



Kanazawa Station, Japan

Serving the Lord in ASIA



News from the Jastrams

Advent, December 2021

“Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.” (LSB 341)

Global Connections

“Welcome to the Suomi [Finland] Lutheran Church (in Tokyo)!!” Both the website and the two greeters at the door made it a pleasure for me to step inside this fascinating mission congregation.

A Japanese Lutheran pastor and his Finnish wife serve at Suomi as missionaries sent from Finland by the Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF). A blue cross boldly painted on the sanctuary doors brings to mind the Finnish flag and begins to tell the mission story about the precious fruit of more than 120 years of Finnish Lutheran mission work in Japan.

The Japanese worship service continues that story by proclaiming God’s truth through its various liturgical parts. The pastor preaches a



CHURCH, PASTOR & WIFE

wonderful sermon proclaiming Jesus Christ, the Advent Lord who comes as the Savior of the world.

I learned later more about this fascinating global connection—from Wittenberg through Finland to Japan—which came about because of Mikael Agricola [vs. the problematic Johann Agricola], who traveled from Finland to Wittenberg in 1536 to study under Melanchthon and Luther, and then became Bishop of Turku in 1554, the first Lutheran bishop over all of Finland. Later, this Wittenberg connection in Finland leaped to the other side of the globe in 1900 when LEAF sent its first missionaries to Japan.

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Rev. Dr. Jastram is the Asia Lutheran Resource Coordinator:
Making Lutheran resources of theology and worship available in Asia.

Special Thanks to:

- *Our partners in mission, for your generous November support, and for the sustaining contributions of individuals, congregations, districts, and LWML groups that make this mission work possible.*

Praise God for:

- *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which is the source of the International Development Grant that makes possible our translation project of Walther's Law and Gospel into the Japanese language.*
- *Development of the LCMS worship sites in Tokyo and Okinawa.*

Pray for:

- *The Japan Lutheran Church as it faces challenges from their 2021 convention decision to ordain women as pastors.*
- *Ongoing Lutheran resource projects throughout Asia, numbering over one hundred, in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, and Taiwan.*

NEWSLETTERS INFO

Want to catch up? Here's our archive link: tiny.cc/dvv9iz

Want to self-subscribe? Go here to receive your own email newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/ddOobf>

To be ADDED or REMOVED from our mailing list, you can send an email message to daniel.jastram@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

To support the LCMS through the work of Daniel Jastram, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861**

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Asia-Jastram."

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/givenow/jastram.

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From those beginnings the present Finnish [Suomi] Japanese Lutheran congregation continues even now to proclaim its Advent Gospel message.

This global Gospel connection gains even more significance these days due to worldwide challenges regarding the authority of the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the biblical teaching and practice regarding ministry and issues of gender or sexuality. In fact, Finland is in the news.

During his recent U.S.A. lecture tour, Bishop Pohjola of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland (ELMDF), spoke multiple times about the current challenges from objecting government, church, or cultural forces which contest our religious freedom to faithfully teach, confess, and practice according to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. His encouragement is fitting: "remain faithful in your own vocations and make a good confession of natural order and biblical truth."

Connecting the past with present

Our project of translating Walther's Law and Gospel continues. In the current section, Walther emphasizes the necessary function of both elements in the recognition that "I am a miserable, accursed, damned sinner, who would have to be eternally condemned if Christ had not died for me. But I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, born of the Father in eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil" (2010 ed., p. 366). This is the clear Gospel message your partnership proclaims through your generous prayers and support!

