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Aloha to Pastor Stan Johnson



Dr. Stanley Johnson
May 23, 1928 - Sept. 13, 2025

*"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
~ II Timothy 4:7 ~*

When I first became a Christian in 1968, Stan Johnson was the pastor at Kalihi Union Church. Even though I was a brand-new Christian, Stan would encourage me to sing in the worship services. When I started dating Randy, I asked Randy to accompany me and to sing with me. One day, Pastor Stan said to me "Gay, you are very good as a soloist, but when you and Randy sing together, there is a very special anointing that touches me deeply." I took that word to heart, Randy and I began singing as a duet, and that is how the Lord birthed our music ministry.

To Randy and me, Stan was more than our pastor – he was a mentor, counselor, and friend. Stan baptized us along

with his eldest son, David. David's passion was music, and he adored Randy, who took him under his wing to encourage his musical gifting. Stan officiated our wedding, where David served as one of Randy's groomsmen.

After moving back to the mainland, Pastor Stan would invite us to come and minister in music in whichever church he served or attended. When David was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, Pastor Stan paid our plane fare to visit David as often as we were able. Each visit was filled with joy and laughter as we shared precious memories of the days of our youth. Once, Stan asked us to do a concert for the residents of their retirement complex. David had a song request list that would have taken 3 hours to perform (mostly Beatles songs). Randy, musical genius that he was, arranged a medley that shortened it to 40 minutes.

On September 14th, I received word that Pastor Stan had gone home to be with the Lord. I was sad to learn of his passing, of course, but I also felt God's peace because I realized this had happened in the Lord's perfect timing. I had heard that Pastor Stan had been declining physically and mentally toward the end, and I was grateful that God had provided us so many opportunities to fellowship, reminisce, and talk story when we were both alert and healthy enough to enjoy our time together.

Pastor Stan's other sons, Doug and Danny, live in the Bay Area, about two hours from Modesto where Andrew and his family live, and where I live half the year to help take care of my grandchildren. Stan's daughter, Debbie, flew in from her home in Missouri. It was also God's timing that Doug arranged for Stan's Celebration of Life service to be on October 26th, when I was still on the mainland. Andrew and I drove to Saratoga Federated Church for the service, where Stan had served as pastor from 1975 to 1988. Reverend Russ Ikeda (who was originally from KUC and served alongside Pastor Johnson at Saratoga Federated) gave a moving message. Andrew and I led the hymns, sang the special music, and closed the service with "Aloha 'Oe." It was beautiful to see such how much the Saratoga congregation loved Pastor Stan.

(Continued)



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(Aloha Pastor Stan continued)

A second memorial service was held at Kalihi Union Church on November 15th, which I helped to organize. Instead of Russ Ikeda, Pastor Jay Jarman gave the message, and in place of Andrew, Chris Windnagle sang with me. Stan's son, Doug, and grandson, Scott, were there to represent the family. Phyllis, David's widow was also there. Jay facilitated an "open mic" time during which Danny Yamashiro, Dan Chun, Gerald Chinen, and Dennis Kawamura shared how Stan encouraged them to become ministers. Sue Yamashiro shared how she was their hanai (adopted) daughter when she moved to California with them to attend college. Pastor Stan's compassion and counseling saw her through a very dark time when her parents had just gone through a divorce.

I will always be grateful to the Lord for providing me with a pastor like Stan, who taught me to love God, know God, and serve God. Through the years, our friendship grew. We were blessed to be able to call on Stan whenever we needed his counseling. Even our son Andrew sought pastor's guidance and godly wisdom whenever he came to a crossroads in his life.

I remember that a number of years ago, Pastor Stan shared with us that he had been reading a book called "The Crime of Living Cautiously." It said something to the effect of, "When you find yourself standing at the edge of a cliff, you jump off and either you'll fall or God will teach you to fly." Stan shared that he took the plunge when he decided to marry Mary Jansen, a highly respected lawyer. God taught him to fly, and they shared adventures and hosted many friends in their home. They had many wonderful years together. During the last months, they were roommates at a memory care facility. Their caregivers told me that when one of them went out of the room they would ask for the other by name. Even as their memories faded, their love for each other remained.

Stan Johnson's Eulogy, by Doug Johnson (Excerpts)

Dad was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He attended Wheaton College in Illinois and knew he wanted to enter the ministry. At one point he wanted to be a missionary in Japan and did spend one summer there but, as is usually the case, a girl changed his plans. He met my mom June, who was also a student at Wheaton, and married her after graduation.

After college, dad attended Northwestern Seminary. His first call was to Lakeside Japanese Christian Church in Chicago. As his ministry grew in Chicago so did his family. David was born when dad was in seminary. Deborah, Dan and I were all born in Chicago during his time at Lakeside.

In 1964 he was called to Kalihi Union Church, and our family moved from the bitter cold of Chicago to the beauty and warmth of Hawaii. He loved his ministry and his congregation here. He always spoke so fondly of his time at KUC and the relationships he built that lasted through his life. This is where I grew up, and even though I've lived in California for 50 years, this is still where I'm from.

In 1975 dad was called to be the senior pastor at Saratoga Federated Church where he served until he retired in 1988. He briefly joined the staff at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church but after a few months he elected to retire permanently.

Mom and Dad enjoyed the freedom of retirement, traveling often to visit with family and spending several months a year in Colorado. They sold their Saratoga home and moved to a beautiful community near Grass Valley in the Sierra foothills to what they thought would be their "forever home," but shortly after the move Mom fell ill. After extensive medical evaluation she was diagnosed with Shy-Drager Syndrome, a devastating, incurable disease.

They eventually moved back to the Bay Area to be closer to doctors and family, but the weekend of their move mom collapsed and was hospitalized and was eventually moved into a skilled nursing facility. God ended her suffering and brought her home on January 13, 1999. Dad moved back to Colorado later that year.

David started exhibiting health issues in 2001 and was diagnosed with ALS, another devastating, incurable disease. He decided to spend time in Colorado with dad so they could be together while he was still relatively healthy and mobile but a few years later it became apparent that the altitude was impacting Dave's breathing, so they moved back to the Bay Area again and Dad was his caregiver until Dave's death on December 25, 2006.

After Dave died we were all seriously concerned about the toll losing mom and Dave took on him, but in 2007, he was set up on a blind date and met Mary. That new relationship brought him back to life. They were married in 2008 and were constant, steadfast companions. Even after we moved them both into a memory care facility, you could find them watching TV and holding hands.

Dad left us and joined Mom and Dave on September 13, 2025 at the age of 97.

I'd like to share some memories I have of him. Anyone who was around my dad knew that he was a man of deep faith and a man who loved his family. After that he loved sports! He watched Michigan and 49ers football games transfixed on the TV. Dad was a great athlete in high school and college and ran track, played baseball and football. He was a fixture at 3rd base for church picnic baseball games as well. That gift ran in the family too. My brother Dave played baseball and Dan played football in high school. I found my passion in the sport of triathlon: swimming, biking and running varying distances. My races were almost always on Sundays, and dad's job required him to work Sundays, so he could not be a spectator, but when he retired from Federated that changed.

(Continued)

The first Sunday after he retired was the "Escape From Alcatraz" triathlon, and I was competing, so he came along as a spectator. The event was smaller then, so he got to go out on the boat with me for the swim start. What he didn't know that the swim start involved jumping off the ferry boat that shuttled us to Alcatraz. I left him on the top deck and told him that I'd wave when I was in the water, so he stayed on the rail and watched a bunch of crazies jump off a perfectly good boat! When I got in the water and swam away from the boat I rolled on my back to wave at him and saw him on the top deck holding his head and shaking it in disbelief! We met up at the finish line, he hugged me, congratulated me and gave me my car keys because he was tired and wanted to nap on the way home!

A few years later he joined us in Kona for the Ironman Triathlon. He and my son Scott ran across the finish line with me, so we got to share that moment together as well.

During the holidays Dad's job was to hold babies. As the families grew, dad was able to hold every one of his grandchildren and great grandchildren, in a rocking chair while the chaos of a holiday continued around him. That was the happiest I think I've ever seen him!



*Saratoga Federated Church Service, October 26, 2025.
Left to right: Russ Ikeda, Andrew, Gay, Doug Johnson*



*Kalihi Union Church Service, November 15, 2025
Representing the Johnson Family:
Grandson Scott and son Doug*



Jay Jarman, Gay, Gerald Chinen at KUC Johnson Memorial Service

PHOTO GALLERY



*Janete and Gay sing hymns for Violet Kagawa, 102 years old
at Craigsides Retirement Home*



*On August 17, Kahu Daniel Kawaha dedicated Paul and Pualani Hongo at Haili Congregational Church in Hilo, Hawaii.
This is where Andrew was dedicated when he was a baby.*

Waipahu High 60th class reunion in Las Vegas



*Shinsato, Gay
Choir 9,10,11,12. Drama Club 11,12
Class Play Comm. Chrm. 12
National Honor Society 11, 12
Ambition: Music and Drama*

From Janete



Ukulele Ministry and Children's Sunday School classes do sign dance to "Give Thanks" at KUC Thanksgiving service.



Let the weak say I am strong because of what the Lord has done for me. We give thanks.



"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

Every Thursday morning, KUC hosts a food distribution ministry for more than 500 houseless and needy people in our community. They come in two groups, each attending a service in the sanctuary. Janete plays the piano for the services. These are the faithful volunteers who minister every week.



Janete and KUC Dance ministry at One In Christ International Asian Church. Pastor Chris Nayir asked them to come one Sunday every other month.



KUC's 112th anniversary celebration service. The ukulele group sings "He's got the whole world in his hands" while children sing and sign.



Janete: I have been visiting this Brazilian Church to keep in touch with my roots. I was born and raised in San Paulo, Brazil. They meet on the grounds of Olivet Baptist Church.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 13 - Ukulele ministry evangelism on the beach at Waikiki

Dec 14 - Gay at Makiki Christian Church
10:00am: English Service
11:30am: Japanese Service

Dec 18 - 4pm: Bell Choir, Ukulele, and Hula ministries at Arcadia

May 25 to June 2, 2026
Gay and Pat Tsuji to Itabashi for the
Pagaragan's "Neighborhood"
and Noguchi's Kita Ageo Evangelical Free
Church (Saitama)

From Taylor

Hello dear friends,

It's hard to believe another year is already coming to a close! This year has been full of joy, and I have truly been blessed by your prayers and support. God has moved in amazing ways that would take pages to list them all, but here are a few highlights: deepening relationships with moms in The Neighborhood community; leading worship at a youth camp with students from all across Japan and discipling a young worship leader from that camp; leading worship for a friend's wedding; tour guiding and translating for visiting short-term teams, friends, and family; going on a short-term mission trip in Southeast Asia; turning the big 3-0; joining the Core Team for our Young Adults service, worship teams, midweek worship, and outreach ministries; helping plan Young Adults programs and events; translating for church; and starting a young women's Bible study. God has been so faithful and generous this year.

As we look toward Christmas and the new year, there is much to be excited about! I'll be helping lead our Christmas Gospel Choir for the Christmas Eve service, where we expect around 600 attendees. Our Young Adults service continues to flourish with about 70 regular participants, and The Neighborhood Student & Ministry Center is always full of love, joy, laughter and visitors from both Japan and abroad!

I have two main prayer requests for the coming year:
 1) That Jesus will remain the center of everything as these ministries, and I myself, continue to grow in trust and influence, and that He would be glorified in all we do.

2) That God would provide new financial partners, so I can continue serving these ministries with excellence. If you or someone you know may be interested in partnering with me or with The Neighborhood, please reach out through Christian Vision or contact me directly at taylorasami.p@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued love, encouragement, and prayers. May God bless you abundantly this holiday season and in the year ahead!

With love,
 Taylor Asami Pagaragan



Fellowship with some of the Japanese girls from the church



I led worship for my Friend's Wedding



With some of our regular English students at a monthly Neighborhood event



Game Night Fellowship with Young Adults from the church



Leading worship at Youth Camp

From Andrew – Update from Modesto



With a 3 ½-year-old and 1-year-old running around non-stop, there's never a dull moment in the Hongo household. Meaghan and I are constantly exhausted, and yet, this season of life is so much fun. We're also incredibly thankful to Grandma Gay for living with us half the year to take care of the kids. Sometimes I wonder if we're working her to the bone, but at other times I'm

hopeful that being with her grandkids is keeping her young.

Naomi Pualani celebrated her first birthday on November 6th. We rented out the fellowship hall at our church, Saint Matthias, and held an apple-themed party for friends and family. Meaghan bought a huge banner that said, "She's the apple of our eye," blew up dozens of balloons for an impressive red and white balloon arch, and baked an apple cake – meaning it both contained apples, and was in the shape of an apple. Yes, my wife is pretty amazing. Pualani was absolutely adorable in a red-and-white gingham dress and charmed all of our guests with her joyful personality and beautiful smile.

Over the past couple months, Pualani has been making strides – literally. It seems she went from barely walking to running in just a couple weeks. While before she was content to cuddle in my arms for hours (much to Daddy's delight), now all she wants to do is walk all around the house, back and forth, finding little objects on the ground to put in her mouth – a scrap of toilet paper, old Cheerios, brother's shoes. She can say a few words – Dada, Mama, bubber (brother), all done, yeah – but seems to understand quite a bit more: She impressed both Meaghan and me the other day when we were playing the Turkey Pokey song (a Thanksgiving version of hokey pokey), and when it came to the lyrics "turn yourself around," she began spinning in a circle! It only confirmed my belief that we have a genius on our hands.

Paul has been thriving his first year at BigValley pre-school, a Christian school just ten minutes from our house (also the school Meaghan graduated from). He goes for a half-day, five days a week, and he loves it. He adores his teachers (and they adore him), he has a couple of best friends he talks about all the time, and he comes home singing songs (with accompanying hand motions) he learns

at school. One of my favorites was when he started singing about the belt of truth and shield of faith and armor of God. I thought, "Praise God that Paul is already learning to be a mighty man for Jesus!"

Paul loves trucks, tools, puppies, robots, and pizza. He loves music, too, and his favorite songs are Lord of the Islands and Christmas in the Islands, both by Papa Randy. We listen to them on repeat in our Toyota Minivan, probably ten to twenty times a day. Once Paul told me, "I like to listen to Papa Randy because you miss him." My heart melted.



Meaghan continues her work as a pediatrician for the county. She technically works half-time, but the workload is equivalent to full-time due to the demanding nature of her work. Meaghan originally went into medicine because she had received a supernatural vision from God in which she saw herself working with Muslim women and children; and now, at her clinic, many of the families she works with are refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine. I can see that she is not only a terrific physician, but she also genuinely cares for her patients and their families and demonstrates to them the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.

As for me, I'm finishing up the fall semester at San Francisco State University, where I continue to teach broadcast news and documentary film. It's a brutal commute (three hours each way, by car, train, and bus), but I only have to go in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so it's not that bad. Even when I'm exhausted by the commute, I recognize that five out of seven days, I get to stay home with my kids, and I'm reminded of what a blessing my work situation is.

Thank you to all of you who prayed for and supported my documentary film, *A Better Way*, which chronicles the effort to replace San Francisco's juvenile hall with a more rehabilitative alternative. I finally finished the film, and it received the Award of Excellence from the Broadcast Education Association this past April, and it was selected to screen at the Justice on Trial Film Festival in Los Angeles this past October. All glory goes to God for the recognition the film has received, and even more than that, I'm grateful for the opportunity to engage in the craft I love while bringing public awareness to a really important issue: how to find a better way to work with kids who end up in the criminal justice system, to treat them with compassion and respect and love.

MORE PHOTOS



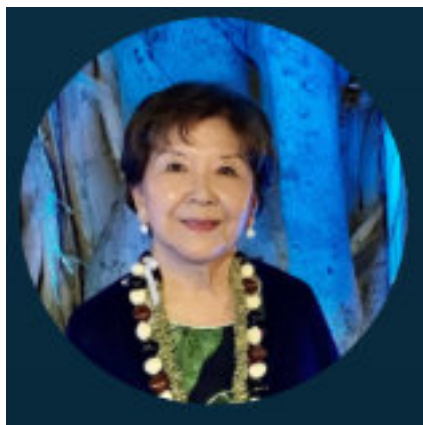
Old friends Brad and Linda Baker, Dennis and Jeanett Frahm meet up at KUC



Grandparents day at Paul's preschool.



Barbara Ching at Amy Ikeda's surprise birthday party. Alan Nakamura photo-bombing.



Pat Tsuji will be my missions partner to Japan. Pat will dance hula and accompany my singing on her ukulele

Mahalo Ke Akua!

Thanks Be To God!

The Lord has blessed me by giving me the best of both worlds. When Andrew is on winter and summer breaks, I get to have a vacation in Hawaii. I have my condo in a place called Salt Lake, which is conveniently located near the airport and my church.

So, I am usually in Hawaii from the end of May to August, and from November to January. My housemate, Maiko Nakano, takes good care of my apartment when I am gone.

Just when I start to miss my grandkids, I get to go back to Modesto to hugs, kisses, and hanabata (snot) all over me.



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Merry Christmas



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It is a joy partnering with you in serving our Lord
through Christian Vision.

Warmest Aloha, Gay Hongo


& A Blessed New Year!