

Multi-Language Productions (MLP)

MLP Japan News



Christmas in Karuizawa

Greetings

A Season of Waiting for Our Savior

Advent is here—the season to celebrate the joyful birth of Jesus Christ. This month, we're grateful for all the ways we can share His love and hope with others.

The first week of Advent marks the start of a new year in the church calendar.

As we step into this new year, let's prepare our hearts to welcome the Savior with joy. May your hearts be filled with God's grace and peace.

Wishing God's abundant blessings to everyone around the world. Merry Christmas!

Kaori Egawa
Editor of MLP Japan

Report

Aganai Church

On Sunday, December 8, Aganai (Redeemer) Church held a caroling event. The group visited five locations in Higashikurume City—next to the Central Post Office, in front of a real estate office, outside the Japanese restaurant E.den, near the local sports center, and at the culture school—singing Christmas hymns at each stop.

Kouji Egawa, the owner of the Japanese restaurant E.den, joyfully supported the event by offering his venue and provided warm drinks for the participants. **We felt the Lord's guidance and blessings in this opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with the community in this cold and dark winter season.**

Pre-Evangelism Activities

Caroling

Caroling in Aganai Church began in 2015, with practice sessions held for five years in the former Aganai Church building. During that time, Kaori Egawa played the organ and led the group in practicing Christmas hymns in Japanese and English. Kaori cherishes the warm memories of sharing the joy of singing with the members, especially the Sunday School students to this day.

Currently, practices take place in the new church building under new leadership, with hymns now sung in three languages: Japanese, English, and Chinese.



SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

Isaiah 9:6

Christian Magazine Summery-From *Forward in Christ* December Issue

A Pastoral Letter Regarding Man and Woman Roles

In 1993, our church, WELS, adopted the doctrinal statement titled **Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles**. This statement expresses the timeless truths of God's Word as revealed in Scripture, using contemporary language, and remains a key doctrinal confession of WELS to this day. However, over the past 30 years, questions have emerged about how to apply these biblical principles in a modern context. While God's Word and its principles never change, the church is called to faithfully confess and apply them in ways that address the needs of the present.



In response, the Conference of Presidents has written a pastoral letter to supplement the 1993 statement. (*A Japanese translation of the statement is available at <http://leccjp.org/>.) Centered on God's love and forgiveness, the letter strikes a thoughtful balance between Law and Gospel and is written to be easily understood by Christians today. Completed in October 2024, the letter was first shared with pastors and later distributed to all members via a newsletter.

The letter offers guidance and encouragement on how the roles of men and women reflect God's beautiful design. It includes a section titled "Embrace," which encourages readers to embrace and thoughtfully reflect on these God-given roles. Additionally, the Conference of Presidents has directed WELS Congregational Services to provide specific guidelines introducing flexibility in church governance. These guidelines will be made available on the WELS website in the near future. Let us pray together that WELS continues to remain faithful to God's Word.

December 2024 Mark Schroeder | WELS P resident

Jesus is Coming: Isaiah's Advent Prophecies

Even during the bustling Christmas season, we may carry sorrow and suffering in our hearts. **Yet Christmas reminds us that God is Immanuel—the one who is with us. The birth of Jesus Christ is the proof that God has secured our salvation.** In the Old Testament, Isaiah 7:14 contains the prophecy that "the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son," which is fulfilled in the New Testament in Matthew 1:23 through the birth of Jesus. Moreover, the entire book of Isaiah speaks repeatedly of God's promise of salvation through Jesus:

Isaiah 9: A prophecy of a King who will establish eternal reign on David's throne, bringing light to those in darkness.

Isaiah 11: A promise of hope that a new branch (Jesus) will emerge from the stump of Jesse (the lineage of David).

Isaiah 40:3-5: A call to prepare the way for the coming of the Savior.

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12: A prophecy of God's servant interceding for sinners.

Isaiah 65:17-25: A promise of a new heaven and a new earth.

These prophecies show that God acknowledges sin and its consequences but faithfully fulfills His plan of salvation for all humanity. **The birth of Jesus is proof of God's love and faithfulness—a moment when His salvation became a reality.** We give thanks for God's love and faithfulness.

Aaron Goetzinger | WELS Pastor

Simple Bible Class

Bible Story Book

Recently, a member of WELS in Texas asked me for recommendations on a good Bible for Japanese readers. **During my research, I came across a Bible with illustrations written in Japanese at an upper elementary school reading level.** After ordering and reading it, I was impressed by its quality. The language is simple yet effectively conveys the core messages of the Bible, and the layout is clean and easy to navigate. The inclusion of illustrations throughout the book makes it both engaging and approachable. You can read it all at once like a novel or take your time to reflect and read it gradually. If this interests you, I highly recommend checking it out:

Bible Story Book (Old/New Testament) Forest Books By Mizue Uchida, Illustration by Takiko Kamijo

Published by Kaori Egawa - MLP Japan Media Consultant <https://wels.net/>

1-3-39 Hon-cho, Higashikurume-shi, Tokyo 203-0053

SUPPORTED BY STAR CROSS, A JAPANESE WRITING & TRANSLATION COMPANY