

Leanne and John Kennedy – A Thanksgiving Biography

St. Matthew Episcopal Church

by Kathleen Monahan

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John Kennedy attended the first service at the newly built St. Matthew Episcopal Church, a mission of Christ Church in Tacoma, on Christmas Eve, 1952. Prior to this occasion, many planning meetings of the new mission were held in his parents' home on Harborview Drive (along with several liturgies in the basement!).

His father, John, a Scottish Catholic, and his mother, Isabelle, a Presbyterian, were first introduced to St. Matthew with a knock on their door by some folks from the new mission. This fateful meeting led to John serving as an acolyte where he often counted how many folks needed wine for Communion. John also had Alex Candoo as a Sunday School teacher (writer's note: So did I!). Later, as a teen-ager, John attended community events at St. Matthew including several teen-age dances. John's mother was active in the Altar Guild where she often ironed the choir robes on her kitchen ironing board.

Leanne grew up in Seattle and attended University Presbyterian Church. She and John met while attending the University of Oregon in Eugene where he offered to drive her home for Christmas. They married after graduation and John went into the Army where he served in Okinawa and Vietnam while Leanne began a career of teaching and counseling. After some time following the Army, John went into international banking which led to positions in Iran, California, New York and finally back to the Puget Sound region where they landed on Mercer Island and finished raising their two children, Robert and Megan. (As adults, both Robert and Megan now have families of their own giving John and Leanne plenty of travel opportunities to visit their grandchildren who live on the East Coast.)

With the death of John's mother, John and Leanne inherited the family home on Harborview Drive. Upon returning to Browns Point, they got drawn into St. Matthew life and worship by Kate Gould where they have been very busy – Vestry/Wardens/Clerk, Adult Education, Search Committees for Priests, Giving Tree, Thanksgiving Dinners, Food Bank, Memorial Garden, Coffee Hours, and much more! Whew! John has also often been involved in the parish's financial business, which has including our annual pledge Canvass.

If St. Matthew was a scratch card, you could scratch anywhere and the faces of John and Leanne would pop up! Leanne describes St. Matthew as part of their family. It's one of the roots that supports their family tree! We appreciate that after a life of world-hopping, they found their way back to our St. Matthew Parish! **KM**

