

St. Matthew Church Biography: Kathy Stewart  
By Liz Latsis

Kathy was born Katherine Jean Brown after both of her godmothers, Katherine and Jean. Kathy and her family lived in the Salinas and Monterey Bay area of California. She was the youngest of four children: one older brother and two older sisters. She explained that she never liked being called the “baby of the family”, so she developed a very independent spirit.

Kathy is very compassionate, helpful, and easy to talk with. You can feel the love and the light of Christ emanating from her very being. During her childhood, Kathy and her family were active in four different Episcopal parishes in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay areas.

She spent her first year of college at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, and then transferred to San Jose State University to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy.

After college, Kathy married her high school sweetheart, Doug Stewart, in 1972. Kathy began her career in occupational therapy working at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center with adults needing physical rehabilitation. She worked for five years before starting a family. Kathy and Doug were blessed with their first child, Anna. Doug was later promoted to a position in Seattle, and they moved to Bellevue in 1980. Their second child/blessing, Jeffrey, was born soon after their move.

Kathy and her family became members of St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church in Bellevue. Both of their children were passionate about soccer, improving their skills so much that they became involved in premiere soccer leagues and collegiate soccer. They traveled nationally and internationally in various soccer tournaments. Jeffrey played professional soccer with the Colorado Rapids. Soccer was an “all family” thing, occupying a great deal of Kathy’s and Doug’s weekends as their children grew up.

In 1985, Kathy answered the call to work in pediatrics at the University of Washington’s Child Development Center. This is when she pursued and obtained her Master’s degree in Occupational Therapy at the University of Washington. Kathy’s greatest joy in working as a pediatric occupational therapist was watching the children develop, and helping the families understand and support their children with special needs. In 2000, Kathy and Doug moved to Federal Way, Washington. Kathy shared her knowledge and skills with students and taught in the Occupational Therapy Graduate Program at the University of Puget Sound. In 2015, Kathy and her family lost Doug to a six-month battle with brain cancer. (Cancer is such an insidious disease...everywhere you turn, it seems that a family is affected.) Kathy retired when the pandemic hit. She realized that working over Zoom posed major challenges and she did not feel she could effectively serve the children and families.

Kathy entered the doors of St. Matthew four years ago (2018). She was first greeted by former parishioners, Janet Witter and Clare Scharmach. She described this welcome as warm, friendly, and genuine. Kathy started getting involved right away. In 2020, Kathy joined the Vestry. She attended only two Vestry meetings in person before the pandemic hit.

Now, Kathy is the proud owner of her dog, Summer, a four-year-old, beautiful, sweet, smart, and fun golden Labrador Retriever. She is close with her family and attends an annual family reunion every summer...this year in Sun Valley, Idaho. She fills her spare time spending time by playing with Summer, reading, and hiking. One of Kathy’s passions is watercolor painting. She was lucky to receive this interest from her mother who was an artist and art instructor until she was 95 years old. Kathy is excited for this upcoming September when she will participate in a weeklong watercolor painting workshop on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, and then travel to Nice, France, for the following week ‘just for fun’ with her neighbor.

Kathy’s greatest joy at St. Matthew Church is being a member of the “Beloved Community Team”. The first year, the team members shared their own journeys with racial and social injustices. Over time it became evident that team wanted to involve more parishioners in the journey toward becoming a Beloved Community at St. Matthew. The group hopes to make a positive difference in the parish family, as well as the and neighborhood community.

In closing, one of Kathy's greatest hopes is that St. Matthew and St. Mattheans thrive today, tomorrow, and always!

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Kathy & Doug's  
wedding  
1972



Hiking on  
Mount Rainier



Kathy's dog  
"Summer"