



Serving the Lord in ASIA

News from the Jastrams

MAY 2020

GOLDEN WEEK: BADMINTON IN THE PARK. (TOKYO, JAPAN)

Pastor Jastram serves as a manager for theological education in Asia for the LCMS based in Tokyo, Japan.

EYES FIXED ON JESUS

I was sorting through Japanese Christian postcards today and ran into this verse: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” I Thessalonians 5:16 ~18. That seems like a tall order these days; and yet, as Dan explained to me in our devotions today in line with our teaching of the theology of the cross, “When trials come . . . entrust your body and life to the One who accomplishes His

purposes in the midst of suffering. See the world through Job’s eyes, and behold the countenance of Jesus, your Redeemer, who bore the price of your salvation” (in “The Countenance of Job”, *The Lutheran Study Bible*, CPH 2009, 837).

May we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, now and always! We rejoice that we can live and work on your behalf to share the Gospel here in Asia....

SUTEI-HOMU SHIKAN

Bustling train stations, packed bullet trains and planes, large gatherings in the park, — none of that was part of this year’s “Golden Week,” which was from April 29th to May 6th. A time normally set aside for vacations and visits to family and friends was instead dubbed “Sutei-Homu Shikan” – “STAY HOME WEEK” here in Tokyo. And, by and large, that is what we have been doing (actually, since the end of March). Several days ago the state of emergency was extended to the end of May including additional

requests (since measures cannot be legally enforced) that people grocery shop no more than once every three days, practice social distancing, and use face masks. Although infection rates are low relative to the United States, Japan’s hospitals have been stretched thin and were seen to be on the brink of collapse until just recently. Now with numbers decreasing a bit, the hospitals are getting “a breather.”



COMPLIANT CARP FOR CHILDREN'S DAY

GOOD & EVIL ANGELS, WINE OR GRAPES, AND H-CM

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Continued good health for us as we live and work in Japan.*
- *Health and safety of our LCMS missionaries living in more challenging environments.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *NEW congregations as well as individuals, who have stepped up to partner with us in LCMS mission work despite this financially challenging time.*
- *God's blessings of His clear teaching as witnessed in our Catechism.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *Concord in doctrine and practice as we work with various partner church bodies.*

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Our fellow Asian Lutherans often tap into the wealth of solid, strong Lutheran resources we have — which includes our most recent revision of Luther's Catechism updated to address timely issues of our day. And here in Japan, one Lutheran pastor is patiently translating it section by section as he teaches it to his confirmands and new members. Dan is happy to act as a consultant with this pastor and has done so on several sections now, including some not-so-basic questions like: when the Bible says "the devil has been sinning from the beginning", does it mean God created the devil as a sinner, at the same time that he created the good angels?" — not always easy to understand fully.

At the same time, Dan has been exercising his theological and basic Japanese as he proof-reads a sample translation work he requested from another Lutheran pastor (and pondered over the equivalence of wine and "grape" in the Lord's Supper).

In Dan's administrative role, the pandemic has meant reworking of

next year's budget (starting July 1st). Towards that end, Dan has been collating some of the anticipated budget needs for our Regional Director with regard to theological education in the Asia region so that the Word of God continues to be proclaimed! In addition, because R.D. Ferry finds himself under travel restrictions these days, (his position used to find him more often than not away from his home base in Taiwan) he has had more time to attend to... email! He knows Dan well enough to pass along a theological issue from a Lutheran pastor in Malaysia impressed with a book on the documentary hypothesis and the issue of the Historical-Critical Method. Dan was happy to provide a response.

So that's a little taste of life and work for Dan these days. We are thankful that God has continued to grant us good health to stay the course. And thank you for your wonderful, ongoing support that allows it to happen!

To support the LCMS through the work of Daniel Jastram, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Asia-Jastram."

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/givenow/jastram.

