

Wisdom from the Woods

by Kerry Liesveld

“A man’s reach should exceed his grasp/or what’s a heaven for?” If you recognize those words by Robert Browning, thank your English Lit teacher. Reaching out has taken on a new meaning for me and I am happy to share my thoughts with you.

On a personal pre-introspective level, I had a God moment. When I was around five years old, my family took a day trip to a Nebraska state park near a river at what I now know was flood stage. The water was high and flowing with all manner of interesting things floating by. I needed a closer look. (Yes, parents, I was THAT child.) No sense of danger or self preservation, I started to look over the edge when the ground gave way. I felt the grab on the back of my collar and must have started to fall in because I was wet from the waist down. My father had pulled me out and without words promptly handed me to my mother. Without words, I knew that I could trust my father to watch out for me, to recognize danger when I did not. His reach saved my life when I had no idea that my life was threatened. My mother, on the other hand, had plenty of words, and I received the scolding I deserved.

We were a church-going family, Sunday School, confirmation class, and my church had a closed Communion. I knew that Jesus died to save me and to keep the Ten Commandments. I knew and accepted that I was a child of God. But I had to wait for the child in me to grow into feeling God’s presence and look for him in God moments.

Reaching out is what brought me to God’s presence.. I started with small groups, like our Women of the Woods, Seekers and Adult Forum. I had the good fortune and timing to find Our Education for Ministry course. I have a newfound appreciation for Scripture and the sharing with my fellow classmates has me reaching inside. I feel that looking forward to Tuesday nights has thrown a lifeline to me and getting through this isolated time of social distancing.

“God ... put a sense of eternity in people’s minds; yet, mortals still can’t grasp what God is doing from the beginning to the end of time.”(Ecclesiastes 3:11b, GW) Reaching out to better understand and explore our Christian faith may provide answers when we may not have words for the questions. I invite you all to reach out and share this Ministry and enjoy your God moments.