

Devotion, Week 4 of Lent, 2023

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

As I write this on March 20, I notice that today is Mr. Rogers Day, a day we in the Presbyterian Church remember this wonderful Presbyterian minister who treated our children to such a lovely, kind TV show for years. Today would be his 95th birthday. His show ran from 1968 to 2001, and he died in 2003. His gentle way of speaking, and his work with children, were an example for us all. I remember so well the beginning of the show when he walked through the door and changed into a sweater (that his wife Joanne knitted for him) and sneakers. His puppets – Daniel the Striped Tiger, King Friday XIII, Queen Sara Saturday, X the Owl, Henrietta, and Lady Elaine – showed the gamut of emotions, fears, and joys. He won the Presidential Medal of Freedom and lobbied Congress to retain funding for public television. Below are some of his quotes:

"The world needs a sense of worth, and it will achieve it only by its people feeling that they are worthwhile."

"Try your best to make goodness attractive. That's one of the toughest assignments you'll ever be given."

"There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind."

"All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we're giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors--in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver."

"As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has- or ever will have- something inside that is unique to all time. It's our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression."

"If you could only sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to the people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person."

"It's not the honors and the prizes and the fancy outsides of life which ultimately nourish our souls. It's the knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our very being is good stuff."

"Love isn't a state of perfect caring. It is an active noun like struggle. To love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is, right here and now."

"Mutual caring relationships require kindness and patience, tolerance, optimism, joy in the other's achievements, confidence in oneself, and the ability to give without undue thought of gain."

"The kingdom of God is for the broken hearted."

"The only thing evil can't stand is forgiveness."

I miss this wonderful theologian, teacher, and gentle soul. Fred Rogers cared for everyone he met. So won't you be my neighbor?

Jeanne