Jesus Christ meet you right where you are and lead you to a life of wellness.

Auditions are coming up for the musical *Dusty 2.0*. This delightful retelling of the story of Christmas through the eyes of Mary's donkey will leave you laughing while reminding you that God is love. Put Christmas Eve at Asbury on your calendar. We start at 6 pm.

We worship each Sunday at 10:30 am. 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

GIVE THANKS
TO THE LORD,
FOR HE IS GOOD;
HIS
LOVE ENDURES
FOREVER.

PSALM 107 1