

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 20

February 20, 2022

## Daniel (The heat is on)



While reading parts of the *Book of Daniel*, I couldn't help but take a side trip to explore the song's background with the same name. The song *Daniel* was written by Bernie Taupin and put to music, and recorded by Elton John. The

common name is apparently a coincidence. However, I can't help but wonder whether the writer was familiar with the biblical character from Sunday School. I read where Bernie grew up in the catholic faith in rural Lincolnshire, England.

The *Book of Daniel* is not all that popular for most bible readers. Nevertheless, the stories are told in Sunday School-appropriate vignettes that illustrate the importance of just saying no to temptation. Unfortunately, this book

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Please continue to wear your masks when in the building. If you don't have one, let us know we will provide one for you.

**DONATE**

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## Interference (Riding on donkeys)



Anyone who has an email address or spends time on the internet knows that not all content is safe to download to your computer or phone. There is the risk that a download will install unwanted code on

your device. Sometimes the unwanted code is just annoying. However, the web is full of viruses that wreak havoc with their host, sometimes doing irreparable damage to our content.

This morning I remembered to renew our security software for computers we utilize at Asbury for our work. The cost is relatively small compared to the threat of losing information and time. I can't imagine why a hacker would waste time on a nonprofit trying to help our community. But it's better to play it safe.

Meanwhile, news of Russian troops surrounding Ukraine is dominating the daily news. According to a recent New York Times

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## Interference (Riding on donkeys) ...cont from page 1

article, approximately 150,000 military personnel along with enough hardware to launch an invasion, despite Russian official claims to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian escalation coincides with the annual Munich Security Conference. Usually one of the premier diplomatic gatherings of the year. But this year, it will be dominated by the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

While attending the conference, Vice President Kamala Harris is scheduled to meet with Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine. However, there is concern that the Russians are identifying candidates, more in line with their priorities, which they could install in his place while he is out of the country.

Heavily armed boots on the ground are not Russia's only tactics. A related article reports cyber-attacks that appear to be instigated by hackers located in Russia. This past Tuesday, several websites in Ukraine were hit with denial-of-service attacks. In these cases, hackers overload the servers hosting the websites, forcing them to shut down.<sup>2</sup>

Russia's military budget in 2020 of just over \$62 billion pales compared to the U.S. military budget of \$778 billion during that same year. However, one article analyzing Russia's motivation for its aggression noted that Russian President, Vladimir Putin, made increased military strength a top priority over the past 22 years.

After the USSR separated into 15 separate countries, the North American Treaty Organization, commonly referred to as NATO, added most newly independent nations to their roster. NATO was formed in 1949 by the United States, Canada, and several western European countries as allies providing greater security in the event of aggression by the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

There are close cultural ties between parts of Ukraine and Russia. However, in response to the ousting of a leader with close ties to Putin, Russia invaded and annexed Crimea, part of Ukraine. This military action was followed by organizing a separatist rebellion that resulted in the death of over 13 thousand people.

The U.S. warned Putin that an invasion would result in severe sanctions that could further cripple Russia's economy. Russia already lags many smaller countries economically and is highly dependent on the sale of energy to Europe. Which is likewise heavily reliant on Russia to meet its thirst for energy.

The "cold war" that dominated world policies for decades is back on the front burner with the heat on high. Perhaps this is why scripture spends so much time on the topics of violence, war and aggression. Love is clearly the only antidote to these human-made diseases.

Mark's gospel jumps right into action in the very first chapter. According to Mark, soon after Jesus is baptized, he is confronted by a heckler while preaching in Capernaum. "Why are you interfering with us?" the screams at Jesus. "Have you come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:21). So, who are the "us" in the man's question?

The writer describes the man as "having an evil spirit." But what does this mean? Traditional interpretations point to the presence of an outside demonic influence. However, the underlying Greek makes anything more than the idea that the man's attitude, and perhaps his life choices, were less than admirable. In any case, the man saw Jesus as a threat to the way of life he claimed to represent.

Jesus confronts and condemns not the man but the attitude and life choices represented by whatever needed interference from Jesus. As a result, the man is instantly reformed. But let's break this scene down before we jump to conclusions that we're not included in the man's idea of "we."

Translations vary somewhat in their choice of words describing what Jesus said and how either the man or the spirit possessing the man responded. And while Mark's gospel is mainly to the point, great caution is in order when interpreting stories told from the writer's context.

Why are you interfering with us, Jesus? Have you come to destroy us?

Mark 1:21

While movies like the Exorcist evoke images of bizarre behaviors on both the possessed and those interfering, scripture consistently offers us insight into our own lives and situations. Moreover, there is too much confusion between the idea of demon-possessed and mental and emotional illness. Even though they have nothing in common beyond our misunderstanding.

What if the "we" represents the way our world is currently ordered? What if the "we" represents wealth, privilege, and excess? What if the "we" represents self-preservation at the expense of others? What if the "we" point to acts of aggression, war, and violence, whether or not our adversary had it coming?

**In Our Prayers**

Kevin Croom  
 Sylvia Pittman  
 Shirley Craig  
 Richard Oram

Miriam Watson



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

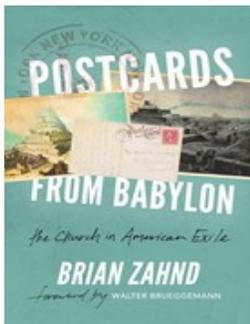
Nancy Elston      Elaine Lamoreaux  
 Norma Buzzard      Mary Nations

**PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS**

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom. Please call the Church Office for more info 810-235-0016 as it changes.

Meanwhile, as a lot of you are already aware, sharp increases in new infections of COVID are pushing us back into isolation. While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated.

Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking. If you don't have a mask, we can provide one for you, just ask the office.



This month's book series is called, "Postcards from Babylon" (The Church in American Exile).

Thank you and everyone stay safe!

**COMING UP THIS WEEK**

- Feb 21 Mon 6:00pm Leadership Team
- Feb 22 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm Food/Water Distribution  
3:00pm CDC Board Meeting
- Feb 23 Wed 10:30am-12Noon Angel Closet at South Flint Soup Kitchen (by appointments only)  
12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Feb 24 Thu
- Feb 25 Fri 6:30pm Doors Open—7:00pm Show  
Asbury Open Mic
- Feb 26 Sat 12Noon Food Not Bombs  
Winter Extravaganza (see pg 16)
- Feb 27 Sun 10:30am  
New Beginnings  
Contemporary Worship

(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find these links along with more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).)



Cyndi and I enjoy watching reality shows that feature individuals living in the Alaskan wilderness. Neither of us have a desire to live alone in the woods. Rather, we're fascinated by the creativity and grit that these rugged individuals discover within themselves to survive. And even more so by the few that seem

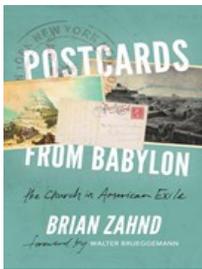
to thrive in the midst of so many obstacles.

A common theme heard among the Alaskan pioneers is a sense of belonging to the vast untamed and unforgiving wilderness. They share common bonds with the other creatures living

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## Book Club News

We finished our discussions of *Braving the Wilderness* by Dr. Brené Brown. So now we're ready for our February selection. The book that we're using as a key resource for our series, *the Way*, is sure to spark interesting, if not controversial, discussion. In his book, *Postcards from Babylon*, Brian Zahnd critiques the state of the church by the standard offered to us by Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>



ready for our February selection. The book that we're using as a key resource for our series, *the Way*, is sure to spark interesting, if not controversial, discussion. In his book, *Postcards*

found in vowing allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth unleashed a shock wave that turned the Roman Empire upside down. Early Christianity was subversive and dangerous—dangerous for Christians and a threat to the keepers of the old order. Most of all Christianity was countercultural. But what about contemporary American Christianity? Is it the countercultural way of Jesus or merely a religious endorsement of Americanism? In his provocative book, *Postcards From Babylon*, Brian Zahnd challenges the reader to see and embrace a daring Jesus-centered Christianity that can again turn the world upside down.

While our regular attenders are vaccinated, we realize that a large number of persons are not vaccinated. Therefore, we reinstated our policy to require masks in our building for all persons when not eating or drinking.

We strongly urge all persons to get vaccinated as soon as practical unless advised by your doctor. Avoid news sources and rumors that promote baseless claims and pay closer attention to the experts we depend on to keep us safe.

The write-up found on Amazon has this to say about our next book:

The original gospel proclamation that the Lord of the nations was a crucified Galilean raised from the dead and that salvation was

In what ways are the *Build Back Better Plan* or *Make America Great Again* representative of *the Way* that Jesus lived and taught? In what ways do either of these two political slogans represent the antithesis of the Way? Let's talk about it.

We each make our own arrangements for lunch at this point. However, we look forward to returning to pot-luck lunches when infection rates fall. We anticipate this happening as the number of vaccinations reaches herd immunity levels, and the CDC relaxes precautionary measures.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away I encourage you to [join us online](#) for our Wednesday gatherings. Alternatively, you can call in by phone, be heard, and hear what others say by calling (929) 436-2866 -- enter the meeting ID, 282 039 5568#.

We are a diverse group, and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion.

You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — [FlintAsbury.org](http://FlintAsbury.org).

<sup>1</sup> Brian Zahnd. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church In American Exile*. Spello Press, 2019.

## Leadership in Worship & Service

Tony, Mirium	Welcome Team
Anthony, Jim	Ushers
Jonathon, Terrance	Production Team
Miriam	Children
Cyndi	Worship Leader
Christine & Norma	Cafe

### Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel	Pastor & Exec Dir
Connie Portillo	Office Manager
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
Jim Craig	Board & Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Exec Chef & Dir Opers
Matt DePalma	Farms Manager

Increases in new infections and yet another variety of COVID pushed us back into isolation. While the latest surge is described as a pandemic of the unvaccinated, breakthrough infections are rising, putting us all at risk.

Chris Freeman	South Campus Bldg Mgr
Israel Unger	Finance Director
Kim Sims	Connections Suprv
Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
Katelin Maylum	Sr Mgr Local Food



*Wilderness Experience... Asbury Worship Series*

around them, even those they hunt for food. All belong to a natural order that is much larger and beyond their grasp.

There are unseen dangers and yet to be discovered delights in the wilderness waiting for the brave ones willing to take the risk to venture into its uncertainty.

Our new series, *Wilderness experience*, explores the risks and rewards of braving the uncertain. And in exploring the uncertain we tackle the thorny question of “Do I belong?”

Brené Brown asserts that “belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.” Based on her research into one of life’s most intimate questions Braving the Wilderness calls each of us to reclaim who we are by letting go of who we are not. <sup>1</sup>

But discovering who we are is only the beginning. Being who God created us to be is easily confused with fitting into a particular expectation. If we confuse fitting in with belonging we’re disappointed and lacking. It’s exhausting to be whatever persona others choose for us.

I wonder if choosing to be alone in the wilderness of Alaska takes less effort than fitting into a community as an imposter. On the other hand, in being who God created us to be may mean taking a stand where no one else is visible. We may find ourselves standing alone.

But what if this is true belonging?

Our series consists of five episodes that roughly maps to Dr. Brown’s book. There are extra copies of her book in the Arts Center. Alternatively, her book can be found at libraries, bookstores or purchased online.

I pray that you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We share our weekly episodes on our **YouTube channel**. We go live at 10:30 am. You can find these links along with more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our **website** at **FlintAsbury.org**.

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Brené Brown. *Braving the Wilderness — The Quest for True Belonging and the Quest to Stand Alone*. New York: Random House, 2019.

**Daniel (The heat is on)** .... cont. from pg 1

loses some of its transformative power when it is stripped of its critique on living in a nation that is a world superpower.

The song *Daniel*, according to Taupin, is based on a story he read about a veteran of the Vietnam war returning home to his small town in Texas. The young man was anxious to return to the quiet life he left behind while serving overseas. But the townsfolk wanted more. They wanted him to play the part of a local hero. So the lyrics are from the perspective of a younger brother who misses him after he left home to travel to Spain.

The first half of the biblical Daniel is about life in exile for the Judean captives taken there after the fall of Jerusalem. This part of the book focuses on the challenges four young friends face to hold onto their allegiance to the God of their ancestors. To remain faithful to God despite intense pressure to shift their priorities. They're faced with whether they accept the benefits and trappings that come with sacrificing their faith in exchange for their patriotism.

The four young men were selected for high-ranking civil service positions in the royal administration of King Nebuchadnezzar. The first order of business was for their new boss to give them names more appropriate for their roles.

Hananiah, whose name means "Yahweh Is Gracious" in his native Hebrew, became Shadrach or "Friend of the King" in the Babylonian language. Mishael, whose name means "is like God," becomes

Meshach or "Guest of the King." Azariah, whose name means "Yahweh has helped," became Abednego or "servant of NeboMishael." The name Daniel means "God Is My Judge." But his new name, Belteshazzar, had the Babylonian meaning of "Bel's Prince."

The four young men were groomed to be civic leaders. This meant demonstrating allegiance to the nation of Babylon. In an autocratic government, unquestionable loyalty to the leader is expected.

**You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other.**

**Matthew 6:24**

Some writers call this the "way of empire." Other writers may call this the way it was under monarch rule. Still, others draw parallels to present-day dictatorships, such as the control Vladimir Putin has over the citizens of Russia.

Some of us notice the alarming comparison to nationalism in any country. Even those nations claiming to be a democracy. One thing that is clear, however. Total allegiance to any power other than God is incompatible with the beliefs of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

Brian Zahnd, in *Postcards from Babylon*, notes that "The self-identity derived from a name... forms us in significant ways. This is why early Christian converts from paganism would be given a 'Christian name' at their baptism."<sup>1</sup>

Today in the ritual of baptism, particularly for younger children, clergy are careful to say the name that the individual will use in their identity as a Christian. There is power in the idea that God "knows our name" and "calls us by name." And thus, to give someone a name is to exert tremendous power over them.

The early chapters of Daniel focus on the struggle of these four young men to carry out the responsibilities of their positions while holding fast to the faith of their childhood. This won't be easy for them. Nationalism demands a willingness to sacrifice for the good of the nation. But, how much is sacrificed, and for whom is the sacrifice being made?

In the book named for the Prophet Jeremiah, we read that God was very much aware of the Judean exiles' struggles in Babylon. So at one point, God instructs Jeremiah to send a letter to those in exile. In the letter, we read that the exiles are to build houses and settle down in their new home. And they are to plant gardens, marry, and have children while living in exile.

There is no doubt that Jesus came to "interfere" with human affairs. And the world's response can be described using similar language to what we find in this short story of healing. Likewise, Jesus came to heal the "we" regardless of merit. Fortunately, God is patient and willing to wait until we're tired of searching for answers in all the wrong places.



AdobeStock\_57609879

Imagine the scene that takes place some months after this story. It's a major festival in Jerusalem and the Governor arrives accompanied by a military parade. Soldiers on horses trained for war are seen for miles and war chariots take the place of floats. The display makes its point. Step out of line and you'll see shock and awe first hand.

A couple days later Jesus enters from the opposite of town amidst a parade of His own. Instead of soldiers with weapons, Jesus is surrounded by ordinary civilians waving palm branches. Instead of riding in a chariot or on a horse, Jesus rides on a small donkey. Was this display sarcasm or simply a warning of God's interference into human affairs?

Brian Zahnd writes that "Jesus' triumphal entry was the anti-military parade. It was a mockery of Rome's intimidating show of military power." But in response to the divine warning the people put down their palm branches and went along with the use of violent aggression against Jesus. Zahnd notes that the people were "still looking for a Messiah who is some dude on a horse."<sup>4</sup>

I invite you to join us for worship as we study the Way that Jesus teaches us to live as followers. This month, in particular, we celebrate Black History month with celebrity guest interviews. We gather in the Asbury Arts Center in person and online on YouTube and Facebook. Video replays are available to watch later.

You can join us each Sunday online by going to the button on the homepage of our [website](#) - [Click here to watch](#). This button takes you to our [YouTube channel](#). You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsbury.org](#).

A reminder that we publish this newsletter that we call the *Circuit Rider* each week. You can request this publication by email. Send a request to [connect@FlintAsbury.org](mailto:connect@FlintAsbury.org) or let us know when you send a message through our [website](#). We post an archive of past editions on our website under the tab, Connect - choose [Newsletters](#).

Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Michael D. Shear, David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt. "Western Officials Dispute Russian Claim of Pullback From Ukraine Border." © *New York Times*, Feb 16, 2022, Updated Feb 17, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Hopkins. "A hack of the Defense Ministry, army and state banks was the largest of its kind in Ukraine's history." © *New York Times*, Feb 17, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Dan Bilefsky and Richard Pérez-Peña. "How the Ukraine Crisis Developed, and Where It Might Be Headed." © *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Zahnd. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church In American Exile*. Spello Press, 2019.

## Life Groups Questions & Notes:

*Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

Mark 1:21 (NLT)

### NOTES FROM WORSHIP

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### QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Mark 1:21-28. What do think is going on in this story? What does the presence of an evil spirit in a person mean to you? In what ways does Jesus interfere with the man in the story? With you? With the world?
2. Read the article in this week’s Circuit Rider, *Interference*. In what ways are you effected, directly or indirectly, by the circumstances in and around Ukraine? What should the U.S. and our allies in NATO be prepared to do to protect Ukraine? In our theme story Jesus heals a man with an evil spirit. In what ways might this story relate to the circumstances involving Ukraine? Cyberattacks? War?
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? Pray for each other to have the Holy Spirit bless you with more courage.

# “Feed Flint”



# “Feed Flint”



A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

### **Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.**

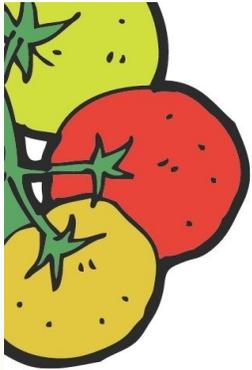
We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:  
[flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate](https://flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate)



SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN  
PRESENTS

# FEBRUARY FOOD GIVEAWAYS & ANGEL CLOSET DATES

3410 Fenton Road (three blocks north of Atherton  
Road)

Flint, MI 48507

Call 810-239-3427 for appointments/questions or  
email [southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:southflintsoupkitchen@gmail.com)

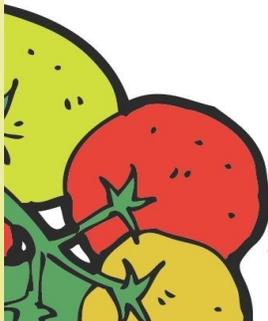
**Food Giveaways: NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY!**

**Feb. 2nd and 16th, 11am-noon**

**Angel Closet: APPOINTMENT REQUIRED**

**Feb. 9th & 23rd, 10:30am-noon**

**MASK REQUIRED FOR ENTRY, ONE CLIENT AT A TIME**  
**IN THE ANGEL CLOSET**





**ASBURY FARM FRESH**

**- TRY OUR WEEKLY VEGGIE BOX FOR \$10.00 -**

**SIGN UP FOR A FREE ASBURY FARMS ACCOUNT TODAY**

**AND**

Receive a \$15 credit on your account for your first purchase

**CREATE YOUR OWN VEGGIE BOX**

Select what goes in your box from each week's harvest. Get \$5 off your next order when you fill your box with \$15 of produce.

**WANT US TO DECIDE FOR YOU?**

Choose Veggie Box Subscription and we will fill your order with a variety of each week's harvest. Pay when you pick up your box. **A \$15 VALUE FOR \$10.**

**\* CONVENIENT PICKUP AT ASBURY OR AT THE SOUTH FLINT SOUP KITCHEN \***

**FREE!  
FAMILY FRIENDLY!  
\$1 RAFFLE FOR ASBURY  
CDC!**

# Asbury Church February Open Mic

1653 Davison Road  
Flint, MI 48506

02.25.2022

Show 7pm  
Doors open  
at 6:30pm

**ALL ARE  
WELCOME!!**

Questions??? Call Katelin at 810-239-3427 or  
email [katelin@flintasbury.org](mailto:katelin@flintasbury.org)

In other words, make yourself at home. And work for the good of the cities where you live. But never forget who put you there and to whom you owe your primary allegiance.

One of Daniel's superpowers was dream interpretation. When King Nebuchadnezzar hears about this, he calls on Daniel to interpret a disturbing dream. But the king is even more disturbed when Daniel tells the king that his dream suggests that Babylon's days are numbered.

A common observation of powerful persons is that whenever their power is challenged it's quite personal. Some also have thin skin and fragile egos. Humility is seldom a characteristic of powerful leaders with big egos and thin skin.

The writer, at this point, shows their sense of humor as the king's reaction unfolds. First, the king orders the building of a giant statue. A structure made of gold that would last forever as a symbol that Babylon would likewise last forever. A sort of middle-finger expression to whosoever challenges his authority.

A ceremony was planned for the statue's commissioning. All residents were required to attend and bow down to the statue as representing the power of Babylon. Anything less would be treasonous and the perpetrators arrested and executed.

Wouldn't you know it? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were expected to be present and bow down to the statue. After all, they were given high-level positions, and the media would be paying close attention to them. The same was true for those who resented foreigners taking away choice jobs.

Instead, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah showed up that day. The men stayed faithful to the One God to whom each pledged their allegiance. While they would sing the Babylon National Anthem with pride and dance with their neighbors to celebrate the occasion, they worshiped only one God. And refused to worship human-made idols.

The story of the three men surviving a fiery furnace is classic. The storyteller uses a combination of humor and hyperbole to build suspense. The men lay faith on the line. If God sees fit to save them, they will be saved. If not, they will perish. Their fate is in the hands of the only God they trust and worship.

The parallels to our nation are condemning but enlightening. Daniel and his three friends were prepared for service to the empire. They were trained in Babylon's language, policies, practices, and beliefs. They learned their lessons well and rose quickly in the ranks. And a day of reckoning soon came.

We had hints of their struggle. They managed to forego the royal diet of excess. Somehow they recognized that holding onto their faith is difficult in exile. Losing our faith begins with seemingly innocent choices. What's a helping of pork chops gonna hurt? I had better take my share now since there isn't enough to go around.

The empire offers an impressive alternative to their faith. But, on the other hand, the trappings of the empire loom large. Will they bow down and worship the gods of security, militarism, and the economy? The

penalties are steep, and the heat is intense. So it's an easy choice for most. But the young men hold onto their belief that the one True God will save them. Otherwise, life doesn't really matter anyway.

I invite you to join us for worship as we study the Way that Jesus teaches us to live as followers. This month, in particular, we celebrate Black History month with celebrity guest interviews. We gather in the Asbury Arts Center in person and online on YouTube and Facebook. Video replays are available to watch later.

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Pastor Tommy

<sup>1</sup> Brian Zahnd. *Postcards from Babylon: The Church In American Exile*. Spello Press, 2019.



## *ASBURY UNITED METHODIST WOMEN*

**Invite you to join us in a Special Lenten Project**

### *"FORTY DAYS ~ FORTY ITEMS"*

Wednesday, March 2, 2022 is the first day of Lent. I have a challenge for you!

Each day of Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday, remove one item from your closet that you no longer wear or need (or doesn't fit) and put it into this trash bag\*. At the end of the forty days, we will donate these items to The Angel Closet at our South Flint Soup Kitchen. This way you will be able to share them with someone who can really use them!!

So instead of "giving up" Chocolate or French Fries for Lent, please give from your heart so we can help with clothes for our neighbors at The Angel Closet. Plus you'll be getting a head start on your own spring cleaning!

\*All items must be clean and not torn or ripped or stained. We are giving these items away to our clients and if you won't wear it, we don't want to have them wear these items either.

If you have any questions, please call UMW President Michele Weston at (810) 624-1184.



# WINTER EXTRAVAGANZA

MEET 

Saturday



MEET  
GREET  
& EAT

GREET  
& EAT 

February 26 2022



 HOT FOOD *noon til gone*

(provided by Asbury UMC, Food Not Bombs, & Union Flint Church!)



MEET & GREET 6PM - 9PM

(lite food and refreshments will be provided)

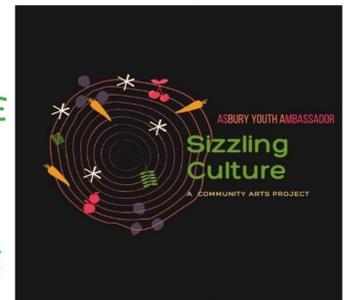
BE THERE & BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Ages High School only (18-19)

Brought to you by SIZZLING CULTURE



NOT ALLOWED: violence  
drugs  
weapons  
abusive language  
alcohol  
Security will be present



Asbury Church | 1653 Davison Road | 810 235 0016 | FlintAsbury.org

