

Devotion, Week of June 28, 2026

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

It's a tremendous birthday – 250 years of independence from Britain. If you have been following the series on the American Revolution on PBS, you will know that it's pretty much a miracle that we won independence. Time after time, our army was met with near starvation, lack of equipment, confusing strategies, and soldiers who often deserted due to lack of pay, concern for their families at home, and doubt about our purpose.

A number of our victories were due to British mistakes, rather than our outstanding courage and fighting capabilities. That's the way war often is – it's not a clear vision of how to proceed toward victory at times. Some of the delegates to the Continental Congress wanted George Washington to be named king. Showing incredible wisdom, he declined and resigned his commission to go home. That may be why it was so easy to elect him President – his courage and his humility.

We are a vastly different country today. We have grown from 13 to 50 states, and from 2.5 million to 330 million people. Less than a hundred years after our founding, we fought each other over slavery, and spent years trying to recover from it. And we aren't there yet with equality and freedom for all. Our country is made up of citizens from all over the world, and our culture is much more varied. We have gone from religious varieties of Christianity to a wide range of religions. Even though our Constitution protects us so that we can practice our various religions, we still have occasions of hate speech and discrimination against those who are not Christian. That is not what Jesus would want from us. He would want us to be ecumenical and welcoming to those who are different from us, and to share our faith with grace. As we give thanks for living in this country of freedom, let us remember that.

Jeanne