



***“Together, the Body of Christ;  
Individually, Its Parts” I 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 ◆

***Christian Stewardship: What God Expects from Us*** Among Christians, stewardship is often associated with “tithe” and “money.” While these associations are not wrong, Christian stewardship means more than that. It is giving time, talent, treasure, and, most of all, ourselves to God and neighbors. In short, its essence is expressed most concisely in the commandment, “Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love neighbors as much as you love yourself.” (Mark 12: 29-31) ◆ In this context, it is well for us to remember Jesus’ parable told in Matthew 24: 14-30. A master goes away on a trip. He leaves his treasure to his three servants: five thousand to the first servant, two thousand to the second, and one thousand to the third, telling each one of them to multiply them as much as they can. The first servant earns five thousand more and the second two thousand more. The third one, however, buries the money in the ground, unwilling to do anything with it. On returning, the master praises the first and second servants but scolds the third for his unwillingness to multiply what he was entrusted. ◆ The master is God and the servants are you and I. Let us not quibble on the difference of the amount of money they received, because that is not the point of the parable. The main point of the parable is this: the first and second servants multiplied their money. In short, they were faithful to the intention of God. The third one was indifferent to either God or neighbor. ◆ No further elaborations are necessary. Christian stewardship encourages us to be the first two servants. We are called to offer time, talent, treasure, and ourselves to glorify God and love our neighbors. October is stewardship month for JAUC. It is good time to contemplate the meaning of Jesus parable of the three servants for us all.

## ◆ Sunday Worship Sermons ◆

■ ***Sept.5 “Miracle in Cana: What Does It Mean?” John 2: 1-11*** Jesus performed many miracles. In order to understand them correctly, we need to focus our attention on their symbolic, metaphorical meaning. Without understanding what

they point to, those miracles are nothing more than magical acts with no lasting significance. With that in mind, let us examine the episode of a wedding in Cana reported in the Gospel of John. ◆ Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples were invited to a wedding in the village named Cana, a peasant village. Wedding banquets were one of the most festive occasions in the world of first-century Palestine especially in the peasant class. What made a wedding banquet truly festive was high quality grape wine. On normal days, the peasant could afford only low quality, sour grape wine. But at a wedding banquet, high quality wine was a must. If it ran out, that brought shame to the families of both the bride and the groom. Now Mary, Jesus’ mother, noticed that the wine was running out and was panic-stricken; even though she was just an invited guest. Jesus calmed her down and transformed 30 gallons of water into the best quality wine. ◆ This episode declares that with Jesus, wine never runs out. That means that when we are panic-stricken, when we become discouraged, when we fall into deep despair, Jesus never leaves us alone. He says, “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest.” This is what the episode of a wedding in Cana means.

## ■ ***Aug. 22 “Did Jesus Love His Critics too?” Luke 13:10-17***

The Bible is never tired of celebrating the God’s love. This is clear especially in Jesus’ healing episodes. One of them is about a woman who was bent over at the waste and had not been able to stand up straight for 18 years. Jesus healed her on the Sabbath. That caused considerable commotions among the elite, because according to the laws of Moses, the Jews were supposed to refrain from work on the Sabbath. Jesus completely disregarded this Sabbath law for this woman because healing was more important than the laws for Jesus. To make his point absolutely clear, Jesus declared that the woman belonged to the family of Abraham. That meant she was precious and infinitely worthy. He enabled her to affirm her humanity and to recover her human dignity. ◆ Did Jesus who loved the woman love his critic, too? Jesus’ words, “Hypocrite”, to his critic seem to be unusually harsh. And yet, he loved this hypocrite, this fraud as well by giving him the truth. What his critic needed was the truth that he was callous and cold and needed to change his heart. His love has an element of stringency, discipline, and rigor. As He did to the critic, he reveals who we are in no uncertain terms. That is how Jesus loves us. ◆ There is one more point for us to understand. The episode does not tell us if the critic repented and corrected his way or continued to be nasty and overbearing. You and I are asked to put our own conclusion to the story. Will we repent or stay complacent? Which way do we choose? Jesus

patiently waits for our response. Patience, too, is an expression of his love.

## ◆Repairs to Church Building◆

**The Building Restoration Team Report** Following the Congregational Meeting of June 27 which approved the request for a building inspection, the Team hired an architect, James Kruhly for this project. The inspection has been completed and we have received the reports. The need for repairs is significantly more urgent and widespread than initially thought. ◆Mr. Kruhly has prepared a list of work to be done in four phases and the reports were presented to the Board of Directors on Sept. 11. The BOD approved them and called a Congregational Meeting for Oct. 3 to approve the expenditure of up to \$250,000 for the first phase. This amount will be borrowed from investments which JAUC holds. The first phase is quite extensive and includes immediate repairs to the rear of the building which must be done before winter, installation of a new roof and renovations to the facade. Several code violations will also be corrected including the placement of windows in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Office and new front doors. ◆A letter has been sent to all JAUC members detailing the work to be done. Anyone wishing to read this report should contact either Rika Marubashi, Elizabeth Suzuki or JAUC Office. We ask each of you to pray for the work of this Team and the people who will be working for us in the months ahead.

## ◆Summer Camp and Retreat◆

**East Coast Japanese Christian Family Camp** The 3<sup>rd</sup> East Coast Japanese Christian Family Camp was held in Ellenville from Sept. 4 to Sept. 6. The total number of participants reached 380, 35 from JAUC. The guest speaker was Rev. Hiroshi Sakakibara, an influential pastor known by his TV evangelism and the director of World Vision Japan. The following is a brief summary of Rev. Sakakibara's messages: ◆(1) "Life shining in His Love" 1 John 4:7-11: "Today's Scripture reading starts with a salutation "Beloved." What an amazing Grace to be called "beloved" by Almighty God! Jesus risks (not only "risked"! His Life for our salvation and lives. Are we living, abiding in Him? From now on, let us walk our journeys of life, meditating on how much we are loved by God." (2) "Life in mission of blessing" Genesis 11:27-12:3: "The Bible suggests that Abraham and his family had been living a painful life in the land of the Chaldeans. God promised him 'you will be a blessing.' That means, Abraham himself would become a blessing by putting trust in God's Word and leaving his father's land. The key of our lives is, whether we say "yes" to God's calling I lost my 6-year-old son in a traffic

accident. It was so painful that I thought that I could not serve as a pastor any more. We sometimes feel that our lives are like wandering through a desert or wilderness. But the most important question we must ask ourselves is, are we still keep walking, trusting God's Love?" (3) "How we look like in God's Eyes" Isaiah 43:1-7: "I suffered from severe depression for 5 years when I was a teenager. I was always thinking about death, but when a church moved next door to my house, I heard about God. At that time I thought that I did not deserve to be loved by God. However, God tells us that we are 'precious and honored in [His] sight.' In God's eyes, the world is not perfect without you." (4) "Jesus, who bears our pain" Hebrew 2:17-18: "This Scripture part says that Jesus can save us because He Himself experienced suffering on this earth. At the funeral of my son, several married couples whom I had never met came to me, not saying anything, just shook my hand and shed tears. I later heard that they had similar experiences and had lost children too. I felt as if I met Christ Himself for the first time. Gradually, I started praying, 'Lord, grant me strength to work in place of my son.' Let us live as witnesses of our Lord in our workplaces and homes." ◆The famous Christian musician Makoto Iwabuchi and his wife



Yumiko also came to the Camp as music guests. They held a concert on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, and they shared the stories of their lives including their loss of a daughter

due to a brain tumor. There were many other programs such as testimonies, workshops, and small group discussions. All the participants had wonderful time. ◆We express our gratitude to Ms. Kaori Suzuki, who served as the window person for JAUC, and Mrs. Sayoko Yoshida, who arranged the bus transportation.

## ◆Church Activity◆

■**Alpha started!** The Alpha Course, an introductory course to Christianity, started on Sept. 22 and will continue for thirteen weeks. The sessions will be held every Wednesday from 7pm until Nov. 24. If you are interested in participating or volunteering, please contact Ms. Rika Downs or Ms. Gerri Yoshida.

■**New Hymnal Dedication – October 10** During the 11:00 Worship Service there will be a special Dedication of the new English hymnals which have recently been purchased.

Members and friends responded quickly and generously to this request. Please join us for this joyous occasion as we give thanks for this new aid for our worship at JAUC.

■ **VIP Meeting:** The June VIP meeting was held at JAUC on Sept. 13. Rev. KiSup Lee of Bryn Mawr Japanese Church delivered a message on Luke 4:18: "The Gospel has a real power to liberate us from sins, addictions, and past emotional wounds."

## ◇ Music Concerts ◇



### ■ Makoto & Yumiko Iwabuchi Concert

JAUC held a concert starring Mr. Makoto and Mrs. Yumiko Iwabuchi on Sept. 7. They sang many pieces including the songs written by the famous Christian artist

Tomihiro Hoshino and Sakie Yokota (her daughter was kidnapped by North Korea). Those who attended were deeply touched by their stories about their path toward Christ and the painful days after the death of their small daughter. The concert ends with the Iwabuchi's singing his famous song "God Bless You."

■ **"Hibaku Piano" Concert** JAUC had a "Music of Peace" concert at 3pm on Sep. 19, held by the Japanese peace group "The Executive Committee for Hibaku Piano Peace Concert at International Peace Day." The piano used at this concert, made in Germany around 1930, was partly destroyed when the atomic bomb struck Hiroshima but was later restored. Many scars on the backside the piano, left by the explosive wind of the bomb, are still visible. The music program included the praise music by the Cocolo Choir, a Japanese Gospel Choir in Harlem (the members include Ms. Noriko Kumada) and the songs for international peace sung by a joint choir of Japanese and American high school students. About 100 people attended.

■ **Music Group from Hinohara Church** A music group of seven members of Hinohara Church, where the late Ms. Kiyoko Murakami served as a pastor in the 1960s, will come to JAUC. They will have a small concert at 1pm on Sept. 26.

## ◇ Church Members News ◇

■ **Transfer of Membership:** Mr. Robert Acevedo recently transferred his membership to Marble Collegiate Church. He

stated that he had enjoyed his day at JAUC and expressed his gratitude to church members. **Ms. Mineko Maruyama**, who had returned to Japan this January, also transferred her membership to Tokyo Chuo Church in Shinjuku, Tokyo, in July. She is currently serving in the choir of the church. Rev. Hiroshi Nishikori, a brother of Rev. Manabu Nishikori of New Jersey Japanese Church, is serving as the pastor of Tokyo Chuo Kyokai. ■ **Visits of Our Friends** Mr. Mitsuo and Mrs. Emmie Hayashi, who were JAUC members during the 1960s and 70s, attended our Sunday Service on Sept. 19. Mr. Hayashi served as a member of the Building Committee when JAUC moved to the present building. They are currently living in Vancouver, Canada. **Prof. Junji Shiba** and **Mr. Yoshinori Shiraishi** also came to visit JAUC on this day. ■ **Ms. Hisayo Asai's New Address** Mrs. Hisayo Asai, our long-time Nisei member, lived with her son Bill for a month, but will live in Massachusetts with her daughter Nancy for the next two or three months. We pray for her good health. Her new address is: c/o Mrs. Nancy Barker, 43 Main Street, Hartsfield, MA01038 ■ **Donations** Mr. Harry Kuwada donated two oscillating stand fans in the Social Hall. He also made donations for the air conditioning system of the church building.

## ◇ Prayer Requests ◇

Please remember the following people in your prayers: Hisayo Asai, Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Fumiko Matsumoto, Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi (from Westminster Japanese Church, Atlanta), Hisako Okuda, Despina Prodromidis (Ms. Hogan's daughter), 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays 1pm at Tokita's or Clarke's (Please ask Mrs. Eika Clarke)

SG2. Japanese Women's Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays 11am at Tokita's

SG3. Bilingual Men's Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 9:30 at JAUC (Kusakabe)

SG4. Japanese Small Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays 2pm at JAUC (Kasuga)

SG5. "The Vine" Japanese: 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 2pm at JAUC (Kobayashi)

SG6. "Testimony & Prayer Meeting": Last Friday 7pm at Sagae's

SG7. English Small Group: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 1:30pm at JAUC (Yoshida)