

# Clifton Presbyterian Church

## MEMBERS' MEMORIES OF THE DECADES

1980's

### Pat's Story

Paul and I purchased 5 acres of land off Evans Ford Rd. in 1980 from Clifton Store owners Earl and Mary Lee. I remember sitting on the bench outside the store and Earl giving me a pad and pencil. "Make a mark every time a car goes by," he challenged. After nearly 30 minutes, I had no marks. He grinned and said, "Now you know why we all live in Clifton." Earl died in the mid 80's so he never saw the commuter traffic that we know today. He did love to see the local kids (including ours) come by for penny candy. There was often a pony tied up outside the door. If he knew you, you didn't even need money. He'd just say, "I'll get you next time."

We spent 3 years building a house on that land. We did it the old-fashioned way with every member of the family pitching in on framing, masonry, roofing, electrical, plumbing, drywall, and painting. Our youngest was 3 when we started. (She tightened the sill plate bolts on the foundation.) The twins were 7 and moved (over the years) from gopher responsibilities to shingling parts of the roof and laying the brick for the kitchen fireplace. We were a team.

Along the way, we met Jim Petersen's oldest brother Don in Maine at a church picnic with Paul's parents. Don encouraged us to worship at Clifton Presbyterian Church. His Mom, Ruth Petersen played the organ and served as Choir Director and Clerk of Session in those days. The five of us attended regularly with our construction work clothes in the car for after church work. There was a search committee looking for a pastor so we were sometimes 5 of the 25 people in worship. Even then, CPC was warm and welcoming. We enjoyed the supply pastors each Sunday who often came from a military background and had very interesting experiences to share. Our children experienced a loving foundation for their faith from pastors and church members. It was a wonderful beginning for them.

We moved into our new house in 1986. By then, our oldest, Mike, was active in Troop 1104 with Scout Master Mark Reimers. His twin sister Carrie was a Girl Scout but spent most of her time horseback riding. Our youngest, Becky was into competitive ice skating and art. I began teaching Sunday School which fed my soul for 22 years. Paul served as an Elder.

Fast forward to 2020. Paul lives in Lovettsville with his second wife. Mike is a Scout Master in Purcellville with 2 boys of his own. Carrie owns a farm in Madison County. She rides her horses all over the state and educates others on pasture management and equine nutrition. She attends Culpeper Presbyterian Church.

*Becky lives in Oregon with her husband. She has an art degree in photography. All three of them live in gratitude for the blessings they received as children from CPC.*

*I am also grateful for the love the church has shown to me and my family. Nothing is more precious to a mother than the well-being of her children. My own faith has grown because of my experiences in our community. I have been given much. I have served 3 terms as an elder and 3 as a deacon over my 35 years at CPC. I have gone on 7 Mission trips to Kibwezi, Kenya and stretched my Sunday School skills to include some lessons in Kiswahili. I have even preached in village churches in Kenya. What I discovered is that the same love-for-one-another that we share in Clifton can be found in God's church around the globe. I am grateful to be a member of this congregation.*

*Thanks be to God for all we have received.*



*The Swanson Family in 1984*

*Front row: Carrie, Mike, Becky Back row: Mimi Swanson, Pat, Paul and Ralph Swanson*

## *MEMBERS' MEMORIES OF THE DECADES*

*1980's*

### *Bette's Story*

*I began attending Clifton Presbyterian Church in January 1983, and in February was wrangled into joining the choir by choir director and future mother-in-law Ruth Petersen. I became a member and became engaged to my husband Jim, in April 1983. We were married on July 29, 1983 by then Rev. Ellwood H. Crick. Wow - early 1983 was an active time!*

*Winds of change began to blow in June 1983 when the United Presbyterian Church in the USA (NY) merged with the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Atlanta) becoming the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), ending a long standing north/south division of faith.*

*My father-in-law Norman Petersen passed away in February 1984; the present day cross and candelabras on the altar are dedicated to his memory by his sons and family friends.*

*In the spring of 1984, session was considering closing CPC's doors due to waning attendance and the resulting lack of funds - often, there were more church members in the choir than in the congregation, and no youth - Jim and I were the "youngsters". Ruth Petersen was Clerk of Session and serving on Presbytery's Committee for Records of Minutes of churches in the Presbytery. She heard about a grant for church redevelopment; our session applied and was accepted, and CPC became a redevelopment Church. Presbytery provided \$25,000 to boost the church's resources - just the boost we needed.*

*The Rev. Robert von Oeyen, with his wife Sherry, were called to the church in 1985. Both Bob and Sherry joined the choir, and Sherry became our organist. Soon, young couples with their children began to attend a reactivated Sunday school, a new preschool, and a revitalized vacation bible school.*

*I became an elder in 1987, humbled that the generation before me took me under their wings.*

*The spaghetti dinner was begun in 1987 by Sherry and me for mission support. We also started "The Harvest of Love" yard sale to raise money for women's mission in the Presbyterian Church.*

*The ladies' group, Women of the Church, became Presbyterian Women in 1987. Annual teas at the church were organized as a fellowship outreach to unite with women in the local community and surrounding churches.*

*That same feeling of family and community is as strong now as when I began my journey with CPC in January of 1983. I love my church on the hill.*



*Bette and Jim's Wedding Day  
July 29, 1983*

*From Left- Ruth Petersen, Norman Petersen, Bette, Jim, and Bette's mother, Helen Pierce*