



February—March 2025

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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Sojourners in Worship

*E*very worship service here in Japan is a reminder that we are only sojourners on earth. Our days, times, and places are temporary. We are fellow travelers among whom God arranges the circumstances for our spiritual good.

This month we welcomed a Chinese lady who was baptized in a house church in China. She moved to Japan, found work in Tokyo, and came to our LCMS worship services here.

Her baptized Chinese husband had sent me an email from his current work place in Africa asking for our Tokyo worship details.

He had learned online of the solid doctrine and practice of the Lutheran Church, found my name from LCMS publicity, and provided a mutual introduction for faithful worship in Tokyo on behalf of his wife. They couldn't find Scriptural faithfulness among the Chinese non-Lutheran

worship services in Tokyo.

Most exciting of all, the husband has become so interested in Christian sound doctrine and practice that he plans to transition from his work in Africa, move to Tokyo and start a dedicated study of Scriptural theology for ministry.

I was overjoyed to provide him information about our Chinese material available through our LCMS Asia missionary headquarters in Taiwan.

In true Christian spirit, the Chinese lady brought along another Chinese woman friend, unbaptized, to the next worship service. "I want her to find God too," she said.

These are some of the circumstances arranged by our loving Heavenly Father who wants all people to be saved.

Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- thanksgiving for God's gracious arrangements among "sojourners in worship" who gather around His Word and Sacraments here in Japan;
- prayer for God's mercy and grace upon those who have left Japan as they continue their international sojourning: Matthew, Tiffany, the Bennett family, and Samuel;
- prayer for the Chinese wife and husband—currently separated by work but hoping to work and worship together in Tokyo soon—with the blessings of sound doctrine and practice, and with plans for his future theological study;
- thanksgiving for the hospital discharge, home recuperation, and renewed well-being granted to Rev. Wakabayashi;
- thanksgiving for the continuing translation of past Lutheran Theological Conference presentations in Japan;
- thanksgiving for good progress on preparations for the next theological conference in May;
- 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, our area facilitator Rev. Matthew Wood, and our 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:

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Other News

*I*n previous newsletters I have mentioned our lone LCMS Japan "sister congregation" in Kobari Niigata served by Rev. and Mrs. Wakabayashi. The picture above shows our great joy when we became reacquainted in Japan decades after our previous visits in Indiana.

After his field work at Zion Lutheran Church under Rev. Matthew Harrison and his 2002 graduation from the Fort Wayne seminary, Rev. Wakabayashi began his challenging second-career ministry work in Japan, separating from the liberal theology of our former Japanese partner church body and establishing a new church plant and congregation sound in doctrine and practice at Kobari Niigata "like the LCMS."

We are extremely grateful that God has graciously brought Rev. Wakabayashi through a recent two-week hospital stay, home recuperation, and a return to the pulpit by the fourth Sunday. In the meantime, Niigata received heavy snowfall, the Kobari congregation cancelled two Sunday services, and I was on hand as substitute pastor for one of the Sundays. ♦



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

"The father said to his servant, 'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found'"
(Luke 15:22a, 24a, Liturgical Verse).

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