

**TITLE: *Hovering***

*Prepared by Mary Fox for 4/26/20*

As we embark on this sermon series we're calling "Drawn In: Living Out the Creative Life with God", our subject for this day – our second week in the creativity series – is "Hovering".

When I signed on to participate in this sermon series on creativity, I was admittedly pretty excited. Creativity is a topic that has fascinated me for a long time and one to which I've devoted a fair amount of study. When I learned that our Reaching-In Team had selected creativity as a topic of discussion, I thought to myself "finally, a subject I should be able to address with ease!"

But then I received my topic assignment – "hovering" – and I thought perhaps there'd been some mistake. First of all, what does it even mean to "hover" and beyond that, what could it possibly have to do with creativity?

I groaned for a while, and then I warmed up to the challenge. I turned to Merriam Webster for some help. Hover: to remain suspended over a place or an object, as in "a hummingbird hovering over the flowers". It means to position over something without selecting it – as in a computer cursor that hovers over a word. Or, to scan the horizon, looking from above without committing. It also means to linger in a state of uncertainty. That certainly might describe where we're at as a society right now. Perhaps we're in one big state of hovering and it's all part of a broader creative pursuit.

That notion really warmed me up to talking about hovering, so I continued to pursue greater understanding...

As it relates to creativity, hovering refers to pausing to look at the "big picture" ... to pay quiet attention to this question: "what one thing do I need to focus on right now"? It's the practice of pausing to give ourselves space and time for reflection. What do you feel drawn to? Where is it that our energies, values, desires, and passions align? It's there that we find our creative calling.

Before I continue on the theme of hovering, I'd like to back up just a bit and offer a few words on creativity in general.

We've all received an email message from Jessica that said "as a part of this series, Brenda is asking that you send pictures that reflect your creativity". Certainly, we have among our flock people who are amazing chefs and bakers, talented musicians, accomplished wood workers. In our first reading this morning from Exodus, the Lord talks about filling Bezalel with an ability to devise artistic designs in gold, silver, and bronze, cut stones and carve wood.

These are all admirable examples of creativity, but they leave me feeling a bit chagrin because I have none of these particular creative talents.

Continuing in Exodus, the Lord goes on to say to Moses "I have given skill to all the skillful, so that they may make all that I have commanded you."

In my quest to discern how that message might apply to me, I recently discovered a resource that which has shed some meaningful light on a broader way of thinking about creativity, and I'd like to share that learning with you. So bear with me while I go off on what might *seem* like a tangent, but which actually has everything to do with creativity and hovering. I'll bring it all back together in the end, I promise ...

For a while now, I've been a fan of author Jonathon Fields, founder and creator of *The Good Life Project*. If you'd like more information about his initiative, just Google "The Good Life Project". I subscribe to his email list, and a recent message caught my attention. The email subject was "a surprising response to unease". That seemed like a timely subject in our present day situation, so I opened the message. The author went on to say that in these unprecedented times, he's discovered *his* personal response to disruption, loss, and anxiety is to "create". To make things.

Since this sermon on creativity was upcoming, this notion begged me to read on. In a surprising twist, what I ultimately learned about was what Jonathon Fields calls "Sparketypes" ... a name he uses to describe a person's essential nature – the pursuits that exist at that sweet

spot where we find ourselves losing time, settling into ease and focus, alive with energy and knowing that we've tapped into some primal, essential part of ourselves.

That resonates precisely with everything I think about with regard to creativity. *As we look within ourselves and seek to find where our energies and passions align – there we find our creative calling.*

Creativity can be look different for each of us. According to Romans 12:6, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith." And in First Kings 3:12, "Behold I give you a wise and discerning mind so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you."

I decided to pursue this unique and essential nature or "Sparketype". And it turns out that the Good Life Project offers a free survey that helps you discover your own "Sparketype". So I bit; I visited the website and completed the brief online survey. The results revealed my "primary sparketype". A very insightful description, I discovered, of my personal form of creativity – *my way of connecting and making a difference in the world.*

The survey results describe my primary personal Sparketype as "The Essentialist" – a surprisingly accurate description of my personal passion. Let me read what it says ... "As an "essentialist", distilling, organizing and simplifying is your call. It doesn't matter where you go ... at work, at home, or on vacation, you see chaos, mess, complexity and it triggers a near-primal urge to create order and simplicity. It could be complex information, ideas, spreadsheets, items on display, books on a shelf; it doesn't really matter. Your brain immediately goes into distill and simplify mode – creating space, order and efficiency. Others may find turning chaos into order a burden, but it's where you find your fullest expression and drop into bliss."

I found this to be an insightful perspective on my passion, and a perspective on creativity that I'd never quite thought of before. It turns out that what I "create" is order out of chaos. I have spent a lifetime distilling data into meaningful, actionable guidance and vision. I

can lose myself for hours arranging objects within a space, or artwork on a wall. I enjoy summarizing complex ideas in a way that enhances understanding and usefulness.

This discovery helps me better appreciate my creative calling (though I have absolutely no idea how I might capture it in a picture to send to Brenda).

If you'd like to try your hand at this free Sparketype survey to see if it might enhance understanding of your own creativity, just go online and search for "sparketest"; it's spelled s-p-a-r-k-e-t-e-s-t.

So once we recognize our particular creativity, how are we to know where to focus our creative energy in the world? That's where hovering comes in.

... See, I told you I'd tie it all together and come back to hovering ...

Remember, hovering refers to pausing to look at the "big picture" ... to pay quiet attention to this question: "what one thing do I need to focus on right now"?

The bible provides us with a many examples of God patiently hovering over unexplored potential. Starting in Genesis 1:1-2, "God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was *hovering* over the waters." Throughout scripture we find that the Spirit would hover over the chaotic void, over judges and prophets, and over Jesus as he went through his own rite of passage. Jesus himself would have hovering patience. He would wait eighteen years between the boyhood dreams of his ministry and his baptism which signified his ministry's actual beginning at age thirty.

God does not rush the process, but remains okay with the "unfinished potential", at home with things as they unfold.

In his book that inspired our sermon series on creativity, author Troy Bronsink tells us that Creatives often refer to hovering as the "incubation" stage of the process, an "empty" place between sensing a problem and intuiting a solution. It's a time to trust in abundance

even when we may feel we have nothing. It's an exploratory time of "mental meandering", mind-wandering, and an essential part of the creative process. The author says that hovering is about being contented with what you find along the way, instead of forcing answers.

Not forcing the answers reminded me of an exchange I overheard a few years ago that left a lasting impression. I was at a girls' junior varsity basketball game, seated close enough to the players' bench that I could overhear conversation. After an exasperated coach called time-out following several unsuccessful scoring attempts, one of the starting players approached the bench and said this ... She said "Sorry Coach, I've been trying too hard instead of just letting the game come to me."

*I've been trying too hard, instead of just letting it come to me.* That, I think, is the point of hovering. It's a time to pause. And as we pause, to suspend judgment, to remain open to transformation, to hallow the space that allows us to be drawn further into God's expanding and beautiful creation.

Julia Cameron has authored a number of books on the topic of creativity, including one of my favorites entitled "The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity." Julia builds her work around several principles all designed to help us get outside ourselves and to let inspiration come to us. She advocates writing morning pages as a way to empty our heads of the constant chatter and competing noise that interferes with our connection to the divine. She also implores us to take ourselves on "artists' dates" – a weekly excursion designed to nurture solitude and playfulness while opening ourselves to insight, inspiration, and guidance.

I recently stumbled upon a fun resource that would make a great "artist date" in this time of stay-at-home restrictions. It turns out that many museums and cultural institutions around the world make elaborate images available in free coloring books that can be downloaded and printed. Do an internet search on #ColorOurCollections and you'll find lots of resources. Download an image that appeals to you and have a little fun with some solitary coloring time.

The point of *The Artist's Way* exercises is to hover and let inspiration come to us. To pause, paying quiet attention to receiving all that we need in this moment

According to Ephesians 2:10, ... “we are God’s accomplishment, created to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.”

May we see the things we do and the way we express our creativity as a way of contributing goodness to the world. God, help us to see your vision once more and, in a world where your hands are our hands, to offer ourselves. Guide us to hover patiently, to hear your call, and to use our talents to create more joy, more compassion, and more love in your world. Amen.