

**Awesomely and Marvelously Made**  
**Psalm 139:1, 7-14 and Genesis 2:4b-7**  
**June 30, 2024**  
**Rev. Leigh Curl-Dove**

In 2015, Canadian television sitcom, Schitt's Creek premiered in Canada and the United States. The show follows the Rose family—who were the wealthiest of the wealthy—as they lose their fortune from their massive video store chain after their business manager embezzles their money. All the family is left with is a town in the middle-of-nowhere that they bought as a joke because of its name—Schitt's Creek. And just so everyone knows that I am not using a bad word in the pulpit it is spelled S-C-H-I-T-T-apostrophe-S. The four members of the Rose family, Johnny and Moira, and their adult children David and Alexis move to the Schitt's Creek Motel in adjoining rooms and despite their best (and sometimes rudest) efforts become beloved members of the community.

The show was created by Dan Levy and his dad, legendary comedic actor Eugene Levy (who also both star in the show). While writing the show, Dan asked, "What if these characters were able to exist somewhere free from the wider prejudices of the world?" and wrote the world he wanted to live in. As a gay man, Dan didn't want to repeat the all too familiar television tropes of queer tragedy and trauma. This is not to say he wrote a world free of hardship or heartbreak, but he centered the relationship between his character David and another character Patrick. Their story was one full of love, truly seeing and knowing each other, safety, humor, and pure joy.

Dan's character, David, frequently references romantic relationships that didn't work out, and often they are hilariously funny. But, what the viewers come to know about David is that he deeply wants someone who sees him, who he can unapologetically be himself with, who he is safe with, who loves him unconditionally.

At one point in the show, David's mother, Moira, eccentrically played by the legendary Catherine O'Hara, and Patrick spend an extended amount of time together one-on-one much to David's horror. When Patrick leaves, David begins to grill his mother about what embarrassing stories she might have told Patrick. Moira says, "After five minutes of talking to sweet Pat..." David interrupts and says, "We're not doing Pat!" Moira continues, "He sees you for all that you are." David rolls his eyes and dramatically says, "Hopefully, not all that I am!"

David and Patrick's relationship is not perfect. They face hurdles. But, as a viewer, you root for them. David has finally found someone who he feels seen and safe with, and you want David to get his happy ending.

The psalmist doesn't depict a perfect life. The psalmist paints a picture of a real life. A life with wandering, depression, the unknown. A life where one might even find themselves in the very depths of hell, and the truth and promise we see and hear is that there is nowhere God is not. In the moments and seasons where we are certain we won't make it, the pain is too hard, the

grief insurmountable, the valley so filled with fog we can't find a path through, God is there with us.

And it's not just that God is there with us, loving us and holding us, walking with us—it's that God sees and knows us like no other. God sees and knows all that we are—everything we have ever done, every thought we have ever had, every mistake we have ever made, every tear that's fallen, every giggle that has escaped, every hell we've found ourselves in, every heartbreak, every love, every breath, every moment that has made us double over with laughter, every moment that has made us question what we think we know, every hurt feeling, every joy, every dawn, every dusk, every day, every night—God sees and knows it all.

So, listen, hear, feel, and know deep in your bones these words from the psalmist once more:

Source of Life, you have searched me and known me.

Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where from your presence can I flee?

If I ascend to the heavens, there you are;

if I recline in Sheol, see, it is you!

If I take up dawn's wings

if I settle at the farthest reaches of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely darkness shall cover me,

and night will become light behind me,"

even darkness is not dark to you;

night is as daylight,

for dark is the same as light.

For it was you who crafted my inward parts;

you wove me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am awesomely and marvelously made.

Wonderous are your works;

that my soul knows full well.

I recently watched a documentary called *Mama Bears*. It is about an ever-growing group of mothers of LGBTQ+ children who are banding together across private facebook groups to love and support their own children and all members of the LGBTQ+ community. Many of these women came out of conservative, fundamentalist, evangelical Christian churches. Their children would come out and the mothers in these churches wanted to love their kids, wanted to support their kids, wanted to fully let their kids live into who they are, wanted to keep their kids safe, but they did not have the support of their church. So, these facebook groups began to pop up. Safe spaces were created that allowed moms to ask questions, to deconstruct harmful theology, to move toward a theology of love and justice and acceptance. What started as a small network has grown into a network across the country of tens of thousands of Mama Bears.

The Mama Bears show up at Pride celebrations across the country offering free mom hugs to anyone who needs them. They go to weddings of same-sex couples to be stand-in moms for people whose parents don't support their relationship. They advocate, organize, and work tirelessly to make the world a safer and more loving place for all LGBTQ+ people proclaiming that every beloved LGBTQ+ person is awesomely and marvelously made.

Kimberly and Kai Shappley are featured in the film. Kai was around 6 or 7 years old around the time of filming, and she is a trans girl. Kimberly and Kai are from Texas. Kimberly was raised in a conservative Christian household and fully bought into her church's harmful teachings of LGBTQ+ people, but now is a fierce advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, particularly the trans community.

From the time she was 3 years old, Kai insisted that she was a girl. The filmmaker asks Kai in an interview about coming out at 3 and trying to convince her mother that she was exactly who she was supposed to be. Kai said, "I told her, 'I'm a girl! I'm a girl! You know that God made me a girl!'"

In the passage we read from Genesis this morning, we hear of God creating the human being. God doesn't create the human by speaking them into being like in Genesis 1, but instead God took the dust of the ground and crafted the human. The human in the full range and spectrum of gender identity. This is not a far-off being who doesn't see us or know us. This is not a being who is watching us from a distance. But, this is the God who has searched us and known us, meticulously crafting each of our inward parts, intricately weaving us together in the womb, and intentionally breathing their very own breath into each and everyone of us to give us life.

Schitt's Creek received critical acclaim and in its last season swept the comedy category at the Emmys. The show received high praise and thanks throughout its six-season run for normalizing and celebrating LGBTQ+ folks and relationships. The show and fictional town of Schitt's Creek created a safe, loving environment where LGBTQ+ people were seen and known and loved for exactly who they are.

The Mama Bears were one of the groups that said thank you to Schitt's Creek. They wrote a letter to the cast that read:

"More than 1,800 of us are signing this letter because we wanted to say thank you for the LGBTQ characters, relationships, and story lines that you have included in Schitt's Creek. Your commitment to represent love and tolerance in your show is so important to families like ours.

Your willingness to explore, inform, and educate about LGBTQ people and their relationships in an entertaining but respectful and positive manner sets a tone that is often missing.

You have created new ways for queer viewers to see themselves represented and in its own way that is just as important as the battles we are still fighting. Therefore, the work you have all done on Schitt's Creek has encouraged us greatly and given us much hope about the future for our kids.

We sincerely believe that shows like Schitt's Creek will serve as a catalyst to help change the world into a kinder, safer, more loving place for all LGBTQ people to live and because of that we will remain forever grateful."

Representation matters. Love matters. Safe environments matter. Shows like Schitt's Creek matter. Networks like the Mama Bears matter. They help people to feel less alone in the world. They help people to know that their life is important. They make people feel seen.

Friends, particularly our LGBTQ+ friends, if you take one thing away from today, this last day of Pride month, let it be this: You, in your unique you-ness are awesomely and marvelously made in the image of God and you are worthy of love. This world, this country, this city, this church is better because you are in it. We give thanks to God for you, for who God uniquely created you to be. You are loved. You are loved. You are loved. You are really really really loved—not in spite of who you are, but because of who you are.