

# “Member Profile”

This week's feature: *Mark and Carol (Rusty) Blakeslee*



Rusty and Mark Blakeslee have been members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church for 35 years, joining in 1983. Pastor Coffman visited Rusty and newborn baby, Ian, in the hospital at the request of Ingrid, Rusty's cousin, who was a member. Shortly thereafter, Mark and Rusty visited Prince of Peace and loved the warmth of the congregation and the Pastor. Both Rusty and Mark were born in the Cleveland area; Mark in Lakewood, and Rusty in Wickliffe. Mark comes from a large family. He is the third of 10 children; three brothers and six sisters. Rusty is the youngest in a family of four children; two brothers and a sister.

After High School in Lakewood, Mark attended Regis College, a Jesuit school in Denver, Colorado. After two years he transferred to the University of Colorado and graduated with a degree in Small Business Management. After high school in Wickliffe, Rusty attended Wittenberg University where she was a biology major. She also has her degree in physical therapy from Cleveland State University.

After graduating from the University of Colorado, Mark worked for an engineering firm in Denver for a short time. He then applied for and spent time in the Peace Corps, living and working in the Solomon Islands as a business advisor. He followed the overseas assignment with a short time assignment with the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. Returning home, Mark went into the family business, Blakeslee Equipment Co., which is a Rep Agency that specializes in chemical process equipment. Mark continues to run the business to this day. Rusty became a physical therapist in pediatrics and neurology. However, since 1989 she has been working in home health care. She has worked for Great

Lakes Rehab at Lorain Community Hospital which is now Mercy Health, Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals.

How did Rusty and Mark meet, you ask? Well, where does an east-sider meet a west-sider in Cleveland? Downtown! Both were taking night classes at Cleveland State, and they met in chemistry class. Mark sat behind Rusty in the lecture hall, and one day he followed her to the bookstore. Mark's idea was that they share the cost of the lab kit and be lab partners. Rusty says that she fell in love with Mark when he showed up in the lab wearing his little sister's apron on which was an embroidered donkey pulling a cart. She says it was ridiculous and came down only to his waist. Everyone else was wearing goggles and rubber aprons, and Mark was wearing this cute little girl's apron. At that point, Rusty knew that life with Mark would not be boring.

Rusty and Mark have three boys. Ian, age 35, is married to Jessica and they have an 11 month old son, Todd. They live happily in Boise, Idaho. Ben, age 33, just finished his medical residency in family practice, and now he works as a hospitalist for Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. Ben is engaged to Katie Dugan and will likely marry in 2019. Kevin, age 30, is a store manager for Meriwether Cider Company in Boise, Idaho. Kev is engaged to Adan Callsen, and they plan to marry in 2020.

Both Rusty and Mark have been very active at Prince of Peace. Mark has been a lesson reader, an usher, a Sunday school teacher and worked on the OMNI activities. Rusty is a member of the Crossfire Band, has been involved with OMNI and the Book Study Group. She has also been on the Fellowship Committee, Adult Education, Church Council, Confirmation Education, Cup and Conversation and others. Together, Rusty and Mark have had fun participating in theatrical productions at Prince of Peace.

Both love to travel, hike, read, go to the theater, and be with their family. Mark enjoys golf, hunting and shooting. When asked what many at Prince of Peace may not know about them, they responded that they always wanted to live out west and two of their three sons have beat them to it! They wanted everyone to know that they are so grateful for all the friendships and support that has developed over the years at Prince of Peace.

If you know the Blakeslee family, as I do, you already know that they are warm, loving and caring Christians.

*By Dick Hardy, Profile Reporter*