

A Call from the NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2023

Getting back to basics

～ Serving creation, becoming a neighbour ～

1. Listening to the voice of God
2. Listening to voices of the people
3. Listening to the voice of the world

※For examples, please refer to the detailed introduction below

Theme: ‘Sanctity of Life～Becoming a neighbour～’

From the 10th to 13th of November 2023, 132 lay and clergy members of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Church in Japan) - including all bishops - as well as provincial representatives and provincial committee members, gathered at Seisen-ryo in Kiyosato, Yamanashi Prefecture for the ‘NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2023’. This gathering was held in response to a resolution of the ‘NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2012’ which committed to bringing about the ‘fruits of mission and pastoral care’ within a decade.

Each diocese and committee displayed and explained the ‘fruit’ of their work; in the ‘Listening to Stories’ session, three numerically small, but active churches were introduced, and in the ‘Listening to first-hand experiences’ session, five people shared their experiences as ‘neighbours,’ helping us consider deeply who our own ‘neighbours’ might be. (For more detail, please visit the Consultative Forum’s website: <https://2023-missionconference-nskk.blogspot.com/>).

As we listened and shared; we appreciated the richness of various people’s experience, but we also learned there was much that had been unrealized and challenges which remain. Therefore, in the groupwork session, we discussed what couldn’t be done and what we need to focus on going forward, referring to recommendations of the 2012 meeting. This is an important aspect of the continuing mission of the Anglican Church in Japan, thus in reality, much valuable input was gathered at this meeting.

The ‘fruit’ was not all good, however, but rather we recognised much failure, frustration, and suffering. However, we accepted these and renewed our commitment to reflect on them, and to move forward to truly be ‘neighbours’ to as many people as possible. The urgent issue of Collaborative Mission Regions was addressed in the House of Bishops’ message and during a session on that specific subject. Furthermore, the concept of ‘Safe Church,’ which is now a central focus within the worldwide Anglican Communion, was also raised.

It was intended that at the close of the NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2023, a ‘Kiyosato Call’ would be issued for participants to take back to their communities, to foster ongoing discussion. In the four days spent together, however, with many important issues discussed, and aspirations passionately expressed, it became clear during the final plenary session that it would be difficult to follow the original plan in the limited time available. It was therefore decided to abandon the idea of completing the ‘Call’ during the Consultative Forum, with the Draft Committee taking it back for further review due to the breadth of expressed opinions.

We hope that this ‘Call’ may be used as a guide to the work that the Anglican Church in Japan aims to focus on over the coming years: walking together with others as a ‘neighbour’.

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Expanded Summary

1. Listening to the voice of God: through Prayer, Scripture, and Worship.
 - Being a disciple of Jesus: considering the gifts God has given me.
 - Confirming the path we should take: reading scripture, praying and seeking God's will.
 - Being unafraid of change: Collaborative Mission Regions, new prayer book, lively 'modern' worship!
2. Listening to voices of the people: through Church, Community, and Neighbours.
 - Creating a safe church: an open church where everybody can feel safe.
 - Valuing the minority voices: celebrating our co-existent diversity.
 - Responding to local needs: collaborative affiliation helping to address specific issues.
3. Listening to the voice of the world: through Nature, the World, and Society.
 - Serving creation: which SDGs can the Church be involved with?
 - Creating peace: saying 'No' to all forms of violence.
 - Acknowledging the groans of the world: through being part of the Anglican Communion.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 ESV)

2nd February 2024

NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2023

※ The report of the NSKK Mission Consultative Forum 2023 and many of the 'voices' shared are available on the website and blog of the Consultative Forum at: <https://2023-missionconference-nskk.blogspot.com/>



※ The Consultative Forum and this 'Call' are not the end of our journey. The story of Kiyosato continues as we strive to live the right way in our daily lives. Please join us and be part of the story.