

John I Torres

Incarnation Pledge Talk – Nov 5, 2023

If you really knew me, you would know that my pronouns are he/him. I identify as Latinx, gay and a senior. I go by: Jonnie T or John T and the reason is because there are so many “Johns” in the world. I live in Larkfield with my partner of 45 years, Tim Webb and our 2 dogs, Connie, and Penny.

If you really knew me, you would know that I visited Incarnation last October. I saw on social media that Incarnation hired a new organist, Jun Kim. When I saw the invitation to the recital, I recalled the numerous times in the past 42 years where Incarnation offered musical gifts to the community. I was delighted by what I heard that night. I am aware that any church with a pipe organ must invest in an exceptional organist and entire music program. Thank you for this gift.

If you really knew me, you would know that I began attending worship services right after that visit. What I discovered was the Incarnation had changed. What I discovered was the people at Incarnation had expanded to a more inclusive, diverse community. What I discovered was signage, messages and sermons that support my uniqueness and queerness in the world with a progressive theology. Thank you.

If you really knew me, you would know that I cherish the Word and Sacrament. As a past Roman Catholic and Evangelical, I admire what is presented here in the sacred vessel of Scripture, with liturgy, music, prayers, and the celebration of the Eucharist. To me the Offering, “La Ofrenda,” is the bridge to both the Word and Sacrament, the symbol of **all that I am** and **all that I have**. The Prelude and the Postlude seal the container. Thank you.

If you really knew me, you would know that I embrace justice. I value being in a community where I feel affirmed and have that sense of “*belonging*,” where I can devote my time studying, exploring, volunteering and with that, making mistakes. I thrive in a container of consent, safety, and transparency. I honor the Episcopal program entitled “Becoming the Beloved Community, with “Sacred Ground,” exploring, racial healing, reconciliation, and justice. Thank you.

If you really knew me, you would know that I became a member of Incarnation in March of this year and immediately sent in a pledge. Tithing is essential for me. I can appreciate and respect the challenging work of nonprofits. This church is a business. Thank you.

If you really knew me, you would know that I have a tremendous love for music. I am a tenor. I joined the Incarnation choir. This is a perfect place for me to invest *my* time and talent while at the same time exercising my cognitive skills as a senior. I highly regard these members of the choir for the gift of *their* time and talent they give to me, and to this community. This extends to praying for them in our rehearsals, in service and throughout the week. Thank you.

If you really knew me, you would know that I live a life of prayer. I pray for our Pastor, our Vestry, our staff and your many hands and hearts that serve in this community. Thank you. I offer you this prayer:

“Dios, tú creaste a todos los pueblos a tu imagen: te damos gracias por la maravillosa diversidad de culturas de este mundo. Enriquece nuestras vidas con abundantes lazos de comunidad, y muéstranos tu presencia en quienes parecen más diferentes a nosotros, hasta que nuestro conocimiento de tu amor se perfeccione en nuestro amor por todos tus hijos e hijas; por Jesu Cristo nuestro Señor. Amén.”

“O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”