

SPIRIT-FILLED HEART

Pastor marks decade at St. Margaret's

By Cathy Kapulka

Pioneer Editor

"He has a spirit-filled heart," Barbara Pemberton, a deacon at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Inverness, said about Pastor Gene Reuman, the rector at the church, who is celebrating 10 years serving the parish.

When Reuman was 19, he was a communications technician in the U.S. Navy. He spent 13 months in active duty and two-and-a-half years at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital in Great Lakes, Ill. After complications from major thoracic surgery. He went through 16 surgeries and spent 52 days in a coma. The doctors did not think he was going to live.

"Coming out of that I really felt that God saved me for a purpose," Reuman, now 60, said. "And I spent a while searching for that purpose."

Reuman said he found that purpose when he heard God's calling and enrolled at the University of the South's School of Theology in Sewanee, Tenn. There he received his masters of divinity degree while serving as a deacon for three years at St. James Episcopal Church in Midway, Tenn.

Before coming to St. Margaret's he served as a vocational deacon for eight years at Holy Faith Episcopal Church in Dunnellon.

Reuman said he loves his work, but being a pastor is more than just a job.

He said his favorite thing about being a pastor is, "the fact that you're invited to share in people's intimate, private moments and thoughts.

"You share their heartache in the death of a loved one or when you give last rights to a dying mother as their children are holding her hand," he said. "A marriage, a birth of a child, you feel you're part of a bigger family.

"As you dedicate yourself in trying to serve the Lord you receive a larger family in brothers and sisters of Christ. You're invited into such very powerful, interpersonal relationships with people, and as God's representative, it heightens your sense of responsibility."

Pemberton said her favorite thing about Reuman is his good heart.

“To me he has a spirit-filled heart, and that’s so important in a pastor,” Pemberton said. “His willingness to be there and beyond for his congregation and his wisdom, it’s a very important quality in a pastor, to have wisdom.”

Sister Anne Rose, a nun at the church, said her favorite thing about Reuman is his compassion and Valerie Harbour, a church parishioner, said her favorite things about him are his kindness, generosity and humility.

When Reuman is not on the pulpit or helping others, he can be found on every third Friday evening of the month at the Inverness Government Center showing off his 1998 light pewter LSI Corvette Coupe at the Citrus Mopar Club’s monthly show.

“I don’t drive it to church,” he said about the Corvette as he laughed. “My wife and I take it out a few times a month.”

Reuman has been married to Paula Sue for the last 27 years. She is the chairperson of the pastoral care commission at the church.

“I’ve served here for 10 years, God willing I hope I have another 10 years to serve,” he said as he explained that an Episcopal priest is not allowed to serve as a rector past the age of 70 without the Bishop’s approval. “Paula and I give thanks to God everyday that I was called here to be their pastor.

“This is really halftime, he added. “It’s not the beginning of the end. It’s merely the end of the beginning.”

Reuman’s 8 a.m. Sunday sermon can be viewed (not live) on the churches website at stmaggie.org.