



July - November 2024

SERVING THE LORD IN

Japan

News from
Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram

<https://www.lcms.org/jastram>



Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram

Rev. Jastram serves as the
Asia Lutheran Resource
Coordinator:

*Making Lutheran resources of
theology and worship
available in Asia.*



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Side by Side

Sitting side by side at the mic, two bilingual young men carefully interpreted each question and answer into their designated target language at our November theological conference.

"How shall we best understand the English words 'ransom' and 'redemption'? Is that different from 'atonement'? How can we know our level of 'sanctification'? Are the Christian and Japanese concepts of 'piety' significantly different?"

Rev. Kenneth Mars of Cody WY followed each of his segments on the "Means of Grace" with helpful responses to each question.

One attendee of Roman Catholic background commented that the conference "overwhelmed me with the high theological quality of the LCMS. . . . I thank you from the bottom of my heart for sharing your church's precious resources with me" he wrote.

We were able to distribute both an English and a Japanese text version of the presentations before each session.

Then after splitting the 22 attendees into separate language groups to concurrently digest the material being read in their particular language, we combined the two groups again for each of the bilingual question-and-answer periods.

One 89 year-old attendee commented that "The Japanese translation was very easy to read, so it was easy to understand, and it was a very pleasant and special day."

In fact, a number of the attendees lingered significantly after the close of the conference to discuss further the issues on their mind.

We are already planning our next conference for May. ♦



Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- thanksgiving for the successful fall theological conference: for the presentations by Rev. Kenneth Mars; for the interpretation service provided by Kanon Haga and Augie Derendinger; for the textual translation work by Rev. Mitsuo Haga and his son Kanon; and for the hospitality of Rev. and Mrs. Wakabayashi in hosting the conference at Kobari Lutheran Church in Niigata Japan 11/5-7;
- thanksgiving for the 100 years of Lutheran Legacy at the seminary in Nagercoil India; for the continued learning of the students and the faithful teaching of the professors;
- thanksgiving for the rebirth of new life through infant baptism for James Boyle on 7/7 and for the adult confirmation of Cacey and Moeko Barnett on 7/14 during our LCMS fellowship Divine Services in Shinjuku Tokyo;
- thanksgiving for the amazing Lutherans Engage article “Gathering the Faithful in Japan” by LCMS Megan Mertz and Erik Lunsford; and for the “Lutheranism in Japan: Recovering the Roots” article by LCMS Laura Owings;
- thanksgiving for God’s blessings at our three current worship sites: Shinjuku (twice a month), Yokosuka (once a month), and Numata (once a month);
- thanksgiving for our LCMS Asia regional director Rev. Charles Ferry and fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings;
- thanksgiving for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.

To support this LCMS mission work:

Give securely online through the LCMS page:

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It’s the Banana Leaves

The food of India still lingers in my memory from the Fall Academic Faculty-Student Retreat at Concordia Theological Seminary in Nagercoil.



“It’s the banana leaves as plates; and it’s eating your food by scooping it up with your fingers” I explain with a guilty grin regarding this cultural contrast with Japanese handcraft pottery and chopsticks.

Needless to say, it was a privilege and honor to represent the LCMS for Nagercoil’s centennial celebration of the “100 years of Lutheran Legacy of CTSN.”

Three retreat sessions later, as well as two double-and-combined large group class sessions for two different batches of students, I was thankful for the 110 students and six faculty members that gathered over the three days.



My task was to provide instruction on a “[A Distinctly] Lutheran Compass for Navigation” as CTSN charts its course forward into the future.

I emphasized the distinctive character of Lutheran doctrine and practice especially at four compass points where there is tendency—even among Lutherans—to wander away from the path of straight teaching (orthodoxy).

Using the publicized CTSN core values (Scriptural, Confessional, Liturgical, Sacramental), I explained that because these core values are equally claimed—according to differing patterns—by various non-Lutheran church bodies, it is necessary to navigate a straight path for distinctively Lutheran teaching and practice *within* each of these four core-value “regions”.

This practice of careful theological and ecclesiastical navigation intends to keep the Scriptural “pattern of sound teaching” in order to “guard the good deposit entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13-14) in a way consistent with the Analogy or Rule of Faith (cf. Rom. 12:6) as witnessed by the Lutheran Confessions.

We are still enjoying the banana chips we received as a parting food gift from one of the CTSN faculty members. ♦

SPECIAL THANKS

to the generosity of the congregations we visited this last home service, especially to Grace, Versailles MO for dedicating a gifted sacramental set for our Japan mission work.



YOUR SUPPORT is vital for our continued mission work in Japan: regular services at our worship sites, translation of theological resources, and nurturing relations with local Lutheran pastors facing individual challenges to the faith. We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support. **Thank you!**

Your missionaries, Dan and Joan Jastram

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

(Psalm 136:1, Day of Thanksgiving, Liturgical Verse).

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