

Margaret Holt Sammons

The Rev. Margaret Duncan Holt Sammons, 73, of Kettering, died on August 3, 2022 in Traverse City, Michigan. Margaret, also known as “Peggy”, was born in Chicago on Christmas Eve, 1948, the first of five children born to Joan Duncan Holt and the Rev. James Craigie Holt.

Margaret attended public schools in Butte, Montana and Kalamazoo, Michigan, and graduated from Wellesley College in 1971. She spent three years in Liberia, West Africa, as a Peace Corps volunteer, teaching children and living in a simple hut in the upcountry. She held the Liberian people in deep affection for the rest of her life.

Upon her return to the U.S., she graduated from the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass. in 1977. She was a trailblazer in the Episcopal Church, one of the earliest women ordained priest (May, 1978) in the U.S. and the first from the Diocese of Western Michigan.

She served parishes in Worcester and Northampton, Massachusetts; Grosse Pointe, Michigan; Toledo, Ohio and, in retirement, Springfield, Ohio. In her 45 year ministry, she was known as an inspiring preacher, a gifted teacher of adults and children, a pastoral caregiver of extraordinary compassion and wisdom, and a loyal soul friend.

She organized numerous youth mission trips and Vacation Bible Schools, and left a legacy of Christmas pageant dramas in her Toledo parish, the dialogues of which have been memorized by 2 decades of children.

She was deeply informed by her understanding that God is love (1 John 4:7-8) and found room in her heart to include everyone in that simple yet profound proclamation. She was a life-long advocate for racial justice, compassionate social policies and the inclusion of everyone in family, church and society.

As committed as she was to her public ministry, she was a loving, involved mother to her two daughters. She was a school volunteer, room mother, girl scout troop leader, and a sewer of Halloween costumes, doll clothes and Easter dresses. She was always willing to lend a supportive ear for problems great and small.

In her retirement, she served as chaplain to retired clergy and spouses and was an active member of former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley’s weekly zoom conference calls with clergy responding to George Floyd’s death and the Covid crisis.

She loved reading and quilting, cultivating the backyard garden, and spending time with her 3 grandsons and extended family. She cherished her annual August trips to the family cottage in Michigan where she could reconnect with loved ones, swim in

Crystal Lake and watch the sun set over Lake Michigan. This is where she spent the last three blissful days of her life.

She is survived by her husband of 45 years, the Rev. Gregory P. Sammons, whom she met in seminary, their daughters Jennifer Sammons (Jo Slieff) of Oakwood; Elizabeth Rodems (Richard) of Shaker Heights; her grandsons Michael, Nathaniel and Gregory; her siblings, Judith Sutton of Indianapolis, Andrew Holt (Kathleen) of Rochester, NY, Michael Holt (Laura) of Madison, Wisconsin; and Sarah (Peter) of Appleton, Wisconsin; many beloved nieces and nephews; and friends across the country.

A Requiem Eucharist will be celebrated on Saturday, August 13 at 10 a.m. Christ Episcopal Church, 20 W. First St. in Dayton (where parish Covid protocols kindly request that all wear masks). For those unable to attend, the funeral will be live-streamed on the Christ Episcopal Church Facebook page or website

Presiding will be the Rev. Peter Homeyer, Rector, Christ Church; the Rt. Rev. Arthur B. Williams, Assisting Bishop of Ohio; and the Rev. Lynn Sinnott, homilist. A private burial will follow at St. Kateri Preserve in Calvary Cemetery.

Margaret's family will greet friends at a reception at the Moraine Country Club from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Memorial gifts in Margaret's name may be made to: City Heart (daytoncityheart.org); Episcopal Relief and Development. org; or Partners in Ministry in Liberia, % St. Matthew's Church, 30 E. College St., Westerville, OH 43081.