

## Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

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### THANK YOU FROM KUMAMOTO DURING MONSOON

**SEASON:** It is well known that June is commonly a rainy month in Japan, except for Hokkaido (the northernmost island). However, in Kumamoto located in Kyushu, the southernmost island, the rainy season did not even start at the end of June and the weather was California-like, very comfortable and dry. According to the National Weather Meteorological Agency this year's June weather was the historical record since the agency's establishment. However, in the afternoon on June 26th, they declared that Kumamoto's rainy season had begun.

And Hitoshi is writing this report during a heavy monsoon. Weather forecasts have continuously warned/alerted citizens about flooding and landslides. At the same time, Hitoshi and Satoko received an updated Giving Report. As they began the second year of their mission, they noticed that there were new congregations and individuals' names. Hitoshi and Satoko are so thankful for the support, prayers, and thoughts from the United States. They will surely help change people's lives in Kumamoto.

### ONE DAY RETREAT IN SOUTH KUMAMOTO CON-

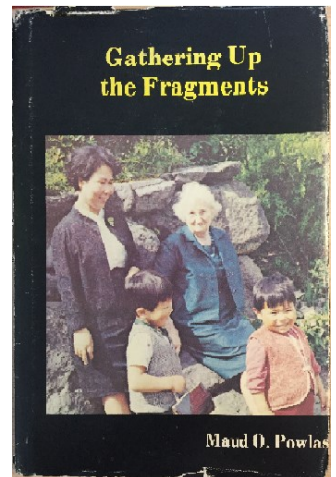
**FERENCE:** Six congregations in the southern part of Kumamoto Prefecture get together for a one-day retreat every year. This year, people gathered at Kuwamizu Lutheran Church on Saturday, June 1st. The theme was "Learning the History of Jiaien which means Garden of Love and Mercy." One of Hitoshi's major responsibilities is being chaplain for the Jiaien. Very briefly the current Jiaien is, a nursery home that takes care of infants to 1 year olds, several children homes that raise 2 year olds to high school students, two nursing homes for disabled children, three nursery schools, three live-in facilities for the elderly and one day care center. The number of clients and employees of Jiaien is about 700 and 270 respectively.

On the day of the retreat, Mr. Yoshikazu Shiotani, a former director of Jiaien, told meaningful and interesting stories. When talking



about education and service in Lutheran's Kumamoto mission, Kyushu Gakuin (boys' middle and high schools) was first established in 1911. Then they planned to establish a girls' middle and high school. However; due to difficult situations endured by children (like exploitation) and elderly care, missionaries in Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church decided to establish Jiaien next in 1919, then in 1923, Kyushu Jogakuin (girls' junior and high school, currently called Kyushu Luther Gakuin) was established.

A notable missionary, Ms. Maud Powlas, from the United States was appointed as chairwoman for founding the Jiaien. She said, "I do not do my work, but do the work of God." Prior to the lecture by Mr. Shiotani, there was a short worship, and Hitoshi presided over service and Satoko played the organ. 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?" for the text and Mother Theresa's Prayer "Please use me, Lord" was sung. Mr. Shiotani's lecture resonated with the text and hymn. When reflecting upon Ms. Powlas' words, what she said is the same as "God's Work. Our Hands." She returned to the US after 40 years of service to the Lord in Kumamoto. After she returned home to North Carolina, she wrote a book called "Gathering Up the Fragments". She received an honorary Ph. D. from Lenoir-Rhyne University. The whole purpose of her study is to "Love".



### RESURRECTION LUTHERAN'S VISIT TO KUMAMOTO FROM HUNTINGTON BEACH:

From May 8th through 20th, Pastor James Pike and eight people from Resurrection Lutheran Church, where Hitoshi and Satoko are still ELCA members, visited Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Tokyo. Even with their busy travel schedule they visited Jiaien to learn it from Mrs. Yoshiko Shiotani, current chairman of the board and a former governor of Kumamoto Prefecture.

### PULPIT EXCHANGE DAY:

Sunday, June 23rd, was Pulpit Exchange Day for churches in Kumamoto Prefecture. Hitoshi preached at Koshi Lutheran Church. The new sanctuary of Koshi Lutheran was built in 2000 but for its structure, the original structure from the oldest Lutheran Church in Saga Prefecture, was used and that was built in 1900. Therefore, on the second floor of the narthex, they display historical materials when the Lutheran mission started in 1890s.



Koshi Lutheran Mission started in 1952, at the same time, Aisen (meaning Love Fountain) nursery school was established. In recent decades, former pastors at Koshi Lutheran have been also pastor at Arao (50 km west from Koshi) Lutheran Church as a two point parish. Therefore, Hitoshi was blessed to preach at Arao Lutheran Church one day before. Next to Arao Lutheran Church, there are the Shion (meaning Zion) Nursery School and Shion Foster Home. Again, this church also has provided for education and service missions. After Hitoshi and Satoko arrived in Kumamoto, they realized that many churches began after education/service institutions were established. Maybe until 70s or even 80s it was the norm for teachers and employees of those institutions to come to church on Sundays. However, that has changed since the 90s and in the last couple of decades, number of worship attendees has decreased.

Hitoshi hopes and prays that this tendency has stopped and that institutions' staff are coming back to church. As far as Saturday and Sunday, Hitoshi and Satoko witnessed 13 seekers attended two churches and Hitoshi prayed for God's guidance to help each one of them to accept Jesus into their lives.

**KUWAMIZU MEN'S GROUP FIELD TRIP:** On Saturday, June 29th, Kuwamizu Lutheran Church Men's Group enjoyed a one day field trip to Aso, the famous volcano in Kumamoto. Even though they're called a Men's Group, four out of eleven attendees were female. Also, four attendees were YMCA Japanese class students from overseas (2 from China, 1 from Thailand, and 1 from Ukraine). In Aso, there is a pizza restaurant owned by Kuwamizu members, who're a couple. They enjoyed very

tasty pizza (not like Chicago deep dish pizza but thin crust pizza though). After lunch, they sang hymns, read a few verses (1st Thessalonians 5:16-18), listened to a short message, and received Holy Communion presided by Hitoshi.



Earthquake damage, from three years ago, still effects the major road and major railroad that connects Kumamoto-city and Aso. Repairs are ongoing. Therefore, the number of visitors to the Aso area are still 30-40 percent lower than usual. They prayed together for God's continuous blessings and guidance for people still experiencing difficulties resulting from the earthquake.

### FLOWER DAY SERVICE & FATHER'S DAY GIFT:

In June in Japan, people enjoy flowers. Pastor Sumimoto, Senior Pastor of Kuwamizu and many other churches, and Pastor Hitoshi led Special Flower services at Aiko Nursery School, Hikari Nursery School, Kuwamizu Preschool, and Kuwamizu Church School. Teachers and volunteers made hundreds of bouquets and children brought them



to fire stations and police stations nearby, and to Senior Care homes residents. Although Hitoshi is not a resident of a senior care home yet, children gave Hitoshi two sets of beautiful bouquets from two nursery schools. Since none of Hitoshi's children lives close by now, he felt that those beautiful flowers were like Father's Day presents from God, our heavenly Father. Hitoshi & Satoko are so grateful for the ongoing love, support, and prayers from the US and Japan. May we all continue to be blessed by God's enduring love and mercy. May the Holy Spirit empower us to do His will to better ourselves and the communities around us. Amen.

### ELCA Global Mission Support & Contact Information

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By credit or debit card, see <https://community.elca.org/Japan> or call 800-638-3522 and specify "(Hitoshi and Satoko) Adachi GCS2051". By automatic monthly bank withdrawal, or to establish a covenant of prayer, communication and support: Contact 800-638-3522, ext. 2657, or [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).