

## “Member Profile”

This week’s feature : Gerry and Fran Wilhelm



Gerry was born in Columbiana, Ohio, the home of Harvey S. Firestone. He grew up here with his sister and later moved to Columbus. He went to Capital University in Columbus, an institution affiliated with the ELCA. He finished a semester in Social Studies, then switched to Speech and Drama, then became an Art Education Major. He was on the faculty of Berea Schools for his entire career. Fran was born in Cleveland where she grew up and later in Parma Hts. Her brother is now retired and lives in Florida. She attended school at St. Cecilia's Nazareth Academy, Baldwin-Wallace College and Cleveland State University. She majored in Music Education and received a Masters in String Pedagogy. Fran developed the String Program for Berea and Westlake Schools.

They met at the Berea High School music room where they both taught. Fran and Gerry have raised 3 married children: Geoff, Jon and Jennifer. Their family has been blessed with 5 grandchildren. Becoming members at POP was a wonderful celebration on Palm Sunday of 1986. The children helped them pick Prince of Peace as they had been church shopping. They credit member Edna Semroc with her recommendation. They currently reside in North Ridgeville.

Both have been a big part of the ministry efforts at POP over the years. Fran has performed uplifting violin music at many services throughout the years. Other areas she contributed to were director of the Chancel Choir for 10 years, the Hand Bell Choir, Children's Chimes and the POP Youth Orchestra. She has been a part of the Women of the ELCA gathering. Travel Quest is another passion of hers, including serving as the church minibus driver. I don't think a CDL license is required :-). Events included a recent trip to The Cleveland Botanical Orchid Mania show. I recall a trip I took with Lora when we went to The Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. We had games and entertainment on the tour bus with prizes along the way planned out by the Wilhelms. Gerry had coordinated parish education for 10 years, and participated in Outreach missions. As he scheduled and trained the traditional service usher teams, he ensured services ran smoothly. He often attends the Sunday Gospel Study. Working

with Bob Engelbert on planning the new Sunday School Education wing, we now have a great resource to teach many about God's Love.

In his free time, Gerry enjoys gardening, art and Legos. His collection is quite impressive and took years to build. Something members may not know is in college he learned to identify all north and central Ohio tree species by their shapes. That knowledge was helpful to me a few years ago when I was purchasing shrubs as he worked at Pettiti's Garden Center.

Fran's interests include herb gardening, sewing, music and traveling. Serving in the Worship and Music Committee for 20 years, Fran had started the fundraiser campaign for a new baby grand piano on the Sunday before the stock market crash. Even with the financial downturn, members contributed to the fund to support the many talented musicians that call POP home and made that campaign a success.

What a wonderful and talented family! Fran and Gerry have incorporated the teachings of The Bible into their daily lives. You will find them attending the traditional services at church.

*By Tom Robinholt : Profile Reporter*