



June—July—August 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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Expanding the Fellowship

*I*n the last two newsletters I have described how sojourners interact with Christ through worship, catechesis, and conference learning. This newsletter continues that story.

The two Chinese ladies previously mentioned continue in their newly-found Christian embrace of worship and catechesis. In fact, for various reasons, both have decided to move into living quarters closer to that Tokyo confessional Lutheran congregation.

After worship, Pastor Nakamoto provides catechesis in Japanese for the two women from the translation of our 1943 LCMS Catechism using occasional support from Chinese speaking members of the congregation. If the pastor is called away on other matters, one of the well-established women of the church leads catechesis for the women with a younger woman of the congregation assisting.

One of the two Chinese ladies has continued in regular worship. The other has thankfully found her own gainful employment, which unfortunately, also keeps her busy on some Sundays.

On my last visit to that congregation, both of the Chinese women were unable to attend, but the younger assisting member had brought her own non-Lutheran Japanese friend to worship for the first time.

As usual, the newcomer was invited to stay for a small group church lunch for fellowship, friendship, and for her first Lutheran catechesis.

That day, because Pastor Nakamoto was leading a separate online bible study, the small group of women asked me—on the spur of the moment—to provide a beginner's catechesis class in Japanese for this new attendee.

What a blessing to see the whole congregation working together to embrace this new attendee, just like the previous two Chinese ladies!

(The picture above shows Pastor Nakamoto in relaxed clothing following up with the newcomer and the small group after his online class was over.)

Thanksgiving and Prayer:

- thanksgiving for the expanding fellowship made possible by every member of Christ's Body, the Church, working with one accord, in accordance with his will;
- prayer that God may richly bless the two Chinese women and the Japanese newcomer through his Word and Sacraments as they associate with members of his holy house, the Church;
- thanksgiving that God has graciously provided spiritual fruit from the May conference in the formation of a new members' catechism instruction class;
- thanksgiving for God's blessings at our four current worship sites: Shinjuku (twice a month), Yokosuka (once a month), Numata (once a month), Osaka (once a month);
- thanksgiving and prayer for our LCMS Asia regional director Rev. Charles Ferry (who completed his responsibilities in that capacity on June 30), our LCMS Asia business manager Sam Borgwardt (who recently announced the completion of his responsibilities for OIM), our area facilitator Rev. Matthew Wood (continuing), and our fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings, especially during times of personnel transition;
- prayer for our interim regional director, Rev. Dr. Brian Gauthier, serving in this role in addition to his role as OIM Managing Director;
- thanksgiving for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.

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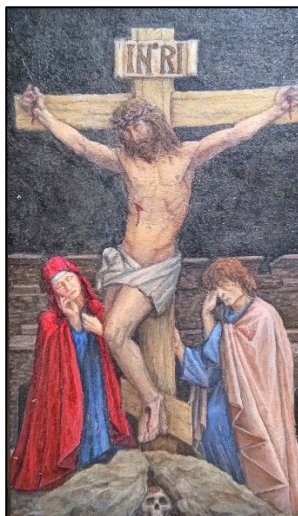
(Kobari Niigata church gathering with Pastor Wakabayashi and guests.)

Conference Yielding Its Fruit As a direct result of our May conference, the Kobari Niigata congregation has begun a new members' catechism instruction class. Here's the story.

Because the conference lodging included rooms for varying numbers of occupants, one room had three long-term women members from a Tokyo congregation lodging with one unbaptized, ninety-year-old woman from the Kobari Niigata congregation.

In the course of conference sessions, breaks, meals, and daily routines, they learned that the unbaptized woman had been worshipping at Kobari Niigata already for four years because she loves the church music of liturgy and hymns.

"Have you asked to be baptized?" they inquired. "Not yet," she responded. "You should get baptized," they encouraged. And so, through the conference God provided the impetus to start a new members' catechism instruction class at the Kobari Niigata church a few weeks later, not only for the unbaptized woman, but also for two others who had not yet studied the catechism thoroughly. ♦



Christ and Culture The image on the left is an acrylic painting by our catechumen living in Osaka. As a 3D digital artist working in the gaming industry, he wanted to create a gift for his mother in Sweden with a clear Christian message. Notice how Christ's death defeats Death itself as represented by the skull.

On the other hand, the image below on the right shows a cucumber and an eggplant standing on chopsticks with two wheat noodles draped over each.

The Japanese obon festival message here is that when the spirits of your ancestors visit, you welcome them with special food and family gatherings, then send them home on their symbolic horse and oxen. ♦



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. We couldn't do it without you.

Thank you!

Your missionaries, Dan and Joan Jastram

"Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD? What has straw in common with wheat?"

(Jeremiah 23:29a, 28b, Pentecost Proper 15C, Liturgical Verse).

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