



## Working Carefully to Develop Personal Relationships

—Amidst the Expanse and Desolation—

The “Let’s Walk Together!” Project  
Director-general Bishop Hiromichi Kato, Diocese of Tohoku

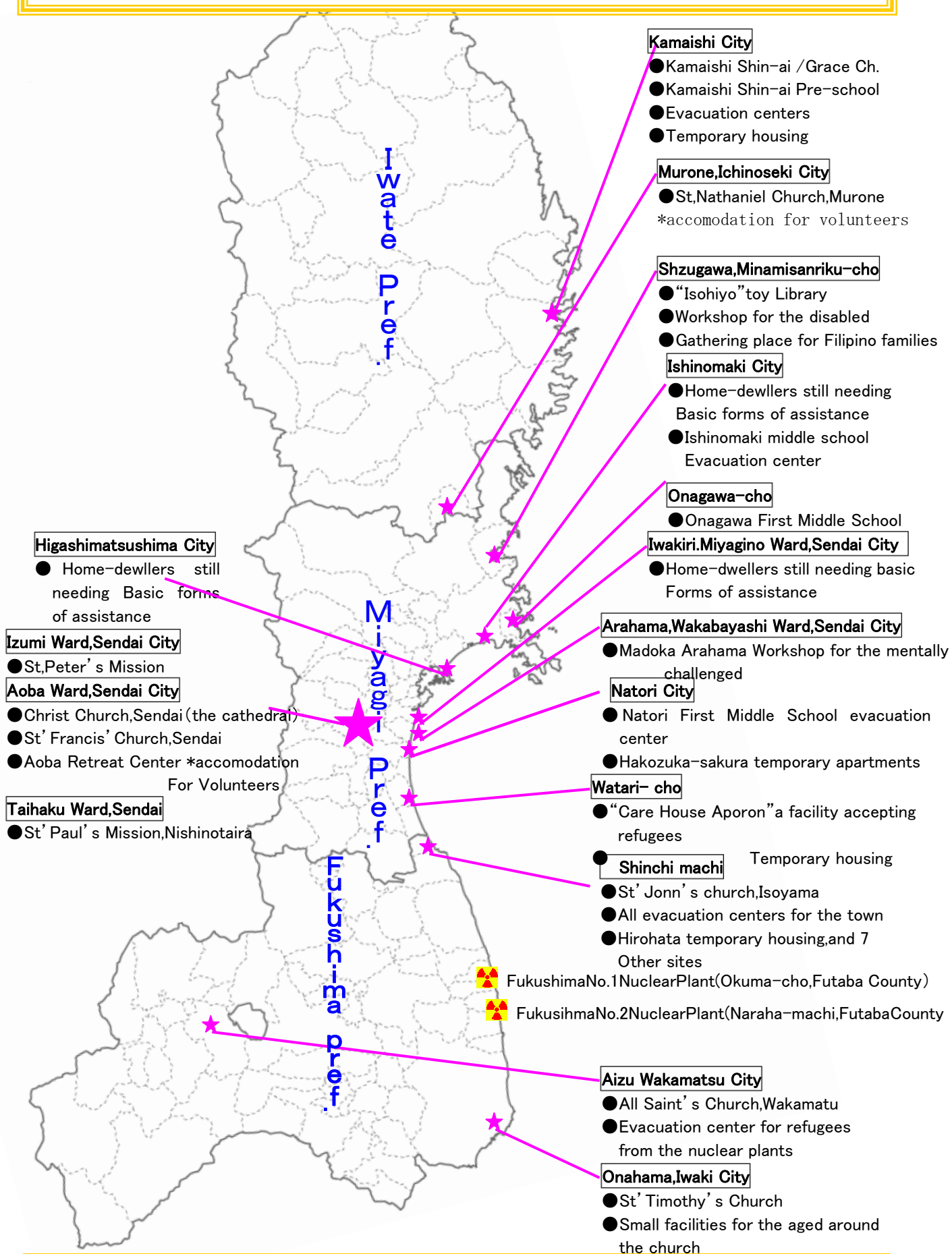
Let me first offer my heartfelt thanks for the way in which, directly after the Great Eastern Japan earthquake of March 11<sup>th</sup>, the various dioceses, clergy and people of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai remembered the afflicted areas and dioceses in fervent prayer, and began to offer aid and provide resources for worship for these churches. Here was a great earthquake and a tsunami that was beyond all imaginings, to which was added the grave issue of the nuclear plant and its radiation. Beyond the obvious point that this was a tremendous disaster, covering a thin yet wide swathe of some 500 kilometers, I feel that in many different ways this disaster was complex and multilayered. This is a massive disaster, but as we respond with caring hearts and with aid, I sense that you only come to see the real difficulties when you actually push through the narrow roads, of the “Narrow Road to the Deep North” [the poet Basho’s collection of poems from his Tohoku travels] and make painstaking efforts in your encounters with people to create personal relationships. In view of the massive scale of the disaster and the overwhelming circumstances, deliberations at the provincial level began from an early stage, and a full-fledged effort by the Nippon Sei Ko Kai began under the name The Let’s Walk Together! Project, with a preparatory office that opened on May 6<sup>th</sup>; toward the end of May, the location of the office changed from within Christ Church, Sendai (the cathedral) to two rooms in a nearby building. With a Steering Committee (Chair: Presiding Bishop Makoto Uematsu) set up by the provincial board of executives as a focal point, provincial secretary of missions and ministry Revd. Jun Nakamura (office manager for the project) and Revd. Kiyosumi Hasegawa, who was in charge of the actual scenes for Diocese of Tohoku aid efforts, have borne pivotal roles, amidst support from many others.

It is not possible to inform you in these limited pages of all our activities and our plans going into the future, but from this point on we will be working toward disclosure of all possible information through monthly newsletters and the creation of a webpage. We also are proceeding with work such as readying locations for accommodating volunteers. However, I would ask you to recognize that all of this is taking

place in the midst of a disaster (i.e., it takes more time than one would expect to find construction teams and establish phone lines). Our desire has been to develop *carefully, amidst the expanse and difficulty, personal relationships* and this is what we continue to desire. We did not simply dive into the vast affected areas; no, as we sought to find concrete ways to support the churches of the Tohoku Diocese and laity who had been affected, we were also able to build up relations of trust with local people, and these relationships have been gradually expanding. Through connections of the “Toy Library” (a group for children with disabilities and parents), a ministry which St. Peter’s Mission of Sendai has carried on with for more than 25 years, we were able to establish relationships with a toy library and a public welfare workshop in Shizukawa, Minamisanriku-cho which were hit in the disaster, and in Arahama of Sendai City, once more with a public welfare workshop hit in the disaster, and this work is becoming quite important. We are also looking to start efforts to support Filipina women in the area. In Shinchi in Soma County, where the NSKK had victims among its laity, we are deepening our local relationships in our desire to contribute to the recovery plan for the whole town. Amid active participation from various dioceses, our activities include areas from Kamaishi [in Iwate in the north] to Onahama and Hitachi. [in Fukushima and Ibaraki, to the south]. This is most definitely “mission with bare feet” (from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s sermon on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anglican Church in Japan), as the “Let’s Walk Together!” Project proceeds, step by step, yet definitely on the move forward. We ask again for your prayers and your support.



## Areas We Are Supporting Churches/Facilities Providing a Base for these Operations and the Activities We are Supporting (as of July 8<sup>th</sup>)



---

# Details on the Support Activities of the “Let’s Walk Together!” Project

Vice Director/Program Director Revd. Kiyosumi Hasegawa

Each of the objectives stated in the Mission Statement of the “Let’s Walk Together!” Project are principles which are there to govern our hearts, minds and deeds, the principles which we have maintained and which we will ever maintain.

A detailed listing (as of July 8<sup>th</sup>) of support activities in various locations that have already taken place or are currently in motion is as follows. Locations where we provide support are displayed on the map. (Left[, or previous,] page)

## **Kamaishi Base(Iwate Prefecture)**

Ministries such as distribution of aid material to small, remote fishing villages (Oishi, Hongoh and Kerobe, where we have been involved from the start); supporting the worship and childcare of Shin-ai Preschool, serving in the worship and holding evening memorial services at Shin-ai/Grace Church; visits/listening to victims/purchase and distribution of aid material to about 400 temporary housing units set up in the area.

From the diocese of Hokkaido have come priests (who are shifted every month) and lay volunteers (shifting as they see fit) to take part in these relief efforts.

## **Sendai Area Base(Miyagi Prefecture) Run by:Sendai office**

Shizugawa, Minamisanriku-cho

Carrying in emergency relief supplies; distribution of aid materials for victims at Shizukawa’s Isohiyo toy library/supporting reopening of Isohiyo; supporting reopening of a workshop for the disabled; providing portable toilets for groups that are providing meals over the long-term. Helping Filipina wives in learning Japanese/nurseries to look after children/ distributing aid materials/listening to victims. Distributing Yamazaki-brand bread.

Ishinomaki City

Carrying in emergency relief supplies; individual visits/individual distribution of relief supplies and purchase for distribution/ listening to home-dwellers who need basic supplies; holding flea markets; visits/distribution of relief supplies/ listening to people in evacuation centers. Distributing Yamazaki-brand bread.

Onagawa City

Purchasing and distributing half-sleeve dress shirts/blouses for the students of Onagawa No. 1 and No. 2 Middle Schools (2 shirts each).

Iwakiri, Miyagino Ward, Sendai City

Individual visits/individual distribution of relief supplies and purchase for distribution/ listening to home-dwellers who need basic supplies; setting up 6 pre-fabricated houses; piling up sandbags.

Arahama, Wakabayashi Ward, Sendai City

Supporting “Madoka Arahama,” a workshop for the mentally challenged, through purchase and sale of its products.

Natori City

Carrying in emergency relief supplies; visits/distribution of relief supplies/ listening to people in evacuation centers; individual visits/individual distribution of relief supplies and purchase for distribution/ listening to victims in temporary dwellings; building shelves; setting up signage for entry to temporary housing complex; setting up bulletin board at the complex; setting up banner to prohibit [unauthorized] entry into the complex; driving people to and from shopping; taking a booth to participate in summer festival; distributing Yamazaki-brand bread.

Watari-cho

Carrying in emergency relief supplies; distribution of relief supplies to “Care House Aporon,” a facility accepting refugees; individual visits/individual distribution of relief supplies/ listening to victims in temporary housing

## **Shinchi-machi Base(Fukushima Prefecture)**

Carrying in emergency relief supplies; visits/distribution of relief supplies and purchase for distribution, for people in evacuation centers; providing pork and eggs (from Asian Rural Institute); distribution of relief supplies and purchase for distribution/ listening to those in temporary dwellings, distributing 100 sets of utensils with dining tables and 500 vacuum cleaners at each temporary housing area; individual visits/listening to victims at temporary housing areas; distributing Yamazaki-brand bread.

## **Onahama Base(Fukushima Prefecture)**

For about 1 month after the disaster, bringing in and distributing emergency relief supplies/providing food supplies; in the following 3 or so months, the three dioceses [of Kyoto, Kobe and Osaka] and the diocese of Kita Kanto established a volunteer center in Hitachi and got to work, doing such things as bringing in and distributing relief supplies and listening to people. The future plan is to move the base of operations to Onahama.

## **Aizu Wakamatsu(Fukushima Prefecture)**

Bringing in and distributing relief supplies to nuclear refugees from Okuma-cho.

# The Support Structure for 'Let's Walk Together!' Project

Vice-director (Office Director) Revd. Jun Nakamura

We can at last give you some information on our 'Let's Walk Together!' Project activities. We apologize that it has taken so long.

Let me report here on the basic support structure for our activities. Under the Program Director and various Regional Directors, all activities are to be carried out by the base staff in each area. The staff alone cannot handle the task. We need to call for volunteers, and one of the duties of HQ is to support the work of the volunteers.

Basically, accommodation for volunteers will be provided in the Sendai area by the Aoba Retreat Center, in the Kesennuma-Shizukawa area by St. Nathaniel Church, Murone, and in Kamaishi by the local base, while arrangements have yet to be made at Onahama base.

At Aoba Retreat Center, initial repairs are now underway. As of this writing (July 11), half of the toilets are now functioning, and the rest should be repaired during the month of July. Extensions to the shower facilities are expected to be completed by early August. The building's ability to resist another earthquake will also be assessed during July. The facilities are now capable of use in a limited form, and requests from schools and other groups are now being considered. St. Nathaniel Church, Murone was badly damaged during an aftershock in April, but repair work has already been completed there. Murone can accommodate about 10 people, and is 20 minutes by car from Kesennuma and about 50 minutes by car from Shizukawa. For the moment, we are responding to inquiries about these two

accommodation centers only at the Sendai Office. Inquiries can be addressed to general affairs officer Matsumura or to me, Nakamura, as Office Director, on 022-265-5221. Sendai Office is open from 10:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. However we are operating with very small staffing and request your understanding and cooperation that we may not be able to answer all requests on the spot. We are just now getting our operations at the Sendai Office properly structured, but in terms of the balance between what needs to be done and the level of our staffing, much remains to be accomplished, and we are still dealing with disorder. We ask for your continued patience.

All the various reports and announcements from the project will be provided in this News Letter, which we hope to be issuing on a monthly basis. We also intend to open a home page very soon. Please be patient with us.

Finally, the work of this project is not simply to be carried out by Sendai Office alone. I would suspect that in your own churches and dioceses and regions there will be people who have suffered from the effects of the disaster. There is also much you can all do as individuals in the way of disaster relief. It would be wonderful if the activities of those who agree with our mission statement could all come under the name of the 'Let's Walk Together!' Project. That's why we developed the logo below. For ease of use, we have provided it in five colors. Details will be provided later, but first, let's all walk together under this common logo!



## 「Let's Walk Together Project」 Office

【open】Mon~Fri 10:00~17:00 【close】Sat•Sun•Public holiday

〒980-0803 “Kreis bldg.” 2F 3-4-5 Kokubun-cho Aoba Ward, Sendai Miyagi Prefecture

TEL&FAX: +81-22-265-5221 E-mail: [walk@nskk.org](mailto:walk@nskk.org)