

PRIDE – 2026 - We've Always Been Here - This Isn't New

Have you ever said or thought: "We didn't have all these pronouns and genders and such when I was a kid!" If you have, you're right. When I was a kid, we had gay and lesbian. By the time I was an adult, we had gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans. Within a decade we now had gay, lesbian, bisexual, transexual, questioning, queer, intersexed, asexual. And now add asexual, 2-spirit, indigiqueer, demisexual, arosexual, and more and more -

What is going on? Are you overwhelmed? Is this all made up? A modern fad?

Consider a rainbow with me. It is the symbol of PRIDE and diversity. Do rainbows have 5, 6, or 7 colours? Could we look between red and orange and find umber, rust and marigold? The labels we have of red and orange are just that - labels. The colours exist no matter how we identify them. And "orange" is just fine. But if you're going to go pick out a colour for your wall, you know "orange" is not specific enough. Or if you paint, sew, bead - you know how many hues and shades of orange exist. Sometimes it is quite nice to have more specific words.

All these gender and sexuality labels are further definitions on how people understand themselves. You yourself - all of who you are - are part of this rainbow too. It isn't just queer people – the rainbow is all. However you identify yourself - you are in this rainbow of God's love of diversity.

And this is nothing new.

The labels are new.

Travel with me into scripture. Scripture, as you may well know, has no words for gay, lesbian, transsexual or intersexed or any of our modern words. But it doesn't mean these hues of people didn't exist. Gender and sexuality was verbally organized differently 4000 years ago.

Just like it was organized differently 10 years ago. Or 20 or 50.

Consider Joseph. He's the youngest son. He's the dreamer. The apple of his dad's eye. While his older brothers are off tending sheep - he's home helping out domestically. You might think of him as a boy - but he's 17. He just is different than his brothers.

His father gives him a כֶּתֶנֶת פָּצִים ketonet passim. This... is a difficult set of words to translate. I mean, I grew up singing Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colours" so clearly that's what a ketonet passim is. But you heard in our reading today "ornamental." The RSV says, "a long robe with sleeves." Elsewhere you'll see it translated as "a royal garment," "embroidered robe," a "flounced garment," pleated cloak, with gold, of silk or wool, not good for working in, long and gorgeous.

These words appear together in one other place in the Bible - to describe what Princess Tamar wears. 2 Samuel 13:18 reads in the NRSVUE: "Now she was wearing an ornamented robe with sleeves, for this is how the virgin daughters of the king were clothed in earlier times."

It's the same two words. Ketonet passim. Maiden princesses wear ketonet passim.

Why are we not translating this as Joseph and the pretty pretty princess dress?!

Now Joseph, in his princess dress, is hated by his brothers. They scheme to do violence to him - kill him - and settle on selling him instead. They destroy his dress. Lie to their father that Joseph is dead. They consider the matter done. The dreamer and odd one is gone.

But Joseph thrives in Egypt... until he refuses to have sex with a woman with power over him. Then he's thrown in prison. But his dreams and dream interpretation bring him all the way to the right hand of the Pharaoh. He guides the country from famine. And eventually, his own brothers come to beg for food. None of them recognize him.

I wonder why. Maybe he is in drag - wearing exaggerated makeup and exaggerated pretty clothing. We do know scripture says he is in fine silk clothes and has a gold necklace.

Maybe if Joseph were alive today, he would have transitioned and be known as Josephine. Instead of drag, Josephine would normally wear women's clothes. It wouldn't be play, it would be who Josephine is.

Our modern terms, our current way of explaining the rainbow of human diversity, is not the ancient terms and the ancient way of explaining the range of all we are. But that doesn't mean the colours and genders and sexualities didn't exist back then. The colours are still the colours. Where we draw the lines between them changes. What we call out, and what we ignore, changes.

What we do know is Joseph is known for the same clothing as maiden princesses. His difference is what saves the lives of so many Egyptians, and his own family.

Once again, God in God's wisdom knows we need one another. We need the diversity of each other. We need straight and queer and in-between; and we need old and young and in-between; we need male and female and in-between; we need morning people and night people and in-between; we need each other. Together, we are a rainbow. Together, we reflect the image of God. Together, we are whole.

Praise God for princess-boys. Praise God for dreamers. Praise God for the diversity that has always been there and always shall be. Praise God for making us, all of us, so many different shades and hues. **Amen!**

Scripture Readings – Aug. 9, 2026 - LCUCPC

Genesis 37: 3 – 34 NRSV Ue

Joseph Dreams of Greatness

37 ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children because he was the son of his old age, and he made him an ornamented robe. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵ Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶ He said to them, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ His

brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.

⁹ He had another dream and told it to his brothers, saying, “Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” ¹⁰ But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?” ¹¹ So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. ¹³ And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” He answered, “Here I am.” ¹⁴ So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, ¹⁵ and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” ¹⁶ “I am seeking my brothers,” he said; “tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” ¹⁷ The man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.”

²¹ But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” ²² Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the ornamented robe that he wore, ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat, and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. ²⁸ When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where can I turn?” ³¹ Then they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² They had the ornamented robe taken to their father, and they said, “This we have found; see now whether it is your son’s robe or not.” ³³ He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

May God’s spirit shape our understanding of these words.

And may they awaken in our hearts

