



Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC)

Congregations in Kumamoto

Rev. Hitoshi and Satoko Adachi

ELCA Missionary and Associate

THANK YOU AND BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF MR. BUSKIRK

As reported Satoko is temporally in California though, Hitoshi and Satoko are truly thankful for all your continued support, thoughts, and prayers. And because of your prayers, ultimately almighty God is enabling this wonderful ministry in Kumamoto. While Satoko is in California, one of Kumamoto International Service attendees often comes to Hitoshi's house now and helps children learn English and play. His name is Mr. Mason Allen Buskirk originally from Kunkletown, Pennsylvania. Hitoshi believes that Mr. Buskirk's activities will be further mentioned in future newsletters.



MINISTRIES IN KUMAMOTO DURING THE WORLD PANDEMIC

It was reported in the previous newsletters that the numbers of new cases of COVID19 were 5 in February, 9 in March, and 34 in April. Therefore, all Sunday services at three congregations Hitoshi and Satoko are serving were either streaming or worshipping at home since Easter Sunday. Not only congregations but also other businesses or any other sort of gatherings were very cautious. Therefore, the spreading of Coronavirus was well controlled and the numbers of new cases were only one in May and one in June in Kumamoto. Therefore, the services were resumed either on May 31st or June 7th. Also, the Kyushu Gakuin high school where Hitoshi teaches Old Testament was resumed in June, and Bible studies and brief services at Jiaien facilities were gradually resumed, but were implemented in different ways to reduce the risk of infections. The picture shows one of the tools (mouth shield) Hitoshi uses when he speaks or preaches. In Tokyo, over 50 new cases per day were recently reported and people's movement across prefectures already started in June, therefore, every effort of preventing infections is being continued in Kumamoto, too.



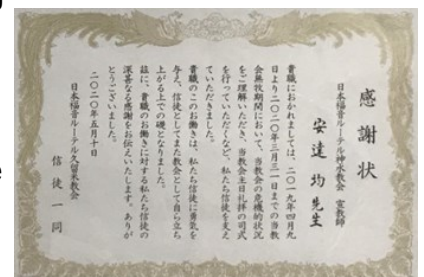
WEEDS AND TREES GROW REGARDLESS OF THE PANDEMIC

In May, six members of Kuwamizu Lutherans spent a whole morning mowing weeds and trimming. As a matter of fact, several trees were even dangerous for neighbors, and a few branches needed to be professionally cut. Very fortunately, one of Kuwamizu's members, Mr. Kazuo Takeda is a professional gardener and landscape architect and helped a lot for this important mission. The picture shows him cutting a branch with a chainsaw he brought and the horizontal white rope tied to the end of the branch and the other end of the rope was pulled by a few other volunteers including Hitoshi (although not in the picture) so that the branch would not hit the neighbor's house (roof). This article is short, but they worked very hard for their neighbors' safety and also for their health in very hot and humid weather.



CERTIFICATE OF THANKS

In the March newsletter, Hitoshi reported that he had the privilege to preach at Kurume Lutheran Church, one of the historic Lutheran Churches in Japan. The reason he went there was that they did not have a pastor and many pastors in Kyushu and even from Tokyo were helping the congregation for about 12 months. Then, they called a new permanent pastor beginning April 1st. They reflected upon how the congregation was supported during critical times and sent their certificate of thanks to all pastors supporting them. Hitoshi received one of these certificates, as shown in the picture. By receiving this, Hitoshi felt the lay people's warm hearts and that he and the congregation together are the part of the family that God creates.



GOD'S GRACE IN THE MIDST OF CHANGES: HITOSHI'S REFLECTION

When Hitoshi became over 40 years old while working for a medical device company, he noticed that plans often needed to be changed. For example, almost 10 years after he joined the company, he was supposed to be assigned to a subsidiary in the UK at the start of the European Union, however something went wrong, and the plan was changed. Several years later Hitoshi was assigned to come to the US, but then an important colleague who was leading the software engineering team was suddenly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The development plan needed to be changed. When Hitoshi reflects upon those incidents, he now feels that God was guiding people towards a good direction even though he, his colleagues, and their families went through challenging times.

The current pandemic is affecting many people and some are forced to change their future plans. For Hitoshi and Satoko, they had many plans for the summer. Satoko planned to come back to California by the end of May to keep her permanent resident status and to renew her re-entry permit. On July 4th, Hitoshi planned to join her in California first, then the two of them were to visit supporting congregations/ individuals/ synods in July and early August and attend the Summer Missionary Conference in Chicago at the end of July. Also, they were to meet their first grandson in California and Hitoshi was asked to preside over the wedding for their eldest son, Shin and his fiancé Pi on Saturday, August 15th, at their home in California. After that they would come back to Japan and visit their parents in the Tokyo area, then come back to Kumamoto by the end of August.



However, Satoko's flight in May was cancelled in April and ELCA travel agents had already noticed that the number of flights in May would be further reduced, so Satoko suddenly flew back to California at the end of April. Hitoshi's flight on July 4th was finally cancelled in the middle of June and Hitoshi abandoned plans to return to the US, because if he goes back to the US to officiate the wedding for a few days, the Japanese government would reject a US citizen's re-entry unless they returned to the US for a funeral or his or her surgery in the US. Although Hitoshi is unable to attend the wedding, this was a wonderful opportunity for him to consult with his Bishop and an Assistant to the Bishop about how the wedding will be realized. They felt that God is guiding their situations towards something ultimately good.

As reported Hitoshi and Satoko made many elementary student friends. Hitoshi still enjoys the friendship with them even after school started because they still visit often and feed Momo and spend an hour for drawings, singing together, and learning English. The pictures are drawn by them.

One of Kuwamizu's members spoke to Hitoshi with a big smile, "Pastor Adachi, thank you for being

with us this whole summer." Although Hitoshi felt some mixed emotions, her words comforted him and made him think that we are all in God's family.

Hitoshi and Satoko pray for those that lost loved ones due to the coronavirus and those struggling with the virus, any sort of disease, or social/economic issues. Many people in the world are facing the need to change their future plans. Hitoshi prays for them to realize God's grace and mercy is working, in their lives, even during drastic changes. Amen.

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 Missionaries" 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.