

**We are a church with one mission:** to grow followers of Jesus through grateful worship, genuine community, and generous service to each other and our world. We believe by loving God and loving people we can have an impact that really matters, and would like to tell you more about that. If you are interested in being a part of what God is doing with us, or just have some questions, **fill out the contact card** or ask the person next to you. **Please feel free to call or email too if you have any questions.**

## FAMILY NEWS AND NOTES

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### GOD'S FAMILY TIMES

**BIBLE CLASSES**  
Building—9:30 am Sunday

**WORSHIP**  
Building—10:30 am Sunday

**GROWTH GROUPS**  
Grose's -- 6 p.m. Sunday  
Tonkin's -- 6 p.m. Sunday

**BIBLE CLASSES**  
Building—7 pm Wednesday

**Family Covered Dish Dinner:** Next Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup> after services. Please bring your favorite dish to share.

**Ladies' Class:** Thursday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1p.m. at the building. The lesson will be on "Doubt".

**Congregational Meeting:** Thursday December 14th at 7 p.m. Please change your December calendars to reflect this date instead of December 7<sup>th</sup>. This meeting is now on the second Thursday of each month.

**No** dinner before classes in December because of the holidays.

2018 Sign-up sheets for monthly communion preparation and organizing the Wednesday night meal are on the bulletin board. Please sign up if you can serve the body in this way.

The Love Basket is looking for volunteers to help sort/pack their holiday food boxes on Monday December 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at St Thomas Moore church (the Newman Center). If you can help please sign the sheet on the bulletin board so that they have a count of the number of helpers that are available.

*Happy Birthday*

12/6 Dave Balthaser

12/10 Louanne Brown

12/12 Tony Crouch

*Happy Anniversary*

12/12 Scott & Susan Stutzman

12/31 Dave & Brenda Antonio

## PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

**PS:**

family and their ministry in North Africa. Pray for peace and protection, for what God wants and for many connections with others God has called there. mercies and renewed connections as they are in the states on furlough until the

# FAMILY MATTERS

*Indiana*

*Church of Christ*

724.463.7240

December 3, 2017

## Creation, the Sixth Day: One and Many in Both God and Human Beings

by Ana Levy-Lyons

*Here is a perspective (different, maybe?) I'd like you to consider*

READING THE GENESIS seven days of creation from a human perspective, the Friday afternoon is really where the action is. This is when God makes the first earthling. The Hebrew word for it is adam, which comes from the word adamah, and means "earth." God makes an earth creature. And the way it's described is downright strange: "Then God said, 'Let us make an earthling in our image, according to our likeness.'" Us?! To whom is God referring? And if there's more than one, why is it "image" and "likeness" instead of "images" and "likenesses?" There has been something suspiciously plural-ish about this God from the start. The Hebrew name for God used throughout this story is Elohim. "Im" is a plural ending, analogous to adding an -s to the end of an English word. But when Elohim is the subject of a verb in this story, the verb is always in the singular. And now the plot thickens and we have the very first time that Elohim refers to itself. And Elohim calls itself, "us." Perhaps this is the author's way of expressing through creative grammar a God that is both many and one.

The early Hebrews weren't the only ones with this idea—it's actually a much older and much later concept as well. Trinitarian Christianity teaches the mystery of one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And a thousand years before Genesis was written, early Hindus were writing scriptures that described a plurality of gods and a profusion of life all emanating from one universal life force. They write, "Just as the seven colors exist within one ray of light, so too the various Hindu Gods exist within the Supreme, as names of its different qualities." Statue of Hindu gods are often explosions of life forms, with human and animal parts, three heads and multiple arms, each hand holding a different symbolic object. They burst outward, reaching to express the radical diversity of God. They're trying to capture in three-dimensional art something that lives in so many more dimensions as to be unimaginable. And it's all one.

Language, art, and religious expression are always inadequate. The artists and clergy among us are acutely aware of this. Sometimes our representations feel feeble in their efforts to convey the subtlety and diversity and magnificence of reality. But we try anyway. Perhaps God refers to Godself as "us" in the text in the same way that some gender-queer people ask to be referred to as "they"—to try to convey a layered, plural identity that does not conform neatly to a single category. It's awkward, but it's the best that words can do, and so it's worth doing. This is what we see here in this next piece of the Genesis text—a religious narrative trying to describe something infinite and indescribable in a way that people can grasp.

We know today that the world is even more complicated than the world of binaries suggested by a straight translation of the Genesis text. We know that the male-female binary is overly simplistic. While most bodies fit into those two categories, a significant minority doesn't. We humans impose binaries on what are really continua. We do this with gender and, of course, we do it with skin color. The Genesis story doesn't mention skin color. Maybe this is because the author didn't know anyone with different skin color, just like the author probably didn't know of anyone who wasn't male or female. Or maybe it was because skin color was not seen as a structural difference between humans. Modern research has shown that from a physiological perspective, race has no meaning, but we have taken the beautiful, subtle continuum of shades of brown that we humans come in, and imposed the artificial binary of black and white. We have piled all our cultural baggage onto what are inherently neutral variances in human bodies. And every time we've done this through history, it has resulted in one form or another of violence.