

SERVING THE LORD IN

# Japan

News from  
Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram



<https://www.lcms.org/jastram>



Pastor Dan and Joan Jastram

Rev. Jastram serves as the  
Asia Lutheran Resource  
Coordinator:

*Making Lutheran resources of  
theology and worship  
available in Asia.*



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## Simple Explanation

“Here’s a simple explanation”,  
Rev. Fukao said with a smile as we  
walked and talked on the way to lunch.

I had asked him what he sees as the  
major difference between the four  
largest Lutheran church bodies in  
Japan.

He said, “The two church bodies  
using the seminary in east Japan (in  
Tokyo) are ‘liturgical’, but they are  
committed to liberal theology. The two  
other church bodies that use the  
seminary in west Japan (in Kobe) are  
‘non-liturgical’, but are more inclined to  
be conservative in theology and have a  
higher regard for the Lutheran  
Confessions.”



Kobe seminary

I had arranged this visit for an LCMS  
visitor, for Rev. Fukao, and for Rev.  
Ishizaki, the president of the Lutheran  
seminary in Kobe, to keep in touch with  
their work in west Japan and better  
understand the distinctive character of  
their church body.

It made me happy to learn in  
addition that they have seen an  
impressive number of eight to ten of  
their theological leaders come to our  
LCMS seminaries in the States for  
graduate studies in theology over the  
last several decades. We were able to

discuss at some length the  
challenges of various influences in  
Japan currently seeking dominance  
over the sound doctrine and practice  
of Scripture as confessed in the Book  
of Concord.

## Lutheran Resources

Another wonderful result from  
these mission context visits was  
information brought to light about  
previous translation work of  
Lutheran theological resources into  
Japanese.

As preparation for my visit with  
Rev. Nakamoto of Aganai  
(Redemption) Lutheran Church, I  
searched online for background  
information about their origins with  
the mission work of the Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod. How  
happy I was to learn of their diligent  
translation work of sound Lutheran  
theological texts over the previous  
decades!

Through the work of seventeen  
ordained WELS missionaries, over  
almost six decades, with the  
dedicated help of select Japanese  
nationals, they have translated  
thirty-some works of substantive  
Lutheran theology.

My future work will include  
becoming familiar with the contents  
of these works and confirming their  
ongoing availability for subsequent  
generations. ♦

## Prayer and Praise:

- thanksgiving for our recent mission context visits which surpassed our expectations: over a six-day period, with seven key representatives, at seven separate events;
- thanksgiving for LCMS seminary graduate theological programs which attract international students and leaders from Japan, Asia, and all over the world;
- thanksgiving for decades of previous Lutheran missionary work resulting in established congregations, theological programs, and translation work of sound Lutheran resources;
- prayer for fruitful home service visits August 15 through September 21;
- thanksgiving for wonderful headway on our translation project of Chemnitz Vol. 5 *Lord's Supper* (now almost 99% completed);
- thanksgiving for the volunteer who plans to begin proofreading our translation work;
- thanksgiving for God's blessings at our three worship sites: Shinjuku, Yokosuka, Okinawa;
- thanksgiving for our LCMS Asia regional director Rev. Charles Ferry and fellow LCMS Asia missionaries each with individual challenges and blessings;
- thanksgiving for the faithful prayers and support provided by our LCMS Jastram-Asia mission partners.



Osaka Castle Stone Walls

### Gigantic Stones

Osaka Castle is characterized by its many huge stone walls and the grand scale of its moats. The stones in the Otemon, Kyobashi and Sakuramon areas are especially known for their great dimensions. The huge stone in front of you is the fourth largest stone in the castle compound, having an exposed surface space of 48 square meters.

## What Big Stones!

**"D**ecades ago, when my father Rev. Robert Jastram arrived in Japan, he visited the famous Osaka Castle (first-page masthead image), took pictures, and used them among others during his LCMS Japan mission slide presentations.

As a child, I remember wondering about his slide with the sign "Gigantic Stones" (top-right) which I always saw in the slides, but the stone itself (top-left) I never saw depicted.

It was only during my recent mission context visit to Osaka that I actually visited the Osaka Castle myself and saw first-hand the famous "fourth largest stone" mentioned in the sign I had seen so often as a child. What a surprise to see its size!

As I walked from one section of the castle to the next, I kept remarking to the others, "I've never seen such large stones in any other castle I've visited!" Then I came to the Otemon

area of the castle and saw the modern sign explaining the same thing as the old sign about the "fourth largest stone." What surprising stone-wall engineering for its AD 1620 construction! ♦

## Update

During the next several months we anticipate some long-awaited progress on the task of proofreading translation work already accomplished. A Japanese Lutheran minister volunteered to spend whatever time he might have available for the task while he is on summer break. Thanks be to God! ♦

**OUR HOME SERVICE** dates for this year are from August 15 to September 21. Although the Sundays are already committed, send us an email to let us know if you are interested in a weekday presentation for a small group, mission board, or church council meeting.

**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. We are humbly grateful for your continued prayers and support. **Thank you!**

Your missionaries, Dan and Joan Jastram

**"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."**

(Isaiah 40:8, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, Liturgical Verse).

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