

CPC Member Profile

Nadine McBeth

THE BEGINNING

I was born in Swedish Covenant Hospital (Chicago) on September 13, 1939. After graduating from Maine Township High School (now Maine East), I ended up at the University of Dubuque (Iowa) and received my BA in 1961. I was raised largely unchurched; had my parents known how “religious” Dubuque was, I wouldn’t have been allowed to go. But I was there and was exposed to God and became Christian, joining the church by confession of faith in December of my sophomore year.



It wasn’t as easy as that sentence makes it seem! I had never heard of the trinity, never seen communion, and it was a time in history when predestination was a hot topic; the most vociferous claiming something that almost kept me away. I fought against God, pumped my roommate (a lifelong Presbyterian) for information, and wrote position papers to argue about with the local minister. God sought me out, put the right people around me to help me, God won and thereby, so did I. My life hasn’t been the same since. And over the years I’ve found my roots in God. Sometimes I’ve strayed but God was always there.

After college I spent the summer doing missionary work in Denver, Colorado. I lived in the inner city, core, slums, depending on your word of choice, one block off of skid row. This was an eye-opening experience for me. Having come from an all-white suburb and a modestly integrated college, to living in a black/Hispanic neighborhood as one of only two “white” people in a one-mile square area was quite a shock to me. Among other things I learned that good and bad people are not defined by color of skin, good parenting does not depend on marital status, and basic human problems have a common denominator, no matter where you live.

Going with the Mission team to Romania also stretched my understanding of the human condition. I’ve spoken here in church, and in many other places about the situation there. Most of the people are warm and loving but poverty-stricken. There is really no middle-class in Romania, only upper class and lower class. And most are lower class. Homes with no electricity, no running water, and often no windows are common. Starvation, illness, lack of education, and babies having babies are among the problems there. With money from CPC and the Presbytery of Chicago, we helped build a church, open a preschool class, run medical clinics, and supported several orphanages. I could go on with sad stories of the abandoned children, and adults with no hope, but the speeches I have given on these subjects often take an hour or more and won't fit here..

Since my retirement I've done some traveling, written a number of hymns, written a book and several articles, trained as a lay pastor in the Presbyterian Church, conducted worship services at a senior home for over three years, preached in a number of different churches, and now am considered unpaid staff at the Presbytery of Chicago. I don't think I'll ever stop learning and doing new things or at least I hope not. There is so much I don't know yet and would like to.

Most of you know that I am divorced and have one son, Derek, or as I call him now - My son, the President. Not that I'm proud mother, but Derek has overcome much to be in his present position - president of a small University in Toledo, Ohio. My daughter-in-law, Laura, and three grandchildren, Lucien, Brandon, and Shannon complete my family. As with all grandchildren, mine are brilliant, talented and beautiful.

I've been a member of four churches over the years - Westminster in Dubuque, Iowa; Westminster in Des Plaines; Bensenville (IL) Presbyterian and CPC. I've been Presbyterian since 1958 and a member of CPC since 1974. Why do I stay at CPC? It's definitely the people- it's like having an extended family. We care about and take care of each other. We offer support in good times and bad. We pray for each other.

Since being here, I've done many things. I've taught third and fourth grade Sunday school, attended and taught many different adult education classes, and helped found two women's circles, serving as chair at various times. I was also active in the Blues Sisters retreat group, and wrote their theme song.

I was elected and ordained as a deacon in 1980 and served as moderator for three of the five years I was a deacon. I then was elected and ordained as an elder; I served two terms then took a year off before serving two more terms. During this time, I served as clerk of session and was on Worship and Spiritual Life, Spiritual Outreach and Membership, Personnel, Nominating Committee, and head of the Adult Education Committee.

I've been a commissioner to Presbytery for many years, briefly served as a representative to Synod, and had the privilege of serving as a commissioner to General Assembly in 2003. Presbytery offices include the Nominating Committee, the Mission Priority Leadership Team, the "Our Common Ministry" staff, and now as Coordinator for the Central Region of the Committee on Ministry, having 35 churches under the care of my region.

Being a representative to the General assembly was a high point in my life. Seeing 2000 people, all working hard to be as thorough and as fair as possible in the name of God is an inspiring sight. There may be too much paperwork and too many rules, but the basic thrust was still to do God's work decently and in order.

MY PHILOSOPHY

Does all this mean that I never have any doubts or never lose sight of God? No, I do have my down periods and my questioning times, but I always know God is there, even when I can't reach God.

First, last and always, I am a child of God.

The Bible says, "Those to whom much is given is much expected". I feel I have been given many talents, and I need to use them. My writing is one of those talents, and my work is dedicated to God.

I feel God still has things for me to do so I can't give up. I may have many challenges, but I can still do God's work and I intend to keep going as long as I can.

First, last and always I am a child of God.