# STAN

When I hear the name “Stan”, there is only one person who comes to mind and that is Stan Kwasniowski, who most of us know as our resident St. Stephen’s photographer. Stan has documented St. Stephen’s history through uniquely beautiful photographs for over 50 years. In addition to capturing photographs of the church, Stan took family portraits for parishioners seeking picturesque backgrounds, dedicating his personal time to ensure the photos were perfect. He developed these photos in his own darkroom at home, a practice he continues to this day. Stan has dedicated himself, and has given his heart and soul, to creating a photographic record that chronicles our parish’s history for future generations. As Stan has chosen to retire this year, I felt it was important to celebrate Stan, his wife Irene and their family. Many of us know Stan’s story but many do not so I’d like to share a little with you.

Stan Kwasniowski's life story is one of perseverance and community commitment. From his early days in Ontario to his high school years mastering typing, each chapter of his journey seemed to prepare him for a life dedicated to service and leadership. His ability to adapt and thrive led him to Calgary, where he not only advanced professionally but also became deeply involved in St. Stephen’s Church.

Stan Kwasniowski was born in Regina, Sask. on June 16, 1931. At seven, his family moved to Ontario for his father's work. At thirteen, Stan took a two-year business studies course he enjoyed, which improved his typing and business skills, leading to many promotions. On May 1, 1965, Stan, his wife Irene, and their son Stephen moved to Calgary after another promotion. They bought a house in Willow Park where Ed and Joe Sakundiak visited them, inviting them to attend Divine Liturgy at a new parish. Enjoying the service and the friendly congregation, Stan shared, *“This was a small closeknit community, and it was our kind of church!”.* There was no elected council at the time and Stan became secretary due to his typing skills. Thus began Stan and Irene’s role as one of St. Stephen's founding families.

The parishioners of St. Stephen’s rented St. James Hall for their services and to fundraise for a new church building. To create a sense of establishment, the parish decided to use donation envelopes for tax purposes. The parish priest, Father Greschuk, prepared 51 envelopes for 37 families, with 14 additional ones for any new parishioners.

The Church of God bought property and offered to sell a portion to St. Stephen’s for $30,000 on the condition that a church would be built there. The bishop loaned the money, enabling the purchase.

An architect was hired to design the church and a hall, requiring about $110,000 for construction. A loan was secured with council's guarantee, acknowledging the risk of bankruptcy for all of them if the venture failed. To raise funds, bingo games, Christmas tree sales, car auctions, and holiday dances were organized. Stan’s father made a suggestion to host a "Gentlemen’s Dinner" to help pay off the church mortgage. Stan proposed this idea during the next council meeting. With months of planning and essential assistance from the women of the parish, the first “Men's Dinner” was launched. This event successfully contributed to paying off the church mortgage. These dinners remain well-attended and contribute to raising funds for the church.

Stan and Irene are blessed with 2 children, Stephen and Lori, and 2 granddaughters, Sarah and Tasha. May they continue to be blessed by God. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Stan and Irene for their dedicated service and presence at St. Stephen’s Parish. On behalf of the parishioners of St. Stephen’s it is our honour to thank Stan for sharing his talent in photography for the last 50+ years. *Mnohaya Lita!*

# MEMORIES AND TRIBUTES TO STAN AND IRENE

***Jim & Pat Ochitwa: Re: Stan, the Man! And Irene too!***

"Our memories are many and all cherished. We remember the days when church happened in St. James Hall and various parishioners took turns setting up the chairs and kneelers for Sunday Liturgy. It was Stan's turn. When we arrived for Liturgy, the kneelers were under the chairs instead of in front of them. To this day we still chuckle and tease about this.

Stan's photography equipment was his pride and joy and he was always upgrading. He not only took private photos of our Ochitwa family in 1985, but he also took pictures at various and many St. Stephen's functions. He loved to photograph Fish Creek Park and also photographed the Calgary Stampede Rodeo. Stan and Irene were one of the 1967 founding families of St.Stephen's. We met and got to know them in the very early 1970's when our family arrived as newcomers to Calgary, and as new parishioners at St. Stephen's. We remember working with Stan and Irene on social committees, the fun "Box Social" Dance Event, church caterings, fund raisers, work bees. We remember putting on a production call Ukrainian Gunsmoke where Irene played the part of Miss Kitty (Ketsyaa). And who can forget the many debriefing parties at the Kwasniowski home in Willow Park after most of St. Stephen's Functions??

The one constant in the many years we have know Stan and Irene which all started with and at St. Stephen's … is the trust and friendship … the joy and laughter … in all situations. Yes, Very Special!"

**Annette and Harry Kozicki:** "Stan was always there! He has been a major asset to our church community. God bless Stan and Irene."

**Des Pepplinski**: "We have always appreciated the wonderful work that Stan has done to keep us informed about events at the Parish."

**Sonja and Tom Shindruk:"**In 1971 when we were transferred to Calgary, we didn't know anyone. We attended Mass at St. Stephens which was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Stan and Irene were the first people to welcome us. It was from this first connection we made that we became lifelong friends and created many fond memories. Stan and Sonja are God parents to Monica Nassichuk. Stan and Sonja share another similarity: they are both only children in their families. Stan you are a great photographic friend. We love you and may God send many Blessings to you, Irene and your family."

**Ambrose Comchi:**

"Stan would always appear at the church with a camera. If he appeared without it, I could not recognize him."

**Joan Nassichuk:** "Stan and Irene were very kind to me after my husband passed away. They remembered my children, (Peter and Monica), with little gifts commemorating many occasions, including Christmas, Easter, birthdays etc. Stan is godfather to our daughter Monica who turned 50 this year. Stan took pictures of Monica at her baptism and her First Holy Communion. Thank you, Stan!"

**Mark and Sheryl Ewanchyna:** "Stan took our engagement photos 38 years ago. They were and still are so very beautiful."

**Flo Volcko:** "Always, smiling, patient."

**Pauline Sachkiw:"**Our family has known Stan K since the 1960s when St Stephen's Church held mass at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Lincoln Park. Stan and Irene were a friendly, fun-loving couple who had moved from the exciting city of Montreal…they were quite cool. Stan was warm and friendly and would greet you with a hug and a big smile beneath his ever-present mustache. He was always interested in what was "new with you" and was an easy conversationalist. Right from the start Stan and Irene were committed to the growth and development of St. Stephens church, participating in the social events and always willing to help. They were so fun and very well-liked by all.

Over time Stan developed a love of photography and shared his talent by documenting innumerable church events through pictures. Stan was always present; an event or special mass was not complete without him there. In the background, subtle like a secret agent Stan would move quietly and gently, finding the just the right composition and angle to capture a special moment. His contributions and hours to St Stephen's are monumental. Stan is St Stephen's Church true historian. Since its inception he has captured church history through not words, but through beautiful pictures. His pictures say more than a thousand words. I doubt their will ever be another "Stan" or person who will fill his shoes in the same way…he was at St Stephen's in the beginning and almost 60 years later he is still here capturing the "life of the church"."