

Alfred John Christian Johnson

Our cherished dad, grandpa, great-grandpa and beloved pastor to many, made his final journey on September 15 surrounded by family and a group of Luther Court tenants and staff singing him to his eternal home. Alfred held his 12-day old great-grandson, Levi, for the first time within 3 hours of his own death and was so present in what was a poignant and holy moment. Although we feel profound loss in his death, we are so grateful for his long life, for the lives he touched and for the kindness and compassion which marked his being. He loved people, had a generous spirit and his life was rooted in a deep faith that sustained and shaped him right to his last breath.

Alfred was born on May 17, 1926, in Kindersley, SK. Of Norwegian heritage he was born on "Syttende mai", the Norwegian day of celebration of their independence, which was a source of great pride for his parents, and he celebrated those roots throughout his life. He attended a rural one-room school, riding the 6 miles to school from the family farm each day on his horse, Fly. He moved into town for high school where he met the lovely Mary Reid, and they were married at the tender age of 18. They enjoyed 62 years of marriage until Mary's death in 2006. They raised four children, Lorna Bjorklund, Mark (Darlene), Aron, and Karen (David Lefsrud), and welcomed 7 grandchildren, Hans, Kristin (Ron Boaz) Anna (Shawn Gowitt), Wesley (Natalie Wagorn), Marta, Carlton (Katie) and Blair and 6 great-grandchildren, Maya, Simon, Jacob, Ezra, Sloan and Levi.

Alfred began his career as a telegrapher on the Northern Alberta Railway in the Peace River region, later transferring to the CPR in Calgary. He felt a call to ordained ministry and although he had a promising future on the railway, the family moved to Saskatoon, SK, where Alfred completed an undergraduate degree and entered the Lutheran seminary there.

During this period, he continued to work full time nights as a telegrapher for the CNR, attended university in the day compressing 5 years of study into 4 years, served First Saskatchewan Lutheran Church in Langham, SK on a part-time basis, was present to his growing family and graduated top of his class! He always credited Mary's steadfast support as enabling this to happen. Alfred was ordained in 1961 and served two parishes – his first in Naicam, SK, which also included the parishes in Spalding and Dahlton. During his tenure in Naicam, Alfred received a scholarship to pursue graduate studies in St. Louis, MO, which he did in 3 three-month stints in St. Louis. The family joined him on two of these three treks to St. Louis. His dissertation was on the Book of Amos. The parish in Naicam/Spalding/Dahlton granted him sabbatical leave to complete these studies – a progressive and supportive action on the part of those communities, decades before it was common for parishes to do so. In 1967 Alfred was called to serve Lutheran Church of the Cross in Victoria, which he undertook faithfully for the next 23 years. Upon his retirement Alfred and Mary re-located to their home on the Sooke River which they had first built as a vacation home, and they lived there for several years before moving back into Victoria. During his tenure at Church of the Cross, Alfred was part of a group of forward-looking people who founded the Luther Court Society and established Luther Court as the first campus of care in British Columbia. Nationally he served on the Lutheran-Anglican Dialogue that led to the full communion partnership between these two church bodies, and he was known for his preaching and for his pastoral care. In the 1970s Alfred was actively involved in the church's work of sponsoring refugees from Vietnam to relocate to Canada. He maintained life-long friendships with those whom he assisted to make Victoria their home.

Alfred was an avid reader, a consummate bridge-player, and he loved to travel. From his railway days he maintained a fluency in Morse code, and as a member of the Morse Club the art of

sending messages to others across the world using Morse code was sustained. He was also known as a raconteur of Robert Service poetry. Gifted with a remarkable memory, he had committed more than 20 of Service's lengthy ballads to memory. He enjoyed recitations and maintained a love for the Yukon captured so vividly in the Robert Service poetry. Alfred was able to recite portions of those ballads into the last week of his life, including a recitation on the morning of the day he died. Alfred also enjoyed his association with Norway House, making rømmegrøt once a year for the whole community until he was in his early 90's. And, of course, he loved nothing better than being with his family and friends. The rhythm of his life was shaped around Sunday worship, which he never missed, and in his later years he loved the Tuesday "Perk Me Up" group at Church of the Cross. He moved into an apartment at Luther Court in 2013 where he immersed himself in that wonderful community, voicing it was the best place in the world for him to live. As his needs for support increased, the care of the outstanding Luther Court team was so appreciated – who saw to his home support needs, and at the end, nursed him in his final journey. We are deeply grateful to the exceptional community of Luther Court, staff and residents, who loved and supported our dad right until his last breath. We are also deeply grateful to the community of Lutheran Church of the Cross, which was his spiritual home, for their support and love for him. We would like to thank Pastor Lyle McKenzie from Church of the Cross and Pastor Ed Chell from Luther Court who understood Alfred's history and heart for ministry and ministered to his spiritual needs in a loving and life-giving way. Our heartfelt thanks to Iris Schoffer, Jeanie Stann, and the Wong family, whose friendships he cherished.

A family graveside service was held on September 22, 2023 and a memorial service will be held on Friday, December 1st at 1:30 p.m. at Lutheran Church of the Cross, 3787 Cedar Hill Road, Victoria. A reception will follow. Donations in Alfred's memory may be made to either the Luther Court Society or to

Lutheran Church of the Cross.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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