

# Bible does not condemn LGBTQ love

**‘G**ood news,” “bad news” and even “fake news” are common phrases we use to describe pieces of information we receive on a daily basis. In the Christian faith, Jesus’ teaching is called the Gospel, which is translated “Good News.”

Not long ago, I returned to the lakes area to recover from a recent surgery. Once home, I picked up the Echo Journal to catch up on the local news. As a seminary graduate and a guest pastor at Crosslake Presbyterian Church, I am always drawn to the Faith/Living page in the weekly paper.

An article in the Aug. 4 edition drew my attention. The title was, “The stain

“*Queer folk are made in the image and likeness of God, and God takes pride in us and our love. Anyone who says otherwise is not speaking for God.*”

of racism, bigotry and injustice.” I was thrilled to read a critically important discussion piece written by a local faith leader.

As I read the article, I realized this piece did not offer a discussion of moral values, in my opinion, or of grace and good news, as one might expect from the faith section. It offered a discussion of the recent departure of Superintendent Lindholm, the SEED program and, I believe, a misconceived understanding of diversity training.

I believe that a multitude of world views and civil discourse about our disagreements are

fundamental to American democracy and society. But when personal opinions masquerading as “Christian truth” employ hateful or abusive rhetoric, other Christians must take a stand and defend the faith.

The Bible teaches that the Spirit of God has enlightened human life since the beginning of time (Gen. 1:2) and that God promises to continue making all things new (Rev. 21:5). Furthermore, Christians are taught that “whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

The author of the above-mentioned article writes that “joy and happiness cannot

be found in the L, the G, the B, the T, or the Q. It can only be found in Christ.” No Christian is debating whether joy and happiness come from Christ. But some Christians take Jesus at his word when he says he has come that we “may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

We understand that abundant life becomes ours when we accept and embrace our God-given identities. Yes, joy and happiness are found in the L, the G, the B, the T, and the Q.

There is not a single verse in the entire Bible that condemns LGBTQ love and relationships. When placed in their original context, culture and language, it becomes clear that the small handful of oft-quoted Bible verses wielded against LGBTQ people actually condemn sexual exploitation and idolatry, not the kinds

of committed same-sex relationships we see in our society today.

The church has a long history of twisting Scripture to justify discrimination and oppression. Citing scripture, the church supported slavery. The church continues to use the Bible to support the oppression of women. With Bible in hand, the church has colonized foreign lands and supported genocide.

The church has too often been a purveyor of “bad news,” as it is when it preaches the exclusion of LGBTQ people. But here is some real good news: Queer folk are made in the image and likeness of God, and God takes pride in us and our love. Anyone who says otherwise is not speaking for God.

Austin Nelson is a part-time guest pastor at Crosslake Presbyterian Church.

## FAITH BRIEFS

### Pequot Lakes church to host 9/11 concert Sept. 11

Grace United Methodist Church in Pequot Lakes will host a concert titled “Home-land” at 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11, in commemoration of

the 9/11 terrorist attacks 20 years ago.

Those who attend will remember the horror of that day by singing songs celebrating our nation.

A freewill offering will be taken for a memorial project.

### Lake Shore church rummage sale set Sept. 2-3

Living Savior Lutheran Church in Lake Shore will host a rummage sale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 2, and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday,

Sept. 3.

In case of rain, most everything will be inside or under tents.

Proceeds from the sale will go to local food shelves and The Outreach Program of Brainerd Lakes in Nisswa (for-

merly Kids Against Hunger).

The church is at 9327 Inter-lachen Road (County Road 77 North), approximately 4 miles from Highway 371 and between Bar Harbor/Zorbaz and Cowboy’s.

## SENIOR MEALS

The Senior Nutrition Program still offers a nutritionally balanced meal at 11:30 a.m. Monday-Friday in Pine River and Crosslake, but people must pick them up at the door at Heart-land Apartments, 445 Snell Ave., in Pine River, or have meals delivered by Meals on Wheels.

To order a meal or Meals on Wheels in Pine River, call 218-587-2921. To order a meal by noon a day in advance or for Meals on Wheels in Crosslake, call 218-692-4271.

The suggested voluntary donation is \$5 per meal for those over 60 and \$8.50 for those under 60. Menus are

subject to change.

Meals are served with bread, mar-garine and low-fat milk.

**Sept. 6-10**

► **Monday:** Kitchen closed for Labor Day.

► **Tuesday:** Beef goulash, peas, fruit.

► **Wednesday:** Chef salad, crackers, creamy fruit salad, cake with frosting.

► **Thursday:** Ham, scalloped pota-toes, peas, dessert.

► **Friday:** Hot dog on a bun with ketchup and mustard, baked beans, chips, peaches.

## CARD GAMES

### 500 SCORES

**1 p.m. Tuesdays**  
Pine River American Legion

**Tuesday, Aug. 24**

► Ernie Burch 4030, Jim Hawkinson 3440, Bill Ellis 3350, Ron Kriewald 3340, Vern Wolkenhauer 3190. Cindy Miller won the door prize.

### BRIDGE SCORES

**1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays**

Ideal Town Hall

**Tuesday, Aug. 24**

Duplicate

► North/South: Lois Steffen and Terri Steffen 111, Tom McGrath and Helen McGrath 109, Sally Larson and

Jane Kleinsasser 106.5.

► East/West: Diana Brown and Chris Brown 98.5, Meridee Dobberstein and Marcia Prescott 95, Emily Schuldt and Carolyn Thompson 92.

**Thursday, Aug. 26**

Duplicate

► North/South: Meridee Dobberstein and Lorraine Northagen 64.5, Jo Bonestroo and Mickey Smith 62, Stan and Shirley Bormann 62, Emily Schuldt and Pat Nentl 60.

► East/West: Ardie Hjerpe and Shirley Shodahl 74.5, Claude and Gail Kane 65.5, W. C. and Daria Blanton 63.

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