



**"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 ✧

Lenten Meditation "Lord Jesus, Remember Me" With Lent and Holy Week approaching, I would like to call your special attention to the scene of the Crucifixion in the Gospel of Luke 23: 39-43. The crowd at the foot of the hill of Golgotha mocked Jesus, saying, "Get down from the cross, king of the Jews!" ♦

There were two criminals hanged with Jesus. One of them joined the crowd. "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, petitioned Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus' response is astounding: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." ♦ Why is this episode important for us in the season of Lent? Because, try as we may, none of us can fulfill Jesus' commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Even Paul wrote, "I do not do what I would like to do. But I do what I do not want to do. How wretched a person I am!" ♦

The season of Lent is a time for us to reflect on our imperfection, weakness, and, yes, sinfulness. The only hope that saves us from despair in the season of Lent is Jesus' astonishing words to the repentant criminal. "Today you will be with me in Paradise." ♦ Lent is the season set aside for repentance. Repentance is not remorse. Remorse presupposes despair; repentance presupposes forgiveness. That is why Lent is not total darkness. We remember that Christ turned water to wine, blindness to sight, death to life, hatred to love, and the desire for revenge to forgiveness. ♦ That is why the prayer most appropriate in the season of Lent is the prayer of the repentant lowlife who suddenly understood the Lord of true hope and said, "Lord Jesus, remember me."



✧ Sunday Worship Sermons ✧

■ **January 31st "The Rich Soil that Produces a Bumper Crop"**
Luke 8: 1-8 Jesus' parables have a unique character. In every single parable, Jesus puts the listener on the spot, so to speak. We are compelled to respond to him. The Parable of the Sower is a good example. Four things are clear at the outset; (1) Jesus is the farmer, (2) the seed is the Word of God, and (3) the Word of God requires rich soil to produce a good result. But there is the fourth point that we should not overlook. That is Jesus' challenge to the listener: "Let anyone who has ears to hear

listen." Jesus is asking the listener, "Which one do you want to be? Are you the road? Are you the gravel? Are you the weeds? Or are you the rich soil?" ♦ Now of whom was Jesus thinking when he talked about the rich soil? In the context of today's scripture lesson, he was specifically thinking of the three women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna. They all had experienced the healing power of Jesus. Healed and made whole, those women had become faithful supporters of Jesus' mission. In short, they became the rich soil that produced a bumper crop. ♦ We are to be reminded that Jesus is challenging us today as he was then. We, too, are called to be the rich soil that produces a bumper crop. On this annual meeting Sunday, we are to remember afresh that Jesus is challenging us to be the rich soil, to lift up the love and grace of Jesus Christ before the world, to be witnesses of the good news of Jesus Christ both by words and by how we live.



■ **February 7th "The Holy Communion, the Essence of the Gospel" Luke 14:15-24** In his entire ministry, Jesus emphasized sharing a meal as an important symbol of the love of God. Holy Communion is an enactment of that truth, illustrated by The "Parable of the Great Banquet." A person prepares a dinner party and sends out his servant to invite friends to attend. But they make excuses for not being able to attend. So the host sends his servant to bring anyone he can find off the streets. ♦ We can imagine how crazy the situation would have been. If anyone had been brought in off the street, there undoubtedly would have been people of both sexes, different classes, ranks, and ethnic groups. Anyone could have been sitting next to anyone else: female next to male, free next to slave, socially high next to socially low, ritually pure next to ritually impure, and a Pharisee sitting next to a tax collector, a scribe sitting next to a prostitute, a rich young ruler sitting next to a woman with leprosy. That would have been a social nightmare. ♦ However, Jesus is saying that this social nightmare is exactly the way God wants us to live. They are sharing a meal together, passing bread and wine, conversing amiably. It is the open table with Jesus as its host. The table of Jesus symbolizes oneness and equality under the fatherhood of God. As we celebrate Holy Communion, let us be reminded that we are at the Lord's Table with Jesus as our host. The person who is kneeling next to you is your brother and sister in Christ.

"Holy Week" from March 28th to April 4th

March 28 th , 11am	Palm Sunday Worship
April 1 st , 7pm	Maundy Thursday Communion Service
April 2 nd , 7 pm	Good Friday Worship
April 4 th , 11am	Easter Worship & Pot Luck lunch

Please invite family and friends to join the JAUC family in each of these deeply meaningful services as we remember the sacrifice and love of our Savior. Please check the Bulletin Board in Social Hall for sign-up sheets for the Easter Pot Luck to indicate your attendance and the food you will bring.

Church Ministry Report

Every partaker is infinitely precious in God's sight apart from status, rank, class, or occupation. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia, "In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, men nor women. We are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is this affirmation that is enacted in Holy Communion. Holy Communion is the essence of the Gospel.

✧ Mission – Relief Program ✧

■ **The Easter Offering** for this year will be divided between the ongoing work of JAUC (75%) and mission work outside JAUC (25%). The mission's portion will be divided equally between **One Great Hour of Sharing** and **Central Conference Pension Initiative**, a project to create a fund to provide pensions to retired pastors in third world countries. Both of these are important projects – greater detail will be posted on the Bulletin Board in Social Hall.

■ JAUC has been receiving funds for **Haiti Relief** since Sunday, January 17th when the Board of Directors ("the Board"), under the direction of the pastor, decided to organize a fundraising campaign for the relief of victims devastated by the Haiti Earthquake on January 12th. The Board committed to send \$6,000 through the United Methodist Church ("UMC") and the Reform Church ("RCA") to support the people in the area. As the initial campaign ended on February 14th, we raised around \$3,700. A volunteer team made another \$620 through **the Bake Sale for Haiti Relief**. JAUC will fill in the difference between what we raised and the amount committed, and will send \$3,000 each (the total \$6,000) to UMC and RCA soon. As the needs are so great after the earthquake and rebuilding will take many years, we will continue to raise funds for the relief efforts. You may send your gift specifically indicating "Haiti Relief" at any time to the JAUC office. We thank each of you who have given so generously to our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

✧ Spiritual Growth – Small Group ✧

■ **English Bible Study**: Starting on Sunday, March 21st at 1:30 pm, Peter and Gerri Yoshida will lead an English Bible study as a part of JAUC small group program, based on "The God Man Renewal Series: Meeting Jesus again as if for the very first time" developed by Iwa, a Christian organization that develops materials to especially reach and speak to the Japanese and Asian American experience. There will be praise and worship followed by a dramatization of stories examining people's interaction with Jesus and how their lives were transformed,

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 and we will grow together spiritually through learning and prayer with members of a small group.

- SG1. Bilingual Women's Group: 2nd & 4th Saturdays 1pm at Sonoda's
- SG2. Japanese Women's Group: 2nd Tuesdays 11am at Tokita'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: 1st & 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)

such as Zacchaeus, Bartimaeus, the woman at the well. We will have small group discussion and refreshments. This group will meet the third Sunday of the month in the sanctuary. All are welcome to join!

✧ Prayer Requests ✧

There are people in agony, sorrow and loneliness among our neighbors. We Christians should keep these people in our prayers for God's healing and peace. Please pray for the following people and those who come to your mind in your daily lives. If you want to include someone in the list, please contact the church office. ♦ **Our Prayer List**: Jayne Arbon (Mrs Kasuga's daughter-in-law), Michiko Gorman, Sue Kubo, Seika Liu, Michi Matsukuma, Fumiko Matsumoto, Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi, Osamu Sagae, Joshua Shimomura, Kazunori Tabe, Ayako Uchiyama, Mary Yamada.

✧ News ✧

■ **Origami Outreach Event** On Saturday, March 21st, JAUC and JACL (Japanese American Citizens League) will be hosting a community outreach event. There will be a free screening of the award winning documentary, "Between the Folds", which is about 10 origami artists and scientists who have taken the ancient art of Japanese origami and pushed the boundaries of what can be created from a piece of paper. Afterwards there will be an origami workshop for those who would like to try their hand at paper folding. Light refreshments will be served. Please join us and bring your friends!

■ **Engagement**: Our friend, **Mr Takashi Yamada**, who returned to Japan in 2008, was engaged on Jan. 31st! He met his fiancée while he was in New York. Their wedding is scheduled for November 27th, 2010. Please pray for their new lives.

■ **Farewell 1: Mr Kazuhiko & Miki Honyashiki** will be leaving for Japan on March 11th. As Mr Honyashiki decided to dedicate himself to the Lord, he will resign from the firm and start studying at the Japanese seminary "Seisho Shingakusha" in Tokyo, Japan in April. May God continue to protect and bless the new life of this couple!

■ **Farewell 2: Mrs Haruho Quintana**, who resigned from the JAUC office at the end of January, will move to Japan with her husband Wilbert and three children Mari, Hope and Yuka on March 9th due to Wilbert finding a job there. Pray for God's guidance in their future path!

■ **The Annual Spring Cleaning** will be held on Saturday, March 13th from 10:00am to 4:00pm. The sign up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the social hall. Lunch will be provided at the church.

■ **New Office Staff**: After Mrs Haruho Quintana resigned from the office, **Mrs Naoko Aita** replaced Mrs Quintana in February.



Church Administrative Report

New office work schedule is as follows: (There will be adjustments between staff)

Monday: Naoko Aita (10am-5pm), Junko Noguchi (2-5pm)

Tuesday: Office is closed

Wednesday: Sayoko Yoshida (10 am- 5pm)

Thursday: Junko Noguchi (10 am-5pm)

Friday: Junko Noguchi (10 am-5pm)

Board of Directors & Managers

On February 6th, the first joint meeting of Board of Directors/the Board of Managers was held. The following are details of discussions:

■ **Building Maintenance Commission:** The following are the four priorities of this commission for the year 2010: (1) Complete parsonage repairs this year; (2) Changes to the façade of the church; (3) Regular Church Clean-up; (4) Spring Clean-up March 13th. Addition: The commission would like to ask if anyone is available to help shovel in times of a lot of snow. If you are available to be put on the list, please let the office know.

■ **Worship Commission:** ♦ **Sunday Worship:** Discussion took place that the group may need to expand the number of liturgists who serve and a sign may be necessary to put on the side door since many ring the buzzer during the 11 Worship when the main door should be used instead. Also discussed was whether the greeting time and announcement of new guests are necessary during the worship service, as they may be disruptive and may be difficult for those who are in need of care.

♦ **Music:** (1) There will be no Choir practice on Thursday nights until March 4th. (2) To honor Larry Kern after his passing, Suzuko Kern has made a gift to JAUC in the form of 50 new Blue UMC hymnals for the church. We are grateful for this generous gift. We will begin a campaign soon to raise funds for 75 more hymnals so that we can put the new hymnals in the pews for a total of 125. The cost for one hymnal is \$18.

■ **Evangelism Commission:** ♦ **Bible Study:** The time for starting the bible study will be 1:15pm instead of 1:00pm. This will help those who are cleaning in the kitchen. It was also discussed if it would be possible to record the bible studies.

♦ **Geppo:** The Geppo staff has new members: Naoko Aita and Eika Clarke. The Geppo has been an outreach tool for not only members and friends who attend but especially those who are unable to attend our church, as well as an educational tool for Geppo team members.

■ **Mission Commission:** (1) We are currently collecting money for Haiti. (2) We will no longer be collecting dry foods for the food drive. We did receive money for the food bank. This will be given to a neighborhood Catholic Church that has a food bank. (3) There are 2 needs that have been proposed by the Mission Commission to collect and donate our Easter offerings for: (a) \$20 million is needed for "Central Conference Pension Initiative" (a UMC fund for retired pastors in Africa), (b) "One Great Hour of Sharing" (an ecumenical fund). A motion was made to give 25% of Easter offerings be directed to these two programs. This motion was approved by the Board.

Special Offerings

■ In addition to pledge and regular offerings received during worship services, we also appreciate your offerings by mail and special offerings from the members & friends of JAUC. From January to February 14th, offerings were received by mail and special offerings received during worship services from the following:

Asai, Hisayo	Aita, Naoko
Baumann, Kumiko	Chin, Noel
Horiuchi, Martha	Ishigami, Rumiko
Kageyama, Kyoko	Kasuga, Yoshiko
Kubo, Sue	Kumada, Noriko
Kurihara, Ken & Noriko	Kuwada, Harry
Matsukuma, Michie	Miller, Rayvon
Okada, Sumiko	Sato, Fujio
Suzuki, Kaoru	Suzuki, Yugo & Elizabeth
Togashi, Motomi	Tokita, Miyako
Tora, Rie	Utsumi, Hisae
VIP	Watanabe, Kaori

Watanabe, Tsugie

■ We acknowledge with sincere appreciation these special offerings for Haiti Relief. (1/17-2/14: US\$4,153.25)

Aita, Naoko	Alexandre, Misato
Bake Sale (\$620)	Baumann, Kumiko
Bolster, Katsuko	Clarke, Junko
Fotinakis, Tony	Goldberg, June
Hara, Tomie	Hasegawa, Junko
Ichikawa, Kaori	Imado, Chizuko
Ishigami, Rumiko	Iwasa, Toshio
Iyoda, Hideko	Kasuga, Yoshiko
Kobayashi, Kaoru Jones-	Kurihara, Ken & Noriko
Kuwada, Harry	Maruyama, Mineko
Motoi, Keijiro	Nakamura, Oriie
Raducanu, Kazuko	Sonoda, Masayo
Sun, Hua Tzu	Sunday School
Suzuki, Kaoru	Suzuki, Moto
Suzuki, Yugo & Elizabeth	Tokita, Miyako
Utsumi, Hisae	Watanabe, Kaori
Watanabe, Tsugie	Woodson, Clara
Yokozeki, Akira	Yoshida, Peter & Gerri
Yoshida, Sayoko	

