



Bitter Sweet in the International Service Community: Over 30 people were worshipping in the International Service at Kumamoto Lutheran Church out of which one third were international students and their families at Kumamoto University. However due to their graduations or transferring, the worshipping community, during the September 23rd service, sent off 10 people (5 from Indonesia, 4 from Nigeria and 1 from Liberia) to either their home countries or other schools, with lots of prayers, Godspeed, and thanksgiving to the Lord.

The picture is a family from Indonesia (back in the middle is a J3 missionary, Ms. Emma Nelson). When they traveled back to their home on Sulawesi island in Indonesia, the big earthquake happened on the same day. The worshipping community from Japan could not get in touch



with the family for four days due to no internet connection for that period, so they were very worried about and praying for the family. Then the mother called Hitoshi saying that they returned safely to their hometown which was about 500 km from the epicenter. Of course, the community continued praying for God's comfort and peace for the victims and their families effected by the disaster. Currently, in the international worship services, around 20 are attending, out of which 2 international students were added from the Philippines and Indonesia to Kumamoto University.

Awoke at 3AM for A Sports Day!? : Sports Day is so popular in Japan. Although October 8th of this year was the National Holiday known as "Taiiku-no Hi" meaning "Sports Day", many schools or entities especially in local cities around Japan held their own Sports Day. Parents and grandparents enthusiastically watch their children/grandchildren's school sports day events. A neighbor of Hitoshi and Satoko's woke up at 3AM and visited his two daughters' nursery school in order to secure good seats for

watching the day's events. After the neighbor secured seats, he came back home around 7:00 AM, and told Hitoshi that there were two other parents ahead of him even though he arrived there at 3:30 AM which was about 3 hours before the school's main gate was opened. Hitoshi and Satoko attended three Sports Day events at Jiaien on Saturday, September 22nd, at Aiko Nursery School on Saturday, October 6th, and at Kuwamizu Preschool on Monday, October 8th. Hitoshi prayed during the opening ceremonies and they played in some games. During Jiaien's closing ceremony, it was closed by the benediction (see the picture below). Hitoshi went on stage right after the game he played and said "The Lord look upon you with His Smile and give you peace!". Guess what kind of the game it was!?



Little Lamb Club Field Trip: There is a ministry called "Kohitsujikai" meaning "Little Lamb Club". Christians including disabled people gather together one Saturday a month, have worship service, and play some games. Originally it was started in 1961 by three disabled people and the Kuwamizu Lutheran pastor. It is now an ecumenical club, not only for Lutherans, but also open to people from Nazarene, Assembly of God, and Non-Church members. Whenever Hitoshi can attend since May this year, he has been empowered and blessed by Christ every time. On Saturday, October 27th, Hitoshi and Satoko attended their Fall excursion to Aso Milk Ranch. Hitoshi enjoyed walking with a blind person inside the ranch for about one hour. Since Hitoshi visited the ranch for the first time, the blind person who had been there many times before guided Hitoshi by saying, "There will be sheep on the right" and "If we walk another 300 meters, you will see two different cows, Jersey and Holstein."



Reformation 501: For the Lutherans in the Kumamoto area, they observed the following Reformation 500th year anniversary related events: In 2016, one year before the 500 anniversary, at the world level the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church got together in Lund, Sweden. Last year, in 2017, the Japanese Catholic Church and the Japanese Lutheran

Church gathered together in Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, Japan. And this year, on Sunday afternoon, October 28th, Lutherans in the Ku-



mamoto area and Catholics at Tetori Church gathered at the Tetori Cathedral in the center of downtown Kumamoto to commemorate the 501st Anniversary. More than 150 people participated and more than 30% were Tetori Catholic Church members. Father Sakurai spoke about "Effects of The Second Vatican Council and Recent Situations of the Catholic Church".

Although the stories Father Sakurai told were very humorous, the heart of repentance was shared among the people in the sanctuary. The Catholic Church obediently depends on the



Holy Spirit, following the second Vatican Council, especially under the present Pope, Pope Francis, experience the gospel of joy, and go out into the world meeting with the living Jesus Christ amongst the local communities especially those oppressed in human society. The heart of repentance expressed by Father Sakurai reminded Hitoshi of the first article of the 95 theses of Martin Luther 500 years ago, was about the "repentance".

Hitoshi was assigned as one of two responders to Father Sakurai's speech, he spoke for a few minutes: Mentioning that he attended Catholic Kindergarten called "Small Flower Kindergarten" when the Second Vatican was meeting from 1963 through 1965,

he was never taught about the Second Vatican at the Kindergarten. However, during field mission Catholics were teaching God's love for small ones. He mentioned Mother Teresa as an example of someone who was showing God's love and mercy to oppressed people many years earlier than mentioned in Second Vatican. He praised the beauty of the Catholic Church.

Enrollment Ceremony: In the Kumamoto area, YMCA's vocational school education is popular in various forms. Pastor Sumimoto at Kuwamizu Church has been involved with them as a preacher for their ceremonies, like entrance/graduation services and other gatherings. Pastor Adachi was invited by a YMCA school for the first time, as a preacher, for their enrollment service of Japanese language school on October 12th. There were 27 new students (China 10, Vietnam 6, Nepal 3, Korea 2, Taiwan 2, Malaysia 1, Ukraine 1, Philippines 1, Bangladesh 1), after the service and ceremony, the all of the new students, principal, teachers, and Hitoshi lined up for a group photo.

Many of them, after one and a half years of Japanese language classes, will specialize in various fields of expertise such as car mechanics, nursing, caregiving, and early childhood education. Then they will serve in the community. Hitoshi prayed that they remember that God's love is always with them both while learning and serving.



From Kumamoto During Comfortable Autumn Weather: When the previous Newsletter was issued two months ago, the heat was still severe and the temperature was over 35C(95F) degrees everyday, but this time Hitoshi and Satoko are sending this newsletter from Kumamoto during wonderful weather, cool temperatures, and always with God's blessings. They are very thankful to the individuals, congregations, synods, and ELCA for their thoughts, prayers, and support.

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