

This picture is of my parents so many years ago (about 1955), all dressed up for the Christmas Eve service. Such memories are real treasures the older I get. The painting above the buffet was actually a piece of drapery fabric.

The first line of "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful" never fails to turn me into a blubbering mess of sobs. That song morphs me into a little kid again and I am standing beside Mom in the pew at the Ridott Christian Reformed Church (That church is gone now...replaced by a new building and renamed Grace Valley Christian Church.) about a half mile west of my birthplace near German Valley, IL.

Mom is wearing her dark-blue, silky "church dress" and her home-sewed gray winter coat with a hand-crocheted red yarn mitten as a decorative pin on her lapel. Her voice is off-key but she is singing her heart out. Dad (in his dark blue suit...the one he wore at their wedding in 1941) is right there beside us and is humming along (I never once heard my dad sing!).

Garland and tinsel and shiny balls are hung from the railings at the front of the sanctuary (NO TREE) and candles are flickering. Flora Crull is making the organ come to life and beloved Rev. Abbas is at the pulpit.

My world was innocent and safe at that moment and it was CHRISTMAS!!!!!! Santa was somewhere, flying in his reindeer-powered sleigh and would be bringing me a new doll before morning and the excitement was building.

That music wraps me in the love of my parents and keeps my heart warm still today. How I wish they were still here. Enjoy your loved ones around you today because tomorrow they may be just a wonderful memory.

