

The Lighthouse

Matecumbe United Methodist Church
"Bringing the Light of Jesus Christ to Our Islands"

Matecumbe United Methodist Church

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Rob Kolb



Rob Kolb was born in Cincinnati, Ohio but spent the first few years of his life moving from location to location through the Midwest as his father worked jobs as a labor negotiator. When Rob was five, the family moved to Venezuela where they spent three years. Rob and his sisters enjoyed many adventures there in the tropical jungle and the high ridges of the Andes Mountains. And so as a very young boy, Rob learned to speak a second language.

When Rob was eight, the family returned to the United States and eventually settled in California where the family spent the next ten years. In 1974, straight from high school, Rob joined the Army. The Army tested him and determined his talent was in learning languages so Rob earned the designation – linguist. And the language he was assigned: Korean. They shipped him off to Korea for a 13-month stint capturing signals coming out of North Korea. He sat near the top of a mountain where equipment was set up to intercept the signals, but during the occasions when the equipment failed, Rob took over. Most days he had plenty of spare time and that is when Rob began reading the Bible and feeling empowered by God as a Christian. Rob managed to get through Leviticus in the Old Testament, and then moved on to the New Testament, while sitting on that mountaintop in Korea.

After Rob returned from Korea, he decided his days as a linguist were done and he left the Army and enrolled in college. After completing one year of school, he got a call from the Army. Wouldn't he please return? Perhaps linguists were in great demand. He insisted that if he could pick the language, he'd return. The Army said that they could not guarantee that he would be assigned German, his language of choice, but he finally gave in and re-entered the Army.

He spent the next five years in Germany, but the language he had to translate there was Russian. And then he spent five years in Texas teaching Russian at the Defense Language Institute, a United States Department of Defense educational and research institution, which provides linguistic instruction to the Department of Defense and other federal agencies.

After serving our country for 20 years, Rob retired from the Army in 1994. While in the Army he got his college degree and now he was ready for a civilian job – teaching high school was the next step – and it was special where he was placed. Not an easy thing to do at the high school level.

In 1996 Rob married Joanne and they merged their families – his son and her two sons became close as brothers.



In 1998, Rob went to work for the Boy Scouts of America as a Senior District Executive in Silicon Valley! He had been a scout master for 15 years while in the Army, so the Boy Scouts were near and dear to his heart.

Eventually the Boy Scouts moved Rob to the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base on Lower Matecumbe where he was director of programming from 2007 until 2015. Rob and Joanne bought a "1935 Hurricane House" on Beach Road, becoming the very first non-Pinders to reside in the home. In 2015 the Boy Scouts sent Rob to their headquarter in Texas where he was the program specialist for all Boy Scout outdoor programming.

In August of 2020, Rob retired from the Boy Scouts and returned to his home on Beach Road and back to the Matecumbe United Methodist Church. We welcome him back! What a great addition he is to our church, with his enthusiasm, Christian outlook and welcoming smile.