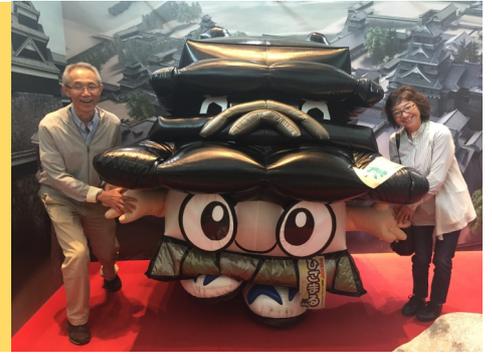


Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi

ELCA Missionary and Associate



THANK YOU FROM RAINY KUMAMOTO

As for the previous July Newsletter, Hitoshi and Satoko were writing it during the monsoon period. Now, they are writing this newsletter in during a rainy period again. For some reason, this summer has been very unusual. In the September report last year they were writing the newsletter during very hot weather, however, this year, they are sending this during much cooler temperatures. But of course, even if the weather is unusual or unfavorable, they are thankful for all the prayers, thoughts, and support from people in ELCA synods and congregations.

LECTURE PRESENTATION by MITSUHIRO IWAMOTO

Sunday afternoon, on July 28th, there was a pre-event for Jiaien's 100th year anniversary. Mr. Mitsuhiro Iwamoto spent his childhood at Light-



house, a facility in Jiaien that took care of disabled children in the 1970s. He was born with congenital amblyopia (eye misalignment that can cause blindness) in Ushibuka, Amakusa, a four-hour drive from Jiaien, and came to the Lighthouse with hard feelings since he had to live apart from his beloved parents and siblings. However, because he came to the Lighthouse, he reflected upon two pleasant and meaningful experiences. One was blind children practicing sumo wrestling with non-disabled children. Actually, one of the current general managers of Jiaien, Mr. Kenichi Ogata who is a non-disabled, could not win against Mitsuhiro, alt-

though Kenichi was already an adult and Mitsuhiro was only a junior high student at that time. Mitsuhiro learned that even blind children can be strong. The other experience was attending Boy Scout activities that the Lighthouse encouraged children to attend. People might feel that blind children should not learn to use fire to cook rice and curry at a campsite, but rather than discouraging them, he was encouraged to try and he enjoyed eating what he cooked at camp with other children. He learned the importance of being challenged rather than giving up before you even try something. Later, he went to a university near Tokyo and met with an ELCA missionary and got married. They live in San Diego now. His wife's passion is sailing, and he learned to sail from her at first, which is an important activity that he devoted himself to improve upon even sacrificing some family time with his beloved wife and daughter. He knew that it would be impossible to drive a car being blind, but he anticipated that it would be possible to sail with his ability to feel the wind. After many years of sailing practice and experience in open water, he completed a non-stop Pacific crossing, reportedly making him the first visually impaired person to do so with the help of a sighted navigator, Douglas Smith. They left California on February 24, 2019, and their yacht made port in Iwaki, Fukushima-prefecture, on Saturday morning, April 20th. Due to his success, his lecture schedule is busier now. Hitoshi and Satoko pray that his and his family's life journey continues with strength & grace of the Holy Spirit even during new challenges. (You can find many articles about the voyage through various media outlets, but one of them is <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47997727>.)



SOME SUMMER EVENTS:

YMCA Nagashi Somen: Hitoshi delivered sermons for Kumamoto YMCA's Entrance and Graduation Services since last October. Hitoshi attends their community events when he is able to do so. On August 7th, there was Nagashi Somen one of YMCA's community events. Hitoshi and Jordan Collins, one of ELCA's J3 Missionaries, enjoyed it very much. Nagashi somen is a fun Japanese eating style and it is a Japanese summer tradition. Somen noodles are a type of thin wheat noodle usually eaten cold. You serve noodles not in a bowl or a plate, but by filling them in a bamboo pipe full of flowing water. You catch the noodles with your chopsticks, dip them in a cup of flavorful sauce and eat them.



Natsumatsuri at Powlas Home: On August 9th, there was a fun "Natsumatsuri", which means summer festival, at Powlas Home, a special elderly nursing home in Jiaien. Not only elderly people in Jiaien but also children and their parents from neighboring communities enjoyed the festival very much because Jiaien invited Kumamon, which is a mascot created by the government of Kumamoto Prefecture in 2010 to draw tourists to the region. Kumamon subsequently became nationally popular. Kumamon entertained the people who attended with his excellent, cute performance.



People Love to Watch Fireworks even in the Rain: In Kumamoto, there was a famous, annual fireworks display on Saturday, August 31st, at Ezuko Lake. Kuwamizu Church and Jiaien are located near the north west point of the lake and Hitoshi and Satoko live near the south east point of the lake. As reported earlier, due to the rain in August, people were concerned if they would enjoy it. Kumamoto citizens hoped and prayed earnestly for it, because the major purpose of the fireworks this year was to wish for the completion of restoration efforts resulting from damage during the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes. On that day, it had been raining on and off. One hour before the show started, Hitoshi and Satoko together with two neighboring families went to a very good spot where

they could see the fireworks very well and were eagerly waiting for it to start. At 7:30 PM, the scheduled starting time, it was not raining, so the fireworks started and it continued for almost a half an hour without stopping. However, it started raining in the midst of over 10,000 fireworks. They had to stop for several minutes, but the rain was not so severe, they continued the rest of the show. Hitoshi and Satoko had a very interesting experience, enjoying fireworks even in the rain. Considering Bible stories, water and fire are both important words and they felt God's presence among the people in Kumamoto whose hearts were broken by the severe earthquake damage. One of the couples, accompanying Hitoshi and Satoko, were forced to live as evacuees for several months after the earthquake and they were reflecting upon and discussing their experiences moving around to several shelters during the uncertain period immediately and several months after the earthquake.



JAPAN CHRISTIAN CARE MINISTRY

When Hitoshi was serving in Pacifica Synod, he had an opportunity to attend Stephen Ministry Leadership Training in February 2016. During the training, he got to know Pastor Kazuhiro Sekino from Tokyo Lutheran Church. Since then their collaboration has continued so they can facilitate Tokyo Lutheran Church becoming an active Stephen Ministry congregation. After Hitoshi came to Kumamoto, the effort became not only a purpose for Tokyo Lutheran, but also for other Christian Congregations to thrive in caring for people who are experiencing difficult life situations. Due to this effort, there is a leadership group who continue expanding the Japanese version of Stephen Ministry. In the last couple of months, they have been talking about the name of the ministry and the group decided to call the ministry Japan Christian Care Ministry with an understanding with Stephen Ministry headquarters. Hitoshi will continue his efforts to assist this ministry and will report its status in future articles.



Japan Christian Care Ministry

ELCA Global Mission Support & Contact Information

You can give through your synod office or mail your check to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Make checks payable to "ELCA Global Church Sponsorship" with "(Hitoshi and Satoko) Adachi GCS2051" in the memo line.

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.