

St. Matthew Church Biography: Linda Diks  
By Kathy Stewart

It all started at Tae Kwon Do classes here in Tacoma. Linda met Barney Hartley (a St. Matthew parishioner) when they were training in Tae Kwon Do. Linda came to know Barney as a dear friend with a deep faith in God. During the pandemic, Linda had time to reflect on her own need for a faith community. So she reached out to Barney and his wife, Sherry Mees Hartley, to learn more about where they practice their faith. They invited Linda to come to St. Mathew and it's history from there! Linda started attending some Zoom sessions with St. Matthew in 2020. Her first in-person experience at St. Matthew was in the summer of 2021 during one of the outdoor services held in our parking lot. She was quick to say yes when she was asked to help by greeting people as they drove by in their cars. She felt welcomed from the very beginning (both during the Zoom sessions and the in-person services). Linda knew right away St. Matthew is where she belonged.

When Sherry, the Junior Warden of the Vestry at that time, asked her to be on the Vestry starting in 2022 she thought she was too new at St. Matthew for such a responsibility. However, after praying about Sherry's request and remembering that her mother said the best way to be part of a parish is to volunteer, she said yes to being on the Vestry. Now that she's on the Vestry and the Strategic Planning Committee, she sees the possibilities for St. Matthew to not only get back to pre-pandemic worship and fellowship activities, but to build new ways to serve the parishioners and neighbors in the community. For example, Linda hopes she can use her Army work experience in emergency preparedness to help with St. Matthew's Emergency Shelter project.

Linda was baptized and grew up in the Methodist church. However, over the years she was exposed to a wide variety of churches, including the Catholic, Baptist, and Unitarian churches. Her parents also encouraged her to experience the Jewish and Buddhist faiths. Linda is so thankful for her parents who had an open approach to different ways of practicing faith. Linda's former husband was Catholic and she converted to Catholicism when she got married. Linda has four adult children and five grandchildren.

Linda's father was in the Navy so her family moved all over the United States. She mentioned she has either lived in or visited over 50% of the states. When her father retired, her family moved back to New Jersey where her parents grew up. Linda was 13 years old when they moved to New Jersey. She remembers "baby sitting" her younger two sisters in the pews of the Methodist church and hoping they would just sit still and be quiet. She attended the same high school as her parents did. One of Linda's teachers recalled teaching her dad and cautioned Linda that she would be in trouble if she acted anything like her father. (smile). Linda spoke highly of her parents. They had a sense of humor; open minded, loving, and Civil Rights advocates.

Linda has two Master's degrees: a Master's in Business Administration and a Master's in International Commerce. She worked for the U.S. Army in Germany and Egypt. She was an administrator for the University of Maryland's Education Programs in Egypt while in the Army. She currently works full-time as an assistant to a financial advisor in Tacoma. When she retires she hopes to do some part-time teaching at a community college.

Linda has a variety of interests outside of her work time. She enjoys having four cats in her household! She says she is a "non-stop" reader. In fact, one of her friends joked that when Linda is done reading the menu at a restaurant, she will look for anything else to read, like the label on a ketchup bottle! Linda also loves to knit. She said all of her presents for family and friends are hand knit. Linda also loves being with her adult children and her grandchildren whenever possible.

As you can see, Linda is leading a very interesting life. With two Master's degrees, international work in the Army, a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, a passion for cats, and a strong desire to practice her faith, she is someone you'll want to get to know, if you don't already.

And, of course, we are all very grateful to Barney and Sherry, for bringing Linda Diks "into the fold" at St. Matthew!

Linda Diks



Captain Jack Sparrow (age 15) and Velvet (age 4)

