



# Serving the Lord in JAPAN

## News from the Jastrams

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"Alleluia. As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him. Alleluia."  
(Liturgical Verse for Pentecost 6, Colossians 2:6b-7a)

## Tending a Garden of Faith

"Beautiful stories—even if they are lies—have value." This truism was expressed by my Japanese neighbor as his overall summary about life and religion in our casual conversation.

It was the third time I had seen this man at work on the landscape gardening of the flower bed along the sidewalk of our nearest bus stop. "Are you a neighborhood volunteer?" I asked. When we first moved into our neighborhood years ago, I struck up a friendly conversation with the elderly lady who tended the same flower bed. A few years later, I noticed her aged diminutive corner house being torn down and replaced by a new efficiency structure. She must have passed away or moved away. The flower bed succumbed to despair. Weeds and ungainly tree suckers tyrannized. But now, a new gardener seemed determined to restore the beauty of that bus stop flower bed.

He asked, "Are you perhaps one of the foreigners working at the nearby International Christian University?" "No, I'm a Lutheran missionary," I said. "Do you know the Lutheran College and Seminary right next to the university?" "Yes," he replied. Then he explained that he has been

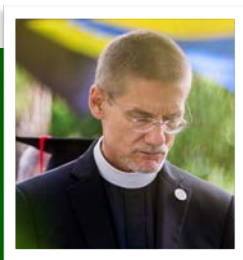


interested in the Christian faith for about twenty years, knows about the Bible from the writings of Japanese socio-philosophers, and has a great respect for Jesus as one with beautiful stories and teachings. But he is not baptized. After all, the beautiful stories and teachings of Jesus, even about his resurrection on the third day, all have value even though no one can know if they are really true. "Do you know our saying about a lovely lie (itoshii uso) being a beautiful thing?" he asked. I thought about Santa Claus,

his flying reindeer, and the stories we tell children about Christmas presents.

But this conversation had already stretched the parameters of our brief encounter. I had only enough time to leave him with an introduction to the power of God's Word to kindle a confident faith in things we do not see, especially about Christ our Savior, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

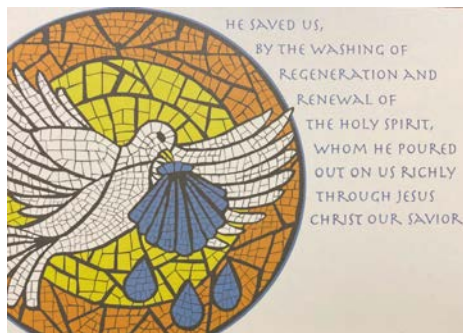
Rev. Dr. Jastram is the Asia Lutheran Resource Coordinator:  
Making Lutheran resources of theology and worship available in Asia.



## PRAYER AND PRAISE

- for God's continual blessings on every opportunity to share the Gospel, even in casual conversations with neighbors;
- for the enthusiastic partnership of stateside supporters who abound in the joy of work accomplished through their agents overseas;
- for the convenience of Joan's naval base access card at Yokosuka;
- for continuing good progress on our translation work of Walther's *Church and Ministry*, now over 55% translated;
- for future arrangements of a proofreader for translation work accomplished;
- for August home service preparations, now in the final stages before travel;
- for our LCMS Asia regional director and fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings;
- for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.

## Cards, Cards, Cards...



Our May newsletter account of the baptism of Mrs. Ooka had a wonderfully unexpected outcome. An enthusiastic stateside partner of our mission work in Japan took the initiative of sending three baptism cards: one to Mrs.

Ooka; one to the officiant; and one to the on-site Japanese minister who patiently taught Mrs. Ooka for over two-years! Not only did this kindness make a deep impression on the three Japanese involved, but it gave the stateside partner tremendous joy through his personal participation with the work we carry out as his agents. Thank you, dear partner, for this wonderful blessing!

## And more cards!

We have the good news that now, Joan also has been issued a base access card as volunteer worship music provider for our monthly visits to the Yokosuka naval base for the LCMS sacramental services. We are thankful to be serving our Savior on your behalf!

*YOUR SUPPORT is vital for our continued mission work in Japan: regular services at our worship sites, translation of theological resources, and nurturing relations with Japanese Lutheran pastors facing individual challenges to the faith. We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support.*

~Dan and Joan



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](http://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

Prayerfully consider partnering with the LCMS to support the work of Daniel Jastram. Make checks payable to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861  
On the memo line include *Jastram-Japan*

Give securely from any device: [lcms.org/givenow/jastram](http://lcms.org/givenow/jastram)