

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Identity (Who are you?)

Who are you? What is your identity? This can be a haunting question. To exist is to have an identity. We give names as a shortcut so that we can differentiate one identity from another. But we also create names for groups so we can categorize and organize what we know about common identities. Scientists have chosen to utilize Latin names as a way to organize living things so as to gain clarity about how a particular living thing differs from other living things. This can be really confusing and doesn't answer the basic question, "Who am I?"

Animals belong to the grouping *Animalia*. Our family dog, Duke, has a scientific label that makes his identity more complete — *Canis lupus familiaris*. Living things are categorized scientifically by genus and species. The genus, or generic name, puts living things into broad categories which is further defined by a species. Us humans are known as *Homo sapiens*.

Note that the genus is capitalized. Just one of the rules for naming things.



Us *Homo sapiens* tend to also have "family" names that identify us with a particular biologically, related group of *Homo sapiens*. Depending on how we feel about the family of our origin we may choose to downplay this part of our identity or to lift it up when our family name can open doors. With advances in discovering family lineage through our DNA there has been a wave of interest in finding out more about who we are in terms of where our ancestors may have lived in past centuries. We are naturally fascinated by our identity "Who am I?" is a very popular question.

But naming us does not define us. While the name that people use to get our attention matters, particularly the name that our momma used when we were about to be scolded, our name doesn't really tell us much about who we are. There is much more to our identity than our name. There is much more to our identity than our DNA when we consider that we are much more than a physical being.

Many people turn to creation stories for clues as to who they are. In fact, identity is so important to humankind that we find creation stories in every culture. From Australia to Egypt and from India to the descents of the Mayan culture, there is no shortage of stories that help to explain who we are through the perspective of how did we get here. Our faith tradition turns to the Book of Genesis in our collection of sacred scriptures that we call the Bible.

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Snakes (Who told you that you're naked?)

Deuteronomy 23 begins with exclusions. In the Good News Translation the heading for the beginning of this chapter reads "Exclusion from the Lord's People." Using our center-pivot irrigation metaphor these are the people residing in the corners. They are the corner-dwellers. The left out and the left behind. The persons that the water that springs out of the source doesn't reach. Christians who point to the Old Testament to support their case for exclusion are careful to avoid the parts of the ancient text that don't support their case. Partic-

ularly those laws that exclude them from living within the circle. The laws they quote are selectively quoted. This allows exclusion of persons that do not fit their carefully constructed definition of insider—the circle-dwellers.



This text from the Old Testament laws does not mention women. They were considered property. Why do we think that the editors of Deuteronomy were men? Circle-dwelling men. This is one of the many reasons that I believe that even Holy Spirit inspired scripture must be read with a discerning mind and heart, rather than grabbing only the headlines that support our bias and blasting anyone standing in our way.

I received a letter from a couple last week that decided to leave their church and our denomination. This couple apparently wanted me to know what was

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Special points of interest:

>>> **Boy Scouts will be holding their annual movie and picnic on Saturday, June 1st, from 10am-3pm. They will be in the Fellowship Hall.**

>>> **UMW will be meeting Thursday, June 6th at 1pm in the Wesley Room.**

>>> **Kearsley Park Neighborhood Assoc will Tuesday, June 4th from 7-9:00pm in the Wesley Room.**

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Snakes (Who told you that you're naked?)...cont. from page 1

behind their decision. I'm guessing that it was a form letter that was sent to a list of pastors and perhaps other church leaders. Their claim is that they cannot just standby as scripture is reinterpreted to justify "alternative" lifestyles.

Really? With which interpretation do we stop reinterpreting? If we must stop with a particular generation's interpretation I vote that we stop with Jesus? But the early church that developed the canon (the list of writings to be included in the Christian Bible) discerned that Paul's voice needed to be heard. And what about the writer of the book that we call James? Do we stop there? In God's first covenant non-Jews were excluded and any others who did not meet the exclusionary laws like the ones that begin Deuteronomy 23. Which scripture do we ignore so that we can hold on to only that which we choose to believe that keeps us comfortable within the circle?

The problem is that the Bible is not a comprehensive set of reference books from which all decisions and interpretations are clear and final. Like the writers of our four Gospels humankind has been studying our ancient texts and drawing conclusions about how to interpret God's will for humankind from the beginning. And not so well meaning influencers are everywhere. Even in scripture. Even in churches.

Before the stones start coming my way allow me to also state that I do believe that the Bible is set-a-

Identity... cont. from page 1

In our tradition, before there was anything, there was God. And God decided to make room for something new and created the world by speaking the world into existence. And after creating the world with all of its wonderment including the sky, clouds, seas, plants and animals, God created humankind. Later translations take the Hebrew word for human and make it a name for the first man (Adam). This allowed the church to teach that man came first and then came woman with less confusion. This decision has also been used to do great harm, but this is a later article.

There are two creation stories in the Book of Genesis. The first creation story doesn't go into detail about the first humans (Genesis 1:26-30). Only that God created two humans initially. Male and female. The use of the conjunction "and" makes for an interesting discussion about gender.

part from all other writings and that the Bible contains all that we need for salvation. And all of the decisions that we ever need to make should begin with an interpretation of the biblical text. Go ahead and take your best shot. Because I also believe that if God wanted perfect clarity in scripture we would have it. But God, with the sort of wisdom that only God has, chose to hold back the "rest of the story" —on purpose I believe.

Why would God do this? One reason is that only God carries the burden of foresight. And God knew that left on our own we would listen to the influencers who most agree with what we want reality to be and we would get it wrong. Again and again. But on our better days we would get it right. The key is that we include those sent to the corners by influencers who missed the text on what love does. We have no choice — if we want to be faithful to scripture. We must read and interpret what we read together. And we must include the corner-dwellers who have been left out or kicked out of the circle.

And while I also have plenty to criticize about my own denomination I do like that our Methodist ancestors left us with the directive that we (each generation) are charged with reinterpreting scripture afresh. Our *Book of Discipline* on this subject reads: "Our theological task is constructive in that every generation must appropriate creatively the wisdom of the past and seek God in their midst in

Were the first humans that God created, and all of the humans that followed, both male and female? This makes more sense than the traditional ideas that men are men and women are women despite obvious evidence that men have feminine traits and women have masculine traits. But this is the subject of a later article.

A 2nd account of God creating humankind appears in Genesis 2:7-25. In this story God first creates one human ('adam - which simply means human) and then decides that this first human needs a suitable companion so as not to be alone. So God creates animals and then introduces the human to the animals and marvels at the human's choices of names for the animals. But none of the animals were a suitable partner (Genesis 2:18-20). So God forms a partner who will share not only in the work to be done but in all aspects of

order to think afresh about God, revelation, sin, redemption, worship, the church, freedom, justice, moral responsibility, and other significant theological concerns." Perhaps this couple also selectively reads this source.¹

I don't believe that the intention of the writers of this directive was that we will totally rewrite all interpretations. Nor should we simply throw-out the interpretations of our ancestors. Rather we deliberate and discern through prayer, study and conversation so as to develop Spirit-led interpretations that oftentimes do depart from past interpretations. And we try and remember that our goal is not to defend that which we want to believe but to discern whether our beliefs are not as grounded in the will of God so much as our own will.

We do have a nasty habit of making this all more complex than I think that it needs to be. But the ramifications are important enough that we should this exercise our best efforts. But are there a few axiomatic statements that can be made about our interpretation? I believe there are a few. My favorite are the two that Jesus gave us when asked to rank the commandments.

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their life together.

This 2nd human, in the Hebrew scripture, is called 'ishshah This Hebrew word, which English translations substitute Eve, has as it's root two different words that both mean "man" although in this context it makes sense that God created a human with reproductive organs that differ and allows for more humans to be created without God doing surgery. And it makes sense that in order to reproduce it requires two humans with the right equipment. But not all humans and not all human relationships result in children. And not all humans are born either male or female in their entirety, but these facts are for a later article.

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Identity..cont. from page 2

This week's message is titled *Identity*. Our subtitle is a question, *Who are you?* But in our case, identity is not about which part of the reproductive cycle that we are built for, or even whether we have reproductive organs at all. For identity is much deeper than physical attributes. When we contemplate the question "Who am I?" we may look into a mirror but even then we hope that our eyes can see beyond the image looking back at us. We want to see into our own soul that is not flesh at all, but spirit.

So for the question of identity we must do the same. And our starting point is also found in the creation stories of Genesis. In the 2nd Genesis story the first human is formed from the dirt and brought to life by God's breath. But in the 1st creation story we find a bit more detail about the specifications God chose for humans. God created human in God's own image. While this still leaves a lot to our imagination as we wrestle what God's image might be, We do have God's incarnation as human in Jesus Christ as a model for humanity. We were created to be an image of Jesus.

So what does this say about our identity? First, we can be clear that our physical appearances have little or nothing to do with our identity in terms of specificity. We look different from one

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In Our Prayers

Curtis Young	Shirley Craig
Rachel Bastine	Christopher Lewis
Norma Buzzard	Sarah Tanner
Virginia Bigger	Elizabeth Wright
Barbara McIvor	Judy Tanner
Austin & Mary Suffle	Mary Lyons

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Elaine Lamoreaux	Mary Nations
Mary Russell	

Snakes (Who told you that you're naked?) ...cont. from page 2

Jesus did so with what I believe are two axiomatic statements. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." And, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all our soul, and with all your mind...Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Matthew 22:37,39

I believe that this interpretation by Jesus is echoed in many places throughout the Gospels by Jesus and in other places like the letters that we attribute to John. And so when I consider the validity of interpretations, even those long-held by the church and by my own denomination, I measure them against love. And frankly, many of our interpretations, or at least how we live them out, is a gross violation of "love does."

I took the "long way around the barn" in this article. Thank you for hanging in there. Now I want to get to the point. But to do so I need to go back to the beginning. Back to the creation story that is often quoted as justification for telling others that they have to change who they believe God created them to be. But I want to focus on the first temptation and the sin of the snake. And I need to name the snake.

In Genesis 3:11 the first two humans had fallen prey to the lies of the snake and were hiding from God in the corner of the Garden where they apparently presumed that God couldn't find them and wouldn't attempt to find them. But God does find them and asks an important question. "Who told you that you were naked?"

The snake had provided the first humans with the argument for their shame by telling them that "You will be like God and know what is good and what is bad" (Genesis 3:4). Scripture doesn't tell us that the snake actually told them that their nakedness was shameful. Not directly. The snake only pointed to the fruit of the tree that they were told explicitly to avoid. And after this revelation the former circle-dwellers felt it necessary to move into the corner. We don't have a lot to work with — only that the snake gave a bad interpretation of God's will to the humans. And the humans drew the wrong conclusion out of the snake's

advice and counsel. And there were consequences for all of creation.

God asked the first humans "Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?" And they did. And they moved into the corners of the garden. And God told them what it would be like to carry this knowledge and to pass it on to their descendants. There would be consequences for all involved. The humans and the snake. Shame has no place in God's kingdom. And there are consequences for the shamed and for the one causing the shame.

Who told you that you were naked?

Here is a stretch that I believe the Holy Spirit shared with me the other day. The Bible, like the fruit of the forbidden tree, contains the knowledge of what is good and what is bad. The Bible has both ends of the good-bad spectrum. And the church itself has too often been the snake in the story. And God responds by ministering to the corner dwellers that were sent to the corners by the cleverness of the snake.

And when God chose to live among people. The corner dwellers were especially cared for. Those persons who were told that they were naked and should be ashamed and do not belong in the circle that is the kingdom of God. But it is God who controls the circle and the Gospels suggest that the kingdom is not a circle at all. That it has no boundaries. Only a gatekeeper. Jesus Christ. The one who lived in the corners with the persons that the church had rejected. Now go and do likewise.

This Sunday we will continue our worship series, *Chosen*. Our title this week is *Shame*. Our subtitle is *Who told you that you were naked?* And our theme is straightforward. When the church shames a person there are consequences. And God goes to the hurting by sending those of us willing to listen to rebuke not the person but the snakes who caused the shame.

Worship is at 10:30 am. I lead a discussion of the day's scripture in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. Come join us.


Pastor Tommy

¹ United Methodist Church. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2017.

Asbury Worship Series Chosen All are Welcome

We have all heard it from parents, from aunts, from anyone who is concerned about us. "You are judged by the company you keep." There are numerous other pearls of wisdom that come at us like a declaration of truth. And some of them are true. But a lot of them aren't. But even the less true ones have a seed of truth.

When the Pharisees and teachers of the law were grumbling about the company that Jesus kept do you suppose that they were scoffing that Jesus hadn't listened to their advice? "Be careful who you associate with Jesus – You are



judged by the company You keep?" After all, the tax collectors and "other outcasts" were coming out to hear Jesus speak. And Jesus was having meals with them. Scandal!

After beginning Chapter 15 with this observation the writer of Luke goes on to share that Jesus told a parable to "them." I'm guessing that Jesus told the parable to the gathered crowd knowing that His critics would be listening.

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Book Club News

Meet Nadia Bolz-Weber who is also the Rev Nadia Bolz-Weber. Nadia is a writer, a mother and a Lutheran pastor who founded



a church that is called The House for all Sinners and Saints. And Nadia has a calling that she takes own with a passion. Her calling is to take the good news to persons who have been sent to the

corners by the church left to believe that somehow God made a mistake when creating them. Her passion is to speak the truth to powerful, but misinformed church leaders and pastors who preach a gospel that isn't good news for a large number of people.*

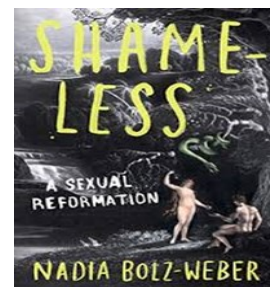
When Pastor Nadia speaks about her passion and her role as pastor she notes that "being a preacher is like having a not-very-interesting mental illness." But she goes on to say that the biblical story offers a great deal of clarity when we manage to read it with fresh eyes and leaving our own garbage by the curb. Welcome to Nadia's latest book, *Shame-less*.

Our book club began reading and discussing this book over the past couple of weeks. There are still copies available and there is one waiting for you to join us. *Shame-less* takes us into the corners where people have been left out of the circle drawn by churches and offers a more grace-filled way to interpret scripture. The purpose is not to change scripture to fit our preferences. Our purpose is to faithfully interpret scripture so that we are better able to fulfill God's purposes for each of us.

Each generation of believers are called to read scripture and to faithfully seek the will of God. Scripture is not crystal clear. And the church has made numerous erroneous interpretations over the centuries. And we continue to do so. The question is whether we can learn to offer the grace and love that God has offered each of us. Whether we live in the center or in the corners.

The Amazon websites describes Shame-less this way:

Christians are obsessed with sex. But not in a good way. For generations countless people have suffered pain, guilt, and judgment as a result of this toxic fixation on sex, the body, and physical pleasure. In the follow-up to her celebrated New York Times bestseller *Accidental Saints*, Bolz-Weber unleashes her critical eye, her sharp pen, and her vulnerable but hopeful soul on the caustic, fear-riddled, and religiously inspired messages about sex that have fed our shame.



Leadership in Worship & Service

- Welcome Team Tony, Mirium
- Ushers Anthony, Jim
- Production Team Mark & Jonathon
- Children Patrice & Mirium
- Worship Leaders Cyndi
- Café Christine & Norma

- Sylvia Pittman Worship Arts
- Jim Craig Leadership Chair
- Kevin Croom Farm to Table
- Israel Unger Business Operations

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.

Asbury Staff

- Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel Pastor
- Connie Portillo Office Secretary
- Mark Vorenkamp Children & Youth

Asbury Worship Series– Chosen (All are Welcome)... *Cont. from page 4*

Book Club News.. *Cont from page 4*

The parable was about searching for the lost. But “lost” applies to the outcasts whom God searches for and gathers into God’s kingdom.

The Pharisees on the other hand believe that they are righteous. They believe this to be true about themselves in contrast to the outcasts. Rather than celebrate with God that the outcasts had gathered to hear the good news that the kingdom of God is near, they scoffed at the idea that God would want to be in their presence at all.

Think about the attitude that too often comes across from us church goers. We declare ourselves righteous, or at least more righteous than those who we don’t see at worship. Imagine if we could see what God sees from a vantage point of seeing the whole picture. Might we see Jesus sitting with outcasts while we celebrate our righteousness without Him?

I’m not saying that Jesus isn’t present in worship with us. I believe

that He is every week and during the week. But in our worship we are to celebrate the lost being found. Not because

One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started gambling, "This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them?"

Luke 15:1 (GNT)

they are less righteous and now can become like us. But because we welcomed them into our community and celebrated with them that each of us is searched for until found by the Good Shepherd.

One additional point to this parable. By the time that Jesus told this parable, shepherds were also considered outcasts. And Jesus had the audacity to compare God to a shepherd. God is an outcast in this context. No wonder we are more apt to find Jesus with the outcasts!

I pray that you will join us for our new series, Chosen, that begins on Sunday, May 5, 2019. As we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we will explore what it means to be chosen – to be an outcast whom God is especially fond of – and prepare for the celebrations to come as more of us outcasts gather together to worship the Shepherd who found us. Join us each Sunday at 10:30 am in the Asbury Empowerment Arts Center for a Spirit-filled worship experience. At 9:30 am a few of us meet in the Asbury Café to discuss the scripture for the week. Join us.

Pastor Tommy

I hope that you will join us for frank, but sensitive discussions about the topics of gender, sexual orientation and a way forward for the church to offering healing rather than harm to persons that don’t fit traditional mold.

Our conversations come out of both our shared and our differing beliefs which often lead us into new insights about ourselves, our world and our God. I am grateful for all of the individuals who have made this an every week item on their schedule. Our current worship series, *Chosen*, will parallel our discussions in a number of ways.

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. 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

* Bolz-Weber, Nadia. *Shameless - A Sexual Reformation*. New York: The Crown Publishing Group, 2019.

Coming up this week

- May 27 Mon** **HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!**
- May 28 Tues** 10am-2pm Water Distribution
7pm Community Gospel Choir
- May 29 Wed** 12Noon Pastor Book Club
6pm Beginners Bible Study
6pm Youth Group
- May 30 Thu** 4:30-6pm Gaming as Education
6pm Worship Band Practice
- May 31 Fri** 10am-2pm Asbury Cafe Open
6:00pm Asbury Youth Group
- June 1 Sat** 10am-12N Japanese Jiu Jitsi
- June 2 Sun** 8am-10am Japanese Jiu Jitsi

- June 2 SUNDAY**
9:30am Café Opens
10:30am New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

**Last Week for Worship
Attendance 30 Offering \$ 950**



Please keep the following families in your prayers as they mourn the loss of their loved ones. Also for all the other families who have love ones in nursing homes or home ill.

Sharon George, who passed way May 10th.

Dr. Merle (DOC) Supernaw passed way April 20th.

And to the many other special members of Asbury who have passed or fighting other illnesses right now or homebound.



If anyone wishes to send cards to the George or Supernaw family, you may send to the following:

For Dr. Supernaw: Christina Supernaw 9095 Overland Trail
Flushing MI 48433

And for the George family, Nicole Poore-Sanchez 8116 N. Bray Rd
Mt Morris MI 48458



In Sympathy

*My thoughts and
prayers are with you
that God will Comfort
you in your loss!*

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
10am to 2pm & Sundays
10 am 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

Life Group Questions & Notes

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous.

Psalm 139:13 (NLT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Psalm 139:13 this week's article titled *Identity*. What images come to mind? In what ways does the text or article appeal to you? Have you ever struggled with your identity? In what ways?
2. This week our focus is on identity. We are identified by our physical characteristics, our roles (father, mother, brother, sister, etc) and a host of other ways including what we do. But this is not who we are. When God created us God declared creation "very good" yet sometimes we worry about God's standards. Yet God made us in God's image. What does this mean for you?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you remove obstacles that stand in the way of your witness?

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.

Identity ...Who are you?..cont. from page 3

another. And we each look different than what we can imagine that Jesus looked like. So while our identity may be influenced by our physical attributes this is not our identity, but more of a way for us to identify each other in a line up.

We may look into a mirror but even then we hope that our eyes can see beyond image looking back at us.

Nor can we go below the surface, below the skin, for our identity. While we mostly have a common set of organs that allow our body to function there are nuances among each of us. I don't have an appendix but I have tonsils. Some of us have both and some of us have neither. Some of our organs are critical for life as we prefer to live it but they have little to do with our identity. We must go deeper. Not physically deeper but spiritually deeper.

We are oftentimes identified by our actions. I am in agony over the amount of theft that takes place in our community. But as much as I want to call those who are committing the theft thieves, I realize that "thief" is not who they are. Theft is the sin they committed. But more about theft in a later article since stealing has become an epidemic in our neighborhood and a major drain on our time, resources and our souls.

Identity, I have concluded, lies beyond what we look like, our internal organs, our gender or what

we do or don't do. My vocation is clergy but I also lead a non-profit. I am a husband, father and friend. I am a believer and I am a resident. I have numerous roles. I have my roles in common with others. But none of these roles identify although my role as believer does give me clarity over who I am.

You are who God created you to be and God didn't choose to use an inferior design. Rather, God chose to use God's own image to make you who you are. And throughout our creation story we read that God said that "it is very good." After all, creation was reflecting God's very image. And so do you reflect God's very image.

I am convinced that our identity is eternal. Our identity cannot be taken away nor can our identity be tarnished or changed and definitely our identity cannot be changed by another person. We are exactly who God created us to be and no matter what we may do or others may do to us we are still who God created us to be. We may choose to steal from another person. We may choose to inflict harm on another person. We may be stolen from or we may be harmed by someone. But we are still that part of creation that God said is "very good."

This is helpful on those days when we feel like we are damaged goods. It is helpful to know that who we are, our identity, is intact and is not damaged. And it is helpful to know that whatever

damage may have been done by others to our physical body and to our emotional well-being, even this damage will be no longer. God loved humankind and all creation enough to live among us. And to bring a message of good news for all persons that God's image is intact and that whatever separation from God that we might be feeling does not need to continue.

God knitted you together in your mother's womb and gave you your identity. You are a reflection, an image, of the Creator. And your identity is very good. Knowing this, isn't it a good thing to admit to God that this is comforting? Isn't it a good thing to show your gratitude that God chose to create you in God's own image?

We worship God because we realize that God not only created us but that God wants us to never be lonely. To never be in distress. To know that we are loved by our Creator. And we gather together to both support one another and to worship God together. I hope that you will join us this Sunday, and the next to do just that. To worship the One who knitted you together so that you will be wonderfully made.

Worship at Asbury Church is on Sunday's at 10:30 am. I lead a discussion of the day's scripture in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. Come join us.

Pastor Tommy