

Dawn Naree Schaffer

Opening remarks

We **want** to be here today....

...and yet we **don't**!

We **had** to be here – to show our **love**, our **admiration**, our **appreciation** for an amazing woman who would never give **up** and never give **in**! //

But we wish the story had a **different** ending... one where Dawn lived **well** for many years to come! /

...but that is not the real **world**...

...and so we gather today to do **three** things...

Grieve. I'm sure there's been a lot of that already, but today will be a bit of a **focal point** for grief. And although in our culture we'd rather **party** than **grieve**... **grief** is actually really **important**... it is an acknowledgement of the **pain** we feel at the **separation** of death – the **finality** of death. Please don't be **brave** or **strong**! Grief is best **expressed** than **denied**! In Ron's words, Dawn was an **absolute gem**; so of course, we **grieve** her **death**!

Second – to give **thanks**. To give thanks to God that this wonderful woman was part of our lives... to give thanks for the **inspiring way** she faced the last 7 years... to give thanks for her **love**, her **compassion**, her **generosity**, her **determination**, her **humour**, her **friendships**... for her **guidance** and **wisdom** as **mother** and **grandmother**... We're here to express our **gratitude** for the way she touched our **lives**!

And third, we're here to find some **hope**. To find **strength** for the days **ahead**. To find **comfort** in **sorrow**. To find **help** for the **ache** we feel in our **hearts**... and I hope to be able to share with you **where** such hope and comfort and strength can be **found**. /

But we begin with a hymn which points us to where **some** of that hope is to be found – when **Jesus Christ** is our **vision**...!