

Dear friends,

I just returned from an unexpected trip to Florida where I said farewell to a very dear friend. I met June on my 50th birthday trip to Sedona in 1999. She was 71 and had recently lost her husband. She was looking to find a new life. We sang on the bus returning from the Grand Canyon and by the time we returned home, we had plans for her to join the Unity choir, which she did. There she met other young women and joined a MasterMind group that lasted 25 years! She surrounded herself with young people, saying people her age just wanted to talk about their health and that was too boring. Instead of a church service, we did a brief graveside service and then returned to June's home for a sharing circle. We zoomed in others who could not be there in person and I am sure June would have loved to have heard all the beautiful sentiments that were expressed about her. She was 97 years young.

While in Florida, I was able to visit others who are aging or who were sick or grieving. I really got that it's our presence that lifts people up. What an amazing "get" right before a holiday that focuses on the presents. I really understood that my presence, my time, my attention, was better than any present I could have offered. Spending time with those who are hurting is priceless.

I know in a season that demands so much of our time, this is not easy, but it's the very best gift you can offer. Telling someone how their presence in your life has blessed you is a priceless gift. If you can't do it in person, write it in a card or letter.

Everyone needs to know that they matter. Let your presence be the present this year. Let your words be the gift. We don't need more stuff. We need to know we make a difference.

My wish for you is that you know what a gift your presence is, that you truly matter.

Merry Christmas to each of you. May the love of Christmas fill your heart and may the new year bring you abundant blessings.

-Rev. Diane Robinson, Region Representative