

## What Matters Is Love

by Reverend Linn Possell, PAC Lead Mentor Coach

*Seasons of Love* is a song from the musical Rent. It asks the question, how do you measure the life of a woman or man? Do you measure it in truths that we learned or times that we cried, in bridges we burn or ways that we die? The song goes on to say our story never ends, and suggests we celebrate and remember our life in love, measure our life in love.

This song is a good reminder that what is important in life are our relationships, and the ways that we love. How do we hold on to this truth when we are affected by dementia?

Dementia can be difficult and all-encompassing to those of us who care for someone living with dementia. Our knowledge and skill we have regarding dementia can be challenged on a daily basis, which can leave our relationships strained. *Seasons of Love* reminds us that what really matters is love. A friend of mine recently went to a funeral of a neighbor and when she returned she commented that the best part of a funeral is always the time when people share their stories of the person whose life they are celebrating. She then made the observation that the stories that mean so much to the families, friends, and loved ones are never the big accomplishments in the life of the person being celebrated, but the little things that make life worth living. Stories like a woman who used to greet all of her neighbors every day as she sat on her front porch. As we look back on someone's life, we find that it is the little things that support and sustain our relationships that are the things that are most important in our life.

We can find ourselves spending more and more time on tasks when interacting with someone living with dementia and find ourselves not having time left for maintaining our relationship. It is important to spend a smaller amount of time caring for a person living with dementia and a larger amount of time loving the person living with dementia. How do we do that? By finding support, gathering a support team that can spend time assisting the person living with dementia, so that we have more of our time to spend on what matters most... love. Finding time to share the love that we have for someone living with dementia and finding new things to love about them every day.