

The Church of the Good Shepherd UMC  
326 New Bridge Road  
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

## The Voice of the Good Shepherd November & December 2011



The Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church  
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# Hearing the Good News in the Wilderness

The Voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' (Mark 1:3).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (John 1:1-5).

Only a few weeks ago, I was literally standing the wilderness; but not the one in Israel, one in Japan. I visited Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture a medium size local city with one hundred sixty thousand residents. When the great earthquake and tsunami hit the North-Eastern region of Japan, it took more than three thousand lives instantly and nearly seven hundred people are still missing today, eight months after the tragedy.



The destroyed fisher village of Ishinomaki

When the tsunami waves hit the fishing village of Ishinomaki, it swallowed up several hundred houses. All the debris and ruins have been cleaned from there and the empty wasteland was created. There was a burnt Elementary School building in the area. When people ran away they left their cars in the play ground of the school.

Then tsunami pushed and crushed all the cars to the building, and they caught fire and the fire spread over the school building. It looked like an inferno. I saw several bouquets of flowers here and there dedicated near by the entrance of the school, which indicated that some pupils and adults had lost their lives there.



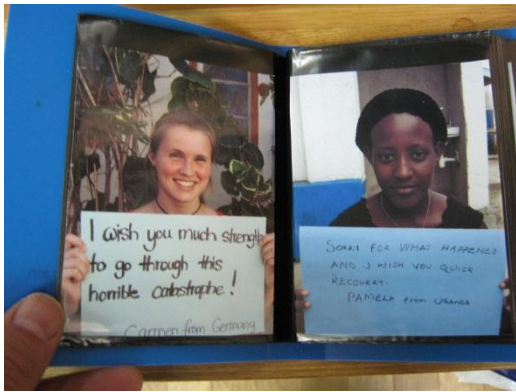
Debris of Disaster, Boat on the land, photo taken from the inside of the car

Next day, I visited Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture another city which was tremendously damaged by the earthquake. Yet, more than that, one million and five hundred thousand residents have lived in fear of radioactivity. They are exposed to harmful radiations every day since the nuclear power plant was completely destroyed and malfunctioned by Tsunami. Many towns and cities in Fukushima Prefecture are devastated. In order to shut down the power plant, clean up all the mess and reduce the level of radiation to become innocuous, the government and the electric company need thirty years. Tens of thousands of people in Fukushima Prefecture cannot go back to their homes for that long.

Could you imagine if you were suddenly exposed to radiation, and your home, town and county became the restricted area to which you could not go back? What a pity!

In those wildernesses, I did not hear the voice of the prophet, but I heard the voice of crying people, whose normal life, day and month, happiness, joy and memory are deprived. Why

God? Why should these innocent people suffer?  
We do not know the answer.



Messages from people around the world to the victims of the disaster

However, I saw many good people visiting these disaster-hit areas and digging the soil and cleaning debris from survived houses. These volunteers encourage the local people who once lost almost everything. Now, the residents start having hope in recovery, in people who have shown kindness and good will. Some Christian volunteers even have moved into Ishinomaki or Koriyama to live among the victims and help them every day. What a love it is!

In the midst of suffering, I hear the voice of crying people and see the messengers of God who are, perhaps, not the prophets but ordinary people; yet, they practice the love of Jesus Christ. I see the great light in the darkness. The love of God shall never cease.

In the time of the Roman Empire, the people of Israel lived under oppression; in other words they lived in the darkness. Yet, in the darkness, they saw the light, which shined upon the world. The light was there when God created the world; and the light will be here with us as long as we live.

Christmas is all about the divine light. It sustains us and keeps us from falling. Thanks be to God and Merry Christmas to all!



*Jun*

## Scripture Lesson of the Month

### December

- 4<sup>th</sup>: **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8.
- 11<sup>th</sup>: **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Psalm 126,  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:6-8, 19-28.
- 18<sup>th</sup>: **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Luke 1:47-55,  
Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-28.
- 24<sup>th</sup>: **Christmas Eve**  
Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96,  
Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-20.
- 25<sup>th</sup>: **Christmas Day**  
Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98,  
Hebrews 1:1-4, John 1:1-14.
- 31<sup>st</sup>: **New Year's Eve/Watch Night**

### 2012 January

- 1<sup>st</sup>: **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas Day**  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Psalm 148,  
Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 2:22-40
- 6<sup>th</sup>: **Epiphany of the Lord**  
Isaiah 60:1-6, Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14,  
Ephesians 3:1-12, Matthew 2:1-12
- 8<sup>th</sup>: **1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29,  
Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11.
- 15<sup>th</sup>: **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
1 Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18,  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51.
- 22<sup>nd</sup>: **3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Psalm 62:5-12  
1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Mark 1:14-20.
- 29<sup>th</sup>: **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Psalm 111,  
1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28

### February

- 5<sup>th</sup>: **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**  
Isaiah 40:21-31, Psalm 147:1-11, 20c,  
1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39.

## Announcement and News

**\*Visiting Sight and Sound Theater.** On November 19, nearly thirty church members visited the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA to watch the spectacular Christmas show. Those members who watched the show were delighted and very inspired. Special thanks to **Mrs. Nolly Dayrit** and **Miss Chrisa Roxas** for planning and implementing this event. **\*Pastor Jun** is grateful to the church members for allowing him to visit Japan, to meet his parents and visit several places in Japan, including the

earthquake and tsunami areas hit. **Mrs. Kesako Yoshimatsu**, who fell and was hospitalized, was discharged from the hospital while Pastor Jun was visiting Japan. Thank be to God!

\*Thanks to **Rev. Kenneth Smith**, retired UMC pastor and **Mrs. Noemi De Armas** for their preaching while Pastor Jun was away.

### \*Advent-Christmas Events:

Sat, Dec 17 at 5:00 P.M: Christmas Caroling

Sun, Dec 18 at 10:00 A.M: Christmas Pageant during the Service, followed by a Potluck Lunch. There will be the **White Elephant Present** exchange during the Luncheon.

Sat, Dec 24 at 7:00 P.M: Christmas Family Candle Service

Sun, Dec 25 at 10:00 A.M: Christmas Service with **Your Gift to Baby Jesus**. We dedicate our gift to Jesus Christ in addition to regular offerings.

Sat, Dec 31 at 7:00 P.M: Watch Night Service with the Holy Communion, everyone is invited to take.

Sun, Jan 1 at 10:00 A.M: New Year's Service with the Holy Communion

\***Donation to the Earthquake and Tsunami Relief of Japan and Hurricane and Typhoon.** Please continue to help the victims and surviving families of the great earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the recent disaster caused by Hurricane Irene here in New Jersey. United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is making special appeals to all the Methodist churches in the United States. **Please make a check payable to the Church of the Good Shepherd** and specify where you want to donate, such as **Japan Emergency and Hurricane Irene.**

Also, please help the Typhoon flood victims in the Philippines if you can. You can also make donations to the Church of the Good Shepherd, specifying the flood victims in the Philippines.

## Prayer Concerns

Maria Baluyot ~ Friend of Noemi de Armas; Hyacinth Mitchell; Carol Oles; Lovie Pablo ~ Uncle of Noemi de Armas; SaviRamsbir ~ relative of Shereen Hollingsworth; Mary Weinheimer; HannieDayrit Yoon;

Kesako Yoshimatsu~mother of Pastor Jun; the victims of different disasters, **especially Tsunami victims in Japan and the victims of Hurricane Irene and the flood in the Philippines**, and wars happening around the US and the world; the many men and women in Military service and their families.

## Other Concerns

\*Would you like to contribute **poinsettia** to the church? If so, please fill out the order form, which you can get from the church office, and return it to the office, or call the office. It will be \$8.00 per pot this year.

**Mugs: for the Coffee-Hour Fellowship.** The church asks you to **bring your own mug** for coffee/tea. **You can use the mug every Sunday.**

## Birthdays & Anniversary

### November:

29 Carol Oles and Linda Christensen  
30 Eleanor Senzamici

### December:

7 Hildegard Tupper  
15 Annabelle (Belle) Roxas  
19 Polly Gordon and Kofi Acquaisie  
21 Emmanuel De Armas  
23 Alane (Chrisa) Roxas  
25 Jesus Christ, our Savior

\***Please make an extra donation on your birthday, Anniversary or special occasions.**

If you celebrate your thirtieth birthday, how about donating thirty dollars to the church in the glory of God and in celebrating your life? If you are sixty, then why don't you offer sixty dollars to God? The church always needs your support.



## Join the Church?

If you are interested in joining the church formally and properly, please inform Pastor Jun or the church office.