

ARTICLE FOR GAZETTE

January 18, 2006

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Orting United Methodist Church

Having just officiated at the funeral of Alice Rushton, who gave so much to our community over the years, and having seen the outpouring of support for her family, I am aware of how deeply we need each other. Through her encouragement, Alice helped others be leaders. She was instrumental in things that brought us together—the newspaper, city government, the community center, the bell tower, the clock, her book on the history of Orting. People gathered around her for words of wisdom and direction. She was a builder, in her own way, of things that have a lasting impact.

This reminds me of the words of St. Paul, that we should build each other up in love (see Ephesians 4:16). We are on this earth not just to take care of our own interests, but to find ways to help others. If you search the scriptures, you will find that Jesus' most frequent comments are about the Kingdom of God and how we should try to bring it alive on earth as well as preparing for it in heaven. Of course, we don't have kings now in our country. Kingdom of God might not be an idea that has meaning for us. I think that if Jesus were here now, he might speak instead of the kin-dom of God.

Kin refers to family, our blood relatives. Through Jesus Christ's deep love for us, we are brought together as kin in the family of God. We gather around him for words of encouragement and wisdom. We

have a “family reunion” each week at church. We know we belong together even when we have disagreements and misunderstandings and we try to work through them with integrity and sincerity, because we are kin with a kinship that comes through the blood of Christ.

Jesus didn't stop going to church because he thought the people there were hypocrites or because he wasn't being fed there.

Throughout his life he went regularly to the synagogue, and not just for special occasions either. Even though he didn't agree with what was being taught. He never boycotted the family reunion.

Now we are talking real family values, where every person is valued equally and honored as our sister or brother, no matter what their skin color, their size, their economic level, or political persuasion, or sexual orientation. We have things we need to talk about. Come to the family reunion this week. You are important in the kin-dom of God.