

“Resonate”

Pastor James York

June 25, 2023

Today is Ordination and Installation Sunday when we celebrate, support, and pray for people who have answered God’s call to serve in specific ways. Typically, we also reaffirm our baptism and membership to make it clear that all are equal, all have gifts. We all have the gift of love, together serving as equals, we strive to make God’s redeeming grace, which God freely offers to all people, tangible. Our gifts shared with love resonate through the cosmos forever.

We are baptized once, because God’s promise to love us forever, that each person is a beloved member of God’s family, never needs renewing. God’s promise is steadfast, eternal, completely certain, forever. We celebrate baptism in worship because our side of the promise needs continual renewal. We promise to accept love. We promise to love all people. We fail to love God, all people, self, and the cosmos perfectly, completely, at all times so we need God’s grace to wash us clean, to forgive our unloving ways and give us fresh opportunities to love. God’s love for you and everyone will resonate forever.

We repeat liturgies, that is words used for specific occasions in worship based on scripture, to connect us with all people across time and space. The Apostles Creed has been said by Christians for thousands of years since 180. The liturgy we are using today is similar to the liturgy that has been used since 1906 when the first Book of Common Worship was published. The liturgies in the Book of Common Worship are similar to the first Book of Common Prayer published in 1549. There is a good chance that many of your relatives have prayed and strived to live the words we will pray and strive to live today. Our liturgy unites us with Christians through the centuries and around the world. Perhaps you will sense the great cloud of witnesses cheering for you. Today’s service reminds me of the people of First Presbyterian Church of Abbotsford, Wisconsin, the church of my childhood and youth. I can perceive their love. Today’s service reminds me of the people of First Presbyterian Church of Hudson, Wisconsin, the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania and the First Presbyterian Church of Maumee, Ohio all churches where today’s liturgy was celebrated to inspire love, all places where it was an honor for me to join with them in worship. The Holy Spirit connects us all. Through me, all the people from those churches are here today. Through you, there are an abundance of people that you are connecting to our worship today. A multitude worship with us. Our loving worship resonates with everyone forever.

Although today’s liturgy may be familiar to you, none of us are fully living it. Imagine the fulfillment of the liturgy such as, each person feeling fully loved; the reconciliation of the world; everyone loving everyone; all people worshipping in peace, unity and purity; all serving with energy, intelligence and imagination; a world where all enjoy peace, justice, freedom and human fulfillment; a world where all care for God’s creation. Today’s liturgy seeks to explain, how with God’s help we will achieve all of this and more. The glory of the Kingdom of Heaven resonates with our love bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

Today’s liturgy is long and is familiar for many. You might find all of it inspiring. You might want to worship with a technique that has been used for around 2,000 years.

Open all your senses. Perhaps God wants you to perceive in the sacrament of baptism, that you are wrapped in God’s love, that you belong. If this resonates with you then let everything else fade away and savor God’s love.

Perhaps God is speaking to you through a word, a phrase, a few sentences, that resonate with you. This may be the Holy Spirit inspiring you to live what God is highlighting for you. If a word, or a few words, resonate with you then let everything else fade away. Focus on the word or words. Imagine Jesus saying them to you.

Perhaps God is inviting you to a particular loving action, then let the rest fade away, imagine yourself doing the loving action. What exactly is God inviting you to do? How? Where? When? How often? Develop a specific plan. Imagine your loving action resonating through the cosmos forever.

Perhaps God is inviting you to joyfully sing or enjoy the music. Singing resonates through the ages, with the trees clapping their hands, with angels and the entire cosmos in praising God.

Perhaps God will communicate with you in other ways. If by the end of this service many of you have tuned out, to tune into God, then it will be a marvelous worship experience. Love in every form resonates forever. Amen