

The InkLink



St. Paul International Lutheran Church, Tokyo

February 2012



*From the
Pastor's
Desk*

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul International Lutheran Church,

I can't believe I've been here three months already! But Tokyo is already starting to feel like home. While I'm still learning the language, I feel like I can navigate my way through life in Japan fairly well. And I've really appreciated the help that St. Paul's has provided me along the way.

We've made some strides in our outreach efforts. We've re-ignited our social media ministry by updating our [Facebook](#) page, adding a [Twitter feed \(@SPILC1\)](#), creating a [YouTube Channel \(SPILCTokyo\)](#), and launching a [Podcast](#) (type "St. Paul International Lutheran Church" into the search box in the iTunes store. I'm working on making it available for Android and Zune as well [does anyone still use Zune?] Be sure to subscribe!).

And I am getting started in making our presence known in the wider community by joining several community organizations.

But St. Paul's also needs **YOUR** help to increase our membership, so that we can more faithfully minister to our community. We need **YOU** to invite your friends, family, co-workers, and acquaintances to life in our congregation. Studies show that a person needs to be invited a minimum of **SEVEN** times before he or she will consider visiting a church. And most Lutherans don't invite people once!



But also, St. Paul's need **YOUR** continued involvement to make this congregation flourish. Our little congregation is filled with so many talented people, and I know that if you bring your gifts and skills to the life and witness of our church, we will be a stronger presence for Jesus in our community.

I deeply believe that God is calling us to reinvent ourselves and our ministry in order to meet the challenges of changing times. This is an exciting time to be the church! And I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us next!

In Jesus' name, *Pastor Kevin*

Ash Wednesday Worship, February 22 - 7:00 pm

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return."

Ash Wednesday is when we reflect on our mortality and remember our need for a saviour. Lent officially begins as you receive the ashes on your forehead, and start the forty-day journey to the cross.

Please plan on attending our Ash Wednesday worship and make this Lent an especially reflective one.

Thursday Morning Bible Study sessions

1:30pm

Palm/Passion Sunday April 1 – 9:30am

Maundy Thursday, April 5 - 7:00pm

Good Friday, April 6 – 7:00pm

EASTER, April 8 – 9:30am



Waffle Time! February 19

We invite you to be with us for a special "Waffle Time!" Fellowship lunch Sunday, February 19. Following worship and the Christian Education Hour, **we will gather in the second floor classroom from 12:00 Noon – 2:00 pm.** This will be our humble pre-Lenten Mardi Gras!

Our Fellowship Team led by Steven and Megumi C. will organize a waffle production line of hot plates and waffle irons. Bring your favorite toppings to share with the group. In addition, we invite you to add other finger foods, veggies, drinks or desserts.

Worship with us, from 9:30 – 10:30; meet others in informal fellowship from 10:45 – 11:00; join us for children's Sunday School and the Adult Forum from 11:00 – 11:55 AM.

And then, stay with us for this delightfully sweet and tasty gathering! (If you can, a donation of 500 or 300 yen would help the fellowship team stay ahead of expenses.) Bring your friends and introduce them to our St. Paul family!

Introduction to Christianity

Study with Pastor Kevin

Have you ever wondered about the origins of the Christian faith? Do you have questions about the beginnings of what we believe? Then you are invited to attend the *Introduction to Christianity* class on the second Sunday of each month from 11:00-12:00 in the upstairs 2FL classroom.

We are going to explore Christian concepts of God, Jesus, the bible, salvation, the Trinity, and faith. This class is open to everyone in the community. Invite your friends and family who might be curious about Christianity!

NEWS & Notes

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ** THANK YOU! Because of you our **Sunday School Christmas Craft and Bake Sale** in December was SO successful! With the many wonderful contributions of baked goods, handmade crafts, books and other miscellaneous donated items, we were able to offer two tables full of items to sell! Because of your generosity, we sent LOTS of toys and school supplies and 40,331 yen to the children at the Denmark Farms Orphanage in Shizuoka.



WORSHIP ** We send a big THANK YOU to all who helped to make our Christmas services very special times of worship and fellowship. Your extra efforts of preparation and participation are very deeply appreciated. We especially thank **Kenta, Ellie and Angelina** for their violin music; the members of our **Angels and Christmas Choirs** for their gifts of song; and **Kris, Fumino, Ayumi, and Yuka** for their beautiful music and accompaniment. And of course, we thank **Yasuko**, for her always faithful music leadership. Thanks be to God for the opportunity to share the good news of Christ's love with so many people. We pray that everyone will continue to spread

invitations for people to join us in worship and that we can continue to reach into the community with the God's Word!

FELLOWSHIP ** Thanks to all who helped with our Day of Thanks/Installation Dinner in November. The turkey was tasty, the variety of dishes were delightfully delicious, and the set-up and clean-up was smooth and efficient! Then in December, we sure missed Santa at the Christmas party but **Elf Kris** did us proud by stepping in and leading us in carol singing and ho-ho-hoing for the children. Thanks Elf Kris! Your talents are many and much appreciated!



FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP ** *Thank you for your prayerful offerings and gifts in support of the ministry at St. Paul International Lutheran Church Tokyo.* November was Stewardship month. We thank all those who made the effort to share their pledge commitment with us. A total of over 3.7 million yen has been pledged to the work and ministry of St. Paul's in 2012. Looking to our future and our extra efforts to reach out to the community, our budgeted expenses for the year ahead come to just over 7 million yen. It is our very sincere prayer that together, with our many efforts to spread the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ, our congregation will grow in faith and steadfast love.

OUTREACH ** The Outreach Team has several efforts planned for the coming months. **WON'T YOU HELP!** Talk to **Ellen or Pastor Kevin** about joining the effort. As our congregation's President, **Lee T.**, wrote in his Annual Meeting report, the "... SPILC congregation needs to grow and what better way to do that than to embrace Christ's command to 'Go and bear fruit – fruit that will last' (John 15:16b). We must share the Good News and all of our blessings and strengths with the wider community in Tokyo. As such the congregation should be aware that a large portion of Pastor Kevin's time in 2012 will be focused on community outreach efforts and we must support him and participate fully. We have already started a number of initiatives and this includes some of the following:

- **SPILC Online presence:** the church *website* needs to be updated and the website must be found easily using basic keyword searches. A committee has been formed to help raise our online profile and the Pastor is already busy maintaining and hopefully growing the church's *Facebook page* and *Twitter feeds*.
- **Introduction to Christianity course:** we are planning to run this course once a month during adult forum over a period of several months. This is for SPILC friends and members already involved with the church and it should also provide a platform to reach out to others who maybe curious about the Christian faith.
- **Music programme:** we are creating a schedule of member performances throughout the year and through this we may be able to attract others who enjoy sharing their gifts of music and song.
- **Tokyo Ecumenical Council:** we are not alone and where we do not have sufficient member participation at present we plan to reach out to other churches to pool our resources. This will help us raise SPILC's profile and to fill gaps in our Christian education such as weekday bible study classes, confirmation classes and even maybe form a Youth Group.

There are many other wonderful ideas provided by the congregation and the outreach initiatives will continue through the year. The council will be documenting these efforts to help us refine and focus our resources on the most impactful areas.

One of SPILC's gifts not mentioned above is that, as a small church, each one of us is challenged that little bit more to participate in Church functions and ministry. Let us work together as Christ's body to become a little more Christlike each day".

Thank you!!.... In celebration of the baptism of **Rei T.**, last summer, **Sumiko K.** created this beautiful quilt. With the stitching help of several of the ladies in the congregation, the quilt was completed and gifted to Rei and his parents recently. As always, thank you, **Sumiko**, for sharing your wonderful, artistic talent with our congregation! You brighten our world with your love and generosity. We are blessed!

.....**Megumi C.**, our super sewer and crafter, for making the very wonderful bags for the Sunday School children. Watch for the T-shirts, too. They are really **cute!**



Rei and family w/ quilt