

## Say Hi to Cathy Nickum



Long ago though not far away, Cathy Nickum worked for the Bainbridge Review and lived on a boat in Eagle Harbor. A degree from U-dub in journalism led her to this first newspaper job. She was twenty-eight, single, and a general assignment reporter and photographer for three years. One of her early feature stories was an interview with Father Gowen, the first rector of St. Barnabas.

Green, smart and intrigued, she eagerly jumped in to meet the Gowans in the study of their Pt. Blakely house. Cathy recognized something very special in

Father Gowen -- an amazing adventuresome man who regaled her with stories about his missionary work. "He was larger than life," she recalls. This was her first experience with St. Barnabas, and though she wasn't a church-goer at the time, that special connection stayed with her.

Cathy met her husband Will in 1982 playing recreational soccer and they married that same year. They bought a big chunk of farm land and began building a house. They've had sheep and chickens and all kinds of farm animals over the years -- plus lots of vegetables, apples, peaches, strawberries -- and two children. Stefan, now thirty-two and Josie thirty. Eventually they built a house, a barn and a guest cottage. "It's a wonderful piece of property that we love still."

Cathy's father is Jewish but she was raised in the Methodist church. Will grew up on Bainbridge Island and was an acolyte at St. Barnabas. Will's parents were active members of St. Barnabas. The Madonna sculpture in the close is dedicated to Will's mother. While raising their children, Will and Cathy explored both Jewish and Christian traditions. But that special connection to Father Gowen and St. Barnabas was always there.

Then one day (trumpet blast!) Cathy saw an announcement in the Saint Barnabas newsletter: Karen Haig was to be the next Rector, the first woman to be so at St. Barnabas. "I knew Karen while we were raising children and that she'd become a priest. I was intrigued by that decision. When I saw that she was coming to St. Barnabas, a door opened for me. I experienced the announcement as a call. I was going through a difficult time and I needed a spiritual community. I saw a bright green light. I walked immediately through that door." Will and Cathy have been coming to St. Barnabas ever since.

"I feel like something in me is awakened in this community, in this liturgy, in this place. Karen's love, passion and call to her work inspires me. I feel as though I have found a spiritual home at St. Barnabas -- 40 years after I first interviewed Father Gowan!"

Cathy attends the Centering Prayer and the Healing Eucharist groups during the week, and she and Will have volunteered to tend the Interium at St. Barnabas. Will has recently joined the St. Barnabas Vestry, a role his father once served as well.