

Going Forth!

Romans 1:16

靈 巫 靈



RAIN, RAIN!



Urawa

Looking at the **big blue Japanese character** below (at left) for **RAIN**, the top horizontal stroke  stands for Heaven over a “covering”  with raindrops inside. Even to a foreigner, it looks like a stylized picture of water droplets in a cloud. This character is used in a part of the characters for “cloud” and “snow,” which makes a lot of sense.

雨

It is fascinating to also see this character used as part of “Spirit,” of the two words “Holy Spirit!” The smaller **blue kanji** (above) is the modern Japanese character for “spirit,” in which you can still see the rain. It is a good picture of “the Spirit of God moving over the

face of the waters,” the first descent of God’s Spirit to this earth in Genesis 1:2. The **black kanji** (above) is the old Chinese way of writing “Spirit” (which the Japanese abbreviated and simplified). The original Chinese scholars who designed the written language used three mouths  as the next layer of the character under the rain, showing the three Persons speaking

INSIDE:
During May and June here in Urawa, Japan, not only is it the **rainy season**, but we can see God’s mercy and grace pouring down like rain on our school, family, and ministries, as you will see in this newsletter: We were blessed to be witnesses to our former student, **Daigo Ikeda’s baptism** (see page 2).

What a joy to watch the combination of God’s Word & water to bring the miracle of the Holy Spirit into Daigo’s heart! In June, it feels like it is raining foreigners, too, as **international programs** bring groups of Americans into our classrooms and ULS homestay families’ living rooms (see page 3)!

We pray that the waters of compassion and empathy washed over our Sixth graders this month as they dove into a **Poverty Simulation** (see page 4).



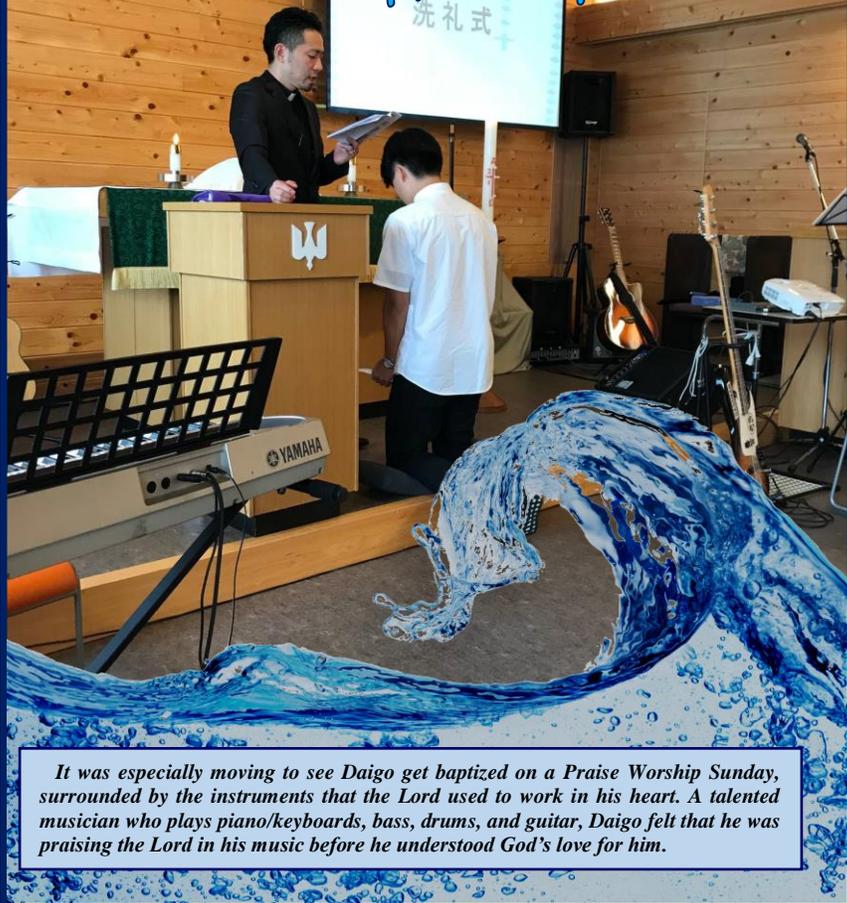
through the Spirit (the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit). On the bottom of the old Chinese letter above, you can see three symbols, showing two people 人 人 with the character for “work” 工 in between. In the symbol for work, there is actually a man standing and connecting two horizontal strokes that represent Heaven and earth. So, there are three people working together under heaven on the earth, and the three men have three mouths to speak messages. **What a beautiful, historical, traditional way to show the Triune God of the Bible & His Spirit that brings healing, refreshing RAIN of Truth & Grace!**

DID YOU KNOW?

In early summer, most parts of Japan get visited by a rainy season, called **tsuyu**, literally meaning “plum rain”, because it coincides with the season of plums ripening. The rainy season, shown on the meteorological rainfall map above, is caused by the collision of cold northerly & warm southerly air, resulting in a relatively stable cloudy and wet weather over the Japanese archipelago for several weeks. In most of Japan, the rainy season lasts from the beginning of June to mid-July.

DAIGO GOES UNDER THE WATER!



It was especially moving to see Daigo get baptized on a Praise Worship Sunday, surrounded by the instruments that the Lord used to work in his heart. A talented musician who plays piano/keyboards, bass, drums, and guitar, Daigo felt that he was praising the Lord in his music before he understood God's love for him.

I still remember the day when I first read the Bible. I was in Third grade, living in North Carolina [because of my father's overseas employment], trying to adapt to American culture. My mother received a Bible in Japanese & English from a piano student as a gift before moving, so she took it. She recommended me to read it, but at that time, it was like reading a fairy tale for me. I only read through Genesis in Third grade.

While living in North Carolina, we met a wonderful Christian family who could speak Japanese, since they both had experience as missionaries in Japan. They had three children, so I often hang out with them. They gave me a very beautiful Bible on my last day in North Carolina, and I am using it today. Once a month, their church had a Table Talk with the Japanese people in our county. This was the first time when I went to church.

On the first Christmas Day during our stay in the United States, we went to their church and I was extremely surprised and excited to see many people coming to worship with fancy red clothes. As I lived in the United States, I started to adore the way American people act. Then I realized that those very kind people are mostly Christians and this was the time when I really got interested in Christianity.

When it was time to go back to Japan in 2013, we started searching for my middle school. It was very difficult to choose since our information about Japanese middle schools was poor. However, one day, when my mother was walking down the hallway of my Saturday Japanese School in Raleigh, she found one brochure of ULS! My parents decided to apply right away, and this is how I got into Urawa Lutheran School.

On the first day of my Japanese middle school, I found this huge "I Chose YOU" sign on the top of the gymnasium. I felt a miracle because my mom accidentally found the last and only brochure of this school at the Japanese school in North Carolina. When I entered high school, I joined the Summer Study Session [at CUI in Irvine, CA & CCL in Phoenix, AZ]. I think this trip was very important for me since I was able to look, study, and feel His love and glory deeply. During this trip, I was able to play the instruments which I had been practicing since I was three years old to worship him.

After the trip, several of my friends and I made a band called L-Rights, and had the great opportunity to play & sing contemporary Christian songs at Urawa Lutheran Church. As I joined the band, I began going to the normal morning worship on Sundays, because I was very interested in Pastor Kasahara's stories. I am not Christian yet, but this is my testimony: I am sure that I believe in God, and He will be with me always and forever. I am hoping to get baptized in June, so I am willing to study more about Christianity.



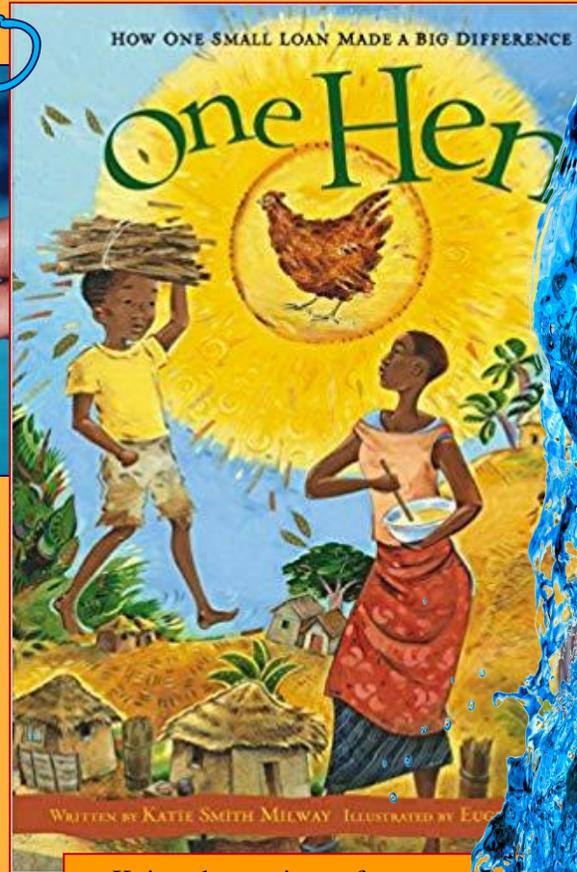
Daigo Ikeda wrote his testimony on this page when he was studying with Pastor Kasahara to explain how he felt that the Lord had guided his life. On June 17, Father's Day, Daigo entered into an eternal relationship with his Heavenly Father through the waters of baptism! One of Daigo's best friends and ULS Christian classmate, Tomoki Komuro, came to witness the exciting event!

DIVING INTO POVERTY

In our efforts to incorporate Service Learning into our ministries,

we have presented a “Poverty Simulation” twice to young students, most recently to the combined classes of Sixth Grade at ULS. We especially wanted to talk about poverty in a way they had never done before by turning the classroom into a village in Indonesia struggling with providing basic needs (*see photo below*). We divided them into “family” groups, giving them specific scenarios that explained the situations each family faced, sharing those stories together in a village meeting, trying to experience some of the hardships and make a few of the hard decisions necessary to survive in poverty.

We used Katie Smith Milway’s book (*above right*), “**One Hen**,” in which a young boy in Ghana joins his mother & other families in his village to pool their money together, taking turns borrowing the money from each other to start a business to help themselves and others. **We translated it all into Japanese so that the experience would be less of an English lesson and more of an emotional experience in the language of their hearts.** This classroom experience is just one step in a Service Learning process at ULS initiated this year to connect with our former school and colleagues in Indonesia and to enrich ULS students and their families as they open their hearts to the needs of Indonesian schools and families, to realize how truly blessed these Japanese families are and how to pass those blessings on – “Blessed to be a Blessing!”



Kojo, who receives a few pennies left over from his mother’s loan to buy a hen, “takes flight as an entrepreneur in his West African hometown,” according to onehen.org (the website that provides activities for students to “learn, play, and make a difference” in the classroom, challenging students to change their world!)

Kojo moves gradually from poverty, to well-being, to provider who creates opportunities for others, inspiring many.

Using this story as a basis for our simulation, students are encouraged to think of ways to work together to use small loans to help each other.



We pray that the Lord uses the Poverty Simulation information to motivate students to reflect on their abundance and how they can help others in need. Many thanks to Mrs. Kyoko Yamamoto for translating the book and classroom discussions.





At Right: 2018 Nihon Kenshu (NK) members from Christ Church Lutheran in Phoenix, AZ – from left: Mr. Jason Mangels, Kyndul Bailey, Jessica Mangels, Grace Chapman, Carson Stern, Joe Harries, and Mrs. Robin Larkin. They are displaying this year's calligraphy project, "branch" (John 15:5)

Top Left: 2018 Faculty Development Program (FDP) from Concordia University in Irvine (CUI): Dr. Cari Chittick, Prof. Julie Steigemeyer, Samantha Redmond, & Abigail Vroegindewey exploring a Tokyo alley. **Middle Left:** CUI's Faith Mc Kinney presents a plaque of gratitude from CUI's president, Dr. Krueger, to **Tohru and Teiko Akatsu**, the generous host family of every FDP team for over 20 years! **Bottom Left:** FDP 2018 Team present Principal Fukushima with Emily Crosby's huge award check! Thank you so much!



2018 NK members teach a song to the ULS Second Graders!



Dear ULS friends, I am excited to announce that I won 1st place in the Great Commission Showcase with my project on Urawa Lutheran School! I was able to show how my experience in Japan impacted me. I am so grateful for your help with the project and am even more excited for what happens next! In addition to my first place prize of \$1000, ULS will also receive a matching donation from President Krueger's office! I am so happy that my work can help ULS and your work in a tangible way. I hope all is well and that our paths will meet again very soon! Love in Christ, Emily

“ Japan is a more terrible swamp than you can imagine.
 -Silence, Shūsaku Endō



Emily's excellent Great Commission Showcase presentation (see photo clip at bottom right, recorded at Concordia University (CUI)

Emily Crosby (in YouTube photo below and dressed in summer kimono above while at ULS) visited Japan in 2017 as one of the first student participants in the Faculty Development Program. As a senior at CUI, she applied to be a part of FDP 2017, boldly ministered on our campus for 10 days, and then returned to Concordia to share her story, ultimately winning the top prize for her heartfelt mission report.

in Irvine, CA) about Japan can be seen on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/VdxwGd2mc8s> She does the difficult mission in Japan justice by presenting the challenges to evangelism (see photo of one of her PowerPoint slides at right) and the enduring hope of the Gospel's eternal work in the hearts of Japanese people.

The disturbance she felt in her spirit for the lost and her eloquent passion in presenting the ongoing labor of God's people here, especially the mission of Urawa Lutheran School, is moving and gives many examples of areas in need of prayer.



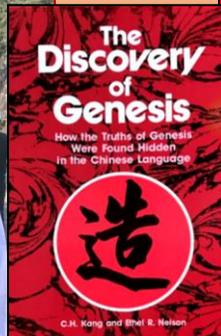
family corner

WE'RE GOING OVER THE WATER!



This summer our family will be taking a furlough in the Midwest, visiting many churches, a few that we have not connected with in almost 5 years. For the first time in 3 years, our family of 4 will travel together and present our mission report about the Lord's Work here in Japan. Our speaking schedule (with possible additions planned) is in the red box at the right.

- July 15** --- Zion Lutheran Church, Seymour, Indiana
- July 22** --- (Washington D.C.)
- July 29** --- St. Peter's Lutheran, Columbus, Indiana
- August 2-3** --- LCMS International Center, St. Louis, Missouri
- August 5** --- Trinity Lutheran Church, Hoffman, Illinois
- August 12** --- Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Bean Blossom, Indiana



Much of the information about the ancient history & original meanings of the kanji from China on our first page is taken from *The Discovery of Genesis* (from CPH, pictured here). We have used this book's fascinating connection of the Japanese kanji to the Bible in conversations & Bible studies for over 20 years.

We have enjoyed running weekend races around the Imperial Palace recently with *Tohru & Teiko Akatsu* (pictured on page 4)! They are in great shape and stay young with a contagiously optimistic attitude. Their son graduated from ULS and married a professional opera singer who teaches music to Megumi & Isaac.

During this rainy season, we are reminded of the faithful

rain of the Holy Spirit that God sends to renew, refresh, encourage, and strengthen our family & ministries. In the Old Testament, the rain needed to bring crops to fruition is compared with the pouring out of God's Spirit on the earth, which in turn promotes spiritual

growth: "For I have given the early rain, [...] & afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." (*Joel 2: 23, 28*) We are so grateful to partner with and rely on the mystery of the Holy Spirit's wonderful loving work in the hearts of our friends, students, and co-workers. **Pray for us to wisely depend on the ONLY Worker that can bring the gift of grace leading to eternal life.** "The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, [but] neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (*1 Cor. 3:8,7*)

Thanks to the grace & mercy of God, we keep soaking up the Holy Spirit's quenching refreshment in the heat & humidity of this beautiful "swamp" (see [Silence](#) quote about the mission field of Japan on p. 4), and keep pressing on to share Jesus' love for the Japanese people!



Tom & Debi Going

serve as educational missionaries for the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in Japan with their 10-year old twins, Megumi & Isaac.

They served in Japan from 1990 - 2006, then in Indonesia from 2008 to 2013 and returned to Japan in 2013 to teach north of Tokyo at Urawa Lutheran School.