



Serving the Lord in ASIA

News from the Jastrams

May 2022

"Alleluia. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. Alleluia."
(Liturgical Verse for 6th Sun. of Easter, John 16:33b)

Finnish Blessing in Tokyo

"As an elementary school girl, I always thought I would some day visit one of three mission churches in my northern hometown." During high school she did visit. She was impressed by the serenity of the worship service. Decades later, and in the middle of Tokyo, that experience ultimately led to her precious baptism. Here's the story.

The Sacrament of Baptism

From our December newsletter you may remember my visit to the Finnish [Suomi] Japanese Lutheran congregation. Since then, I have become further acquainted with the missionary couple in charge of the work there. And last Sunday, I heard the story from Mrs. Ooka herself, how she was walking by the neighborhood mission church several years ago, exchanged greetings with the Finnish missionary wife, and eventually accepted an invitation to visit one of the activities of the church. After becoming acquainted, she eventually met with the missionary husband for two years of Bible study. This led to her baptism this month.



BAPTISM OF OOKA

However, the story of the baptism itself takes an unexpected turn. Although her *Japanese* missionary teacher had a master's and doctorate degree in theology from Åbo Academy University of Finland, he was denied ordination due to his confessional

stance against woman's ordination. But, a Finnish mission organization was eager to send him and his Finnish wife as missionaries to Japan to work with one of the Japanese Lutheran church bodies which agreed to ordain him once he arrived in Japan. However, after he arrived, they also decided to deny him ordination because of his confessional stance. Nevertheless, they agreed to use him as a non-

ordained missionary, but without the authority to administer the sacraments.

So, for the last ten years, he has labored faithfully teaching God's Word on Sundays and weekdays according to his calling, but dependent on ordained ministers of the Japanese Lutheran church body to administer any sacraments in the congregation,

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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 new life of baptism begun by Mrs. Ooka this month;*
- *for the accomplished transition from our former LCMS worship site in Yokohama to our new site in Shinjuku;*
- *for Japanese Lutheran pastors' faithfulness to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in the midst of their individual challenges;*
- *for continuing good progress on our translation work of Walther's Church and Ministry;*
- *for future arrangements of a proofreader for completed translation work;*
- *for continuing Word and Sacrament ministry for LCMS Lutherans in Okinawa;*
- *for our LCMS regional director and fellow LCMS missionaries in Asia each facing their own challenges.*

NEWSLETTERS INFO

Want to catch up? Here's our archive link: tiny.cc/dvv9iz

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including baptism and the Lord's Supper for Mrs. Ooka. By God's grace, this new lamb of God joined the flock of Christ's Church with the administration of both sacraments by an appointed visiting Japanese Lutheran pastor, with a number of her non-Christian relatives in attendance for the important occasion.

The Word and Sacrament

Our acquaintance with this Finnish Japanese Lutheran congregation and missionary couple has also resulted in another wonderful development. Because our LCMS worship gathering in Tokyo had to move out of our former worship site in Yokohama to somewhere else by the end of March, we accommodated by meeting in the rather small apartment of one of our members during April. But in May, the Finnish Japanese Lutheran congregation graciously agreed to let us use their church twice a month on Sunday afternoons after their morning Japanese activities are done. The church is wonderfully equipped with a Nordic atmosphere, a beautiful Finnish-style altar and pulpit set, electric organ, comfortable chapel seating, and a lounge area for coffee and fellowship. In addition, God has arranged that, for the time being, three of us men in the called ministry can regularly interact with each other face to face in the context of the Sunday morning and afternoon church services to talk about theology and church work issues. What a wonderful blessing!

Interested in a visit this summer?

Yes, we are planning visits for July 29th–August 29th! Contact us at daniel.jastram@LCMS.org if you would like to arrange for one. Here are current Sunday options: July 31st–MN; Aug 7th–MN or East River–SD; August 14th–Alexandria circuit area, MN; August 28th–St Louis, MO or MN). We are also available most weekdays during this time. We look forward to hearing from you.

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

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.

