

CPC Member Profile

Robert Graham

As a young man and recent college graduate from the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, I moved from my native Wisconsin to the Chicago area to begin my career as a District Executive with the Boy Scouts of America. Away from home, alone and on my own, I came to Community Presbyterian Church nearly thirty years ago, because of the singles group that the church then sponsored.

At the time, I was very wet behind the ears. Immediately, CPC made me feel accepted and supported. Soon I began to feel the sense of a new “second” family in Northern Illinois.

I met my future wife, Cindy, at an inter-group activity with the singles group of a Schaumburg church. We were married at CPC over 27 years ago by CPC’s Pastor, Paul Palmer. Cindy chose to join our church. A new phase of life had begun. The families of CPC provided many role models helping me grow as a husband and life partner.

Later, God blessed us with a beautiful baby boy – Joshua Robert. Once again our church provided many role models as together Cindy and I embraced parenthood. Our son Joshua was both baptized and confirmed at CPC. Joshua was also an active participant in CPC’s Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. He also has served our church, and was on the Mission Emphasis Committee for 2 years while he was a high school student.

Cindy and I are so blessed to have been able to raise our son in a faith and a church that preaches and teaches the affirmations found in the Apostles Creed. We also have grown together as a couple, grounded in the faith that Christ would help us through tough times and laugh with us during good times.

We have been involved in many aspects of the church. We both were adult leaders of the high school youth group for 2 years. I have served as a trustee and been ordained as a deacon. Cindy has been on both the Worship Committee and the Christian Education Committee for many years and continues to serve in these two capacities to this day.

What keeps us so active in the life of Community Presbyterian Church? The same reasons that we are members: the friendship, care, and compassion that we receive from our fellow church-goers, during good times and not so good times, especially at this time of grief over my mother’s passing. There are many opportunities to understand and grow in our spiritual lives. One example is the Bible-based six week classes led by Paul Palmer, Pastor Emeritus. Also, we enjoy the pure fun at events such as the annual spaghetti dinner.

When Joshua started college at ISU, Cindy and I became empty-nesters. Alone again, we faced a real adjustment. Yet, so many families in the church were already where we had just arrived. Again, we were surrounded by role models.

In June, 2010, we lost my Mom. I am still trying to understand how to live through this time of sadness. At the same time, however, I keep in mind what Mom whispered to me, as she lay in her hospice bed. I said to her that Jesus was waiting for her and if she wanted to go, then all she needed to do was to let go. Mom whispered in my ear, “I am not afraid.” What she was seeing of the beyond did not frighten her. It had to be perfect goodness. Jesus with His arms outstretched, waiting for Mom to come to Him. For if all she saw was blackness, or nothing, she would not have been able to say that she was not afraid. Her testimony, at such a crucial point in her life, has helped me deal with my grief in her death. CHRIST IS ALIVE! HE LIVES INDEED!

Today, I devote much of my free time fighting to eradicate human trafficking (modern-day slavery) in Chicago, and beyond. I was recently appointed to be CPC’s representative to the Presbytery in the area of “Advance Justice” mission, which includes Abolition.

I also love bike riding, cross country skiing, and I just completed my first year of horseback riding lessons. I am also enjoying the experience as Cindy and I embrace our lives as a “couple” again, who are parents of an outstanding young man.

