

Devotion, Week of October 26, 2025

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

It was a beautiful day. Many of my family had flown in, as well as my high school buddy. I had planned the order of service and knew that when Samantha Burke got up to sing "His Eye Is On the Sparrow," tears might flow. But the service for Jim turned out to have much laughter in it, partly because he was rather infamous for his exploits. I wasn't sure I could do his eulogy, and Kathy Banke even offered to read it for me if I couldn't, but it was fine, mainly due to the crazy stories about his life. Jim's good buddy, the Rev. Dr. Ken McKenzie, a quite highfalutin' name for a UGA good ole boy, had other interesting things to say. But what struck me the most was this statement: "you know, you usually get the friends you deserve. But what we forget is that God sends us the friends we need. Those friends always add something meaningful to your life. And Jim was that friend I needed."

Memorial services and funerals are for the living, and the process of greeting, worshipping, singing, praying, and weeping comes with laughter, reunions of family and friends, and hopefully, a meal together. It turned out to be a glorious day. Cindy, Ed, Barbara, Connie, Fran, and Beverly took care of serving the food and making people feel welcome, and Ed, Danny, Jim, and David helped us set up the sanctuary and receive guests arriving for the service. I was embraced with love, and my family and friends can't stop talking about how welcoming our church is. Thank you to all who helped make this a day that I will always remember, and for all the cards and emails and hugs from my Philadelphia family. I love you all, and Jim did too.

Jeanne