



REMEMBERING
Karolyn Toews

January 2, 1966 - September 7, 2021



It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to Karolyn Anne Toews of Arnold, BC on

Tuesday, September 7, 2021. She was born on January 2, 1966 in St. Catharines, ON., a

daughter to Anne Koop and the late John Koop. She will be greatly missed by her husband -

Gary; children - Rachel, Julia, Emily and Josiah (Lily); sisters - Kathryn Balzer (David), Judith

Voth (Jo) and Andrea Janzen (J), along with many nieces and nephews.

Karolyn's early years were filled with regular family gatherings, piano lessons, participation in

church activities and family camping every summer. Childhood was full of joy. She graduated

from Eden Christian College in Virgil, ON. in 1985, then went on to university studies in

Winnipeg in the fall of 1986. Her undergraduate studies in music (ARCT piano), theology and

liberal arts culminated in a PDP, teacher certification, at Simon Fraser University in 1990. This

led to a 31-year teaching career in the Abbotsford School District. Many of those years were

spent in Matsqui, a community that found its way deep into her heart. She embraced kids and

the act of learning and discovery and experienced many rich friendships with colleagues.

Telling stories and inviting imagination were an unquenchable passion.

Karolyn met Gary in Winnipeg at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in 1986. Their common

gifts and love of music brought them together. They were married in 1987 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON., and began married life in Abbotsford, BC., Gary's hometown. Karolyn embraced

motherhood with her whole heart. Easter egg hunts, home-made birthday cakes and walks at

the Mission Abbey, among many other ventures, marked the rhythm of their family life.

From early childhood she desired to know and follow the One who made her. Karolyn anchored

her life in Jesus. She sought out communities of faith where serving and learning went hand in

hand. Many pages in her books and Bible display careful notations. Questions. Exclamations.

And affirmations. She was a seeker, a thinker and a lover of truth. In all of this, she knew God's

love for her was secure.

Karolyn was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2015. This began a journey that was painful and

hard. However, in the midst of this, Karolyn took on a posture of learning and acceptance. She

completed her master's degree, she read, reflected, collected sets of her favourite children's

books and wrote about her faith. She was living in the dying.

Karolyn will be remembered for her insatiable passion for teaching, her undeniable love of her

family, her probing love of God and her exuberant delight in nature, learning and friendship.

The family is eternally grateful to the many medical professionals, caregivers and friends in

Cancer Care, Holmberg House and the broader community that so lovingly walked this journey

with Karolyn.

A Celebration of Life is taking place at South Abbotsford Church at 4pm on September 20,

2021. A livestream/recording of the service is available here:

In lieu of flowers, you are invited to donate to Mennonite Central Committee's Education

programs, <https://donate.mccc.ca/cause/education>

