

# FPC Member Spotlight Interview

## Eileen Bookman Peters

### **Where were you raised? Tell us a little about your growing up years.\***

I was born & raised in Bryan & have lived in Bryan-College Station all my life. My family has a long history with First Presbyterian Church-Bryan, and I'm so proud to still be a member of this fine church & wonderful congregation where I enjoy friendships & worship with folk of all ages including some I've known for 50+ years & others I've met in just the recent months! This is the only church I've ever belonged to, although I've had occasion to visit many other local churches throughout my lifetime, I've never had the desire to look for a different place to plant myself, & indeed this church & even the building itself feels more like my true home than anyplace else...even more than my home dwellings! I'm the third of four generations that have been members or worshipped here. My father returned to Bryan in 1958 with my mother after their education, marriage, and a brief time in the army having chosen to raise their family here, I'm grateful to say. We were a family of five with three children, all daughters.. I am number three. Growing up we had a busy, active, faithful, loving & it seems an apple pie sort of existence, as I look back upon it now. Our family's involvement in our church activities was a big part of our existence. If there was something...ANYTHING... happening at the church, one or all of us was here. I grew up studying pretty hard & playing French horn in the band & stayed in Girl Scouts as long as they'd keep me without making me into a troop leader.

### **What brought you to B/CS?**

As I said, I was raised in Bryan and so I guess a better question would be why have I never left Bryan-College Station and I would say part of that was wanting to stay near my family, but also it's a great place to live. I've been happy here. I attended Texas A&M and received my BA in English. I've also done graduate studies in English literature, as well as anthropology and nautical archaeology. After a period of time which included working in bank marketing in the middle of some of those studies, I realized that I loved working with flowers & floral design.. I had found the Benz School of Floral Design, also part of A&M. After lots of classes I attained my Advanced Master Florist certification which has enabled me to work in the floral design field in various ways over the years.. I've just always found this to be a wonderful community with so much to offer and has grown in so many ways that it has felt like a good place to be. As wonderful as other places are, it always feels good to come back home to BCS.

### **Which Bible Class (if any) do you attend?**

I am a "loosely" a member of the Loose Leaf Sunday School Class. I'm a little bit of a ghost member and need to work harder on regular attendance to classes though I'm a bit more regular at the parties, but I highly recommend BOTH class activities!

**In what (if any) ministries are you involved?\***

I am an ordained elder and deacon in the church, and over the years. I have participated in various forms of ministry and in different capacities. But primarily, I am focused on our music ministry now, and play in the bell choir and sing in the chancel choir. In addition to that I have a commitment to congregational care and outreach to place-bound members of the church.

**Do you have any family you'd like to tell us about?**

My paternal grandparents, Marshall and Ellen Peters, joined FPC-when they moved to Bryan from Navasota with their 2 boys, my dad Bookman & my Uncle Mervin, in the mid 1940's.& they remained members here for the rest of their lives. (As a child I enjoyed the privilege of being the youngest and getting to sit between my grandparents on our family pew.) My mother and father, Patricia, and Bookman Peters were always very active, as were my grandparents, and when we were all together, we made a pretty full pew. My mother was very active in the music ministry, and had a beautiful voice, and occasionally played the organ or piano and conducted the children's choir for a number of years. When we were children. My mother, Pat, passed away from breast cancer in 1995. It was a difficult loss for all. Fortunately, my father was able to persuade his dear friend Florence, Carter to marry him in 1998. We again were most fortunate that she chose to move her church membership to First Presbyterian, so we have been able to continue worshipping together for the last 25 years. Many of you may have known my father and will know that he passed away this past July at the age of 89. Remarkably he stayed active along with Florence in the Presbyterian mode until the very end. My grandparents, parents & Florence leave quite an example for me to follow and try to emulate if I possibly can! My sisters are Karen Ellen Anderson & Laura Stehr Peters. Karen Ellen, a homemaker & a retired banker & CPA, lives with her husband, Brian, also now a retired financial controller & CPA, in Arlington, Texas. Their daughter Elizabeth Ellen Anderson lives and works in Dallas. She attended FPC while completing 2 business degrees at Texas A&M. Laura, a lawyer, lives & works in Houston. Both my sisters & I have attended A&M for degrees though KE had to do time at Baylor where she & Brian met as undergrads before making her way back to Aggieland. \*I'm a still-single gal who accidentally forgot to get married & have children. A surprise, really! ....But anyway, sometimes I say, " I'm single. No priors. No juvies." It makes people smile. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

**How long have you been worshipping at FPC?**

Since birth really... so 59 years. TRIVIA: I was the first baby to be baptized in the newly completed sanctuary in 1964!

How did you find FPC and what made you decide to make it your church home?

I keep meeting the most wonderful people at FPC & feel so stimulated & nurtured by the members I've known for many years...some going back to childhood...it simply feels like the right place for me!

**Do you have a favorite FPC memory?**

Some of my favorite FPC memories include youth activities such as retreats to Camp Cho-Yeh & Mo-Ranch....Lock-ins...hosting dances in the Fellowship Hall...church caroling parties when you

could still ride on trailer stacked with hay bales in the cold... homemade ice cream socials held in the summer.... \*One of my favorite things to do has always been sitting in the darkened sanctuary at the end of the day & watch how the saturated colors of the stained glass windows gradually change their colorful shadows on the surroundings. It's incredibly beautiful.

**What is something we would be surprised to learn about you, or what is the most interesting thing you've ever done?\***

In my younger days I was a very avid SCUBA diver & achieved certifications through rescue diver & dive master. In my 20s I did a little skydiving including free fall but quit because it was stressing-out my folks. TRIVIA: Another FPC veteran David Wilding, son of members Gladys & Larry Wilding, & I made our first static line jump together in the same class on a Saturday. We both called our parents on the following Sunday morning telling them with thrilled enthusiasm that we'd successfully "jumped out of a perfectly good airplane" the day before. Our parents commiserated together in a mild state of shock during the fellowship time at church that day!!

And then there's this: I broke a leg pretty badly skiing on a lower slope of the Matterhorn one summer a good while ago & had to be airlifted off the mountain to a hospital there where I stayed for several weeks. THAT was an adventure!!