



*Train station plaque guiding tourists to Mt. Kasho Mirokuji Temple and Japan's largest "tengu" mask deity.*

<https://www.lcms.org/jastram>



**Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram**

**Rev. Jastram serves as the Asia Lutheran Resource Coordinator:**

*Making Lutheran resources of theology and worship available in Asia.*



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to:

[daniel.jastram@lcms.org](mailto:daniel.jastram@lcms.org)

with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

Here's our newsletter archive link:

<https://bit.ly/3Xkd9W8>

Link to join our mailing list:

<https://tinyurl.com/47vyhnae>

888-THE LCMS • [lcms.org](http://lcms.org) • [infocenter@lcms.org](mailto:infocenter@lcms.org)



December 2024 -to- January 2025

SERVING THE LORD IN

# Japan

News from  
Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram



Picture courtesy of Rev. Matthew Wood, Area Facilitator for Asia Region

## Worship Spaces

**I**n our current Japanese mission, we make use of a wide variety of worship spaces: an individual household room, a re-arranged child-care space, a church-renovated apartment unit, military-based chapel spaces, and on occasion—even in the mountains—space in a rural, traditional, Japanese hot-spring inn.

It was during a recent, once-a-month visit to our communicant members who live three-and-a-half-hours away by train, who made special arrangements to meet at a mountain-village inn owned and operated by an aunt's family.

We arrived, received a gracious welcome from the aunt and the staff lady, found our way to the allocated space, got situated, then arranged things for worship.

A small cross fixed on the outer-wall beam, communion vessels and linens centered on a makeshift altar,

preacher and hearers in place, and our Divine Service began with the invocation and sign of the cross.

If you look closely, you will notice a sunken fireplace to the right, set in the straw-mat floor, traditionally used for heating and cooking, with an adjustable bamboo-and-iron-rod pothook hanging from the ceiling. A modern flat-screen TV, electronic equipment, a space heater, and electric ceiling lights keep up with the modern times.

Before worship, while traveling to the site on winding mountain roads, we visited a local mountain dam and reservoir. After worship, we refreshed ourselves with a traditional Japanese hot-spring bath at the inn.

How extra-ordinary an experience; how refreshing for both body and soul!



## Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- prayer for the Japanese people who are guided to folk deities, like the “tengu” mask deity of the Kashozan Mirokuji Temple, in order to pray for divine favor, safety, and the fulfillment of wishes;
- thanksgiving for the wonderful variety of Christian worship spaces wherever God’s children sanctify those spaces by their gathering for the public ministry of Word and Sacrament which provide true life and salvation;
- thanksgiving for preceding generations of missionaries who have brought saving faith with sound doctrine and practice into native languages and theological texts around the globe;
- thanksgiving for God’s blessings at our three current worship sites: Shinjuku (twice a month), Yokosuka (once a month), and Numata (once a month);
- thanksgiving for completion of our latest translation project of Engelbrecht, *The Lutheran Difference* (CPH 2014);
- thanksgiving for our LCMS Asia regional director Rev. Charles Ferry, our area facilitator Rev. Matthew Wood, and our fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings;
- thanksgiving for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.



## Publications List

This past week I have been eagerly pursuing a particular project: to compile a list of Japanese-

language LCMS publications, produced by the previous generation of Japan missionaries.

I dug through a cardboard box of missionary records provided by the family of our longest-serving LCMS missionary in Japan: Rev. George Shibata (in Japan from 1949 to his death in 2002).

What a joy to find his neatly written notebooks, his ring-binders of Tokyo area administration records, and his partial lists of mission publications, both of theological textbooks and of pamphlet-tract materials.

With as many of these previous Japanese-language publications as can be located, we will have to compile a spreadsheet and evaluate whether they are still usable in language and content for our current work in Japan. The literary-and-classical Japanese language still in use at that time does not often appeal to our current Japanese population which is more accustomed to colloquial and contemporary usages. ♦

## Visitors, Etc.

What a blessing that God sends LCMS visitors from the States to Japan who are eager to find faithful Word-and-Sacrament ministry!

Hiroko and Tyler visited our sister-congregation in Kobari Niigata (last picture); Brandon and family visited our Yokosuka base worship site (2nd-last picture); Jake and family visited our Shinjuku worship site (3rd-last picture).

Brandon’s eldest son eagerly greeted me by explaining that a relative had pointed out to them the LCMS 2024 fall issue of the “Lutherans Engage” article we mentioned in our last newsletter. Apparently she said, “When you get to Japan, be sure to find this Jastram who is doing our LCMS work over there!” What a blessing to greet the whole family that Sunday after they arrived on the Yokosuka base! ♦



**YOUR SUPPORT** is vital for our continued mission work in Japan: regular services at our worship sites, translation of theological resources, and nurturing relations with local Lutheran pastors facing individual challenges to the faith. We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support. **Thank you!**

Your missionaries, Dan and Joan Jastram

“I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose” (Luke 4:43b).  
(Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Liturgical Verse).

## To support this LCMS mission work:

Give securely online through the LCMS page:

[lcms.org/givenow/jastram](https://lcms.org/givenow/jastram)

[OR] Mail your 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”**