

# Won't You Be My Neighbor? A Good Samaritan Reflection

*Karen Hall*

Dear Neighbor,

We all remember watching Mr. Rogers as he visited with our children through the television. He would come in singing the song “Won't You Be My Neighbor?” For us as adults, the show was a little too sweet, but our children were enthralled. And, as adults, we relaxed a little and listened to Mr. Rogers share about the people in his neighborhood and the everyday occurrences there.

In 2019, the movie “A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood” based on Fred Rogers’ life was released. The story, shared from the perspective of a reporter who interviewed him for an article for Esquire magazine, starred Tom Hanks. Interestingly, the reporter did not really want to like Mr. Rogers. Indeed, he was expecting to find that under that cardigan and smile was a man who was just trying to get ahead like the rest of the world. Instead, he found ... well, I certainly don't want to tell you more about the movie in case you want to see it sometime.

Surely, by now you are wondering why, in the president's letter welcoming you to the 2024 Program Kit, I am going on about Fred Rogers. So, let me get on with my letter. This year's kit is different from any other I have been involved in helping to write. The entire kit is based on the parable of the good Samaritan and focuses on the individual characters in the story.

It truly blessed me and also challenged me as I considered the actions of each character and realized that, at some point in my life, I have been each one of those people! While I am not proud of the fact that I have acted like the priest or even the criminal more often than the Good Samaritan, I don't think I am alone in that realization. So, prepare to be challenged and encouraged.

Hopefully, we will all be better neighbors because of what we learn together this year. After all, this is the essence of the second commandment of Jesus. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Fred Rogers would approve. More importantly, Jesus would.

Love each of you,  
Karen