

St. Matthew Church Biography: The Latsis Family

by Kathleen Monahan

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St. Matthew Episcopal Church has been a central part of the Latsis family's life ever since they moved to Browns Point in 1965 and joined the parish.

Beth Latsis Monahan was born and raised in South Dakota. She was the youngest in a family of six children. Just before leaving for college at South Dakota State, she met Tom Latsis, who was attending South Dakota University. After Beth graduated in Education in 1955, they married and moved to Tacoma where Tom was a regional sales manager with Gibson Greeting Card Company. Tom made a career with Gibson rising to a national Vice-President. Beth taught English at Franklin Pierce High School. With sons, Mike born in 1957, Steve born in 1959 and daughter Liz, born in 1966, they made a cozy and active home at the end of Varco Road in Browns Point.

At their St. Matthew home, the family was involved in many activities. The kids attended Sunday School and served as acolytes. Beth sang in the choir, taught Sunday School and served on the Altar Guild. With the children born, Beth gave up full-time teaching, but substituted and did some full-time teaching intermittently. She was also involved in sports (FYI – she helped name the Seahawks!), PTA and the Hyada Park Guild of the Tacoma Orthopedic Association. Tom was busy with his sales career and traveled often.

The family loved boating, skiing and entertaining. Tom came from a Greek family, and he loved to share his Greek Heritage with his friends and family. Like many Greek families, Tom's family began attending the Episcopal Church because there was no Greek Orthodox Church in Watertown, South Dakota where he was raised. South Dakota also proved to be a point of connection for others because that is where Tom and Elaine Taylor also met and dated. When Tom and Elaine moved their family here from the Midwest, the Latsises helped them adjust, which included joining St. Matthew.

In 1986, Tom Latsis died after a prolonged illness. At his service, the family displayed a telephone they subsequently put in his coffin since he was constantly on the phone with business and getting people together for meals, skiing trips and boating excursions. Since then, Beth has become the grandmother to six grandchildren. Mike and his wife Teresa, live in Texas with children Monica, Rachel, Eric and Sam. Monica graduated with a MD and will soon start her residency at Harvard Medical Center (Mike's first wife died of cancer at 45, which has inspired her children to seek medical careers). Steve and wife, Lisa, live in Boston with Nicholas and Elena. Liz, after a career in teaching has become an entrepreneur and shares a home with Beth as a companion and caregiver.

After becoming a widow, Beth and fellow parishioner Jerry Monahan began a 25-year relationship that would eventually blossom into marriage four years ago when Beth and Jerry were married at The Great Vigil of Easter at St. Matthew. It was a record service with two baptisms and a wedding! Their relationship was a natural merger of families as they had all raised their families side-by-side at St. Matthew since the 1960's.

Today, Beth is still a very active member of the Altar Guild and enjoys time spent at Cabin Creek, gardening, cooking, reading and traveling. She and Liz are also active members of PEO. Liz is also a very committed member of St. Matthew having been a Sunday School teacher, a Vestry person, a Capital Campaign team member, as well as a current Altar Guild member, event planner and ad hoc parish project developer.

When the St. Matthew gathers again, you will find Beth and Liz back inside working to make the church welcoming to all. You will also find them, along with Jerry's daughter, Kathleen, at the 8 AM liturgy in the second pew giving the biggest hugs to all at the Peace! So come on down! There are plenty of hugs for everyone! And to quote Liz, "Here's to getting back to real hugs soon!"



Jerry and Beth



Jerry, Beth, Children and Grandchildren



Latsis Family Picture – 1983

Liz (17), Mike (25), Steve (23), Tom, Beth



St. Matthew Confirmation Day – Spring 1979

Liz Latsis, Jackie Whorton (then Gretzinger), David Zimmerman,