



*Together, the Body of Christ;
Individually, Its Parts" 1*

Corinthians 12:27

JAUC is a Christian community seeking to reach out, especially to Japanese and those who are interested in Japan in the greater New York City area, with the purpose of sharing faith in Christ and growing together in Christian discipleship through worship, fellowship, study, evangelism and mission.

☞ Pastor's Message ☞

Time and Memories We use the word "time" quite often in our conversation. What are some of its characteristics? ☐ Time is given to everyone equally. By that I mean one hour is sixty minutes for everyone, one day twenty-four hours for everyone, one week seven days for everyone, one year 365 days for everyone, so on and so forth. Also, time is measured quantitatively. That is, we think of it in terms of being short or long. Jesus' life on earth was short, whereas the life span of a centenarian is three times as long as his. Then, too, time does not come back. For example, I am writing this sentence at 10:52 a.m., December 23. Nothing can bring back the time prior to it. ☐ We feel desolate, empty, and precarious whenever we live only in time. Ecclesiastes cries out, "What gain have the workers from their toil?" (3: 9) It is a cry of one who knows only the fleeting nature of time. But fortunately we are given something other than time. We call that something memories. Some have more; others have less. They are not shared equally. ☐ Memories are measured by the impact they create in us. The disciples lived with Jesus for only three years. But those three years gave the disciples meaning and power that cannot be measured by time. Contrary to time, memories return to us constantly. Church history is the record of those Christians whose lives were transformed and sustained by the memories of Jesus. ☐ Now we have entered the year of our Lord 2011. Let us brush up our memories of Christ. Let us refresh them as we participate in worship, prayer, study, and service. In so doing, we will be empowered to live joyfully and lovingly in the present, freed from emptiness, meaninglessness, and desolation that captivate this world of ours.

☞ Sunday Worship Sermons ☞

■ **Nov. 21 "Let Us Walk on Water" Matthew 14:22-33** The Puritans celebrated the first Thanksgiving in the fall of 1621 in Plymouth, Mass. The previous winter had been a living hell

and one half of the original settlers had died from starvation and ill health. Those who were fortunate to survive persevered with their fervent faith in God that enabled them to carry on. Their faith was crystallized in the Letter to the Hebrews: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11: 1) It was this faith that empowered them to be hopeful in the midst of hopelessness. After the winter, the Puritans planted various crops with the help of kind hearted Native Americans. They knew God was with them. Without their trust in the goodness and power of God, there would have been no thanksgiving. ☐ A well-known miracle story is Jesus walking on water. It is a profound illustration of the audacious faith of the Puritans. At his encouragement, Peter climbs out of the boat and bravely begins to walk on water toward Jesus. But seeing the dark clouds above and the turbulent waters below, he becomes afraid and begins to sink. Jesus reaches out to him and grabs hold of him. He never lets him go. ☐ The Puritans saw themselves in Peter. Like Peter, they almost drowned but Jesus was with them. In the first Thanksgiving, the Puritans thanked God not only for the bumper crop of the fall of 1621. Most of all, they gave their heartfelt thanks to God for his grace that sustained them when they were in despair, his love that encouraged them when they were discouraged, and his mercy that gave them hope when they were hopeless. ☐ Today we are celebrating Thanksgiving 379 years later, to be exact. Let us walk on water with Christ. Jesus does not promise us an easy life. But he promises us a good life, a fulfilled life, and a hopeful life. On this Thanksgiving Sunday, let us affirm together that Jesus invites us, even us, to walk on water with Him.

■ **Dec.5 "The Wolf shall live with the Lamb" Isaiah 11:6-10**

"The wolf shall live with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." This is the glorious promise of God articulated by the prophet Isaiah. "The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." Of course, the world in which Isaiah lived was different. But when the Messiah comes, says Isaiah, the devouring and killing and threatening will be no more. Instead, "The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah spoke these words in a period of history in which his nation was plundered by the empire of Babylon and his people were in exile. ☐ Almost 500 years after Isaiah, the Christ child was born in the manger. The Gospel proclaims that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah's amazing promise, "The wolf shall live with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." Those words were fulfilled in Jesus. How can we say that the child in the manger surrounded by domestic animals, his carpenter father and teenage mother, the non-Jewish wise men and the poverty stricken shepherds is our

Messiah? □The answer lies in the fact that the purpose of the Messiah is tearing down the dividing walls of hostility between God and humans and a human and another human. Only Jesus can bring reconciliation into reality. Thirty some years after his birth, he gave his life to us so that we might live. For, after all, what makes human life truly human are serenity, tenderness, quietness, compassion, and love. Jesus is all of these.

❖ Building Repair Report ❖

Building Restoration Team Report We are pleased to report that the 4th floor apartment is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The new door to the outdoor terrace at the back of the sanctuary was put in as well as 2 new clear glass entrance doors in the front! The back wall repointing has also been completed. There are several stages to the work on the roof and it is proceeding on schedule. The 3rd floor office windows have been put in and office staff are delighted to see sunlight in the office. The AC / heating units have also been installed. Thankfully these are coming in just in time since the cold weather is upon us! □Phase 1 is almost completed. The Restoration Team has been meeting regularly on Thursday night to continue discussing what other work needs to be done. The Finance team is working on the funding and payments to the contractors and we are in the process of discussing fundraising ideas. Details of further repairs and updates will be reported at the Annual Meeting. Please join us if you are interested in helping with the fundraising efforts or the building restoration discussions. We thank you for your support and assistance. Please pray for the work of the Bldg. Restoration Team that we may follow God's leading in the way that we should go.

❖ Preparation for Children's Summer Camp ❖

The planning for Children's Summer Camp has started! This year, SMJ (Special Ministry to the Japanese)'s "Children Discovery Camp" will be held at Camp Quinipet, on Shelter Island, from July 10 to July 22. This Camp is a place where children can meet Christ through programs and fellowship with other kids and counselors, and it is gradually becoming a well known event in the NY Japanese community. The fee is \$1,300 per child. This camp started as JAUC's Summer Children's School nearly three decades ago. We want to support this as much as we can! Brochures with details will be printed in January, so please forward the brochures to households with small children. There will be informatory meetings at JAUC and other churches in May. We are also calling for camp counselors and offerings. This year, Rev. Jun

Yoshimatsu of Good Shepherd Church in NJ will serve as the Camp Director.

❖ Church News ❖

□ **Jan. 8, 2-5pm Open House at the Manse (Parsonage)** Members and friends of JAUC are invited to visit the Manse in Flushing to welcome the New Year and to see the recent improvements made to the house, There will be a sign-up sheet with directions to the Manse in the Fellowship Hall.

□ **Church Annual Meeting** The JAUC Annual Meeting will be held on Jan. 30. The Annual Report will be published one week before the Meeting. If you are a church member, please pick up and read the Report carefully before the Annual Meeting.



□ **Baptism** Ms. Tomoko Suzuki and Ms. Fumiko Kitada were baptized at the Dec. 12 Sunday service and have joined our congregation. Congratulations to both!!

□ **Our Christmas Program** JAUC Christmas Worship Service was held on Dec. 19, with a potluck lunch in the afternoon. We are happy that several new comers attended. Immediately before the service, eight church members sang Christmas carols in front of church. Some pedestrians stopped and listened to their singing. On Dec. 24, the Christmas Eve Service was held from 7pm and about 40 people attended.

□ **New Year's Eve** The program "Spending New Year's Eve at church," which started two years ago, will be held again at JAUC on Dec. 31. Ms. Noriko Kumada will play the organ and the Kokolo Gospel Choir will sing praises.

□ **Japanese Bible Study** Rev. Suzuki's Bible Study meeting is held on the 3rd floor of JAUC every Sunday (except the 1st) from 1:15pm. We are now studying about Paul's mission trip.

□ **Rev. Masahiko Sagara's leaving** Rev. Masahiko Sagara, the coordinator of SMJ (Special Ministry to the Japanese), completed his three-year term and will return to Japan mid-February. Rev. Sagara also served as the director of the Children Summer Camp, and often preached at JAUC as a guest speaker. We express our sincere gratitude for his faithful service. Rev. Sagara plans to work in Tokyo.

□ **VIP Meeting:** The November VIP meeting was held at JAUC on Nov. 11. Ms. Yukiko Tanaka, a former JAUC member and the music director of St. John's Church in NJ, played the piano and gave a brief testimony. She told how God guided her heart to think "because God loves me, let's play the piano to express my gratitude for His Love" and how this conviction changed her practice. This monthly meeting of Japanese Christians living in NY and NJ is held at JAUC every second Monday, from 7:15pm.

□ **Equipper Conference** Four JAUC people will go to California to attend the "Equipper Conference," a bi-annual six-day Christian retreat held by the Japanese American Christian Fellowship (JCFN) from December 27 to January 1. Mr. and Mrs. George Honyashiki will also attend the conference from Tokyo. Before going to the conference, Mrs. Miki Honyashiki visited New York and enjoyed fellowship with her old friends in JAUC.

□ **Gratitude for Volunteers** We would like to express our gratitude to two former restaurant chefs, Mr. Akira Suzuki and Mr. Keiji Suzuki, who help prepare delicious lunches for us very often. Since the lunch fee is low they volunteer to go to Chinatown to buy ingredients so that the cost can be kept down. Whenever we see them in the kitchen, we are happy knowing that there will be another nice lunch today. Their wives, Mrs. Kaoru Suzuki and Ms. Moto Suzuki, help their husbands with the cooking. We thank ALL helpers who volunteer their services.

☞ My Favorite Bible Verse ☞

Mr. Dean Kusakabe Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." □ **Mr. Osamu Sagae** John 15:13-15: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My father I have made known to you." □ **Ms. Junko Noguchi** "Mary's word 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38) is my favorite verse. No, it is not just a favorite; it is my hope in life. I also love Jesus' prayer at the Mt. Olive: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will,

but as You will." (Matthew 26:39) I am very selfish, and most of my prayers are out of self-concerns. So many concerns over health and human relationship, anxiety, and anger fill me. Since this world is filled with absurdity, I am always confused. But Jesus' prayer overwhelms such things and shows me the meaning of life. It makes clear who I am in this world. Yes, God is the Lord of this world, and I am not mine but God's. It is God who placed me here, and it is out of His Grace. In the year 2011, I will pray that God will make me a believer who entrusts all to and in Him.

☞ Prayer Requests ☞

Please remember the following people in your prayers: Roberto Acevedo, Rev. Barbara Alexander, Hisayo Asai, Kumiko Bauman (who had brain surgery on Oct. 24), Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Rev. Arthur Kamitsuka, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Harry Kuwada, Fumiko Matsumoto, George Mukai (Bayside), George Mukai (Isabella Home), Mariko Nakamaru (who recently had eye surgery), Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi (from Westminster Japanese Church, Atlanta GA), Hisako Okuda, Akira Yamazaki (Ms. Horiuchi's brother), Kimi Yuzawa

JAUC Small Group Ministry

Small Group is the JAUC program for church members ☞ spiritual growth. Through fellowship in a group, we will think and share how we can live as Christians in our daily lives. You may join one of the small groups below which you expect to meet your need. The following schedules are subjected to temporary changes. Please check the ☞ Church Activity News ☞ section of JAUC Newsletter and see whether there is any change.

- SG1. Bilingual Women's Group: 2nd & 4th Saturdays 1pm at Sonoda's
- SG2. Japanese Women's Group: 2nd Tuesdays 11am at Kusakabe's
- SG3. Bilingual Men's Group: 2nd & 4th Sundays 9:30 at JAUC (Kusakabe)
- SG4. Japanese Small Group: 2nd Sundays 2pm at JAUC (Kasuga)
- SG5. "The Vine" Japanese: 4th Sundays 2pm at JAUC (Kobayashi)
- SG6. "Testimony & Prayer Meeting": Last Friday 7pm at Sagae's
- SG7. English Small Group: 3rd Sundays 1:30pm at JAUC (Yoshida)

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