

Our Activities: JELCW Board

Naoko Suzuki, President

Thank you for remembering and cooperating in the work of JELCW.

We will hold a general meeting and rally next year. The progress of the task is unbelievable as we look back on how we were unsure about fulfilling our mission in the beginning of our term.

As we had hoped, we have successfully reserved the National Youth Center (originally the 1964 Tokyo Olympic village) for the GM&R venue. The reservation was secured in August, which leaves us relatively short time for preparation, but we will work hard and coordinate with the local arrangement committee (LAC).

Regarding the JELCW work review, the subcommittees on; 1. GM & R, 2. Board Election, 3. Succession of Faith to the Next Generation, and 4. Sabah Support, have finished discussions and given back their reports. We thank you for your sincere discussions. The Board will further consider and make proposals to each district. Then, the final decision will be made at the GM.

The sale of woven sandals and hanging dolls for the Tsunami survivors' support goes well, thanks to the orders made by JELCW members. We hear thanks from the disaster-hit areas both for the sale and for the material donation. The board plans to revisit the areas in late October.

Miss Yasuda, who has contributed the article on page 8, is a graduate student in her 20's. She shares with us how she felt when she was faced with the reality of Asia. Also in this issue, a JELCW member tells a story about her active work overseas. She is Eimi Watanabe, chair of the investigation panel, World Bank. We hope you will enjoy reading them.



Discussion with LAC

Activities: Hokkaido Special District

Masako Kondo, Chair

The World Day of Prayer fell on March 7 this year. In Hokkaido, spring was nowhere near, and we were concerned about snow, partly because Sapporo and Obihiro Churches were responsible for organizing the inter-denominational meeting for its local area. Sapporo was going to have some 300 participants, which was well beyond the chapel capacity, so it used Kita-Ichijo Church of the United Church of Christ instead. The Sapporo members had some challenges working in a different church, but thankfully, all who gathered there ended up sharing the message and video clip from Egypt together. There were 295 attendees, which we later heard, was the largest number in one venue throughout Japan.

The leaders from women's groups gathered in February and reviewed the activities during the past several years. We agreed that changing the board in two years translated in higher costs for holding GMs, and a weaker relationship with the national league. We have decided to hold GMs in November instead of February from now on, since it is difficult to get together in the middle of winter in Hokkaido. This means that we need to prepare GM materials alongside the annual kelp packaging in September and October.

Unfortunately, only three women's groups remain in our district; Sapporo, Hakodate, and Obihiro. We hope that the disbanded groups would join us again so we could deepen understanding and friendship as a small circle, which is the benefit of being small.



“No-no Hana (Wildflowers in the Fields) Kai”
the circle in Hakodate

Our Activities: East District

Seiko Asano, District President

One of the action plans for the 22nd-term East District CW's league is to pray for and support the Seminary for the future seminarians. At the One-day Seminary on Sep. 23, we will have our mini-shop for the third time in a row. We sell Christmas ornaments made by the East district churchwomen with love. Each year the basic ideas of the goods are proposed by the district board, and our sisters add their special touch to them. What results is a variety of nice products.

We tried a new approach this year. We organized two workshops in which sisters from different churches get together to make goods by the guidance of a leader; Ms. Junko Sasaki, a member of St. Paul Church. We made flower baskets and Christmas wall decorations. Actually, we recycled the baskets used to contain tea bags from *Wakachiai* fair trade project. You know them all well, don't you? As each piece was displayed at the end of the day, the participants looked at them with satisfaction.

This is how we have combined our efforts to donate to the Seminary. It is a pleasure and privilege to be joined together in a common cause, praying, and working together with sisters from different places.



Ms. Junko Sasaki (second from right) leading the workshop

Our Activities: Tokai District

Kimiko Suzuki, District President

Tokai District Subcommittee was assigned to discuss "Board Election." The subcommittee has tried to find new ways suitable to the time, through the review of the JELCW history, the member survey and direct interviews. In addition, with the help of President Suzuki, we had the opportunity to talk with five past presidents at Ichigaya Lutheran Center, Tokyo. The committee has added their precious remarks based on their experiences to the report recently turned in to the JELCW board. We pray that the report will serve as a base for exchanging opinions to draft the way forward with the help of the Lord. Through this process, we felt that JELCW is at the crossroads to think hard and make necessary changes in order to be responsive to the time.



Discussion with the past presidents

In May, we had a district churchwomen's gathering at Minori Church. The church members dedicated music service and Ms. Carol Sack performed the harp and song, "Lyra Precaria," to sooth everyone's heart. We are grateful for having such a good time together with 80 sisters attending. It was a great blessing from the Lord. In October, we plan to have our second churchwomen's gathering at "Fukushi-mura," a social welfare complex given by the Lord for Tokai District. Considering its location, we would like to get help from the men for the ride to and fro.

Our Activities: West District

“Modeling our faith for the next generation”

Rieko Saeki, District President

The West District CW’s was assigned to the subcommittee on “TNG,” but the board had little idea what TNG does. Therefore, we asked Ms. Nami Matsumoto to be our lecturer and organized briefings and DVD screenings whenever sub-regional CW chair meetings were held. Then, the majority of the audience was impressed by the sincere work TNG did for modeling our faith for the next generation. As we wanted to see their activities first, one board member took part in “the 16th Lutheran Children’s Camp” in Hiroshima for a day. The following is the excerpt from Vice President Ikeda’s report.

“Apparently, careful planning and preparation were made beforehand. The day begins with prayer for peace. After watching a DVD that explains the atomic bomb, children walk along the Peace Avenue up to Point #8, group by group, led by the junior- and senior-leaders. Each point is chosen to teach something about peace or the atomic bomb. After coming back, they engage in reflection and discussion. I was so impressed by the children’s deep understanding and the camp staff’s dedication that I myself prayed that I might live as a peace seeker. Thank you very much.”



Lutheran Children’s Camp
(Ms. Ikeda far left end)

Our Activities: Kyushu District

“Hot News”

Akiyo Iwakiri, District President

On Aug. 5-7, the Bible camp for junior and senior high school students in the district took place at Lutheran Aso Lodge. This year sisters from Oe Church supported the camp as the main kitchen staff. Though the weather was not perfect due to an approaching typhoon, those who worked in the kitchen were cheerful and joyful, praying for children’s health during the stay. The co-working churchwomen encouraged me, just as the children inspired me by their growth each year.

“Prayer for Peace” by the CWs in Chikugo sub-region was observed on Aug. 23 at Tanushimaru Church. In the opening worship service, Rev. Miyakawa cited Rom. 12:15 and taught us that peace begins with listening to others and that evangelism is also listening not arguing. After that we had discussion time that included a few minutes of self-introduction and free speech by all the participants. One participant spoke about what triggered her to come to church, and another about her thoughts on peace, while another mentioned her current concerns. Every speech filled with gratitude to God was a wonderful testimony. By talking about oneself and listening to others, we meditated on the blessing of God, who works steadily among us. At the same time, we prayed for peace to be established among us through the love of the Lord.



Camp kitchen staff at Aso Lodge