



*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

◆ Pastor's Message ◆

Love Your Enemy - Is This Meaningless Idealism? A few days ago, I turned on television and caught a glimpse of a pro-Mubarak Egyptian shouting at an American reporter. "Love your enemy – that's ridiculous!" I don't know in what context that outburst was made, but such a sentiment is quite common. A Japanese student once told me that Jesus was a dreamy idealist. I am sure what he had in mind was Jesus' well known words, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' (Matthew 5:44) ◆ Are these words soothing and yet powerless? Do they have anything relevant to offer to today's world where enmity and hatred are rampant? Here it is important to point out that loving enemies is not the same as liking them. Loving your enemies is seeing them as persons loved by God as much as He loves you. ◆ When I was a child during the war living in a small village, there was a boy I could not stand, because he was a bully. One day I cooked up a plot to take him down a bit. As I was waiting at the school gate, the boy came with his dad. His dad was holding his son's hand! It was strange how suddenly the boy changed in my eyes. He was no longer a bully but a mere boy who was loved as much as I was loved. I continued to dislike him, but I dropped my scheme to take him down. I realized that he and I were held together by love. ◆ To repeat, loving your enemies is to see them as persons loved by their parents, spouses, children, friends, and, most of all, by God. Love is certainly not powerless. Jesus is not a dreamy idealist. Love is the foundation of our hope in the midst of hopelessness. It is the only power that brings about reconciliation among us humans.

◆ Sunday Worship Sermons ◆

■ **Jan.9 "Crisis of Faith and the Work of God" Isaiah 55:8-11** The people of Israel lived in the darkest years in 6th and 7th centuries B.C. when they were taken to Babylonia and Assyria as hostages and slaves. In those desperate years, people were compelled to ask themselves, "Does God really care? Does he know I exist?" What they experienced was a crisis of faith of

the most serious nature. It was the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Hosea who consoled their people, "Of course, God cares. Be patient. Keep the faith." ◆ And yet, the prophets were also convinced that when all the chips were down, no human beings deserved God's forgiveness. Human beings need forgiveness but do not deserve it. All the prophets could say was, "We cannot think God's thoughts. God will do it his own way." This was what Isaiah meant when he declared, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." ◆ The New Testament solves this theological dilemma. The answer is this: God took the consequences of our wretchedness upon himself. In Jesus Christ, God took the consequences of our sin upon himself for our sake. Jesus died for us. ◆ This solution of the theological dilemma is so profound that reason and logic cannot fully comprehend it. All we can do is to accept it in gratitude and faith. God cares, God knows, God loves more than we ever know. God sacrificed himself for us. This was done once and for all in Jesus Christ.

■ **Jan. 16 "I am the Way" John 14:1-7** Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." What did he mean by that? It means that Jesus is the revelation of God's radically new way of thinking and living. His way is different from what the conventional wisdom of this world teaches us. It was the value system of the first century Jewish society. ◆ For one thing, it taught that wealth and success were the measures of the worth of human life. This teaching was cruel to the poor and downtrodden who occupied more than 90% of the entire population. The second characteristic of the value system of the first century Jewish society was that it divided people by gender and ethnicity. The third characteristic of the first century Jewish value system was that it justified discrimination by insisting that it was the will of God. In other words, it taught that God was the God only for the Jews, only for men, and only for the rich and well to do. ◆ Now Jesus absolutely denied all this. If you follow its way, you will lose your true humanity. You will die. Contrary to the conventional wisdom of the first century Jewish society, Jesus invited everyone to his table. Jews and Samaritan alike. Men and women side by side. The rich and the poor, the noble and the despised next to each other. The dividing walls of hostility were overcome. ◆ This happened 2000 years ago. What does all this have to do with us? It means that we need Jesus, because we, too, chase wealth and success as the measure of human worth, fail to question male domination in our society, and often harbor ethnic prejudice. Jesus is the way, Jesus is the truth, Jesus is the life.

◇ JAUC Annual Meeting ◇

The JAUC Annual Congregational Meeting was held at our church on January 30, from 1:30pm. By vote, Ms. Junko Noguchi, Ms. Rika Marubashi Downs, and Ms. Chizuko Imado were elected / re-elected as the new Board of Directors members (serving 2011-2013). Ms. Downs and Mr. Ken Kurihara will serve as the co-chairs of the Board. Ms. Gerri Yoshida, Ms. June Goldberg, and Ms. Kaori Ichikawa were elected as new Board of Trustees members (serving 2011-2012). Ms. G. Yoshida will serve as the chair of the Trustees. The Congregation approved the 2011 Church Budget Plan, printed on the Annual Report.

◇ Building Repair Report ◇

Building Restoration Progress Report: The 4th floor apartment is completed and will be used for a period of time by the Sunday School. The new heat unit will make the space much more inviting and healthy. Work on the roof continues although it has been slowed by the weather. Repair of the facade tiles cannot be done until the weather becomes warmer. New doors have been placed at the entrance to the roof and to the elevator house. Grills were installed onto the windows of the Church Office. ♦ Please take time to visit the apartment - the denominational representatives who attended the Annual Meeting favorably agreed with the improvements. You will notice the flooring and kitchen cabinets are of bamboo, environmentally renewable materials. ♦ On Sunday, March 13, from 1:15pm, we will have a joint meeting of Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees to report and discuss the total amount of the repair fee which has already been spent, and to plan for the future budget, and future plans. Anyone who is interested is welcome. Please continue to pray for the Team as it looks forward to the next steps that need to be made.

◇ Preparation for Children's Summer Camp ◇

This year, the SMJ (Special Ministries to Japanese) "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 is gradually becoming a well known event in the NY Japanese community. The fee is \$1,300 per child for 2 weeks. This camp started as JAUC's Summer Children School nearly three decades ago. We want to support the camp as much as possible! Brochures along with details are ready for distribution, so please forward them to

households with small children. 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 ◇

■ **Pastor's Vacation** Rev. and Mrs. Yugo Suzuki will take a vacation from Feb. 8 to Feb 24 and travel to the Holy Land. Please pray for their safe trip. Rev. Takako Terino will deliver a sermon during the Sunday service on Feb. 13. For the Feb. 20 service, Rev. Hiroshi Obayashi, a professor of Rutgers University, will serve as a guest speaker.

■ **Lent Church Schedule** The season of Lent is coming soon. On Ash Wednesday (March 9), there will be an evening service at JAUC. During Lent, on Wednesday evening, Rev. Suzuki will hold a study session teaching the meaning of our Lord's Suffering. Please join if you can.

■ **Church Cleaning** Our annual church cleaning is scheduled for Saturday, March 26. We need many helpers! Please come!

■ **Altar Flower Arrangement** The Worship Committee is looking for volunteers who can arrange the altar flowers for Sunday worship service. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Sayoko Yoshida or Mr. Osamu Sagae.

■ **Rev. Masahiko Sagara's leaving** Rev. Masahiko Sagara, the coordinator of SMJ (Special Ministries to Japanese), completed his three-year term and will return to Japan in mid-February. In Japan, he will work at Aoyama Gakuin High School in Tokyo.



Rev. Sagara also served as the director of the Children Summer Camp, and often preached at JAUC as a guest speaker. To express our gratitude, we invited Rv. Sagara to the Fujinkai meeting on Jan. 16. Showing the photos of his missionary activities in NY by powerpoint, he shared the memories of his pastoral life in Japan and NY: "The foundation of the richness of our lives is God's Word. No matter how difficult way we have to go, if it is God's Will and we obey His Will, God will surely protect us."

■ **VIP Meeting:** The January VIP meeting was held at JAUC on Jan. 13, and Rev. Hiroshi Tateishi of Greenwich Japanese Church delivered a message based on Isaiah 6: "God is so pure

that if we go to Him directly, we will perish immediately, as Isaiah cries in this Scripture. However, because Christ died for us and cover us with His righteousness, we can now meet God face to face. We must keep this fact in our mind and turn to God seriously so that He purifies us and make us His worthy instruments.” ♦ The next VIP meeting will be held on Feb. 14. Rev. Masahiko Sagara will deliver a message. This monthly meeting of Japanese Christians is held at JAUC every second Monday, at 7:15pm. ♦ On Feb. 28, VIP will hold a concert of Mr. Noboru Morishige, a Japanese Christian guitarist, at JAUC.

■ **Conference** The “Equipper Conference,” a Christian retreat held by the Japanese American Christian Fellowship (JCFN), took place in CA from Dec. 27 to Jan. 1. 5 JAUC members and friends had been planning on participating, but due to flight cancellations caused by the blizzard, only Ms. Chizuko Imado could go. On Jan. 15, the New York branch of JCFN held a meeting at JAUC to give a summary of the Conference. Three people who had attended the event shared their experiences.

■ **Mr. Mukai’s Moving** Mr. George Mukai, who had been living in Isabella Home, moved to New Hampshire in January.

■ **News from Friends Aboard** Mr. and Mrs. Kazunori Tabe safely arrived in India on Dec. 8. ♦ Ms. Hiroko Shimoda, who was baptized at JAUC in 2003, is now living in Australia and has safely delivered a male boy in January, named Yuma.

■ **Rev. Sasamori’s New Book / Church Library** Rev. Takemi Sasamori, the pastor of our sister church Komaba Eden Church, published the second collection of his poems *The Songs of Prayer and Praise*. A Japanese copy is in the Church Library. ♦ Two English books were purchased for the Library. They are: Adam Hamilton’s *Enough: Discovering Joy through Simplicity and Generosity*; E. Egan and K. Egan’s *Blessed are You: Mother Teresa and the Beatitudes*. Please check them!

◆ My Favorite Bible Verse ◆

Ms. Noriko Kurihara Mark 1:40-42 “And a leper came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.”

◆ Prayer Requests ◆

Please remember the following people in your prayers: Roberto Acevedo, Rev. Barbara Alexander, Hisayo Asai, Kenneth

Burns (Ms. Yoshie Burns’ father-in-law), Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Rev. Arthur Kamitsuka, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Harry Kuwada, Fumiko Matsumoto, George Mukai (Bayside), George Mukai (now in New Hampshire), 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

◆ The Story of the Beginning of JAUC ◆

JAUC was created in 1953 by uniting three Japanese churches in NY City. The oldest one, the Japanese Methodist Church, was founded in 1893. The story of the beginning of this church is amazing: A young layman named Kinya Okajima, driven by his zeal to share the Gospel with Japanese people in NY, *walked from Oregon to NY*. He was introduced to Ms. Nancy Campbell, a former university professor who was managing a Sunday School for Chinese. Okajima started teaching with her and brought some Japanese men working in the Brooklyn Navy Yard to her class. Soon he opened a small missionary station by the Navy Yard. This tiny missionary post, who had only 20 or less members, became the origin of JAUC. ♦ The pastor who baptized Okajima is Rev. Sadakichi Kawabe. He, who became a Christian in San Francisco in 1887, later became an important leader of the Free Methodist Church in Japan. The pastor who baptized Rev. Kawabe is Rev. Merriman Harris. Rev. Harris had been to Japan as a missionary and taught at the Sapporo Agriculture School. There he led young Kanzo Uchimura, who later became a prominent theologian, to faith. ♦ Thus through Harris-Kawabe-Okajima, JAUC is connected with the main current of Christianity in modern Japan. But what is most inspiring is, the origin of our church, continuing for more than 120 years, is a tiny missionary post founded by a young layman. God be praised!

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)

