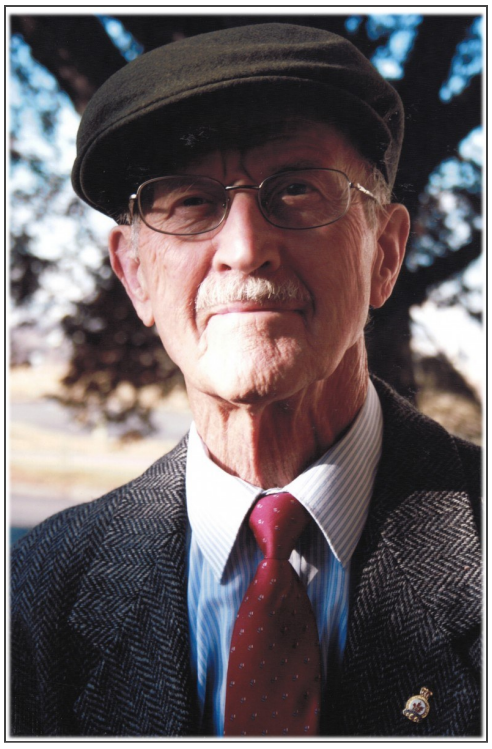
Stanley Ross Bessey

FEBRUARY 4, 2022



BESSEY, Stanley Ross

February 5, 1926 – February 4, 2022

Friday, February 4, 2022, was a sad yet very special day for the Bessey family, relations, friends, and community. Stanley Ross Bessey, a husband, a father, a minister & a friend passed away peacefully and comfortably that morning at the age of 95, one day short of his 96th birthday. His transition from this life celebrates a life well lived filled with immense breadth of experience and adventure. Founded in his earliest years growing up in a family of 8 brothers and sisters (the younger of two sets of twins) in a small rural community that borders Alberta and Saskatchewan during the Great Depression years, his strength of character was forged early on into a life of service to others.

Soon after his graduation, he enlisted with the Canadian Army and received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal upon honourable discharge at the end of the Second World War. Returning to civilian life, his adventures took him across Canada, serving first on the C.P.R., then for a brief time with the McColl-Frontenac Oil Company, and later as a civilian contractor with the RCMP, K Division, in Aklavik, N.W.T. Together, with his brothers and sisters, in 1948 he helped to build

a home from the ground up at 3310 Centre Street North that “love for family had built”, still standing to this day, which together enabled their parents to move and retire to Calgary.

Returning to his education, first at the University of Saskatchewan, where he met his loving wife, Shirley MacFarlane (Saskatoon), and then culminating at the University of Alberta, where together in attendance with the largest ministerial group at that time to have graduated from St. Stephen’s College, he was ordained into the Christian ministry of the United Church of Canada in June of 1959.

Prior to his retirement in 1991, he served as a minister in the United Church for over 30 years at a number of community pastorates across Alberta: Oyen, Crossfield, Calgary (Montgomery), Tofield (Ryley and Holden), Bashaw (Mirror), and Acme (Beiseker). At each pastoral charge he also served as chaplain at the local Royal Canadian Legion branch. It was at Crossfield that he and his wife were blessed by the birth of two children, Heather and Spencer. During this time, Stanley found life fulfillment through his spiritual journey in the church, at the legion, and in scouting, reading, travel and community volunteering. He enjoyed many hobbies – woodwork, photography, stamp & coin collecting, painting, gardening, and participating in sports – hockey, curling, skiing, hiking & swimming. He enjoyed music & the arts. He held a deep appreciation of life with its challenges & opportunities.

He enjoyed meeting people & was grateful for his many friends & acquaintances he was privileged to meet. The years he dedicated to raising a family with his wife

were reflected in his passion to expose their children to nature and the beauty of God’s creation; camping and hiking, cross-country skiing, travel and exploration together of various places within the vast geography of Western Canada. For him life was a divine gift enhanced by the devotion of his wife Shirley, the love of his children, and family overall.

In a similar way, his retirement years also reflected his love for people and his enjoyment of learning from a variety of cultures and ethnicities. He was an active participant in his local church community and also enjoyed travel with his wife Shirley to foreign lands. Those who knew him appreciated his genuine warmth and caring of others, his ready smile; as a neighbour shared - "He was such a kind and gentle soul and the epitome of a good human being."

Stanley throughout his life’s journey was a humble, faithful and dedicated servant in Christ. Years into his retirement, in October of 2009, he graciously accepted the honour of Minister Emeritus from the United Church of Canada in deep appreciation for faithful service at his home congregation of Forest Lawn United Church.

He will be lovingly remembered by Shirley, his wife of 63 years; his children, Heather Bessey, Edmonton, AB and Spencer Bessey (Leanne), Calgary, AB; his twin sister, Ruth Wilkins of St. Catharines, ON; and by numerous nieces and nephews. Stanley was predeceased by his parents, Joseph & Frances Bessey; and

by his siblings, Cliff Bessey, Orville Bessey, Dalton Bessey, Lloyd Bessey, Dorothy Gusella, and Laura Snyder.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at Forest Lawn United Church on Saturday, April 2, 2022 at 2:00 pm. For those unable to attend in person, an online live stream broadcast, at the date and time, will be available here: https://tinyurl.com/StanleyBessey-Service In keeping with the times, there will be no reception; however, shortly before and after the service a picture slide show will be presented. All expressions of sympathy are welcome; however, respecting Stanley's wishes, in lieu of flowers, anyone wishing to make a tribute may also consider making a donation, for the purpose of a needed upgrade to the sound system, by way of the Forest Lawn United Church Memorial Fund, 2236 35 Street SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0X1.

Messages of Condolence

I send my sincere condolences to you and to your family. The Bible promises that your loved one will live again in a peaceful paradise on the earth when there will be no more death. (John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:4)

— Len Gayle

Dear Shirley and family,
Both Gord and I are deeply saddened by the death of your beloved Stan and our dear friend. And yet, at the same time, we are wonderfully grateful for the length of life he lived on this earth. He was indeed a blessing and a gift to the world--kind, gentle, sincere and so dedicated to making the world a better place with unconditional love.
May you know that we hold him close in our hearts today and will remember him forever because, of course, he was unforgettable.
Much love,
Linda and Gord

— Gordon and Linda Hunter

Mom and I send our condolences to you We will miss him

— Debbie & Janet

I was so saddened to hear of the passing of Stanley. My sincere condolences to Shirley and the Bessey family. Upon meeting Stanley about five years ago when I came from Newfoundland to retire in Calgary, I was instantly welcomed into the Forest Lawn United church by both Stanley and Shirley. I found Stanley to be a quiet, gentle man and it was my honour and pleasure to have met and known him, even for a short time. He will be remembered and missed. Rest in peace, Stanley.

— Carolyn Colbourne

I had the privilege of getting to know Mr. Bessey as his family doctor for the past six years. He and Mrs. Bessey, Shirley, were and continue to be some of my favorite patients. Stan was kind, gentle, thoughtful, and almost never (if ever) complained about his ailments. Stan and Shirley would, at every visit, check-in on the health and wellbeing of my family - I think this speaks to the type of people they are. Although sad, I really enjoyed reading Stan's obituary. What a wonderful and full life in the service of others and of our Country. I will miss seeing you at clinic, Mr. Bessey. My very best wishes, -Brendan Miles

— Brendan Miles

As Vice Chair of the Calgary Co-operative Memorial Society, I had the pleasure of meeting Stanley many times at our Annual General Meeting, where he was one of our most long-standing members. His enquiring mind and cheerful demeanour will be greatly missed. Please accept our condolences.

— Sylvia Kasper

Dear Shirley,
I know that all good things come to an end; but we never seem to be quite ready to bid farewell to a loved one. When it comes to a beloved spouse, we never really do so; for years of shared affection make us so much a part of each other that we still feel their presence in our loneliest times. It was good to be part of Stan's class of '59 at St. Steves; and I still remember in insight that Stan shared with me after class one day. It was a very wise thought that helped me so that I have not forgotten it in more than 6 decades! I'm glad he shared such a fulfilling life with you.

— David Gilchrist

Shirley,

Who can forget meeting you and Stan at Forest Lawn United Church with your friendly smiles and concern about Paul and I? "How is that man of yours" as you always asked. I did not know you or Stan well but you are in our thoughts this spring day and we wish you peace and love in the days ahead.

— Paul and Maureen Kirby

We thank God for the opportunity of knowing Rev. Stanley Bessey. We have learned many life lessons which from him which will treasured forever.

Kathleen and Ferdie
Forest Lawn United Church

— Ferdie and Kathleen Massiah

I feel very privileged to have known Stan while he ministered to Beiseker and Acme. He was a very welcoming and thoughtful man. I enjoyed his pleasure in sharing an occasional light moment with a joke during his service.
I wish Shirley well as she moves forward. She shared a rich with Stan.

— Susan Coates Simpson
