

Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)
Congregations in Kumamoto
Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi
ELCA Missionary and Associate

MANY THANKS FROM KUMAMOTO
Before Retirement

In February 2018, Hitoshi and Satoko were called by the ELCA to serve the JELC (Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church) as a missionary and an associate. Hitoshi came to Kumamoto in April of the same year and Satoko followed in May. At that time, they were scheduled to serve two four-year terms, with Hitoshi serving as co-pastor of two JELC congregations, Kuwamizu and Matsubase. This year, in March 2026, their terms and the original mission assignment are ending, and they are retiring from their ELCA positions as Missionary and Associate. Hitoshi and Satoko are truly grateful for the prayers, thoughts, and support they have received from many individuals and ELCA congregations over the years. (What you see in this photo is a farewell gift sent to Hitoshi by Jiaien Baby Home.)



However, even though they are retiring, they have decided to spend most of their remaining years in Kumamoto. While Hitoshi will no longer serve as pastor of Kuwamizu and Matsubase congregations, they will continue God's mission at Kumamoto as a retired pastor and his spouse from ELCA. For example, he will continue his mission as chaplain for the primary school division of Kyushu Lutheran International School and as a retired pastor serving for Kumamoto International Service. Satoko will continue her mission for Kuwamizu Kindergarten for 1 to 2 year-old children, aka "Director of Diaper Changes." :-) The ELCA also plans to continue helping Hitoshi and Satoko in Kumamoto until September, calling it the Reintegration Period. Therefore, it would be extremely helpful to both Hitoshi and Satoko, and to the ELCA, if you could continue to support them until September of this year. They both and the ELCA thank you very much. All involved in the Kumamoto mission are so moved by your continued, generous support.

As Hitoshi and Satoko are ending service, they encourage you to support other ELCA Missionaries, in Japan or elsewhere around the world. If you are interested in continuing to support missionaries, please connect with Hellen Rios Carrillo from the ELCA Development Team at Hellen.Rios-Carrillo@elca.org.

THE LAST BUSY ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

As reported every year, after Advent season, and this year is no different, Hitoshi has had a very busy seasons. This year Hitoshi counted the number of services which he preached/presided over and number of attendees for those services. And those numbers were 28 services and 1535 adults and children. And in many of those services, Satoko was together with him as a organist or helper during the services. When they think about those over 1,500 people, maybe 90 percent of them are not Christians. Christians make up less than 1% of the Japanese population. Nevertheless, Hitoshi and Satoko are grateful for the blessing of being able to deliver the Christmas message and stories of God's love and grace to about 1,350 non-Christian children and adults. They cherish this Advent season, knowing that from next year onwards they will never again be so busy.

(This photo was taken after Matsubase Church's Christmas Eve service, when some musicians in the area came to perform. 72 people attended the service and listened to Hitoshi's message and beautiful Christmas music.)



HOLY FRIDAY: GOOD FRIDAY

～ Hitoshi's Reflection ～

We are in the season of Lent. This year's 40-day period began last month on Wednesday, February 18th and runs through Saturday, April 4th (excluding Sundays). The climax of the season is Holy Week, which begins on Sunday, March 29th, with "Sei Kinyobi" in Japanese which means Holy Friday (In Japanese, they never call this day as "Good Friday") on April 3rd.

Hitoshi teaches Bible at the Kyushu Lutheran International School Primary School Division, and Hitoshi teaches about the events of Holy Week. Since Spring break begins on March 19th, he has already started teaching about Holy Week before the closing ceremony and graduation on March 18th. Students have already learned about Holy Friday, the day when the Lord Jesus was crucified and that is called Good Friday.

Many students in every grade asked the question, "Why is it called Good Friday when Jesus was crucified and killed?" What do you think about this? In classes, Hitoshi explained that, "Jesus died to show God's love to the world," but there was more to it than that.

In classes, Hitoshi uses video teaching materials provided by Sparkhouse Digital (part of 1517 Media, formerly called Augsburg Fortress Publishers) it is a publishing ministry of the ELCA. Students watched a five-minute animated video about Good Friday. The video ended with a scene of a beautiful butterfly flying out of its cocoon after the Lord Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea and others. The children watching were silent for a while and then joyfully cheered. The animated video ended there, but God's story is by no means over. Finally, Hitoshi quoted the first verse from "In the Bulb," a hymn that the students love very much.

In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.



(This is an article Hitoshi wrote for the Kuwamizu Monthly Newsletter and translated into English.)

ELCA Global Mission Support & Contact Information

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