

Rev. Bob Moore marches forward, peace flags high

By Erica Chayes Wida
Packet Media

In November, Rev. Bob Moore celebrated his 35 years as executive director of the Coalition for Peace Action, Princeton. In addition to working for the church, Rev. Moore has spent his life as a proactive peacemaker - organizing conferences, leading demonstrations, and moving mountains.

But peace was not always Rev. Moore's perspective.

As a boy, Rev. Moore considered himself a hawk. The proud son of a career Navy man, he recalls rooting to just "blow Cuba up" during the Cuban Missile Crisis; at that point he was 12. By the time he was a teenager, Rev. Moore had decided to enlist and applied for the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. He passed the written test with flying colors, but his vision was too poor and his application was denied.

"There but for the grace of God, go I," said Rev. Moore.

Soon after enrolling at Purdue University to study science and engineering, Rev. Moore's evolution into a dove with minister wings began.

"It was halfway through my freshman year. It was 1968. DOW Chemical was recruiting, students were protesting, the Vietnam War was raging. On campus, there was a large photo of a Napalm child. It really made me question things," he said.

Rev. Moore was raised in the church and continued, at that point in his life, to be involved. Realizing a shift in his own perspective, he sought the input of his campus minister, Myron "Mike" Teske, who quickly became the mentor and instrumental force in Rev. Moore's life.

"He led me on the peace-making journey that really is



Courtesy photo

The Rev. Robert Moore, in front, with family members, is celebrating his 35th anniversary at the Coalition for Peace Action.

central to the gospels. I was 18-and-a-half and I had the sense to call to ministry," Rev. Moore said.

Between his first and second semesters of freshman year, Rev. Moore went with the church to a Native American reservation in Osage County, Oklahoma. He and a group of other students and individuals from various theological backgrounds drove in four cars on a service project to help re-roof the reservation's Quaker church. The experience of working hands-on and sharing a service for a better good was exciting to Rev. Moore and transformed him.

When questioning what root of study to pursue at Purdue, Rev. Teske - who was heavily involved in science and theology dialogue - encouraged Rev. Moore to continue earning a bachelor of science in his chosen field, engineering. He emphasized it would be a fine background for a minister.

After graduating in 1972 from Purdue, Rev. Moore went on to Wittenberg University to earn his Master of Divinity degree, which he completed by 1976. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Moore took off like a firework on a mission to not only achieve

peace for members of his congregations, but for those outside and throughout the world.

"The church and peacemaking came hand in hand," Rev. Moore said. "It's not an accident the first church I was called to was six blocks from the White House. One of poorest areas in D.C., at Church on 14th Street; one of the riot corners in late 60s, a lot of poverty, dilapidated houses. Two blocks over, wealthiest area of D.C. During my year-and-a-half there, I went to a lot peace protests."

Also during that time, Rev. Moore organized a program that housed local homeless

overnight in the basement of the church. The winter before, eight homeless people had frozen to death. The year Rev. Moore was assigned to his congregation, nobody did. They were offered a safe place to sleep and a warm meal before leaving in the day.

Rev. Moore continued with the church - serving as part-time pastor of East Brunswick Congregational Church from 1988 to 2014 and as part-time co-pastor of Christ Congregation in Princeton from 2014 until Labor Day of this year when he decided his work was needed full-time with the CFPA.

Looking back on his career and 35 years with the CFPA, Rev. Moore likes to think he has gained enough wisdom to look back and see the larger trends in what bears the most signifi-

cance.

Among his feats in peace-making is the press conference at Three Mile Island the after the March 1979 nuclear accident, which led to the governor of Pennsylvania to evacuate pregnant women and children; the first meetings of the Organizing Committee for the largest demonstration in U.S. history - a million gathered in New York demanding a freeze and Reduction of Nuclear weapons on June 12, 1982; the state Nuclear Weapons Freeze Referendum that received majority support of N.J. voters; passage of the 2002 Childproof Handgun Bill; and more.

Rev. Moore is proud of his helping form the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and the work he did to help reduce

the amount of nuclear weapons in the world. Since the late 1980s, nuclear weapons have been reduced by more than 75 percent.

"I want to get it all the way down to zero," Rev. Moore said emphatically. "I'm still young and ambitious."

Rev. Moore - in addition to spending time with his wife of 42 years, Mary Timberlake, and three children, Alex, Micah and Dorothy, and staying energized on the golf course - is working to end drone warfare and limit gun use with the CFPA campaign, Ceasefire N.J., which aims to forbid gun licenses to those with domestic abuse histories.

After 35 years, Rev. Moore continues to march forward - peace flags waiving high.