

News Letter No. 10

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**Let Us Walk Together
Project**

NSKK Support for Victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

Memorials and Remembrance

A Year since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake



On 11 March 2012 (the third Sunday in Lent), exactly a year since the disaster, a communion service was held by the people of St. John's church, Isoyama, in Shinchi-cho, Fukushima Prefecture – in a tent set up in a yard owned by a parishioner, because their badly damaged church building can no longer be used – both to mark the Sabbath and in memory of three parishioners whose lives were taken by the tsunami.

On the day of the earthquake, the strength of the tremor that hit Shinchi-cho was 6 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale, and the tsunami struck almost an hour later, at around 3:40 p.m. The earthquake itself completely or partially destroyed homes of 81 families, and the homes of another 517 families completely or partially destroyed by the tsunami, which swept through fully a fifth of the town. In terms of human loss, of a population of around 8,200 in Shinchi-cho, by the end of June 2011, 100 people were confirmed dead and another 10 were still missing. (Figures are from the town's Local Report)

A Prayer – for Victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

11 March 2012, the House of Bishops, Nihon Seikokai

O Lord, who constantly supports us in times of grief or loss, we pray for all those who suffered or lost their lives in the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake.

In your great mercy, O Lord, embrace and give rest to all who those who died in the disaster (and especially)

Stand by and support all those who suffer because of the earthquake, the tsunami and the radiation outbreak – all those who lost their loved ones, all those in grief and loneliness, all those scattered and separated and weakened by the disaster (and especially)

Grant your blessing on the work of recovery, that it may bring hope in this world of so much suffering.

O Lord our Comforter, may we continue to bear these issues in our hearts, and together with those burdened with such affliction, walk always in the way of the Lord.

We ask this in the name of your son our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

Visit by Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori to the Disaster Area



From February 14 to 16, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop

of the Episcopal Church of America, visited the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake disaster area. She arrived on February 14 from Hiroshima, and set out next morning for Kesennuma, where the staff of the Himawari Workshop, part of NSKK's "Let Us Walk Together!" Project, showed her the area.

Removal of debris in Kesennuma is still underway, and seeing it for the first time, the group were initially at a loss for words, but soon began asking questions such as 'How high

did the wave reach?' and 'How many people died?' Jefferts Schori then visited Shizugawa, and met with participants in the project's Support for Foreign Residents Program.

On February 16, Jefferts Schori visited Shinchi-cho, in Fukushima. She was introduced to the history of St. John's church Isoyama and the damage it suffered in the disaster by congregation members, who have been working to preserve



their church, and prayed together with them. Jefferts Schori was deeply moved by her visit to the disaster area, and said she now understands what the NSKK is endeavoring to carry out there.

NSKK 's 11 Dioceses – Praying Together, and Remembering March 11 • Tohoku Diocese

Tohoku Diocese “Worship in the Wilderness”

St. John's Church, Isoyama
Priest-in-Charge, Revd. Jacob
Kunihide Hayashi



Eastern Japan Earthquake, St. John's Church Isoyama also commemorated the lives of those three parishioners who died in the tsunami: our brother Isaac Minoru Miyake, and our sisters Susanna Yoshimi Miyake and Grace Junko Nakaso. For this communion service, on the first anniversary of the quake, it was agreed at the request of St. John's Isoyama's congregation, to erect a tent within view of our damaged church, on the ground where people of Isoyama had lived.



For the service, NSKK Primate Bishop Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu agreed to take the sermon, and two priests sent to Japan as part of the Japan-Korea Cooperative Project by the Korean SKK's Seoul Diocese, Revd. Yi De Son and Revd. Yi Jon Ho also participated. The

service was assisted by Revd. Jun Nakamura of the “Let Us Walk Together!” Project, and an unexpectedly large number – 55 persons – attended. In addition to St. John's regular parishioners, they included representatives from the Province, neighboring churches, local residents and “Let Us Walk Together!” Project staff, as well as the staff of Fuji Kindergarten, which was hard-hit in the disaster. Holding this service in the disaster area confirmed the presence of our Lord with us in this wilderness, and was a great encouragement. The service closed with a few words from St. John's Isoyama congregation member brother David Tsuyoshi Miyake, who said the sadness of the disaster areas is still not healed, and that support continues to be needed. I would also like to remind you that, from the point of view of the disaster areas, the Great Eastern Japan Disaster isn't over yet.



How the NSKK's 11 Dioceses shared in prayers and memories of March 11th



Osaka Diocese

"A Time of Prayer and Praise: A Communion Service for the Great East Japan Earthquake One Year Memorial" took place at 2pm, Saturday, March 10th, 2012, at Kawaguchi Christ Church, the Diocesan Cathedral. The Right Rev'd Samuel Osamu Ohnishi, Bishop of Osaka, celebrated, and the sermon was given by Right Rev'd Andrew Yutaka Nakamura, Bishop of Kobe. This dedication service included music of praise from sister Ruth **Takako Hamazaki**. There were 137 participants, who offered up 141,007 yen for aid efforts as part of the service.



Chubu Diocese

Every church of the Diocese offered prayers for the one year memorial of March 11. Kani Mission (in Gifu Prefecture), to which many Japanese Filipinos come, set aside time to light candles and offer up special prayers during its Lord's Day communion service.



A meeting for hearing about the Kamaishi base from Mr. Ebihara, at Sapporo Christ Church (Feb. 26)

Hokkaido Diocese

Now a year has passed since the great disaster, and NSKK's "Let Us Walk Together" project will be continuing for yet another year. This means the work of people from our Diocese stationed at the Kamaishi base will be continuing for another year. As we desire yet more of your prayers and your cooperation, the **Earthquake Response Office** of the Hokkaido Diocese is now preparing its "intermediate report," as well as a "Volunteer's Handbook." We are now working to make these available to you by this Easter. (From "Hokkaido Diocese Relief Office News No. 24")

* Kamaishi Base is updating its blog everyday. Don't miss it!



Kyoto Diocese

Every Tuesday at St Agnes', the diocesan Cathedral, there is midday prayer remembering the 3/11 victims. This began in April 2011, when people in Kyoto felt they should gather to pray for Tohoku, and think over what to do as they prayed. Please read the blog of the Diocese's **Earthquake Response Office** as well, at <http://nskk-kytsinsai.blogspot.jp/>



Kitakanto diocese

Though this Diocese did not organize any joint memorial service, every one of its churches prayed the "one year memorial collect for the Great East Japan Earthquake" and read aloud a special message from the House of Bishops. In addition, in Saitama, right to the north of Tokyo, some believers took part in a special service in Tokyo held jointly by Roman Catholics and the NCC.

For me, the author of this report, my worship was at St. Andrew's Church, Hitachi [Ibaraki Prefecture]. Before preaching, I read out the message from the House of Bishops. Together, we prayed for all the victims of the 3/11 disaster, especially for the peace of those who lost their lives in it.



Kobe Diocese

Each parish of the Diocese observed special services to remember the disaster of a year before. At the diocesan Cathedral, Bishop Nakamura led the worship and preached. After the service, the cathedral's youth group held a coffee event to collect donations. At 2:24pm, everyone present joined in silent prayer.



Tokyo Diocese Prayer in memory of the East Japan Earthquake

On March 11th, 2012, in addition to prayer by all of its parishes, the Diocese held a time of prayer at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Tokyo, beginning at 2pm. Some 120 people gathered in prayer on the day remembering the disaster, taking time for silence and for words of prayer.



Yokohama Diocese

St. Andrew's Cathedral Yokohama hosted a "Eucharist and Lecture on the One Year Memorial of the East Japan Earthquake" on Saturday, March 3rd. They prayed for peace of those killed by the disaster and for rebuilding with peace for the surviving victims of the great disaster. Sr. Yoshiko Takaki of Souers Auxiliatrices [an active Catholic order], gave a talk on the theme of "God's Messages to Us in the Great Earthquake."



Kyushu Diocese

On March 11th, 2012, the faithful of many different churches got together at Fukuoka Chubu Church of the United Church of Christ in Japan, to remember the 3/11 victims and pray for rebuilding efforts. The service was jointly led by representatives of Roman Catholic, Anglican, UCCJ, Baptist, and Lutheran churches of Fukuoka City. 30 Anglicans were there, among the 220 or so people present. At 2:46, there was a requiem piece played on the "koto" (a Japanese instrument like a zither) and everyone offered their silent prayer.



Okinawa Diocese

--- we cannot forget that time. And, we will pray for what comes next ---

Some 250 people from different denominations gathered at the chapel of Okinawa Christian University to take part in a "Charity Concert Praying for the 3/11 Great East Japan Earthquake," organized by the Okinawa Christian Council. Begun at 4pm, the event consisted of two parts: 1. prayer time, and 2. a concert.

Please don't be saying "Let's try hard, Japan!"

Rev. **Hideki Saitoh**,
St. Stephen's Church, Mito,
Diocese of Kitakanto

Over this year, there's one Bible verse that has always been ringing in my mind: "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep." (Romans 12:15) Someone else's joy can put us in an envious mood – "You just wait for when I get mine!" Sharing someone else's joy is such a tough thing to do. When someone's weeping, we try to find words of comfort – "You'll be OK. This too will pass."

Since March 11 of last year, how very many people have come to me to offer words of comfort! Our sanctuary collapsed, and our kindergarten building had cracks in it. Looking at the scene, my mind went blank while my heart went pitch-black. What sent a ray of hope into my heart was this request: "Will you please let us use the rectory at Hitachi [Ibaraki Prefecture] as a facility for volunteers?" Within two months from the disaster, about 150 volunteers came in from Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe to serve in Hitachi, Mito, and Onahama. Next, work started in Hitachi and Mito to support these volunteers.



At St. Stephen's Church, Mito, the bell tower, cracked in 3/11 and then demolished, has now been restored.

We collected "futon" [Japanese style bedding, placed on the floor] for the volunteers. Church ladies brought food for dinner. We also joined in with their activities. Parishioners and kindergartener parents of Hitachi and Mito, themselves badly affected by the earthquake, worked hard to help the volunteers and the victims.

What I sensed based on all of this was that the real purpose of these volunteers from Kyoto, Osaka and

Kobe was not to remove debris. Nor did they come to fix roofs. I deeply sensed that they were here to be with those who had suffered. I saw them as they were "weeping with those who weep."

I am deeply convinced that I did the right thing in giving over the Hitachi rectory for this use. This year marks the centennial of the start of church mission in Hitachi, and our experiences with the volunteers were the best possible preparation for the centennial. The whole congregation gained in vitality through working with these volunteers, and experienced the joy of serving others.



The volunteers from Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe have now moved on to Onahama. The churches in Hitachi and Mito are working so as to support the activities of Onahama Base, since we want to share the joy have experienced with the church in Onahama as well. I know we must continue this rebuilding effort many more years, but I want to continue forward step by step, under the guidance of our Lord who is always there with us.

Revisiting the year that followed the earthquake

Atsuko Kikuchi, Director,
St. Paul's Kindergarten (Koriyama)

On the day of March 11, 2011, I was at work in my kindergarten, St. Paul's. With the power outage and the jammed phone lines, I was unable to contact my kindergarteners' parents to check that they were all right. Nor could I confirm the situation of staff members taking children home, nor even how my two daughters were, who were by themselves at home. Over that whole day, hours were passing where all I could do was to pray, "Please be alive!" In addition to being faced with dangers whose nature I could not discern, I had a

grievous parting from many beloved kindergarteners and parents, due to the [government-encouraged] voluntary evacuation due to radiation from the nuclear plant meltdown.

At present, all the teachers and staffers of my kindergarten are doing the best they can in facing those realities that we are not free to forget. I too keep on telling myself “It will be alright!” keeping a smile on my face as I go through each day. I maintain a positive attitude due to the kindergartners and the parents remaining in Koriyama who need our kindergarten, as well as to countless people farther afield who have Fukushima on their minds and stand with us in their hearts.



A radiation measurement point in the kindergarten

A kindergartener who was away from school with a cold from the beginning of February and returned to us after a long interval told me, with a big, big smile on his face, “Teacher, you know something? I, I’ve wanted to be right back here, playing along with my friends. So, I’m real happy today.” And then I thought, those kindergarteners that were forced to evacuate away from the radiation must have been wishing, in their hearts, “I want to get back to Koriyama now! I want to play with my friends!”... it left me in a painful mood. It was then, on the television, that Chinese characters [used in Japanese writing] that include 心 (“kokoro,” the heart, the seat of the mind), such as 慈 (cherish, raise up), 慶 (joy, celebration), and 恕 (compassion, forgiveness) grabbed my eye. Before 3/11, I would have not have given such commercials a second thought, simply overlooking them, but I was able to confirm once more the need to take even these smallest things to heart, and be thoughtful toward my neighbor.

When I take another look back on the year that followed the earthquake, I’ve had encounters with many,

many precious people. I have also received numerous phone calls, letters and e-mails offering comfort, saying something like: “I keep your teachers, your kindergarteners and your parents in mind, as I’m always praying for you.” This year has given me an even stronger sense of the deep value of the ties one has with people and the importance of helping one another, and how I am not alone.

And so, let me thank all of you for your “愛” (love, affection) [another character with the “heart element”] from my “心” (heart).

What I have seen and felt, and will now spread

Samuel Masahiro Watabe

You might say it was a natural form of leading from God that right after the 3/11 disaster, I, who at just that time was retiring early from my company and so unburdened of those responsibilities, should join the “Let Us Walk Together” project as a volunteer. I had done some looking for a new job after the earthquake, but it was a difficult time, so I decided to put my job hunt on hold and went to Kamaishi and Minamisanriku a number of times, acting as a volunteer to carry aid items. After that, I regularly joined in volunteering for “shopping tours,” first at the Hakozuka Sakura Danchi temporary housing [complex] in the City of Natori and, from October on, in the Medeshima area as well. Honestly speaking, I was quite nervous when I first took part in volunteering on a shopping tour. First of all, I asked myself, “how should I go about being with these victims ---?” But, after getting on the mini-bus with them, I found I could let go of such fears. You see, each and every person was saying, “I’ve been looking forward to this!”



(P8のファイルに続きます)

Moreover, there were such lively, cheerful conversations in the bus that it really made you wonder whether these people could really be victims of a disaster. On that time we took them to Yuriage, though – the place from which some of them came – the minibus was completely quiet on the return trip.

Yet even so, I remember these tearful words of gratitude: “it was so good to smell the breezes of Yuriage, after such a long time.” What causes me the most pain when I join in these shopping tours is the drastic difference between hard-hit areas and those which were not hit. Just drive 20 minutes away from a totally devastated area, and you will find places that have returned to ordinary life. My greatest wish is that these areas will not forget how close they are to the hard-hit areas, and that these people will go and see the devastation

with their own eyes, even if only as onlookers. Shortly after the earthquake, when I volunteered to work in Kamaishi, I asked some victims if it was OK for me to take some photos of the debris around. They replied, “Take plenty of them, and show them to everybody! – and may people not forget our situation!” These words have left their mark on me.

It is now almost nine months since I started accompanying these Natori shopping tours. I believe my greatest benefit from this would be that by now I have built up relationships with these people where we can talk about just anything.

I believe that rebuilding efforts still have a long, long way to go. I believe we will need to continue support efforts over the long run, in which we combine all of our strength.

News from Sendai Base for February and March

□ “Class 2 Home Helper” Course in Shizugawa

Saturday, March 10th, 2012, the “Class 2 Home Helper” course which we provided as part of our assistance to foreigners [living in the 3/11-affected areas] has at last come to its end. The students, six Filipina mothers, have finished a total of 8 classes each and will be starting 5 days of on-site training on March 13th. Just a few days remain before certification!

Meanwhile, at Rikuzentakata and other places, we have started new English instructor qualification courses for foreigners resident there.

□ Groups visiting from various places

On Saturday, February 18th, a Prayer and Fellowship Tour arrived in Sendai Airport from the Diocese of Osaka. The group had a three day itinerary, visiting Fuji Kindergarten in Yamamoto-machi and Isoyama St. John’s Church in Shinchi-machi, then seeing Shizukawa as well as the Ogatsu District and Old Town of Ishinomaki City, after which they flew back to Osaka. Another six visitors came in on Monday, March 12th from the Diocese of Chubu. On the 13th (Tue) they took part in volunteer activities in Shinchi-machi; on the 14th, they visited Ishinomaki City, Minamisanriku Town, and Kesenuma City. There were many others who visited on an individual basis. From outside Japan, as reported in the first pages of this newsletter, a group from the Episcopal Church (USA), led by the Presiding Bishop, the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, visited the affected areas. Visitors came from our neighbors in South Korea as well, including two priests of the Seoul Diocese, a journalist from Chosun Ilbo, and officials from the disaster prevention operations of a city in the suburbs of Seoul.



「いっしょに歩こう！プロジェクト」事務局

【open】月～金 10:00～17:00 【close】土・日・祝

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