



One Page Sermon

By Rev. Robb McCoy

November 10, 2024

Franklin, Peppermint Patty and Marcie

Recap of sermon from November 10, 2024

Scripture: Galatians 3:25-28

Franklin, Marcie, and Peppermint Patty were all introduced in the same general era of the comic strip, and each tell a story about the power of representation in pop culture.

Peppermint Patty debuted in 1966. People my age might forget how groundbreaking she was. She appeared in shorts and sandals and bristled at dresses and shoes. This was in a time when many schools required girls to only wear skirts and dresses. Schulz loved this gender-norm-defying girl who was a great athlete and a terrible student. In fact, the very last storying of the entire strip was one of Peppermint Patty using Snoopy as a ghost-writer (spoiler alert, it backfired).

Franklin was introduced a few years later. The story of Franklin's origin is a fascinating one, and worth looking up, but here's the short version: about a week after the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, a teacher named Harriet Glickman wrote a

letter to Schulz asking him to include a black character. After some correspondence, Franklin was born. He found Charlie Brown's

beach ball on July 30, 1968. There was some backlash against his inclusion, especially when he shown in an integrated school with Peppermint Patty. When asked by a syndicator to now include Franklin in school with white kids, Schulz's reply was "print it as I draw it, or I quit."

Marcie, Peppermint Patty's "dorky" friend, was introduced in 1971, and she quickly became Patty's constant companion. The exact opposite of Patty, she was a very good student, anxious, and terrible at sports. While Patty was boisterous and inelegant, Marcie was quiet and formal, and the two formed a perfect pair.

One thing I did not know until doing this series however, is that many Asian-Americans identified with Marcie. I read several essays and comments that identified Marcie as Asian. Her hidden eyes, thick glasses, straight black hair leave her appearance ambiguous. Combine that with Marcie's anxiety over being a good student, parental pressure, ineptitude at Ameri-

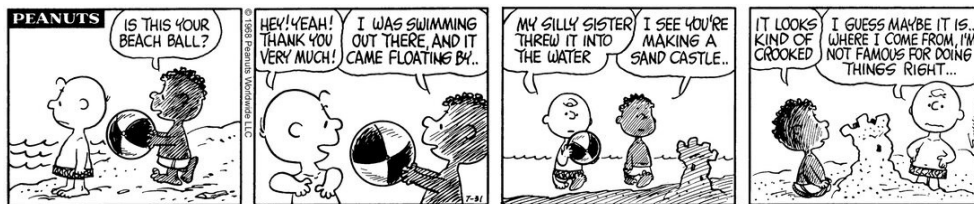
can sports, her constant activities and extracurriculars, and even her formalized and misgendered speech all captured the Asian-American immigrant kid's experience.

Peppermint Patty and Marcie, though never shown in a romantic relationship, also became important figures for LGBTQ kids. The theme of unrequited love runs strong in *Peanuts*, a universal experience of youth, but a particularly biting experience for queer kids who are afraid to express their crushes. And while their relationship was never romantic, it has been said that Peppermint Patty was modeled after Schulz's beloved cousin Patricia Swanson, and that Marcie was modeled after Patricia's live-in girlfriend, Elise Gallaway.

Regardless of Schulz's intent on their relationship or Marcie's ethnicity, the fact remains that these three characters were identified with marginalized communities. The inclusion of Marcie, Patty, and Franklin pushed racial and gender boundaries in a way that was non-confrontational.

Our church has used Galatians 3:28 as the foundation of our Reconciling Statement of welcome and affirmation of people of all races, gen-

ders, and sexualities. The Church is to be a place where the unity of Christ trumps all divisions. Paul reminds us that



"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female." While our differences have not been erased by unity in Christ, the power-structures and hierarchies should be.

Diversity enriched *Peanuts*, and is a part of a healthy congregation. We are in a remarkable time in our congregation's life. There is unprecedented diversity in our pews. People from various nations, of various gender expressions, speaking various languages, of varying ages are gathering every Sunday to worship in unity with Christ. We celebrate Franklin, Patty, and Marcie; and the diversity they represent. Like Charlie and Franklin in the first strip, we are learning and growing together. Our sand castle might be crooked, but there is joy in building it together.

**Next Week: The Gospel According to Peanuts
Snoopy, the dreamer**