

Volunteer Spotlight



Bill Harper

Adult Ministry - Veterans Ministry Team Leader

As part of the Canton First UMC Family, Bill Harper volunteers as part of the leadership team for Canton First Veterans (CFV) Ministry, a group that meets monthly. CFV promotes awareness of Veteran issues, education for Veterans through guest speakers, affiliation with and support of local charities that work with homeless Veterans, Veterans/families in need, MUST Ministries, Georgia National Cemetery, Wreaths Across America, etc.

Bill also participates in the Men's Wednesday Prayer Breakfast group that meets weekly. Previously Bill served on the Board of Trustees, and eventually became Chairman, sharing, "the challenge was significant, and it instilled a confidence that I carry with me today".

Bill was born in 1951 and turned 71 on March 21. He grew up in Southeast Missouri and has been married to Janet since 1973. Bill served 30 years in US Navy and retired January 1, 2001, achieving rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. Bill has 2 (step) sons - Ed & Don - Ed in Idaho, Don in Cumming, 6 grandchildren (plus 2 spouses), and 4 great grandchildren. Bill's hobbies include - cars, cooking/eating, and traveling. Bill has 1 dog - "Gidget", a Toy Fox Terrier.

We asked Bill:

"Why is it important to you to volunteer at our church?"

"It's the least I can do for my own great fortune to have served the country in the US Navy uniform. The church is a reflection of the community.... participation is by individual choice, and I see my role as giving of that time I have, combined with my experience from serving, to help those I interact with know what commitment is, what honor is, and what serving a larger interest than my own does for the community, and especially our church."

"What do you enjoy most about volunteering in your area of ministry?"

"Veterans are a relatively small but important group - our experiences, our health concerns, both mental & physical, and the aspect of 'Brotherhood within a Fellowship' is something we must never set aside.

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‘Serving Beyond the Uniform’ is a phrase I've come to use, and it fits so well for every veteran in our group.”

How has volunteering at our church had an impact on you (spiritually, emotionally, etc.)?

“I'm challenged daily to be mindful of those less fortunate - being able to recognize when the right time is to say or do something when a brother needs a lift. Praying for others, praying about situations, past, current, and for those with needs beyond our ability to directly impact them.”

What have you learned about yourself and/or about others through volunteering at our church?

“People enjoy getting together, as we do on Wednesdays and the monthly Canton First Vets meetings. It's not supposed to be easy to make things happen in our busy & complex lives, but at the end of the day, what we learn about ourselves, to be able to interact with others, say a kind word, thank someone, or help someone in need is the best reward.”

A Few Fun Facts about Bill:

Favorite ice cream: Nutty Coconut if I can find it! Otherwise, it's Vanilla - most recently Blue Bell Natural Vanilla Bean....or homemade when I make the effort!

Dream Vacation: Australia/Singapore/Hawaii - in any order! We lived in Hawaii for over 5 years, so Australia & Singapore might be the place to go, but Hawaii is closer, and we still have friends there!

Favorite Sports Team(s): Notre Dame Softball (college women), I should be a St Louis Cardinals (baseball) fan but became a San Diego Padres fan while living there. Otherwise, my "team sport" passions are more focused on motorsports!