



## Nancy Gauthier: VBS Snack Coordinator & Much More!

**Tell us a little about how long you've been a member of BUMC and what role the church has played in your life.**

I have been a member of BUMC for over 50 years. As a child, I sang in the choirs, attended Sunday School, and went through Confirmation Class. I started playing bells when we first got them. After college, I lived in Des Moines, Iowa, but came home for holidays. I always came home in time for the Thanksgiving service with Beth El. When I moved back here to go to graduate school at American University, I was the youth director for 2 years. The music program is one way I recharge my batteries and refocus on good things in life. BUMC has always been a steady and supportive spiritual community for me.

**You've been an active volunteer in a number of different ministries at BUMC. What have been some of the most rewarding ways that you've been able to serve over the years?**

I really enjoyed my years on Altar Guild, using visuals to enhance the worship experience. My best ideas came in the middle of the night, like the Advent candle banners and the Pentecost banners. The first set of candle banners had suspended flames and were a challenge to hang. The current set is all one piece and are hung from longest candle at the front to the shortest candle at the back, showing the progression of the Advent candles burning thru the season. I also loved being a wedding hostess and solving issues that arise: creating missing boutonnieres from the altar bouquet, keeping divorced parents apart, creating a fingertip veil when a cathedral-length veil was delivered in error, and making sure the wedding goes smoothly.

**VBS is on the horizon and for the last few years, we have been fortunate to be able to count on you coordinating the snacks for 200 children. Share with us what that entails and why you volunteer to take on this huge task.**

I started working with the snack service for VBS many years ago with Debbie Gillette. Debbie and I have been friends for years, and we often "volunteer" each other for projects. This time, I kept going after she stopped. Once the VBS curriculum is selected, I look at the snack recommendations and tailor them to our size, feeding typically 300-350 people. I have to laugh at some of their selections - like root beer floats! By the time the 300<sup>th</sup> scoop of ice cream goes in a cup, the first one is melted! Not to mention the mess if it gets spilled on the carpet! So when I look at the snacks listed, I keep in mind our numbers and typical allergies and substitute as needed. Some things go over well, like gummy bears for Moses, square pretzels for bars on Paul's prison cell, Ritz crackers for making a cross, blue jello for water, and rice cakes with blue cream cheese and goldfish crackers for a fish pond. Each group of kids gets to make snack one day of the week. Younger kids scoop trail mix into snack bags, older kids spread cream cheese on rice crackers. My job is to figure quantities, organize things, and recruit volunteers. I'm always looking for volunteers and will take anyone, even if just for a day. We start at 8:30 am and are done about 11:00 am. We get things ready for the kids to make snacks assembly line style, but we also have fun! The kids make the snacks in about 20 minutes, and then we clean up the space. After snack time is over for the day, we restock the bags and do any prep work needed for the next day, like making jello or pudding. And then, I go to my day job and amuse them with the snack creation!

**Each year, you take on a truly behind-the-scenes job in the days following our Easter Egg Hunt. Can you tell us about that?**

I started the Easter egg washing business about 10 years ago. After the Easter Egg Hunt, the plastic eggs were being thrown away or taken home, and we were having to buy more eggs the next year. To avoid that waste and expense, I volunteered to clean the eggs and bring them back to store at church. I set up an assembly line at home to sort and wash eggs. The cleaned eggs are laid out in beach towels on my kitchen table and trays on chairs around the room so they can dry before being reattached. The eggs are counted and boxed and returned to church. It takes about a week to finish all the eggs. This year, there were 3,509 eggs cleaned!

**As someone who has been involved in many ministries, do you have any thoughts on how we can help new members find a place to plug into the life of our church?**

I think the way to get new members involved requires a personal touch, a personal invitation. Once someone's interests are known, they can be matched up with others. When we made quilts for Volunteers In Mission trips, I invited anyone interested to come help and specifically reached out to several people to encourage them to come. The only requirement was for them to be able to use scissors without cutting themselves! Everything else is teachable.

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