



***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 ◆

Since this is my last "Message from the Pastor," let me reflect on my five years at JAUC as your pastor. ◆ On the first Monday morning, I stood foolishly in front of the church not being able to get in. The door did not budge. Later Mrs. Yoshida, our church secretary, taught me how to open the stubborn lock. "After inserting the key, pull it just a tiny bit toward you and slowly turn it counter-clockwise. The door may open." From then on, my motto was, "Pull the key just a tiny bit and turn it counter-clockwise..." ◆ I learned quickly that most JAUC members became Christian after they came to the States. Some immigrated from Japan more than thirty years ago. Some were company workers in NYC, some were on a student visa, some were on research, some married American citizens, some were American born, both young and old, so forth and so on. Imagine there had not been JAUC. Chances were they might not have become Christian. Reflecting on that possibility, I was impressed more than ever with the importance of our church that is JAUC. ◆ I was honored to baptize people into the Christian faith. Some were young. Some were middle-aged. Some were elderly. I would like to point out at the risk of repetitiveness that without JAUC they might not have heard Christ's message, let alone been baptized. God entrusted JAUC with the awesome responsibility to put down roots in the soil of NYC to be his important instrument. ◆ My first duty at JAUC was to prepare sermon manuscripts both in English and Japanese. Many years ago, I was pastor to the English-speaking congregation of a Japanese-American church in Seattle. There the only language I preached in was English. While I was serving in Japan as dean of chaplains at Aoyama Gakuin in Tokyo and a cooperative pastor at a local church, I preached in Japanese. Here at JAUC, I preached in both, because English-speaking people, bi-lingual people, and Japanese-speaking people worship together on Sunday. That is a wonderful thing and I would not change it for anything. So even though bi-lingual preaching required considerable time in preparation, I never thought of it as a burden. ◆ Since our arrival at JAUC, four babies have been born. The number of

Sunday School children is gradually increasing. The teachers are doing a good job. Let us hope that those children will grow up to be the backbone of JAUC. ◆ I have enjoyed immensely my ministry at JAUC. But, at the same time, allow me to be frank to point out its pitfall. That pitfall is its tendency to be ingrown. Unless it is constantly reminded of that tendency, JAUC may become an island to itself separated from the two denominations to which it belongs. ◆ Let me cite only two examples. At JAUC, an observer often speaks out and gives his/her personal opinion and even tries to change the direction of the discussion of a committee. This is totally unacceptable to both UMC and RCA. JAUC needs to acknowledge the common rule that an observer is allowed to speak only when he/she is asked by the committee for his/her opinion on a specific issue. ◆ Then, too, it is common knowledge that a committee member is to refrain from talking to outsiders of the committee about the content of the discussion that is currently going on. This does not mean worship of secrecy. Rather it is to prevent confusion, misunderstanding, and suspicion from boiling over among church members. After all, one person's opinion is just that; it may not be fair to other members of the committee. As far as I know, the only church that ignores those rules is JAUC. Let me be frank. That must change. ◆ I fervently pray that JAUC may be united in spirit under the leadership of a new pastor so that having achieved a successful soft-landing, it may fly high in the future spreading its wings like an eagle's. ◆ Elizabeth joins me in thanking each of you for including us in this great community.

◆ From Sunday Worship Sermons ◆

■ ***"The Core Basis of the Church" 2 Corinthian 13:5-13***
Jesus' message was earth shaking. But his ministry was confined to Galilee and Jerusalem. It was Paul who carried the good news of Jesus to Asian Minor, Greece, and finally to Rome. One of the churches Paul established was the church of Corinth, a large cosmopolitan city in Greece. The city had a large population of Gentiles and dispersed Jews. So it was an ideal place for evangelism. ◆ At first, Paul's ministry in Corinth was a big success. However, within a few years, the Corinthian church was rocked with dissension and infighting among its members who were called secularized Christians. They introduced unchristian ideas such as that the elders and deacons should be elected on the basis of social status, mellifluous voice, and eloquence of speech rather than commitment to Christ, earnestness in worship, and sincerity in prayer. Another thing was the fact that they showed little interest in worship and declared that non-participation in worship was OK, because they were saved by faith anyway.

We can sense Paul's profound aggravation and grief from his Letter to the Corinthians. "I write you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears." ♦ It teaches us that without worship, Christian faith will atrophy and our faith cannot exist for long. Paul refuses to compromise this point. More importantly Paul declares that God loves those who are faithful in worship, of course, but those who showed little interest in worship, as well. "God makes no distinction," he writes. God is absolute and unbounded love. ♦ So for Paul, the church is a worshipping community; also the church is a reconciling community. In the most well known passage of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul entreats his people; "God is reconciling the world to himself, entrusting God's message of reconciliation to us....You are called to be ambassadors for Christ." God uses all of us, even us, as his earthen vessels, as instruments of his grace, indeed, as ambassadors for Christ. None of us is left out.

■ **"Pentecost as the Beginning of the Church" Acts 2:1-13** In the earliest days of the Christian movement, the message of Jesus Christ was proclaimed only in two languages, Aramaic and Greek. For those who could not understand those two languages, the good news remained gibberish and made no sense. But on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' ascension, this situation changed. Since Pentecost was one of the important Jewish festivals, the city of Jerusalem was full of Jewish people visiting from many foreign countries such as Turkey, Syria, Libya, even Egypt. They spoke only their own native tongues. Then an amazing thing happened. The followers of Jesus who spoke only Aramaic and a smattering of Greek began to proclaim the Gospel in the visitors' languages, the Egyptian language, the Turkish language, the Syrian language, and the Libyan language in addition to Aramaic and Greek. ♦ How should we understand this story? The message it seeks to convey is clear: For the first time in their lives, this motley crowd was hearing the word of God in a way that they could understand. And what they heard struck straight home to their hearts. The Gospel of Jesus Christ can be expressed and understood by people of any language and nationality. The universality of Jesus' message - this is what the episode of Pentecost proclaims. ♦ The spirit of Pentecost may dawn upon JAUC and transform us. Would we pray for it? Or would we pretend to be indifferent? The choice is up to us. The choice is up to each one of us. Thanks be to God.



◇ Church Schedule ◇

■ **Farewell Program for Rev. and Mrs. Suzuki** Our pastor Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki will retire at the end of July 2011. To express our sincere gratitude for the faithful services which Rev. Suzuki and his wife Mrs. Elizabeth Suzuki have done for us for these five years, we will have a farewell program at JAUC on Sunday, July 24. The program will start from our regular worship service. In afternoon, there will be speeches, music, and gift-presentation. We are planning to order *obento* (lunch-boxes) for lunch. If you want one, please contact the Church Office by July 19 (\$5 for children / \$8 for adults per *obento*). We are making an album with personal messages for the Suzukis. Please get an album sheet from Ms. Gerri Yoshida. ♦ Though his pastoral duty will end on July 31, Rev. Suzuki will preach at JAUC on the 1st and 2nd Sunday as a guest speaker.

■ **Pastor Calling Process** The Pastor Calling Team in the Board of Directors is communicating with the denomination representatives to find good candidates for our new pastor.

■ **Children's Summer Camp** SMJ (Special Ministry to the Japanese) "Children's Discovery Camp" is being held at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island, from July 10 to July 22. This year, 22 children and 7 adults are participating. From JAUC, Moet Aita and Shinya Ishigami are attending, while Ms. Naoko Aita and Ms. Miyuki Sato are serving as camp counselors. Mr. Akio Iyoda is also participating as a staff.

■ **Fujinkai Bazaar** The Fujinkai held a bazaar on June 19 / 26, and \$1,526.76 was raised. Half of the proceeds will be donated to the Japan Earthquake Relief Fund while the remainder will go to the Building Restoration Fund. We thank all the people who donated items and helped with selling and clean-up.

■ **Spring Alpha Course** "Alpha," the introductory course for Christian Basics, started June 1. The sessions will be held every Wednesday, from 7PM. There will be 13 sessions ending August 3. You can join from any session. For further details, please contact Ms. Rika Marubashi Downs.

■ **Sunday School on Summer Vacation** Church School is on Summer Vacation till September. Have a great Vacation!

■ **Congregational Meeting for Building Restoration** The 2nd Congregational Meeting on our church's Building Restoration was held on Sunday, June 12. Details of the repair works which have been completed were reported. However, we still have to repair the tiles on the church front, and there is a need to clear several violations of the Fire and Building codes. After a Q&A session, the congregation approved the amount up to \$75,000 to cover the additional expenses of these items.

■ **Haruyama Scholarship Recipients** The committee meeting to decide the 2011/2012 recipients of the Justin Haruyama Scholarship was held on June 16, and Rev. John Himstra, Rev. Yugo Suzuki, Rev. Jun Yoshimatsu, Ms. Emi Kamihara, Ms.

Sayoko Yoshida, and Mr. Ken Kurihara attended (Ms. Sara Haruyama and Rev. Susumu Ando could not come). After discussions, the following ten seminary students were elected: Ms. Kristin Tomiye-Asami Ou (Fuller Theological Seminary, CA); Mr. Mitsunari Nakashima (Fuller); Ms. Jennifer Ikoma Motzko (McCormick Theological Seminary, IL); Ms. Ken Hiramatsu (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, MA); Mr. Seiichi Yaginuma (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, IL); Ms. Kyoko Murata (Asbury Theological Seminary, KY); Ms. Yumi Shoji (Gordon-Conwell); Mr. Arthur Wolf Rouzr (Fuller); Ms. Yuko Unehara (Drew Theological School, NJ).

◆ Earthquake Related News

■ **Japan Earthquake Relief Fund** By April 30, JAUC had collected \$12,629.50 for Japan earthquake relief and this amount was sent to the relief agencies of the United Methodist Church and Reformed Church of America. We are continuing to collect donations for earthquake victims.

■ **Mrs. Noriko Nishikori's Story** Mrs. Noriko Nishikori, the wife of Rev. Manabu Nishikori of the New Jersey Japanese Christian Church, worked as a volunteer nurse at the shelters in the areas destroyed by the March tsunami. She shared her experiences at the VIP Meeting on July 11. Especially painful were her stories about the tsunami survivors' trauma. Many people are still suffering from painful memories where they could not help their family or neighbors struggling in the water. Even children, who lost their classmates, are suffering from a sense of guilt. However, some survivors have been touched by the efforts of the volunteer workers and have regained a sense of hope.

◆ Church Members & Friends

■ **Engagements and Weddings!** Mr. Takumi Fukunaga and Ms. Naomi Mikami announced their engagement, and their wedding will be celebrated at JAUC on Saturday, Aug. 27. Congratulations!! Rev. Yugo Suzuki will officiate the ceremony. After the wedding, the couple will live in Long Island City. ◆ Mr. Jonathan Suzuki, Rev. Yugo Suzuki's son, will marry Ms. Kazuko Linda Sakamoto on Aug. 26.

■ **Baptism** On June 12, Ms. Mana Hashimoto and her daughter Yuu Loy were baptized. Congratulations! Ms. Hashimoto works as a professional dancer and recently performed at several charity events for the Japanese earthquake sufferers.

■ **Passing of Mr. Tatsuo Fujii** Mr. Tatsuo Fujii, a faithful member of JAUC for many decades, passed away on June 22. The memorial service was held at Rutherford, NJ, on June 25. Mr. Yoshio Narita, Ms. Takako Onuma and her family, Ms.

Noriko Kurihara and others attended the service. A wreath was sent from JAUC and the Men's & Women's Fellowship jointly. May God's comfort be with Mr. Fujii's wife Mrs. Sada Fujii and the other family members.

■ **Moving to Bulgaria** Ms. Rumiko Ishigami, a staff member of the Japanese Consul in New York, who was baptized at JAUC, has been reassigned to the Japanese Embassy in Sophia, Bulgaria. Ms. Ishigami and her family will leave NY in mid-August. Her son Shinya has been an active pupil of our Sunday School for these three years, and her husband helped with preparation for the cooking during our Thanksgiving Dinner.

◆ **Returning to Korea** Mr. Teddy Park, who has faithfully served at our Sunday School this one year, finished his studies and returned to Korea in June. May God guide the new lives of both the Ishigami Family and Mr. Park.

◆ Local Church Network

■ **Rev. Joe Suzuki Moved to Seattle** Rev. Joe Suzuki, the pastor of the New York Japanese Church in Tuckahoe, obtained a pastoral position at a Japanese church near Seattle (*Eiko Kiristo Kyokai*) and left NY on June 28. ■ **New SMJ Coordinator** Rev. Takako Terino of the Presbyterian Church will be the new coordinator of the SMJ (Special Ministry to Japanese). Her three-year term will start from Aug. 1.

■ **Doctorate Degree** This May, Rev. Jun Yoshimatsu received a Ph.D. degree in education from Columbia University.

◆ Prayer Requests

Please remember the following people in your prayers: The sufferers of the Earthquake in Japan, Rev. Barbara Alexander, Hisayo Asai, Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Rev. Arthur and Mrs. Lily Kamitsuka, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Harry Kuwada, Fumiko Matsumoto, George Mukai (Bayside), George Mukai (Oneonta), Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi (Westminster Japanese Church), 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.

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)