

GRANDMA OLSON AND CHURCH

Our church choir recently presented a program called "Old Time Religion" instead of our regular Sunday worship service. As I was enjoying most of the lively, simple gospel tunes, tears suddenly sprang to my eyes when I heard the choir's rendition of "In the Garden." It took me a while to realize my subconscious associated that song with Grandma Olson, and that I had heard it many times as I sat with her in the Caledonia Presbyterian Church in Spruce, Michigan. I was only 13 years old when she died, but the hymn reminded me that after all these years, I still missed her terribly, and I wished I could still sit next to her in church.

I remember her "making a joyful noise" to the Lord during the hymns at church. I thought she had an awfully high, screechy, "wiggly" soprano voice when she sang, and my sister, Sonja, and I shared a secret smirk when we heard her singing. One Sunday recently in my own church, I heard a similar screechy voice during the processional hymn and I looked around to see who belonged to my grandma's voice. Was I ever surprised when I realized it was MY voice I was hearing! I think Grandma would get a kick out of knowing that I like to make a "joyful noise" to the Lord, too.

Lynn VanderLinde - 1993