

# ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 2 Issue 16

October 16, 2022

## Praise (Let God be God)



“Do you know anything about this?” I asked Cyndi the other day. “No,” she replied, “but I’ll google it.” I suspect this is a familiar conversation. Over half of the world’s popula-

tion use Google. And 77% of google users will search for something on Google at least 3 times per day.

And if you use Google to search, you’ll see a lot of Google and YouTube advertisements.

We are inundated with messages intended to convince us that we’re in need of whatever the source of the message is selling. By 2007 persons using social

Page 6

## Listen (God hears you)



For the most part, I believe around half of what people tell me. But, after you gasp at my confession, hear me out.

Even when someone I trust tells me something, I presume that one or more of their facts are off, some are opinions, and all are contextual. For those who frequently

stretch the truth, my confession sounds like grace. Perhaps even misplaced grace. But my confession may appear accusatory for those closest to me who try to be truthful.

I argue that my approach is motivated by grace in all cases. For the truth-teller, I take the pressure off of getting all of their facts straight. And for the liar, I realize that most lies have an element of truth at their core. This element of truth is what makes lies believable.

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EVERYONE HAVE A  
WONDERFUL AND-  
SAFE WEEK!



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And in all cases, my assessment helps me to be a better listener. Discerning which is truth and which is fiction requires paying careful attention. Admittedly, fact-checking takes time, and I'm sure I sometimes get it wrong, so I try to spend my efforts wrestling only with the essential points.

I wonder if God uses a similar filter when listening to my prayers? Probably not, since God already knows truth from fiction and doesn't need to use averages or guess which parts are true.

Last week, we looked at a prayer of praise that Jesus said out loud for a crowd to listen in on His conversation. These prayers are helpful to study since they offer insights into the mind of God. This week's example is found in John's Gospel.

Jesus hears that His friend, Lazarus, is sick. But instead of dropping everything and heading towards Bethany, Jesus goes on about the work at hand. Which is understandable from several angles.

First, the last time Jesus was in Judea, where the town of Bethany was located, the community leaders wanted to stone Him. And when Jesus announced to His followers a couple days later that He needed to go see His friend, they discouraged Him from going back to Judea.

With Jesus knowing what was unfolding in Bethany, He and His followers headed that way a couple of days later. As they approach, word travels ahead, and Martha, a sister of Lazarus, goes out to meet Jesus on the road leading into the village.

Seeing Jesus, Martha said to Him, "If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died!"

We don't know for sure the tone that accompanied Martha's words. Nor do we know for sure how her body language punctuated her accusation. But we can imagine how we feel when we lose someone close to us. And we have an idea of the disappointment and frustration we feel when someone we believe could prevent a tragedy doesn't show up in time.

But Martha adds a foreshadowing comment. "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask for."

Scripture is a living text that ebbs and flows according to our situations and moods. One day we read a story like this, and Martha is shouting with angry tears. At another time we envision Martha as full of anticipation and gratitude. And these mood swings seem to occur regardless of how often we've read the same story.

God's Spirit plays a role in our timing and the impact the words have on our demeanor and what we take away. Provided that we're listening.

Martha runs home to tell her sister, Mary, who rushes to meet Jesus with a crowd of mourners following. As soon as Mary saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said through tears, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!"

The Good News Translation adds an exclamation to the end of Mary's words that don't appear in any manuscript, revealing the hand of the translators. When we read this story, an exclamation point feels right as

someone who experienced loss and disappointment. I can imagine a blubbing Mary, barely able to get out her words.

I can also imagine how I would feel if I arrived too late to help. Scripture tells us that Jesus felt a special affection for Lazarus and his sisters. And it appeared that He let them down by waiting too long to arrive. After all, it is likely that Jesus healed a few other people during the two days before He left for Bethany. Couldn't He have left sooner after He learned His friend was ill? It appears that Mary thought so.

We read that Jesus felt great compassion for His friends. And as Jesus arrived at the tomb where Lazarus was buried, we read the shortest verse found in scripture. Jesus wept.

I'm not sure I've ever read these two words without tearing up. There is something about God weeping at the sight of grief. I can't put my finger on it, but as I try to put down my thoughts this morning, I can feel tears streaming down my face.

We each deal with grief and disappointment in our own way. These emotions are contextual. In other words, we respond out of a plethora of past experiences. Many who watched this scene unfold were surely weeping along with Jesus and the sisters of Lazarus.

But we read that others responded with indignation. "He gave sight to the blind man, didn't he? Could he not have kept Lazarus from dying?"

In Our Prayers

Kevin Croom  
Sylvia Pittman  
Shirley Craig

Richard Oram  
Chris Freeman



FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE  
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Nancy Elston Elaine Lamoreaux  
Norma Buzzard

**CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORTS**

**Please get your reports into me ASAP.**

**Thank you! Connie**

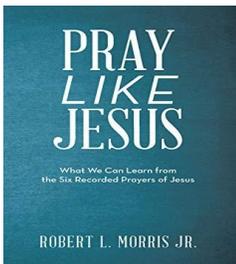
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**PASTOR BOOK CLUB NEWS**

Pastor Book Club is still meeting via Zoom, but we are also gathering in the Asbury Library Conference Room at 12Noon every Wednesday, unless otherwise noted.

Please call the Church Office for more information, as things could change (810-235-0016).

October's book series is called, *Pray like Jesus*, written by Robert L. Morris, Jr. *What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus.*



Thank you and everyone continue to stay safe!

**COMING UP THIS WEEK**  
**OCTOBER 17 –OCTOBER 23**

- Oct 17 Mon 3:00pm Leadership Team Meeting
- Oct 18 Tues 10:00am-12:30pm  
Food/Water Distribution
- Oct 19 Wed 11am-12Noon Food Giveaway at  
South Flint Soup Kitchen  
12Noon Pastor Book Club
- Oct 20 Thu
- Oct 21 Fri
- Oct 22 Sat
- Oct 23 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](#).)

# Upcoming Worship Series "Pray"

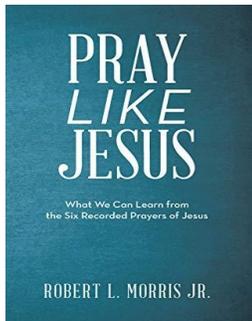


"Will you pray for me," the man asked his friend. "Of course," came the response. What else could his friend say? Prayer is so easy. It doesn't even have to be verbal. And prayer is so personal that no one knows if it even takes place.

But to whom will his friend pray and how will his friend go about praying? After all, nationally, we are a diverse group demographically and politically, and our religious beliefs vary.

## Book Club News

Our worship series beginning in October focuses on



prayer and our book club selection that accompanies our series is titled *Pray Like Jesus*.

This book, written by Robert L. Morris, Jr., examines six prayers of Jesus, found in the Gospels, to help us

become more consistent prayers.

Prayer is probably the most talked-about subject in churches. However, not enough of us actually pray regularly. Rev. Morris believes that this is because we don't know enough about how to pray. The six prayers of Jesus can teach us how to grow our prayer life deeper and wider than ever before.

According to Amazon's description of our book selection:

*Pray like Jesus* is intended to be a simple

spiritual how-to-manual for those who do not have a vital prayer life but seek one. It is one intended to be an academic book as much as it is an epistle from a fellow believer who may have learned a few things in forty-one years of ministry. Author Robert L. Morris Jr. invites you to join him and look at six prayers of Jesus, but you will intentionally not examine the Lord's Prayer in depth. The reason is simple: the Lord's Prayer contains valuable information on how disciples should pray, but this book is about how Jesus personally prayed.

### Asbury Staff

- Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel 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
- Chris Freeman South Campus Bldg Mgr
- Israel Unger Finance Director
- Kim Sims Connections Suprv
- Terrance Williams Arts Center Mgr
- Katelin Maylum Sr Prog Mgr Local Foods
- South Flint Soup Kitchen

### Leadership in Worship & Service

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

## Upcoming Worship Series - "Pray" ...cont from pg 4

As Christians, we believe that there is one God and we're likely to presume that praying means taking our petitions there. Yet we also believe that God lived among humanity and that we know God through Jesus Christ. And that God is ever-present through the Holy Spirit.

But according to a 2021 Pew Research Study, just under one-third of the U.S. population do not claim an affiliation with a particular religious group. Instead, they identify as atheist, agnostic, or simply respond "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious identify. And while the majority of U.S. resident self-identify as Christian, this percentage dropped 11 points over the past decade from 3/4 to less than a third.

Does this mean that prayer is a dying trend? The news is disturbing.

According to an article published in the *Christian Post* based on the *Pew Study*, *less than half of Americans pray daily. This is quite a contrast to the prayer habits of Jesus. As a Jew it's likely that Jesus prayed at least three times each day.*

Doesn't it make sense that, as Christians, our prayer life would resemble that of our Savior, Jesus Christ? Of course.

Our new series, *Pray*, examines the prayer life of Jesus by looking at each of the six actual prayers that we find in the Gospels. While there are numerous references of Jesus praying there are only six actual prayers preserved for our benefit.

Come learn how Eat, Pray, Love gets lived out when we try to emulate the prayer habits of Jesus.

Our series is based on a book written by the Reverend Dr. Robert L. Morris, Jr., a Presbyterian pastor for over 45 years. Our series will utilize his book titled *Pray Like Jesus as a guide. Be sure to get your copy before or after Sunday worship, or find a copy at your local library or favorite source for books. And join us at Book Club each Wednesday at Noon for further discussions on each Sunday's message.*

Everyone is invited to submit prayer requests for each worship. Each prayer request will be dedicated during worship and be included in our prayers. Prayers requests can be submitted through the homepage of our website or filling out a prayer request form.

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](http://FlintAsbury.org).

Pastor Tommy

*Robert L. Morris, Jr.. Pray Like Jesus: What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus.. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2019.*

media and email were seeing around 5,000 ads every day. Today the average online person sees around 10,000 ads per day.

Most of us have learned the hard way that even if we decide to purchase whatever the message is selling our feelings of satisfaction are short-lived. First, our satisfaction is short-lived because the barrage of messages doesn't stop. And whether abruptly or subtly, each message reminds us of deficiencies in our appearance, our vehicles, our homes, our entertainment, and in nearly every aspect of life.

From a need for a prescription, better hair, a more powerful truck, or a more comfortable bed. How can we ever feel like we've arrived when we're always traveling to the next store to buy whatever we're told we're missing.

And even when we feel satisfied our satisfaction is short-lived. Our satisfaction is short-lived because that which truly satisfies us cannot be purchased from somebody else. The result is that we feel lacking and convinced that we're never enough. Recent surveys suggest that somewhere between 70 and 80% of us report feeling inadequate.

So I'm guessing that feelings of inadequacy often show up in our prayers. "Lord, help me to be more," fill-in-the-blank. And why not ask for that new truck while on the topic of inadequate. After all, Jesus said that we should expect to receive what we ask for in prayer (Matthew 7:7).

Father, Lord of  
heaven and earth! I  
thank you because...

Matthew 11:25

There is no doubt from scripture that Jesus prayed often. But one difference from the prayers of Jesus and my own is the absence of requests for self-improvement. And in the first of six actual prayers of Jesus, found in scripture, His focus is on God.

Father, Lord of  
heaven and earth!  
I thank you be-  
cause you have  
shown to the un-  
learned what you  
have hidden from  
the wise and  
learned. Yes, Fa-  
ther, this was how  
you were pleased  
to have it hap-  
pen... (Matthew  
11:25-26).

Depending on where you believe Jesus' prayer ends there is more to this lesson than these two verses. Jesus was speaking to a crowd and now He is addressing you and me. Jesus says a prayer that is heard by the crowd right after sharing His reflection on how some of the smartest and most powerful people around missed the obvious.

Jesus travelled from town to town teaching and performing miracles that included healing incurable illness and disability. Yet, a large number of eye witnesses seemed to miss the point altogether. By way of illustration, Jesus reminds the crowd that some of the least knowledgeable and a few of the worst offenders believed what they saw and heard. But their revelation is a divine gift that they didn't earn by their own efforts.

Instead, salvation that comes from knowing that Jesus Christ is God is simply a gift. The facts are so straight forward that they confuse the wise. And God's message is often overlooked by the comfortable.

Jesus said "Unless you change and become like

Life Group Questions & Notes:

I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so that they will believe that you sent me..

John 11:1-44 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

Handwriting lines for notes.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

- 1. Read the story of Lazarus found in John 11:1-44. What thoughts came to you as you read this story? What confused you? Did any past confusions become clear? What feelings appeared as you read this story?
2. Read this week's article titled Listen. Do you believe that God listens to your prayers? Why or why not? Why do you suppose Jesus prayed out loud so the crowd could hear Him? Why do you think Jesus waited two days before leaving for Bethany? Have you ever felt let down by God arriving too late? Share your experience with others. Have you ever let someone else down by arriving too late? Tell others about it.
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”





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 OCTOBER FOOD GIVEAWAYS & ANGEL CLOSET DATES**

**Food Giveaways - October 5th & 19th  
11am-Noon**

**Angel Closet (appointment only) -  
October 12th & 26th**

3410 Fenton Road (3 blocks north of  
Atherton)  
Flint, MI 48507  
810-239-3427





**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 \***

The Reverend Dr. Robert L. Morris Jr. has served in various ministerial positions for more than forty-five years. This includes serving as senior minister at First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida, for over seventeen years. Rev. Morris has since returned to Young Life staff, where his ministry began.

He is on the board of the Salvation Army and an organizing board member of First Ministries, a nonprofit serving the poor and homeless in Jacksonville. Rev. Morris is also a former board member of Habitat for Humanity in both Jacksonville and North Carolina.

I invite you to join us each Sunday for worship as we explore the six prayers of Jesus and consider how to improve our prayer life. Each Wednesday, we'll dig deeper into the wisdom offered by our book selection. You can pickup a copy of the book when you attend worship.

If you prefer to avoid groups or live too far away, I encourage you to join us via Zoom 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, delighted when new people 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).

Pastor Tommy

*Robert L. Morris, Jr.. Pray Like Jesus: What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus.. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2019.*

We don't know if Jesus heard these comments or if they came from someone who overheard them. But can't you imagine the hurt and feelings of helplessness behind these words?

And then, it happens. They took the stone away as Jesus requested. The crowd gasps in anticipation of ripping the bandage off an open wound. Martha warned Jesus about the smell of death.

*I thank you Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me...*

*John 11:42*

Undeterred, Jesus looks up and prays, "I thank you, Father, that you listen to me. I know you always listen to me, but I say this for the sake of the people here, so they will believe you sent me."

God listens and acts out of love, compassion, empathy, and grace. But Jesus realizes that not everyone intimately knows God in the same way He knows God. But there is more.

Jesus accentuates the connection between Himself and God. "You sent me," says Jesus. The arrival of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus was not a matter of coincidence. And what comes next is also a part of God's plan for humanity.

As the story continues, we read that after Jesus says a prayer out loud He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

Scripture should have more explicit warning labels like "Don't try this at home." I suspect that thousands of well-intended, faithful followers of Jesus have

prayed and shouted similar words. And cried out to God in anticipation that they also can bring a person back from death. And perhaps this has happened a time or two.

And some may argue that it's all about faith. If our faith is strong and we believe that God will do our bidding, the argument goes, miracles happen. And miracles do happen. God listens and acts. But in my experience, God does as God chooses based on the knowledge that is far beyond any of us.

Be wary of side shows that may have more to do with personal problems than divine intent.

But on that day, under those circumstances, Lazarus walked out at the beckoning of God, living among humanity. According to the writer, Lazarus walked out of the tomb with his hands and feet still wrapped in grave cloths. And with a cloth around his face.

Seeing Lazarus coming out of the tomb, Jesus asks that the attenders "Untie him, and let him go." Lazarus was free.

I mentioned earlier that we read scripture from a very personal perspective. Our experiences affect how we interpret the stories, along with how the translators choose and arrange words that they believe reflect the intentions of the original manuscript.

But suppose for a moment that the story is not about physical death. Instead, imagine Jesus standing in front of your tomb. However, not a physical cave but a circumstance that keeps you bound. What is tying you up and keeping you from a life of abundance?

Imagine Jesus praying out loud for you to remind you, not someone else, that God sent Jesus save you. To save you from

whatever obstacles, addictions, worries, shortcomings, or failures that hold you down.

At some point, Jesus will save you from death. But the afterlife is beyond anything we can grasp. So let's stay focused on the here and now.

God listens and responds to you and me. God's response may not be what we asked for, but it will be what we need. Even if we don't know what that is. And likely, we can't imagine or don't think we deserve that which God has in mind for us.

Each Sunday during our series, *Pray*, we're collecting prayer requests. You can submit a request online from our website [home page](#). In addition, prayer request forms are located around the church and during water and food giveaways.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's homepage](#) - [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

Content for this series is based in part on: Robert L. Morris, Jr.. *Pray Like Jesus: What We Can Learn From the Six Recorded Prayers of Jesus*. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2019.

Summer is getting into full swing at the farm!!!

Coming soon, the farm's new twist on a  
CSA Food Box!!!!

Bring home only the veggies you love!

**First Pick-Up Date: Saturday, July 16th, 11am-1pm and  
until further notice. We will post if anything changes.**



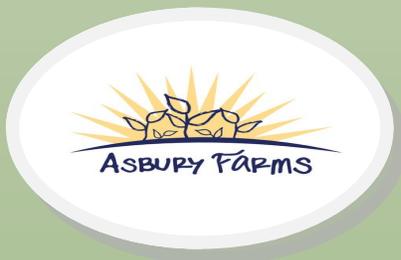
Want more information??  
Email: [kelly.jewett@outlook.com](mailto:kelly.jewett@outlook.com)



We were stoked to be kicking off our very first Asbury Farms Sliding Scale Food Box Program last week! Get the most local, organic, delicious produce!! Grown on the East Side!

Pick what veggies you want, how much you want and pay what you can between \$12.00 — \$24.00.

Every Saturday from 11:00am to 1:00pm  
1601 Jane Ave Flint MI



Look for the big banner  
that says “SALE” ...

little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). When I think of children I think of potential and possibility. I feel like children come into the world so much smarter than adults because they haven’t learned limitations. And, as a result, they still believe anything is possible and they learn to navigate life at lightening speeds.

In Jesus’ first prayer in scripture He gives thanks and praises God for divine wisdom on display. For He knows that unless we’re able to let go of the regrets, hurts, disappointments and failures we miss the offer of grace coming from Jesus. And perhaps even harder, unless we let go of the successes, accomplishments, one-ups, wins, and trophies, we miss out on the humility that allows God to be in charge.

Do you want to improve your prayer life? Take a tip from Jesus and begin your prayer letting God know that you notice divine wisdom even when you don’t understand it.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. This week, try starting your prayers with praise.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below. This week, try starting your prayers with praise.

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Pastor Tommy



*South Flint Soup Kitchen  
Thanksgiving*

# FOOD DRIVE

**WE NEED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR OUR  
THANKSGIVING FOOD GIVEAWAY:**

- \*100 TURKEYS
- \*STUFFING
- \*CRANBERRY SAUCE
- \*GREEN BEANS
- \*CREAM OF MUSHROOM SOUP
- \*DURKEE ONIONS/FRIED ONIONS FOR CASSEROLES
- \*POTATOES/MASHED POTATOES
- \*DESSERTS/PIES
- \*ROLLS/BREAD
- \*COLLARDS/GREENS
- \*GRAVY PACKETS/CANS
- \*GALLONS OF MILK



**For questions call  
810-239-3427**



GET READY FOR A  
HALO-WEEN CELEBRATION!!

OCTOBER 31, 2022 FROM 4:30-6:30PM IN OUR  
VERY OWN HOOP HOUSE AT  
1600 BLOCK OF JANE STREET ...



WE ARE LOOKING FOR CANDY DONATIONS. IF YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO DONATE, PLEASE DROP YOUR  
DONATIONS AT THE CHURCH OFFICE  
BY OCTOBER 30, 2022.

