

Amazing Grace

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Caldwell United Methodist Church

Your Mukwonago Church in the Country



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I paused for a moment, looked down, and an unfamiliar item caught my eye. "Was it a book? A journal? A date book?" I thought to myself. I was hanging clothes up in my mother's closet, helping with the weekend laundry. I couldn't resist picking up the book and looking it over. It was covered in dust, but the shelves had just been installed this year. "The book looks new so it can't be some sort of antique, can it?" Sure enough, as I brought it up into the light I saw the tell-tale edge of a color photo peeking out of the cover. I opened it. There they were- faces of family friends- faces I knew. But this was an event I had never attended, pictorial evidence I had never seen. "Mom, when were these taken?" I asked thumbing through the smiling faces. I stopped again. Our family friend, Jerry, was smiling down at his new grandson- a moment captured 4 years ago- a moment that he was blessed to have with his second grandchild, but a moment that can only live in a photograph and our memory.

Jerry died this past February and I laid a stone in his honor this All Saints' Day. He is part of my own church family, someone I never would have known without the family of faith. His loss is as acute as the loss of an aunt or uncle.

RETHINK: CHURCH ... What is the church to you? Is it the building? Is it the people?

We've done a lot of remembering in our own lives, the snapshots of our family and friends leaping off the page to remind us of times spent together. Heritage Days on October 24 and 25 was filled with food, fancy finds, and friendship as we auctioned and rummaged and browsed pictures of friends long departed.

Our roots are deep and pictures and stories help us to remember. But in order to reach out to the world, we have to become like a tree's branches and reach out. Our leaves only can process food when the sun is shining. Can we be Christ's light in the world? I think we can. But first we must take a look around us and see that our roots are firmly in the ground, that they have enough space, and nourishment from the soil in which we are planted.

When the United Methodist Church asks you to RETHINK: CHURCH, past and present must feed into the plan for the future. On November 22, we will celebrate our giving commitments to Caldwell UMC for 2010. Please gather with your family and talk about what gifts you can offer for this upcoming year. Don't get me wrong, Caldwell's history is rich, and not even the lack of funds can take away our passion for ministry. The reality is that unless we can sustain our ministry financially, it will not be able to go forward. We look to the future knowing that God will take care of us, but also knowing that we will need to put forth our monetary gifts to continue the work. Those are the stark realities we face. Can you help Caldwell, help people, to BE the church?

Blessings, Pastor Grace