

The Reverend Deacon Carolsue Cummings

In our midst December 21, 1944 – August 6, 2025

On Saturday, September 6, 2025 we will celebrate the life, faith, love, and ministry of our beloved Deacon Carolsue Cummings! Carolsue (Carolyn Suzanne) Cummings (nee Jones), age 80 passed peacefully from this earthly life on August 6, 2025. Carolsue was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and a lifelong servant of others, both professionally and spiritually, and her quiet touch upon this world was remarkable.

Born December 21, 1944 in Camden, New Jersey, she was the only child of John Ellsworth Jones and Mary Jane Jones, both of whom predeceased her. Her loving parents made sure that Deacon was soundly rooted in the Episcopal Church from her youth.

In 1967, Carolsue married Donald Cummings in a service at Grace Episcopal Church in Merchantville. Carolsue and Don lived much of their life in Surf City, on Long Beach Island, New Jersey, raising their three cherished daughters Donna-Lynn (Navarro), Deanne (Bleuter), and Danielle (Arnold) there. They were active members of St. Stephen's church in Waretown and the Reverend Bill Paul (who was then rector at St. Stephen's), perceived in Carolsue a call to diaconal ministry. Carolsue applied for and was accepted into the 3-year diaconal formation program of the Diocese of New Jersey. Bishop George Phelps Mellick Belshaw ordained Carolsue and three others to the diaconate on June 9, 1990.

From the day of her ordination, Carolsue stepped into her ministry with humility, courage, and love. As a hospice and certified bereavement counselor, Carolsue provided comfort, dignity, and hope to families navigating profound loss. Her calm presence and heartfelt compassion brought peace to moments of great vulnerability. This was a ministry she loved, for which she was well-prepared, and into which she joyfully poured her unwavering faith and deep compassion.

Carolsue had a deep and enduring love for dogs, and her home was always shared with a canine companion or two. These brought her endless comfort and joy, especially as she confronted some health issues over recent years. Though retired from formal ministry, she participated with all her heart in liturgical, sacramental, and outreach ministries at St Peter's-at-the-Light. For the last few years, On Top of the World in Ocala, Florida served as Carolsue and Don's winter home.

Last winter, doctors in Florida diagnosed Carolsue with colorectal cancer and expressed confidence that the cancer was small, early, contained, and treatable. Carolsue passed the time between diagnosis and treatment finding joy in music and companionship. She learned to play dulcimer, began singing with a large choir, and joined an a cappella choral group. She made new friends and continued to spread the good news of Jesus by the clear witness of her life. Carolsue knew so many were praying for her and she was always grateful for our prayers. She believed that the calm she experienced during the months of awaiting treatment was God's answer to all the prayers that were raised on her behalf.

Carolsue's life was marked by unwavering faith, deep compassion, and joyful service. That legacy will live on in the lives she touched and the hearts that hold her dear. She did what God requires of all of us: she did justice; she loved goodness; and she walked humbly with our God each day.

Carolsue is survived by her husband Donald Cummings, her three daughters, Donna-Lynn (Navarro), Deanne (Bleuter), and Danielle (Arnold), and by her granddaughters Autumn, Lauryn, Emily, and Tara, all of whom will continue her legacy of love, grace, and resilience.

We will celebrate Deacon Carolsue's life and ministry with an 11:00 a.m. Eucharist & Interment on Saturday, September 6th, at St. Peter's-at-the-Light, 609 Central Ave., Barnegat Light, New Jersey 08006. A zoom link to the service will be posted on the website stpeterslbi.org and on St. Peter's Facebook page.