



Nov - Dec 2023

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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## New Acquaintance

**T**he most exciting development recently came through new acquaintance with another confessional Lutheran pastor and congregation — Rev. Haga and Megumi (Grace) Lutheran Church in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, 3 hours north of us.



**Mito New Acquaintances: Jastram with  
Rev. Haga, S. Brandt, A. Schuette**

After hearing of Rev. Haga's interest in meeting me, I gathered information about his Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC) background; namely, the fruits of Japan mission efforts started in 1952 by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and carried on by 18 WELS missionaries and others over 63 years, resulting in a fully independent, self-governing and self-supported church body recognized as sister church body with WELS and a member of the worldwide Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) fellowship.

In its genesis, the LECC has also benefited from Japan missionaries with LCMS connections. It is a small church body boldly addressing current ministry challenges with God-given resources of three national pastors and six congregations in a region particularly known for resistance to foreign influences—even those of Buddhism established in Japan thirteen centuries ago!

The Mito worship service focused squarely on God's Advent Word of promise: "he [the Savior] will crush your [Satan's] head" (Genesis 3:15).

After worship we enjoyed extended conversations with both English speaking members as well as with those more comfortable in Japanese.

The Mito congregation pursues community outreach using English classes with gospel messages taught by WELS Kingdom Workers and Friendship Network church workers as well as by using online streaming of worship services and website content for church resources.

This wonderful new acquaintance came about through previous interactions with Rev. Haga's LECC colleague, Rev. Nakamoto in the Tokyo area, who has also treated me very warmly in our visits.

All these interactions have gone extremely well. We have acquired greater understanding of common resource needs, greater motivation to maintain communication, and greater eagerness to coordinate future planning.



**Mito church elders**

## Prayer and Thanksgiving:

- thanksgiving for the new acquaintance of Rev. Haga and Megumi (Grace) Luth. Ch. in Mito, for their energetic outreach efforts, and for future opportunities of interaction;
- thanksgiving for the official church relations Japan visit by Dr. Shaw with Dr. Yoshimura and Rev. Wakabayashi;
- thanksgiving for lively ministry connections through the Derendinger family;
- thanksgiving for McFerrin family members visiting from the States;
- prayers for American expats at a distance from Tokyo who desire closer connection with LCMS teaching and practice;
- prayers for our LCMS Asia missionary family gathering coming up in January, for times of renewed learning and friendships among colleagues;
- thanksgiving for wonderful headway on our translation project of Engelbrecht, *The Lutheran Difference* (CPH 2014) (about 30% completed);
- thanksgiving for God's continual 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 and our St. Louis headquarters.

## To support this LCMS mission work:

Give securely online through the LCMS page:

[lcms.org/givenow/jastram](https://lcms.org/givenow/jastram)

Rev. Yoshimura & Rev. Shaw



## Ministry Contacts

What a wonderful blessing it was to welcome Rev. Dr. Jonathan Shaw on his recent official visit to Japan as he became better acquainted with newly ordained Rev. Dr. Hiroaki Yoshimura!

Although the LCMS is not in fellowship with the state-established Ev. Luth. Ch. of Finland, nor with its

Ripple effect, from Grace Lutheran Church in Versailles MO to Tokyo Japan. Following the Derendinger family's visit to Tokyo reported in the last newsletter, we received in the mail a wonderful gift of the *Liturgy Accompaniment Edition* of the Lutheran Service Book! Not only that, but pastor Rev. Rottmann contacted us about the possibility of adorning our Eucharistic service with sacramental vessels more noble than our current, travel-scarred, well-used and generations-old, "circuit-rider" diminutive set. Thank you!

Jastrams & Derendinger Family



**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

**"Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you"**

(Matt. 11:10b, Third Sunday in Advent, Liturgical Verse).

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