

Prayer

Fred Meijer Memorial Service

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Sunshine Community Church
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Let us be in the spirit of prayer
in the presence of the Creative Source of all being,
in whom we live and move and have our being –
that sacred mystery hidden in a cloud of unknowing.
We are gathered here to celebrate the life of one
whose presence was larger than life,
one who, it seemed, would always be there.

We are still reeling from the shock,
the abrupt wrenching away
of one so deeply loved –
husband, father, grandfather,
titan of business, inspiring leader of the broader community.

We know that death awaits us all,
that, from the moment we emit our borning cry,
there is for all of us a final farewell.
Yet, especially when the leave-taking is sudden, it seems too soon,
even after nearly 92 years.
Though spared the agonizing pain and suffering
of a slow, deteriorating death,
there has been no time for proper goodbyes,
no time to say things so often felt but left unsaid,
no time for mutual blessing and holding and hoping.
And thus, the grieving comes so sharply, cuts so deeply,
because there has been no time for easing into the inevitable,
to adjust to the loss.
Thus, we feel bereft of one who it seemed would always be there.

Loss is proportionate to love.
Pain is measured by what the one removed meant to us –
and this one meant so much.
There is no denying the loss.
Yet, O God, there is no denying the wonder as well –
wonder at the beauty of love,
at the amazing grace, simplicity, humility and authenticity

with which this one, now absent from us,
lived before us, with us.

In the spirit of prayer, we remember this one
whose life we celebrate –
remembering the way he was in the fullness of human being;
the brilliance of that mind that never rested, yet was ever at rest;
a sensitivity that shined through those eyes dancing with delight
as he looked into our eyes and put us at ease;
a brilliance used never to intimidate or embarrass or humiliate,
but to lay bare the truth that sets us free,
to free us from superstition that holds the soul bound,
from a lack of nerve, a failure of courage,
to follow where justice and fairness lead,
furthering the possibilities for a humane world,
for civility and dignity,
for compassion and peace...

We remember and we marvel;
he was so tender in his sensitivity and care, yet so strong...
Living out of his own center in freedom,
submitting to no external authority,
living with a marvelous detachment
that enabled him to live beyond the siren call
of recognition or adulation or fame
purchased at the cost of one's soul –
yielding never to compromise or expediency
in the struggle for justice and defense of principle.

In the silence we remember the way he was,
the way he changed our lives.
We remember and we are grateful,
grateful that the luminosity of his being
irradiated our own;
grateful for this gift we have shared,
this human encounter which has been divine.

For Fred Meijer in whose life and love we have beheld You
and been brushed by Your grace.
what can we say but "Wow!"

Thanks be to You, Oh, God.
Amen.