

Meet our FUMC Family

Meet Karen Jones

I first met Karen soon after I graduated from college and married my husband, Ben. The Fountain Class had just gotten started (Fall 2007), and I remember having a conversation with Karen at a Super Bowl party at another Fountain Class members' house. She struck me as fun and kind, both attributes which anyone can see in her today. As I have journeyed alongside Karen over the years, many more attributes have presented themselves steadfastly—creativity, courage, faithfulness, generosity, and love.

Karen grew up in a United Methodist church in Divine, Texas, attending Sunday School, vacation Bible school, and the choir. She lived with her mom, who taught Sunday school, and two older brothers. Karen first came to Georgetown in 2007 when she moved in with one of her older brothers, Shane, his wife, Jen, and their son, Ethan. That was when Karen first started coming to FUMC Georgetown and joined the Fountain Class. Even after she moved to north Austin for a job, she would drive back to FUMC for church and Sunday School. She had found her new church home. After a couple years, Karen moved to Houston, married her husband, Keith, and moved back to Georgetown in 2011 where she again re-joined the Fountain Class and the life of the church.

Karen has many creative talents including painting, sewing, and baking. As she says, she likes to “try to be creative in everything.” I was fortunate to have her as a friend as we each had a daughter about a month apart in 2014. We supported each other in the ups and downs of motherhood and in the anxieties that we experienced along the way. We would meet for story time at the Georgetown Library with our young daughters, and we met weekly with our Friday morning moms' Bible Study.

Karen's journey took an unexpected turn the summer of 2017 when she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. With this diagnosis Karen was forced to spend time away from her three-year-old daughter for treatments and eventually a bone marrow transplant (thanks to her oldest brother, Scott). Throughout this time, I was blessed to see Karen at work, even as she was “sidelined.” In a time of fear and uncertainty, she clung to her faith, and blessed those who helped her through her kindness and generosity of spirit. More than once, when visiting her or picking her up from appointments, one or more staff members would comment to me about what a kind person she is and how she was a bright light in their otherwise difficult or busy day. Karen was present to them. That is the gift of Karen—presence. And a model of faith even in difficult circumstances. Karen is past leukemia but is struggling with the aftereffects of the transplant. She is now facing a lung transplant.

Recently I asked Karen, as I was interviewing her for this article, where she has seen God at work in her life. She told me about a time she was driving to another doctor appointment. She had



just found out that she needed a lung transplant and that most recipients only lived 2-5 years after receiving one. It was a rainy day, she was depressed, driving by herself, and pleading with God in desperation to live. She said, “Clouds instantly broke and a rainbow spread out across the sky.” She said at that moment she knew it was going to be ok. “God's taken care of it. I don't need to worry. That's gotten me through a lot of hard times, thinking about that.”

What is God currently doing in Karen? “God is using me to show unwavering faith in my medical journey. People say, ‘I don't know how you do it’, but I believe that everyone has their own difficult journey that they live through every day. Mine is no different than anyone else's. And I'll be here until God says I'm done.”

Yes, Karen has been such an example to me about what faith should be, no matter the circumstance, but she has also shown me friendship. She has been a bright light to others just by being present and caring for them. She is an amazing mom to her daughter, Evelyn. God is doing many great works in Karen, and anyone who meets her knows that almost immediately.

In regard to First United Methodist Church of Georgetown, Karen has told me that she loves how open-minded and welcoming we are, that we're committed to helping the community, that we have generous members with both time and money, and that we really do care for each person and for the community. I have to agree that these are many of the things that make our church what it is today. I am so thankful that Karen and her faith are part of the fabric of our church community.

Interviewed and written by Jennifer Lake