

May 26, 2015

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

Over the last week, our two oldest boys came home. James just graduated from Wake Forest with a degree in history, and Thomas, who finished up at Bucknell University last spring, completed his one year contract position with the Golf Channel. Neither has a job lined up at this point, and so they will be living at home, at least for the time being.

Each of them brought a lot of stuff back, and so we spent most of yesterday unpacking their belongings, getting the apartment organized and putting items in storage. We were so busy we hardly realized it was Memorial Day.

We were probably not the only ones.

As the unofficial kick-off to summer, most people spend Memorial Day enjoying the first weekend at the pool or having a cookout with friends, and it is pretty easy to neglect the real meaning of the holiday – honoring those who, in Abraham Lincoln’s words, “gave the last full measure of devotion” in service to this country.

And, that just doesn’t seem right.

Twenty-five years ago, I was captivated by Ken Burns’ documentary on the Civil War. I watched it faithfully night after night, and while the entire film was outstanding, there was one moment in particular which really caught my attention. It was a letter written by Major Sullivan Ballou to his wife Sarah in July, 1861, one week before the Battle of Bull Run. Its lyrical prose and heartfelt beauty moved me to tears, and I think the letter perfectly captures the spirit of all those who lived and died for our country.

I invite you to take a few minutes now and listen to Sullivan Ballou’s letter by clicking on the link below. Listen. Remember. And, give thanks.

See you in church,

*Andrew*