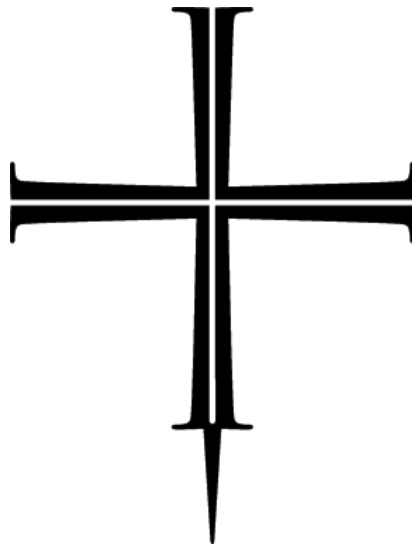


# **A Vigil of Lament and Comfort for a Grieving Community**

**Sheila Stanton**

March 24, 1963 - August 31, 2025

**Thursday, September 11th at 6:30 PM**



*My friend and my neighbor, you have put away from  
me, and darkness is my only companion.*

*Psalm 88:19*

Saint John's Episcopal Church  
127 State Street, S.  
Kirkland, Washington, 98033

The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

## **A Vigil of Lament and Comfort for a Grieving Community**

Tonight's Vigil of Lament and Comfort for a Grieving Community will create a dedicated time and place for community members to gather and collectively acknowledge the sudden, tragic death of Sheila Stanton.

The primary purpose of the vigil is to allow the community to mourn together. A public vigil provides a powerful way for people to support each other and realize they are not alone in their grief. This shared experience can be incredibly healing.

This service will last approximately 30 minutes.

Following the worship service, all are welcome to Marsh Hall for light refreshments and to participate in a guided discussion facilitated by Greg Malone. Greg is a licensed therapist and minister with 30 years' experience helping communities and congregations process traumatic loss.

This time of conversation offers each of us the chance to express our pain and grief in ways that can be heard, witnessed, and received by the gathered community in helpful and healing ways. Participation in this conversation is completely optional.

The primary focus of tonight's vigil is not to memorialize Sheila. Rather, it is to try and process her sudden and tragic loss, so that when we come together to celebrate her life on Saturday, September 20, at 11:00 a.m., we will be in a better place to honor and remember

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael" followed by a plus sign (+).

**Piano Prelude:** Mr. Michael Monnikendam, Music Minister

**Welcome:** The Rev. Michael Ryan, Rector

*Following the welcome, we will observe a moment of silence.*

## **A Collect of Lament**

*Please stand as you are able*

Gracious God, we come before you this day in pain and sorrow. We grieve the loss of Sheila Stanton, mother, sister, niece and cousin, friend, mentor, colleague and community leader: a beloved child of your making. Give your grace to all who are gathered together this night in our grief and shock. Bless and comfort all who are sorely grieved by Sheila's death. Hear the cries of our hearts at the sudden and tragic nature of her death. That by your grace, and in comforting presence with others we may find consolation and be strengthened by your Spirit embodied in tonight's gathering. All this we pray in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## **A Reading from Holy Scripture**

**Lamentations 1.12, 16a,b; 3.19,21-26,31-33**

*Reader:* A reading from the Book of Lamentations.

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger. For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage. Remember my affliction and my bitterness, the wormwood and the gall! But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.' The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that we should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not reject for ever; though he causes grief, he will have compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

*Officiant:* Hear the cry of God's heart.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

# Hymn

## Abide with Me



1 A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide;  
 2 I need thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour;  
 3 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
 4 Hold thou thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes;



the dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide:  
 what but thy grace can foil the tempt - er's power?  
 ills have no weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness.  
 shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;



when o - ther help - ers fail and com - forts flee,  
 Who, like thy - self, my guide and stay can be?  
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?  
 heaven's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain sha - dows flee;



help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.  
 Through cloud and sun - shine, Lord, a - bide with me.  
 I tri - umph still, if thou a - bide with me.  
 in life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

## Gospel Reading

## Matthew 5:1-7

*Officiant:* A reading from Matthew's Gospel.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

*Officiant:* Hear the cry of God's heart.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

## A Litany of Lament

*Officiant:* God, hear our prayer,

*People:* **And let our cry come to you.**

*Officiant:* Merciful God, we come to you in sorrow. Help us to grieve; let our tears flow; and look upon our broken hearts with loving kindness. God, hear our prayer,

*People:* **And let our cry come to you.**

*Silence*

On this 24th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks we remember all those whose lives were taken from them. God, hear our prayer,

*People:* **And let our cry come to you.**

*Silence*

Holy and Merciful One, for some our faith has been shaken, we are sick with sadness, and weak with despair. Consider our anguish, dear God and hear our prayer,

*People:* **And let our cry come to you.**

*Silence*

Holy and Merciful One, for some our faith has been shaken, we are sick with Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: Deal graciously with Sheila's family in their grief. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come. God and hear our prayer,  
*People: And let our cry come to you.*

*Silence*


## Concluding Collect for Comfort

Deliver your servant, Sheila, O Sovereign Lord Christ, from all evil, and set her free from every bond; that she may rest with all your saints in the eternal habitations; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*People: Amen*

**MY HEART IS BREAKING WITH GRIEF**  
*From Matthew 26*

**Response**



My heart is break-ing with grief, stay with me and watch.

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## Leave Taking

*Officiant closes with these words.*

As we conclude this service of lament, let us do so in the sure knowledge that each of us shine brighter for having known, loved, and been loved by Sheila.

To symbolize the light she brought into our lives, and to affirm her continuing life in God, I invite you to come forward, receive a beeswax taper, light it from central candle, and place it among the others as you depart.

We leave Sheila's light burning in this holy place. May we trust that though we no longer see Sheila, her light continues to shine brightly in the place beyond this life.

## Conversation in Community in Marsh Hall

If you wish to stay and join in a community conversation for healing and comfort, please come to Marsh Hall, help yourself to something to drink and a cookie or two, and take a seat in the circle.

**Welcome:**

Greg Malone, M.Div, LMHC

**Conditions for Healing Conversation**

**A Poem “For Grief”, by John O’Donohue**

**A Prayer for Aid**

**A Time of Conversation, Listening and Sharing**

**Closing**

**Concluding Prayer**

The Rev. Michael Ryan

## Sheila’s Funeral Service and Celebration of Life

**Date:** Saturday, September 20, 2025

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** Saint John's Episcopal Church, 105 State Street, Kirkland, WA

**Details:** A reception and time of fellowship will follow the service.

If you would like to help with food, setup, or cleanup for either of these events, please contact **Michael Monnikendam** at [michaelm@stjohnskirkland.org](mailto:michaelm@stjohnskirkland.org) or **425.827.3077**.