

THE MAN WITH THE BROOM

by Nancy Cramer

If you see a man around the church with a wide broom in his hands, you will know it is Phil Gross doing his duty. Or you may see him outside trimming the bushes and helping to keep the huge expanse of lawn. Phil and his wife, Mary, have been members of All Saints since 2010 when their former church, Abiding Savior closed. They keep returning because All Saints teaches and preaches Lutheran beliefs.

Phil is a man to know if you need some minor maintenance done at the church. He takes care of cleaning the interior of the building, waxing and polishing floors, cleaning the restrooms, and other rooms adjacent to the sanctuary. He takes care of it also, running the sweeper and the wide floor broom that most men won't touch. He says it is a pleasure to do the caretaking because the members are such nice people. Most are not easily upset but instead are of a good disposition.

Serving in the United States Navy from 1967 to 1971 is something Phil is proud of doing. Another activity he enjoyed was when he served on the Board of the Sunshine Center for disadvantaged children years ago. The Center was taken over and is operated by the Independence School District. One of the most difficult times for him was when the school had no funds, and he had to tell the teachers there would be no pay checks for them. "There was a lot of crying going on that day," he added. Something he enjoys in his spare time is scuba diving. That is relaxing and fun also, he claims in his earlier days. He retired from USA 800, an inbound call center in Raytown.

He also enjoys bird watching, and while we were talking, he was at his home looking out the window. He saw a hawk on the lawn and some hummingbirds at the feeder. When the hawk appears, the other birds takeoff. The hawk is joined by a couple of others, searching for food in the lawn. Next time you are at church, you may want to try spotting some birds yourself with Phil there to help you. An early riser

at 4:30 or 5 A.M., Phil can identify birds with the best of watchers. He and Mary have two married daughters, Heather and Leslie, and three grandchildren.

When you get a drink from the clean, shiny water fountain at church, just remember it was cleaned by no, not Phil, but, see Mary Ann's story if you want the answer. Otherwise, If you see him, how about saying

"Thanks, Phil, for all you do."