



Serving the Lord in JAPAN News from the JASTRAMS



October/November 2022

“Alleluia. Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Alleluia.” (Liturgical Verse for All Saints’ Day, Hebrews 12:1a, 2a)

Hidden Fruit Discovered

Suddenly I found it!

I had been searching on the internet at great length but in vain for even the slightest information about the church and the pastor. No luck.

A retired Japanese pastor had asked me four weeks ago where my father had done his missionary work. When I mentioned my hometown Shibata City, he said, “I know someone there! He studied theology at our seminary for four years, but he decided to start an independent congregation instead of being assigned to an existing congregation.” Could this church planter be a member of my childhood church home in Shibata?

Search as I might for his name or any reference to his church, all was in vain—until I noticed,

on google maps street view, a little white cross on top of the house next to the incorrect old address I had from my parents. Then, I noticed a weathered signboard on the other side of the building. Finally I noticed a “Welcome” sign at the front door. Could this be a building used for a church by the pastor in question? After an extended internet search I finally found an indirect link between this address and the name of the church and pastor. I finally found it!

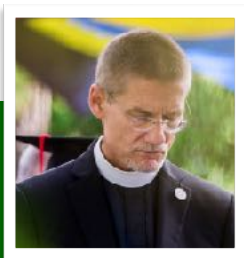
With high hopes of further discoveries, I made immediate travel plans, packed my bags, and took off the next day by train across the island. At the appointed Sunday hour of worship, the pastor in question appeared, led the worship service, then invited me, the one foreigner, to introduce myself.



What a surprise for all of us to realize how God brought about Gospel fruit after all these years. He had been baptized at our home church in Shibata in 1975 just before my parents returned to the States. Later, he studied one year at a bible college before auditing four years of

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



PRAYER AND PRAISE

for the wonderful discovery of hidden Gospel fruit—an independent church plant—come to light this last month in my hometown of Shibata;

for new fruit discovered in Osaka out of the Independent Lutheran Diocese;

for another Sacramental Service provided this last month to the faithful LCMS service members in Okinawa as well as those continuing at our regular LCMS worship sites in Tokyo and Yokosuka;

for wonderful headway on our new translation project of Elert’s Eucharist and Church Fellowship (now 70% completed);

for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.

NEWSLETTERS INFO

To self-subscribe or catch up with our newsletter archive go here: <https://tinyurl.com/5459478e>

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seminary classes. Then, after leading services during a one-year vacancy at the Shibata church, he decided to plant a new congregation right beside his ancestral home in Shibata. He has served there faithfully for twenty-four years, independently, not

associated with any other church body, nor with any email or internet skills. In my conversations with him after the service, I promised to help him and the church come out of hiding in this digital age so that others would not have as much difficulty as I did in finding the church.

More Fruit Discovered

What a surprise to receive an unexpected email from a totally different quarter—from an independent Norwegian Lutheran missionary living in Osaka, previously unknown to me. He sent me an email after hearing a segment on “Religion in Japan” on Issues Etc. and introduced himself as a representative of the small, global, Independent Lutheran Diocese.

The resulting fruit was a wonderful informal face-to-face



conference in Tokyo with four out of the five identified Lutheran ministers living in Japan meeting together for the first time, all with a high regard for the Lutheran Confessions and for the future of sound Lutheran doctrine and practice in Japan.

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- 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 local Lutheran pastors
- facing individual challenges to the faith.
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- *We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support!*
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- ~Dan and Joan Jastram
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To support the LCMS through the work of Daniel Jastram, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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