



*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◆

**Reflection on Thanksgiving Day** Thanksgiving Day is before us. It is generally accepted that this is a time of family gathering and enjoying good food. But for Christians, Thanksgiving Day means more than that. Its meaning is deeply rooted in the first Thanksgiving Day. ◆The Pilgrims set up a colony at Cape Cod in 1620 and called it Plymouth. They befriended the Native Americans and regarded them as equal partners of life. They reciprocated with the Pilgrims by teaching them to plant corn, barley, and peas. They even taught them to fish. Then brutal winter came. Many of the Pilgrims could not cope with the cold temperature, freezing wind, and oppressive snow. Half of them died during the first winter. On some days, only six or seven people were well. Those few cared for all the others. They cut wood for fires, cooked and washed, and did all the other necessary chores. ◆Finally spring and summer came, and through hard work the Pilgrims enjoyed a bountiful harvest in the autumn of 1621. William Winslow, one of the leaders, writes in his diary that corn and barley were plentiful, although peas were a disappointment. It was in those days that they learned to eat turkey. In the November of that year, the Pilgrims invited their friends to a dinner of thanksgiving. What were they thankful for? The bountiful crop, of course. But that was not all. They were thankful for God’s sustaining grace in the hellish winter. They were thankful to God for their kind friends who had taught them to plant, harvest, and fish. They were thankful to God for the future they could look forward to. ◆We need to be reminded time and time again: on the first Thanksgiving Day, the Pilgrims gave fervent thanks to God – to God! That is what we Christians need to recover today.

◆Sunday Worship Sermons◆

■ **Sept.19 “Abraham, the Father of Our Faith (Part 1) Genesis 12: 1-4** In this time of Islam phobia, it is good to remember that Christians, Jews, and Muslims call Moses “the

Father of our faith” and his wife Sarah “the Mother of our faith.” It is important for us to understand why. From Abraham’s episodes, three things are clear. ◆(1) Like Abraham who left his father’s house for the unseen land, we can be courageous whenever we follow the guidance of God. Like Sarah who forgave Abraham, we can be generous and forgiving whenever we follow God’s way. ◆(2) Like Abraham who betrayed his wife to save his own skin, we can be so cruel and self-centered whenever we turn our backs to God. Like Sarah who tried to have Hagar and Ishmael killed to satisfy her self-centered desire, we can be heartless and barbaric whenever we forget God as our protector and sustainer. Like Abraham and Sarah, we may end up participating in oppressing the weak and innocent whenever we refuse to trust God.◆(3) As God was incredibly patient with them, He continues to persuade us to change our ways. He loves us in spite of everything. God protects and sustains us in good times and bad, through thick and thin.◆ Abraham and Sarah are witnesses to that truth. That is why they are called the Father and Mother of our faith. Christians, Jews, and Muslims confess that we are all symbolically descendants of Abraham and Sarah. God consoles us when we are down; He empowers us when we are weak; He brings us home when we go astray. That’s why there should be no room for Islam phobia among us. Thanks be to God.

■ **Sept. 26 “Abraham, the Father of Our Faith (Part 2) Luke 22:1-3** Isaac is now a young child. One day God speaks to Abraham, “Take your only son Isaac to the top of Mt. Mariah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering.” What should we make of this haunting story? It needs to be read as a continuation of the story of Hagar and Ishmael. ◆God’s command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac symbolizes the fact that Abraham truly understood as his own the fear, sadness, and despair that he had caused in Hagar and Ishmael when he abandoned them in the desert. Abraham understood once and for all the horrible and inhuman nature of his cruel act and truly repented. Not only that, Abraham’s repentance met God’s forgiveness. That is why the life of Abraham, however marred by egocentrism, cruelty, and betrayal, is, in the last analysis, a life of hope and regeneration. There is one more thing that needs to be pointed out. ◆Many years later, Abraham dies at a good old age. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. Obviously Ishmael walked many a mile under the scorching sun to reach Machpelah and gently buried his father with his half-brother Isaac. If that is not an act of forgiveness, we do not know what is. Abraham is a truly blessed man, because he is forgiven on both the divine level and human level. ◆So the theme of our sermon this morning is the same as the one preached last week. Christians, Jews, and Muslims all share

Abraham as the father of our faith. That is why there is no room for Islam phobia among Christians, none whatsoever.

### ◆ Stewardship Month Testimony ◆

October was the “Stewardship Month,” the period when we were encouraged to meditate on how we should serve God and how we can deepen our relationship with God. Four JAUC members shared testimonies regarding stewardship during Sunday worship services. The following is Ms. Chizuko Imado’s testimony on Oct. 10. (Ms. Rika Marubashi Downs and Ms. Tsugie Watanabe shared their stories on Oct. 17; Mr. Ken Kurihara on Oct. 24). ◆ Ms. Imado’s Testimony: “My daily life has been changed a little since September last year. I started learning at a theological seminary on Saturdays. It is a non-degree program and I am studying for a certificate in Christian Ministry. I just started my third semester in September and have one more to go after this one. The studies are challenging but rewarding. ◆ On the very first day, I was so nervous among my classmates (about 25 people) who are leaders coming from various churches. But after introductions, the professor said, “You have God’s reason to be here. You may be thinking that you have chosen to come here. However, you are all called by Him.” It was very encouraging and I was glad to be allowed to study there. ◆ Through this experience, what have I given to Him? Money? Yes, but the tuition is much less expensive than regular college tuition. Time? Yes, I spent a lot of time reading and writing every week. Effort and energy? Yes, I would like to know God more and build a better relationship with Him. Courage and commitment to step forward? Yes, they are probably the largest things I am dedicating to Him this time. But actually, these are all given by Him. ◆ The things that I sacrifice and dedicate to God might not be so much. I always think, “I wish I could have more time” or “I wish I could understand more.” But He receives my “a little more to Him” and returns a lot to me. It is such a blessed and wonderful experience to know what I didn’t know in the lectures. I often feel peace of mind from messages and enjoy fellowship and prayers with my classmates. His blessings are more than enough for me. ◆ Last Sunday, Rev. Dr. Suzuki gave us a sermon about stewardship and the connections between the parable of talent and Jesus’ feeding 5000 people.



If one is willing to give and serve God with gift from Him, no matter whether it is a lot or a little, He will gladly receive and return abundantly. This is what I am experiencing now. Through personal relationship, God gives me my true necessities. I give thanks to His presence and I praise the Lord that His word has been true throughout ages, yesterday, today and forever.

### ◆ Building Repair Report ◆

Building Restoration Team Report During the Congregational Meeting on October 3, the gathered members and friends heard the report for the proposed work to be done on Japanese American United Church. There was a power point presentation with pictures to help the group understand the full scale of the needs. After discussion and questions, the Congregation approved the request for \$250,000 for the first phase of repairs. Various contractors have been meeting with the architect to give estimates on the work to be done. ◆ The Team agreed with the recommendations of the architect regarding contractors and the week of October 25 workmen began the brickwork on the back of the building. Next will be work on the roof. These are top priorities to complete before cold weather. ◆ Let us all pray for the Team members to be able to make wise decisions. Let us also pray for the safety and health of the workers.

### ◆ Equipper Conference ◆

The Japanese American Christian Fellowship (JCFN) will hold a bicentennial six-day Christian retreat “Equipper Conference” in California this December. The purpose of this retreat is to “equip” Japanese Christians in the US who will return to Japan soon so that they can sustain their faith and work for God in their mother country. Anyone who is interested in supporting Japanese Christians is welcome. The programs will be held in Japanese, but English translation service will partly be available. As guest speakers, Rev. Kenichi Nakagawa (who had served as the host of the “Harvest Time” broadcast for many years), Rev. Eiichi Osato (a Baptist missionary to Thailand), and Rev. Manabu Nishikori (the pastor of the New Jersey Japanese Church) will participate in the conference. The conference will start on Dec. 27 and close on Jan. 1. If you are interested, please check the website: [www.equipper.org](http://www.equipper.org).

### ◆ Church News ◆

■ Thanksgiving Celebration The JAUC Thanksgiving worship service and the annual dinner are scheduled for Nov. 21. The coordinator of the program is Ms. Gerri Yoshida. There is a

sign-up sheet of helpers on the bulletin board of the social hall. Please check it!

■ **Alpha Course** The Alpha Course, an introductory course to Christianity, started on Sept. 22 and will continue for thirteen weeks. About 20 people are attending now. 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.

■ **VIP Meeting:** The June VIP meeting was held at JAUC on Sept. 13. Rev. Manabu Nishikori of The New Jersey Japanese Church delivered a message on the significance of prayer in Christian life: "If you want to *know about* someone, looking for information about the person is enough. However, if you want to *know* someone, the best way is to meet the person directly. Likewise, if you want to *know* God, the best thing is to pray to God directly. The health of a tree can be judged by how wide and deep the roots have spread. The invisible part of a tree is most important. This image can be applied to our spiritual life. Our Christian life is sustained by daily prayer." This monthly meeting of Japanese Christians living in NY and NJ is held at JAUC every second Monday, from 7:15pm.

■ **The Haruyama Scholarship Recipients** The JAUC has selected the recipients of the Justin Haruyama Scholarship for the years 2010-2011. They are: Ms. Kristine Tomiye Asami (Fuller Seminary), Mr. Arthur Wolf Rouzer (Fuller), Ms. Yuko Unehara (Fuller), Mr. Akio Iyoda (Alliance Theological Seminary), Ms. Shiomi Mikami (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), Ms. Kyoko Murata (Asbury Theological Seminary), Ms. Yuko Nakagawa (Fuller), Ms. Yumi Shoji (Gordon-Conwell Seminary). Since 1981, the Haruyama Scholarship has granted scholarship to more than 60 seminarians.

■ **Dedication of the New English Hymnals** There was a dedication ceremony of the new Methodist English hymnals during our Sunday service on Oct. 10. We thank for those who made donations for the purchase of these hymnals.

■ **Wedding!** The wedding of Ms. Suzanne Kern, a daughter of Ms. Suzuko Kern, and her fiancé Peter was celebrated in Burlington, Vermont, on Oct. 17. May God bless the couple and fill their new household with His Grace!

■ **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 1970s, came to New York and held a concert at JAUC on Sept. 26. The program included Jazz-style arrangements of traditional hymns

by Mr. Kio Tamura (clarinet), Handel's famous arias, and Japanese folk songs.

■ **Open House of Homeless Shelter** New York City Rescue Mission, a Christian organization which has been helping the poor in the Lower Manhattan for more than 130 years, will have an open house of their building and the homeless shelter on Sunday, Nov. 14, from 2pm to 4pm. The Mission provides more than ten thousands meals to the needy every month. This will be a good opportunity to see how God works through them to support those in need. Please check the organization's website: [www.nycrescue.org](http://www.nycrescue.org).

## ◆ My Favorite Bible Verse ◆

**Mr. Jun Tonegawa** John 21:22 "(Jesus said to him [Peter], "If I want him to remain until I come,) what is that to you? You follow Me!" ◆ **Ms. Kaoru Kobayashi** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

## ◆ Prayer Requests ◆

Please remember the following people in your prayers: Roberto Acevedo, Rev. Barbara Alexander, Hisayo Asai, Kumiko Bauman (who had a brain surgery on Oct. 24), Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Harry Kuwada, Fumiko Matsumoto, George Mukai (Bayside), Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi (from Westminster Japanese Church, Atlanta GA), Hisako Okuda, Miho Sasaki (who will have a baby soon), 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays 1pm at Sonoda's

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)