



## Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi

ELCA Missionary and Associate

**ALMOST ONE YEAR** has passed since Hitoshi and Satoko arrived in Kumamoto. From the bottom of their hearts, they express their thankfulness to the Lord and to ELCA, Synods, Congregations, and Individuals for their support, prayers, and well-wishes. A challenging Lent and the accompanying cold weather are gone and we Rejoice, Christ has risen, indeed, Alleluia!

### **MULTIPLE BAPTISMS in KUMAMOTO and TOKYO:**

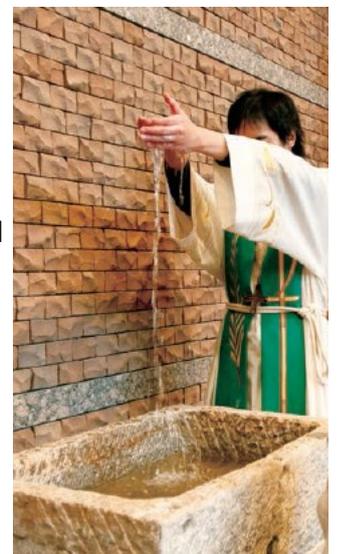
When Hitoshi and Satoko reflect upon their year, they feel joy for seven people that were baptized at Kuwamizu Lutheran Church. Not only for those at Kuwamizu, but there were also two people being baptized at Tokyo Lutheran Church where Satoko was heavily involved in both baptisms under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Due to Satoko's mother's illness, she has been to Tokyo (a one and half hour flight from Kumamoto) almost 10 days a month. That frequent travel also supported those two individuals being baptized. This newsletter reports an article Satoko wrote about Katsuko's baptism, one of the two, for the monthly newsletter at Tokyo Lutheran Church:

"Mysterious wind blows strongly and strengthen my heart, and I can surely become a child of God. Making every day new, my life is with that wind" (from a Japanese children's hymn.) One of Satoko's friends over 28 years, Tomiko, Katsuko's daughter, called and asked Satoko, at the end of August last year, if Satoko could recommend a church Katsuko could visit. Katsuko was born and raised in Niigata (200 miles north of Tokyo), became a teacher, then moved to Tokyo, married, and



raised her two children. She began studying counseling at the age of 53, belonged to the Japanese Counseling Association and volunteered her time counselling autistic children and elderly people until the age of 70. Her first time going to a church service and witnessing Holy Baptism of her friend, in the counseling association, at Sophia University chapel over a few decades ago. Her husband passed away in January 2016 after three years of care. Then three days later, she had a heart attack, but she survived. However, it was no longer possible for her to live alone anymore in the house, located in Chiba prefecture, where she and her husband lived together for over 50 years. Therefore, she sold the house and moved closer to Tomiko's family in Tokyo. Even though she moved closer to her daughter's house, her condition worsened, so she consulted with orthopedics, neurosurgeons, and other doctors in mental health clinics, but no one could improve her situation. Katsuko lived with fear, anxiety and loneliness. Then, despite Tomiko not being a Christian, she invited Katsuko to go to church. Maybe, what Satoko told them about Stephen Ministry at Tokyo Lutheran Church strongly influenced Katsuko to come to church. While Satoko was in Tokyo, in early September, Tomiko took her mother, Katsuko, to Tokyo Lutheran Church for the first time on September 9th. Again, in mid- October, while Satoko was in Tokyo, Katsuko and Tomiko attended Tokyo Lutheran church. Sermons, by Pastor Sekino, during both services, handbells, hymns, organ music, and senior people's testimony, were all a part of the Holy Spirit and it blew strongly enough to touch Katsuko's heart and made her a child of God. Now she is a sister in Christ standing with all of us! Alleluia!!



## GRADUATION/ENTRANCE CEREMONIES

In Japan, the new academic year starts in April. Therefore, Hitoshi was invited to the graduation and entrance services to preside and to preach. He was in charge for Jiaien's Senior High-school Students' Graduation service, for two kindergarten graduations, for one kindergarten entrance, and for both graduation and entrance services at the YMCA Japanese language school, in Kumamoto, during March and April. After the YMCA graduation service, an English-speaking Filipina graduate and her father talked to Hitoshi, "Father (since Hitoshi was wearing a clergy shirt), although my daughter studied Japanese here, because she studied all subjects in English in the Philippines, I hope she can continue attending English worship service while she is in Kumamoto." Hitoshi learned that the International Service in Kumamoto is not well-known to English speaking people living here...so the poster is currently being created (see the picture) to encourage international communities, in Kumamoto, to attend in the near future. Hitoshi and Satoko pray strongly that this will be a reality.

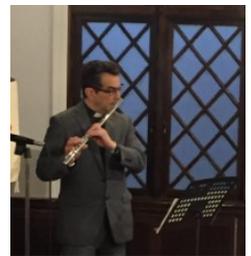


## BEAUTIFUL CHERRY BLOSSOM SEASON

In Japan, the cherry blossoms bloom, in full, from the end of March to early April. Because they were so beautiful this year, one of the junior high and high school meetings and one Bible Study group gathered under the cherry blossoms at night. Hitoshi learned that the name Sakura (a Japanese word meaning Cherry Blossoms) has its origins from a word meaning that God exists in every single cherry blossom flower. You may think that the triune God, who is Omnipresent, and the meaning of Sakura are seemingly incomprehensible ideas. However, with time and study His truth will be revealed to you.

## INT'L. SERVICE PREACHED by REV. POUKKA

Second Sunday of Easter, International Service had the wonderful opportunity to listen to Rev. Martti Poukka, from Finland, preach. People were concerned that not enough advance notice was given and usually on the Sunday following Easter, the number of worship attendees is much smaller. However, more than 30 people (currently less than 20 participants on average) attended the service. He preached about the text from Luke where the two disciples who left Jerusalem to go to Emmaus and the disciples who remained in Jerusalem were re-connected because of the Resurrection. The relationship among brothers and sisters in the resurrected Christ is very strong. Rev. Poukka's personal history is also characterized by a strong relationship between him and his friends in Christ that overlapped with the text well. During the service, Rev. Poukka played the flute beautifully and the children enjoyed Finnish children's hymns.



## CAN YOU SPEAK JAPANESE?

Hitoshi was asked by Kyushu Gakuin (junior high and high school started by the Lutheran Church over 100 years ago) to teach Old Testament to eighth graders three times a week. He did not have high school teaching credentials, in Japan, so he applied for temporary credentials from the Kumamoto prefectural government. He and the school had a strict examination of documents, since Hitoshi is an American citizen and the diploma submitted was from Luther Seminary in English, Hitoshi's Japanese fluency was questioned. The prefectural staff requested an interview with Hitoshi. His bachelor's degree from an accredited Japanese university was requested and it was submitted on time. Prefectural government officials finally approved Hitoshi credentials and he started teaching. Hitoshi was reminded about the text from Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate." and he was humbled by the situation. He has great hope for teaching students who may become missionaries in the future.

### 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](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).