



Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi

ELCA Missionary and Associate

HITOSHI BACK TO NORMAL and THANK YOU

Hitoshi and Satoko spent this Summer in the US. They visited over 10 congregations across 4 synods (South Carolina, North Carolina, Pacifica, and Southwest California). And they attended the Summer Mission Conference called "Becoming Conference" in Chicago. In addition to these Home Assignment and Conference experiences, they were also blessed by having meaningful visits their three grown children and their families, in California. Hitoshi left Los Angeles on September 1st and got back to normal (busy but blessed) in Kumamoto. For Satoko, she is still in California since it took almost three months for her Green Card renewal, but she just received it and will join Hitoshi soon. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

FUNERALS TWO WEEKS IN A ROW

As soon as Hitoshi returned to Kumamoto, He found that Mr. Mitsuo Ishikawa, a Kuwamizu Church member and a close neighbor, was in critical condition due to lung cancer diagnosed just this summer. He passed away on September 6th. Mitsuo-san was only 70 years old. Mitsuo-san found and recommended the house where Hitoshi and Satoko would live. They met with Mitsuo-san very often since Mitsuo-san and his wife, Setsuko-san, have a small dog like Hitoshi's and Satoko's Momo. Pastors Sumimoto and Adachi presided and preached at a series of funeral services. A week later, on September 14th, another neighbor, 75 years old, passed away quickly due to his brain disease. He was not a church member, and the funeral was officiated by a local Buddhist monk, but his wife started attending church after Hitoshi and Satoko came to Kumamoto. Therefore, as the man's neighbor, Hitoshi served as a receptionist for the funeral. It seems like both men were waiting for Hitoshi to return to Kumamoto. Now Hitoshi misses them a lot.

ANYONE WHO RECEIVES YOU RECEIVES ME Hitoshi's Reflection

Before Hitoshi came to Kumamoto, many of his church members and friends in the United States

accepted children who were not blood related as family members (adopted or fostered children). He believes that in the United States, a community foundation was built in which ordinary families accept children, rather than social welfare facilities accepting them for the long term. Community based care (with government help, as needed) is often more beneficial than solely state-run care. Hitoshi believes that the presence of Christian churches is important in building that foundation.

After he came to Kuwamizu Church that was founded by members from Jiaien Social Services, he learned that there was a desire for the same trend in the United States, calling it "from institutional welfare to home care," although he hears that this is due to national budgetary constraints. However, in Japan's current situation where Christianity is less than 1%, Hitoshi wondered if there is a sufficient community foundation for ordinary families to accept children through foster parents or adoption as in the United States. Kuwamizu members are thinking about their community responsibilities.

Whatever the circumstances, Hitoshi is convinced that the power of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the Church established by Christ, and that the will of God is taking place slowly, but steadily. At Kuwamizu service, a new liturgy was recently adopted, and they began to pray as follows when they interact with the community. "Fill us with hope, patience and courage, so that we may love our neighbors" and "Send us forth in your Holy Spirit as neighbors to those who are in pain and sorrow."

Even though the Kuwamizu Church is in the Central ward of the city, people are sent to the areas of East, West, North, and South wards, and even outside the city. When they are sent to each region, there is a promise of Jesus Christ, "Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives me receives the Father who sent me." (Matthew 10:40). After the worship service of Kuwamizu Church, which celebrates its 90th anniversary with Jiaien, Hitoshi prays that members sent out into the wider community will establish and guide regional community foundations based on God's love.