

# The Asbury Messenger

*Connect. Grow. Serve.*

February 2016

• Lansing Asbury United Methodist Church

• Issue #12 Volume 30



## *Sermon Notes* **Look to Jesus and Live**

“Look to Jesus and live.” How simple and powerful a message it is! Sometimes, we turn our eyes away from our Lord Jesus Christ, and look at the many other things that occupy this earth. Because of the things that come into our line of vision and catch our attention, our minds are easily disturbed and we are shaken in our faith in Jesus Christ. Our heart, mind, and the foundation of faith sway as a bridge sways whenever a train passes over it. I know that you know it. Whenever our hearts shake, whenever our minds sink, whenever our voices tremble, we need to turn our eyes to Jesus.

*“Oh soul, are you weary and troubled. No light in the darkness you see. There’s light for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”*

To believe is to look at Jesus and live. This is the life of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. Anyone can look at Jesus. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who looked to Jesus and lived, therefore, Hebrews 12:1a-2 says, “Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

## *A letter from Pastor Cho* **Some Changes in Asbury**

“John Henry Newman said, ‘To live is to change. And to be perfect is to have changed often.’ I like his words of wisdom. But in reality, making a change, even a small one, is not easy at all. It would not be easy to make a change, even if there was a general consensus among people that the change would be a positive one. Change requires not only courage and ability, but also love and patience. When we have to make and face changes that we don’t agree with, a deeper level of love and patience is asked of us. That’s what I believe - that to love is to be changed, and to love a lot is to be changed a lot.

As you all have experienced, there have been so many changes here and there, and probably too often in Asbury recently. There may have been some changes that you don’t like. I, as pastor of this congregation, appreciate your love and patience with the changes. Your willingness to accept these changes shows me how deeply you love and care for Asbury. In the last two months, we at Asbury tried to make two changes: a stewardship plan, and a change about the future of the Asbury’s contemporary service. I believed, and still believe, in the great potential of ordinary people like you and me; that if we work together, we will be able to create a significant change in our lives. One of the stewardship campaigns for 2016 was to have one hundred people who would be willing to increase their giving by one dollar per Sunday. As of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 68 Asbury friends have participated in that campaign. They were the people who graciously accepted the challenge for change. I am thankful for them. I am also thankful for our other Asbury friends who have decided to keep supporting Asbury Church through their giving, despite their limited financial resources and situations.

As most of you know, we at Asbury have changed the worship hour for the traditional service from 9:15am to 10:00am. After much thought and consideration, we have now come to a final decision regarding the contemporary service, and I would like to inform you that **the contemporary service will be discontinued, officially, as of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**, until a time comes in the future when Asbury is in a condition to try to restart it. I feel some of the pain and frustration that the people who planned and launched this service with hope and vision two years ago might be experiencing because of this decision. What can I say to you? I can only pray that this change might increase your love and patience in God and for Asbury Church.

In the midst of 1960s, a time of violent change in our society, Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr, a famous theologian and ethicist, used to pray: ‘God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.’ I pray that all of us who work together in the ministry of God and walk in the journey of our faith together can pray together as he did. May God bless you and Asbury Church.”

# Worship Service Schedule

Sunday Worship – 10:00am

**Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday Service @ 3:00pm**

**Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> – Special Music Sunday** (details below)

## Upcoming Events

### Souper Bowl Sunday



This year marks the NFL's 50<sup>th</sup> Super Bowl Sunday. Will you watch it on TV? Go to a party? Eat a lot of food during the game? Read about it somewhere? Regardless of what you do for the Super Bowl, please consider what you will do for the Souper Bowl. Wouldn't you like some of your resources go to feeding the hungry? On Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, you have the opportunity to do just that. After the service, there will be soup pots waiting to receive your donations toward our Sack Lunch program to feed the homeless in Lansing. Your generosity will enable this program to continue.

### Special Music Sunday

This year, Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, and to celebrate the wonderful gift of love that we all share, Asbury will be having a special music Sunday for that day's 10:00am worship service. The service will focus on the theme of – you guessed it –

Love! Our choir will perform numerous songs centered on this theme. Afterwards, there will be a potluck lunch, so be sure to bring something. It will be a lovely service, and we hope to see you there!



# *An Important Notice on Taxes*

**WILL YOU BE RECEIVING A REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION FROM AN IRA OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT PLAN THIS YEAR? IF THE ANSWER IS YES, THEN THIS IS IMPORTANT NEWS FOR YOU.**

The tax bill that was recently passed by Congress and signed by President Obama made permanent a provision that allows taxpayers who are at least 70½ years old to make up to \$100,000 in qualified charitable distributions from individual retirement plans without including the distributions in taxable income on their Federal Income Tax.

If you will be at least 70½ years old by the end of 2016 and expect to receive a Required Minimum Distribution or other distribution from your retirement plans in 2016, you could achieve significant tax savings by taking advantage of this new law.

EXAMPLE - Assume you receive \$50,000 in taxable income this year, at least \$5,000 of that from your individual retirement plans, and contribute \$5,000 to Asbury.

**THE OLD LAW** - You will report \$50,000 in taxable income on your Federal Income Tax. If you itemize deductions, you can count the \$5,000 as a charitable contribution, so your taxable income will go down to \$45,000. If you don't itemize deductions, your taxable income will remain at \$50,000.

**THE NEW LAW** - You can have \$5,000 go directly from your individual retirement plans to Asbury and \$5,000 less go from your IRA to yourself. You will not have to count the \$5,000 that goes directly to Asbury as taxable income on your Federal Income Tax, whether or not you itemize deductions. Your taxable income will be \$45,000.

**IF YOU DO NOT CURRENTLY ITEMIZE DEDUCTIONS** - For someone who does not currently itemize deductions on their Federal Income Tax, this is a no-brainer. If the person in this example is single, they would pay \$1,250 less in Federal Income Tax on their 2016 income. If they are married and file a joint return, they would pay \$750 less.

**IF YOU CURRENTLY ITEMIZE DEDUCTIONS** - Even if you currently itemize deductions on your Federal Income Tax, you could save a significant amount in taxes by making all your 2016 charitable contributions directly from your individual retirement plans and taking the standard deduction on your Federal Income Tax. It would also be easier to fill out your Form 1040.

**HOW WILL THIS IMPACT YOU?** - Your results will vary depending on your tax bracket and the amount you plan to donate to charities this year. Please see your financial advisor for details. They will probably be able to arrange a regular monthly contribution directly to Asbury from your individual retirement plans. Consult your tax advisor.

We hope that those of you who make this change will consider using some of your tax savings to increase your contributions to Asbury Church.

# Update

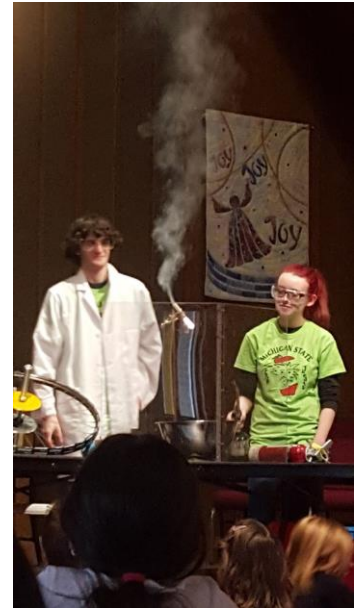
## Science Theatre - Thank you!

On the afternoon of Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, three M.S.U. student volunteers from an on campus organization called *Science Theatre* captivated the minds of 27 children and 51 adults with demonstrations, hands-on experiments, and fun, for one amazing hour of science!

Afterwards, everyone joined together in the fellowship hall for a delicious dinner; every table was filled and not one sloppy

joe sandwich, bag of chips, or brownie was left!

The Outreach Team was so happy with the attendance. Our focus had been to draw families from outside the church community and, in this regard, we were successful. It was indeed an "outreach" event. To those who helped, supported, attended, or have prayed for our team, we are forever grateful.



## Conference Room

If you have visited Asbury in the last few weeks, you'll have noticed some very exciting changes taking place in the conference room across from the front doors!



It's been quite a journey of making that room into an efficient and usable space – from cleaning up the clutter and clearing out the old furniture to giving it a makeover with a

fresh coat of paint and a new carpet, we're finally ready to put this room to good use. The newest additions to this room include a brand new flat screen TV, complete with cable and the ability to be wirelessly connected to a computer (great for presentations, DVDs, or just broadcasting something from the internet to the screen for everyone to see!), and a brand new conference table that can seat at least 10. (We haven't quite decided on chairs yet, but those will be coming in the near future to complete the room!)

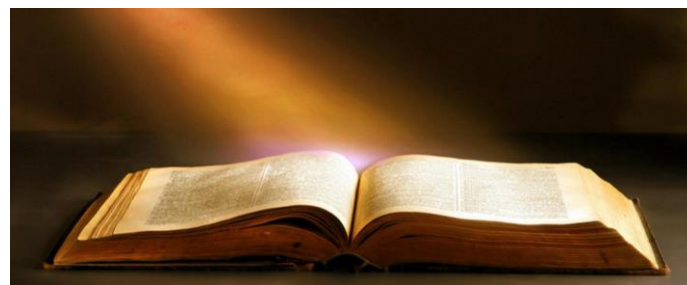
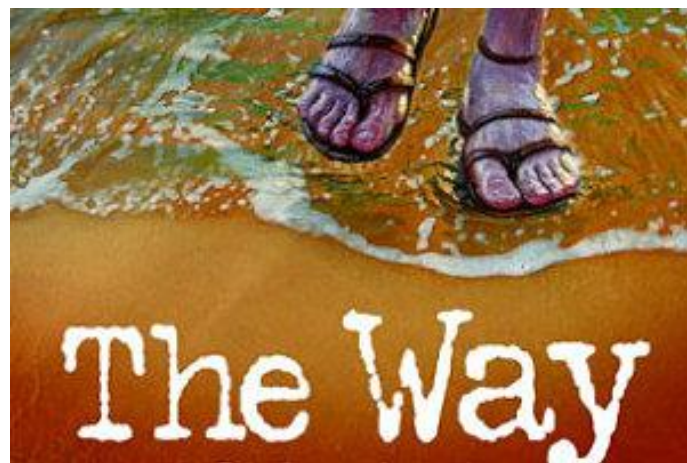
We hope this newly renovated and modern multi-purpose room will be utilized as much as possible for groups and meetings that require the space, the presentation equipment, or just want a nice space to gather. If you would like more information or have any suggestions for how we can improve this space even further, don't hesitate to contact the church office with your comments and questions.

## Doxology Change

Beginning in February, we will be switching back to the old Doxology (UMH #95). This decision was made not only due to popular demand, but due to the fact that #95 is a bit easier to play and sing in general than the one we are currently using.

## Bible Study Schedule

Asbury's Bible Study group has decided to move their time from Mondays at 6:00pm to Sunday mornings at 11:00am, after worship. They will be meeting each Sunday in the newly renovated conference room, located in the Narthex. In the upcoming weeks they will be studying Adam Hamilton's "The Way" series. All are welcome – if you would like to participate, please contact Carole Armstrong or Dawn Hecker for more information.



## Loose Coins -- Salud y Paz



During the Guatemalan Civil War in the 1980's and 1990's, dentist Phil Plunk spent several weeks serving in Guatemala. On each trip to pull teeth, Phil became more and more aware that the need for dental care in Guatemala couldn't be solved through week-long service trips - what the people of Guatemala needed was easier access to regular care. So Phil packed up his dental practice and moved to Guatemala, and in 2001, Phil founded Project Salud y Paz and opened a small clinic in Camanchaj, Quiché, Guatemala.

seeing more than 50 patients a day. In addition, Project Salud y Paz operates a second clinic in Quetzaltenango (Xela-Urbina) and began partial operation at a third clinic in Cunén in early 2014.

Salud y Paz doesn't just provide medical care. In 2009, Salud y Paz opened an early education center called Susanna Wesley School. Susanna Wesley School provides education, nutrition, and medical care for more than 50 children preschool through first grade.



For the first time, comprehensive dental care was available to people in the rural highlands. Phil worked with the local firemen to spread the word

about the American dentist providing free dental care. Slowly, news of Salud y Paz reached more and more people, and the number of patients began to grow.

Since 2001, the clinic in Camanchaj has grown from one American dentist seeing less than 10 patients a day to one full-time Guatemalan doctor, two part-time doctors, a dentist, and a dental assistant

Annually, between 25 and 30 mission teams come to Salud y Paz; most are either surgery teams or construction teams. A team from West Michigan has been going there for 4 years, and has helped build an apartment for the guardian and his family, a room for medical equipment, and this past year, worked on the playground for the school. Future plans call for expanding the surgical capabilities of the clinic.

Asbury supports this mission through our Six Lane giving and by participating in the West Michigan teams. Our loose coins for February will go to this mission project. In addition to this, if anyone is interested in joining a mission team, talk with Carole Armstrong. (For more information on Salud y Paz, please visit their official website: <http://www.saludypaz.org/> )

## *Personal Needs Month*

Three times each year, Asbury collects personal needs items as part of our contribution to Christian Services here in Lansing. The availability of these items allows persons in need to use their limited resources for things like rent, heat, and food for their families. The table downstairs

awaits items such as laundry soap, bar soap, deodorant, dish soap, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. When you are shopping for your family, look for the sales and BOGO items for someone less fortunate than you.

## *Altar Flowers*

The 2016 Altar Flower sign up chart is available now! If you would like to provide flowers for a special occasion, please write your name and who/what the flowers are for on the date(s) on the calendar located at the bottom of the stairs on the lower level.

The cost is \$17.50 and you are welcome to take the arrangement home after the worship service. Checks should be made payable to Asbury UMC and clearly marked "altar flowers."



## *Calling All Book Lovers!*

Do you love reading? Do you love to engage in discussions about the books you're reading with others who share the same passion? Why not join Asbury's Book Group? We meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month, 6pm at Schuler Books Café, in the Eastwood Towne Center. The group chooses the books they would like to read. Please join us!

## *Tuesday Movie Night*

Do you love movies? Why not join us for our bi-weekly movie night! Movie nights are the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. "Like" and follow Asbury's Facebook page for movie information and show times! All are welcome.



# February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>31 10:00a – Worship Service 11:00a – Bible Study</p>	<p>1 6:30p – Sending Out Ministry Meeting 7:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>2 <b>Ann Gerhardt</b> 8:00a – Prayer Group 6:00p – Movie Night (movie time TBD)</p>	<p>3 10:00a – Asbury Brass Practice 2:00p – Small Group Self Defense Class 6:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>4 9:00a – Busy Hands 6:30p – Handbell Choir Practice 7:30p – Choir Practice</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 1:00p – GA Meeting</p>
<p>7 <b>Teri Bedford Souper Bowl</b> 10:00a – Worship Service 11:00a – Bible Study</p>	<p>8 7:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>9 <b>Marvin Goad</b> 8:00a – Prayer Group 6:00p – Book Group @ Schuler's</p>	<p>10 10:00a – Asbury Brass Practice 3:00 pm – Ash Wed. Service 6:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>11 6:30p – Handbell Choir Practice 7:30p – Choir Practice</p>	<p>12 9:00a - Pack Sack Lunches</p>	<p>13 1:00p – GA Meeting</p>
<p>14 10:00a – Special Music Sunday &amp; PotLuck 11:00a – Bible Study</p>	<p>15 7:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>16 <b>Joyce Meyers Betty Clark</b> 8:00a – Prayer Group 6:00p – Movie Night (movie time TBD)</p>	<p>17 10:00a – Asbury Brass Practice 1:00p – Lamplighter's Circle 6:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>18 <b>William Allen</b> 9:00a – Busy Hands 6:30p – Handbell Choir Practice 7:30p – Choir Practice</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 <b>Dawn Hecker Cindy Jubeck</b> 1:00p – GA Meeting</p>
<p>21 10:00a – Worship Service 11:00a – Bible Study 6:00p – Intl. Camporee Planning Meeting</p>	<p>22 7:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>23 8:00a – Prayer Group 6:00p – Book Group @ Schuler's</p>	<p>24 10:00a – Asbury Brass Practice 6:00p – GA Meeting</p>	<p>25 6:30p – Handbell Choir Practice 7:30p – Choir Practice</p>	<p>26 <b>SeungWon Cho</b> 9:00a - Pack Sack Lunches</p>	<p>27 <b>Alesa Webb</b> 1:00p – GA Meeting</p>
<p>28 10:00a – Worship Service 11:00a – Bible Study</p>	<p>29 7:00p – GA Meeting</p>					

