



**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 ◆

A few days ago, a young lady gave me a seat on the subway. Do I look so old and frail? My feelings were conflicted. And yet, I was impressed with her generosity. Recently I spent three weeks in Tokyo and I rode subways and trains almost everyday. But I never witnessed people giving seats to anyone. In NY, on the other hand, such a sight is quite common. Elderly persons and people with handicaps can feel assured that they will be given seats on subways and trains. ◆ One day I was riding subway 7. A group of high school students got on. They were a rowdy bunch. They were loud, joshing and cutting up with each other. I said to myself, "This won't happen in Tokyo." At 74th St. station, a middle-aged lady with a big shopping bag got on. One of the students quickly gave her his seat. Another one put her bag next to her. My apology to them for my unkind thoughts! ◆ In the past several days, I have been thinking about NY where I live and Tokyo where I return once a year. The subways in New York are old and undependable. The subways in Tokyo are clean and punctual. If you get lost in New York, there are always some people trying to help you. In Tokyo, people, more often than not, ignore foreign tourists stranded on a platform. In NY, gun murders are common. If one gun murder occurs in Tokyo, the entire city will be in an uproar. ◆ This is not to say Tokyo is a better city than NY or vice versa. Each has good points and bad points. What I have come to realize is this: we can translate the above observations into human relations. If another person has good characteristics that I lack, hopefully I will recognize the lack in myself and try to emulate them. If I happen to have good characteristics that another does not have, hopefully my attitude, deeds and presence will affect that person positively in some tangible ways. We are to help each other to overcome our weaknesses and enhance our strengths. Here I am reminded of Jesus' commandment to love one another.



◆ Sunday Worship Sermons ◆

■ **April 18 "The Road to Emmaus" Luke 24: 23-35** Two of Jesus' followers are traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus. A stranger joins them. They tell him that they are quite despondent, because their master is dead; everything is over. As they approach Emmaus, the travelers invite the stranger, "Stay with us. It is almost evening." At the inn, the stranger breaks bread with them. Luke writes, "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him." Jesus vanishes from their sight. ◆ This story is a summary of Jesus' ministry. First of all, the travelers represent Jesus' disciples right after the crucifixion. Jesus whom they believed is dead. Their hopes are dashed. Second, Jesus breaks bread with the travelers. In his ministry, Jesus used sharing a meal with the sinners, and all the despised people as an ideal venue for his love. Then three. Jesus is alive. He journeys with the travelers even when they do not recognize him. ◆ So the meaning of the story of Emmaus is clear. Jesus comes to us when our hopes are shattered even though we do not recognize him. While this story is a concise summary of Jesus' ministry, it is also an illustration of what it means for us to be his disciples. The travelers invite the stranger to journey with them. The spirit of kindness, compassion, and friendship opens our eyes to Jesus, whereas egocentrism, intolerance, and unkindness do not. ◆ The meaning of Jesus disappearing from their sight is that we do not know Jesus in the flesh. In that sense, he is out of our sight. However, we meet him nonetheless as in this worship service or in our prayers. Jesus journeys with us today. He will stay with us on our life's journey to open our eyes again and again.

■ **May 16 "You Are Given Life" Psalm 8** The 17th century French philosopher named Blaise Pascal wrote that what makes human life truly human is a "sensitive spirit which is a profound self-awareness that I am not on my own. My life is given to me; I am placed here and now by some power greater than myself. Pascal says that to be shaken by this realization is one of the essential requirements of true humanity. We often ignore this insight of Pascal. ◆ For the Psalmist, the whole universe is God's precious creation. In Psalm 8 "O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" "You have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor." In short, according to the Psalmist, you and I are not accidents of nature. God has placed us on this earth with a clear purpose and loving intention as well as instruments of Almighty God. ◆ The New Testament brings this Psalmist's affirmation even closer to us. God did not remain in the headquarters in heaven. God came down to us in Jesus Christ in the midst of us, feeling our pain as his own, suffering our

despair as his own. No sin is unforgivable, because the love of Christ is absolute and unbounded. No pain is unbearable, because Jesus bears it with us. No misery is absolute, because Jesus takes it upon himself for us. This is the foundation of Christian hope.

◆ Repairs to Church Building ◆

The Church Building Repair Project team held a meeting on May 20 and discussed the next step which should be taken in regards to repairing the church building. The original cause of the April 12 incident, which caused a tile to fall from the JAUC façade, was due to the bad drainage of the roof: The rainwater, which had not drained properly, soaked into the façade wall and weakened the tile's glue. It is clear that we have to repair both the roof and the façade wall immediately. ◆ In addition, our church building has not been inspected by professional engineers for many years, and there is a high possibility that there are additional and unnoticed safety concerns in other parts of the building. Therefore, the project team has agreed to ask an engineer to inspect the whole building and to list the places which should be repaired for safety reasons. This will be a major project – Even an inspection will cost a great deal. The project team is considering several candidates from the engineer companies who will inspect the façade. We have to consider not only how to undertake these necessary repairs but also how to improve our church building for future use. ◆ If you are interested in this project, please contact the Church Office for details. The co-chairs for this team are Mrs. Elizabeth Suzuki and Mrs. Rika Downs.

◆ Summer Camp and Retreat ◆

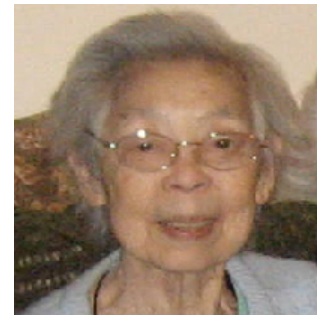
◆ Children Summer Camp 2010 The bilingual “Discovery Camp” will be held at Camp Quinipet on Shelter Island from July 25 to August 6. We accept 3rd-10th grade children and they must be able to attend both weeks. The total fee is \$1,300 (including insurance, etc.). The application deadline is Wednesday, June 15. If you are interested, please check the brochure, available at our church. The Camp Director will be Rev. Masahiko Sagara of the Union Japanese Church.

◆ 2010 East Coast Family Camp The 2010 East Coast Japanese Church Family Camp will be held at Ellenville, NY, from Saturday, Sept. 4, to Monday, Sept. 6. The guest speaker will be Rev. Hiroshi Sakakibara, the famous pastor and director of World Vision Japan, widely known through his TV evangelism. Leading Christian musician Mr. Makoto Iwabuchi will also attend. There will be simultaneous English translation for those who do not speak Japanese. This is a very rare

occasion when hundreds of Japanese Christians living in the US gather and praise God together. Please join! If you apply before May 30, you will receive a \$10 discount. The secondary deadline for reservations is July 11. Please check the details of the Camp brochure, available at JAUC. Additional News: Mr. Iwabuchi is planning to have a concert at JAUC on Sept. 7. Do not miss this special event!

◆ In Peace – Ms. Mary Yamada ◆

Our beloved sister Ms. Mary Yamada passed away at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital at around 4pm on April 17. She was 97 years old. After her fall last December, Ms. Yamada was undergoing rehabilitation at Isabella Home. She attended the monthly Isabella worship service on April 11 and enjoyed fellowship with JAUC members, but she was hospitalized several days later due to a stroke. Ms. Elizabeth Suzuki and other JAUC members were in attendance when she died. Ms. Yamada's cheerful character, her humor and positive attitude toward life, were loved by everyone in our church. During the Pacific War, she served as First Lieutenant of the US Army Nurse Corps, and her experiences during the war are detailed in Dr. Brenda Moore's book *Serving Our Country*. A Celebration of Life for Ms. Yamada will be held on Sunday, May 30, from 2pm.



◆ Church Members News ◆

■ Baptism Ms. Naomi Mikami, was baptized during the Sunday service on May. 23. Her parents also attended. She grew up in Europe and the US, and she is now working at a Japanese company. Congratulation!

■ It's a Girl! On May 6, a baby girl was born to Mr. Yoshinori Shiraishi and his wife Mariko who moved to Hawaii in April. Their daughter is named “May Hana”. Their son Ken is very happy that he now has a younger sister. May God fill the household with His Blessing!

■ Reunion Rev. Satoru Nagaoka, who served at JAUC as a youth leader from 1995-97, attended JAUC Sunday service on May 2 and enjoyed fellowship time with old friends. Rev. Nagaoka is currently serving as an assistant pastor at Arakawa Seisen Church in Tokyo. ◆ Rev. Shin Oita, who attended JAUC during 2006, is now serving as the pastor at Aburaki Church in Hiroshima.

◇ Church Activity News ◇

■ Temporary Schedule Change for Small Group Meetings

The English Small Group meeting (SG7), led by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Yoshida, is usually held on the 3rd Sunday of month. During June, the English study will be held on the 4th Sunday, June 27, as the Fujinkai bazaar is scheduled for June 20. ◆ The Bilingual Women's Group meeting (SG1) also has some changes. The meeting which had been scheduled for June 11 at Ms. Masayo Sonoda's apartment was rescheduled for Saturday, June 12, from 12pm (at Ms. Eika Clarke's place); the meeting on June 26 will be held from 1pm at Ms. Kaoru Kobayashi's apartment, not at Ms. Sonoda's place.

■ Spring Alpha Course: The Alpha Course, a bilingual introductory course to Christianity, will start from April 21 for thirteen weeks. The sessions will be held every Wednesday from 7pm. If you are interested in participating, volunteering or would just like to come and see how it is, please contact Ms. Rika Downs or Ms. Gerri Yoshida.

■ Fujinkai Bazaar: Fujinkai is scheduling a bazaar at JAUC on Sunday, June 20, from 2pm. The money raised will be donated to both the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund and JAUC's building repairs. Fujinkai is currently gathering items to sell at the bazaar. If you have anything, please deposit it in the boxes labeled "Fujinkai Bazaar" located on the basement and 3rd floors. For details, please contact Ms. Motomi Togashi.

■ VIP Meeting: The May VIP meeting was held at JAUC on May 10, and Rev. Masahiko Sagara, the pastor of Union Japanese Church, delivered a message regarding the faith of the Apostle Peter. Ms. Noriko Kumada played the piano while she still had her arm in a cast. A very unique guest-speaker will come to the meeting in June: Rev. Hirokazu Matsuoka, who had been a devout Buddhist monk before he converted to Christianity and became an ardent pastor.

■ Sunday School Offering The JAUC Sunday School donated the offering, which had been collected during 2009, to World Vision. The amount totaled \$191. May God bless the offering of the children and use it for His work!

■ Workshop held by the RCA The Brooklyn Consistory of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) held a training workshop in Brooklyn on May 1, and 6 JAUC members attended. The workshop encouraged participants to reflect on the biblical meaning of service to God, based on the Deacon / Elder system of the Reformed Church. It became a good opportunity to communicate with members of other churches.

◇ Prayer Requests ◇

Please remember the following people in your prayers: Roberto Acevedo, Jayne Arbon (Mrs. Kasuga's daughter-in-law), Michiko Gorman, Yuko Ito, Toshio Iwasa, Yone Kanzaki, Sue Kubo, Noriko Kumada, Seika Liu, Fumiko Matsumoto, Minako Noma, Ai Oguchi (from Westminster Japanese Church, Atlanta GA), Hisako Okuda, Despina Prodromidis (Ms. Hogan's daughter), Junji Yoshida

◇ My Favorite Bible Verses! ◇

■ Ms. Sayoko Yoshida John Chap. 15: "John 15 starts with the word 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser....' Between Verse 1 and Verse 10, the word 'abide' is repeated 9 times, 'bear fruit' 7 times, and 'love' 5 times. The image Jesus presents is very easy to grasp and to reflect on. Here God's love is compared with that of a vinedresser. We can



feel it as intimate and close. These passages sound like a father carefully admonishing his children. ◆ Our lives as Christians are compared with the branches of the vine. We must consciously abide with the vine, or we cannot expect any fruit. Away from God, we will just wither and fall away. ◆ I was baptized by Rev. Giichi Kawamata on Easter Sunday 52 years ago. Rev. Kawamata often painted in his spare time. I saw his paintings of the vine, and I can still recall the strong touch - The branches extended themselves as if trying to reach the vine - similar to us, trying to abide with Christ our Savior." ■ Ms. Miyako Tokita Jeremiah 31: 3: "The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."

JAUC Small Group Ministry

Small Group is the JAUC program for church members' spiritual growth. Through fellowship, we will consider how we can live as Christians in our daily lives. You may join one of the groups below. The schedule is subjected to changes. Please check the "Church Activity News" section for any changes.

- 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 Sundays 1pm at JAUC (Kobayashi)
- SG6. "Testimony & Prayer Meeting": Last Friday 7pm at Sagae's
- SG7. English Small Group: 3rd Sundays 1:30pm at JAUC (Yoshida)