

Kumamoto Sub-district

On April 16 the three commissioners of UCCJ Kyushu District (Moderator Rev. Umesaki, Vice-moderator Rev. Kusakabe, Secretary Rev. Niibori), together with UCCJ Secretary Katō who arrived from Tokyo, visited UCCJ churches and missions in the Kumamoto Sub-district.

As of 3PM this party of 4 had been to Yamaga Church, Kumamoto Kusabachō Church, Kumamoto Shirakawa Church, Kumamoto Jōtō Church, Nishikigaoka Church and Musashigaoka Church, and had arrived at Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) Kumamoto Church to assess the situation there.

The following damages were identified, based on their site visits.

Kumamoto Shirakawa Church (information 4/16, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Awatsu and family, as well as congregation members. Rev. Awatsu welcomed the visiting party. Tiles of the sanctuary roof had fallen into the yard in large numbers. The church yard outer wall was collapsed. No major damage inside the sanctuary. The church hall and kindergarten served as overnight accommodations for approximately 20 neighbours impacted by the earthquake.

Kumamoto Kusabachō Church (4/16, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Namba and family, as well as congregation members. Rev. Namba and family spent their first night in a neighbourhood park. Furniture and fixtures in the church hall, sanctuary, office, anteroom, etc. were in disarray.

Nishikigaoka Church (4/16, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Kawashima and family. Still trying to determine the safety of congregation members at the time of visit. Due to proximity to the early-morning main quake's epicenter, there was great damage to many buildings. A crack appeared in a section of one wall, causing some wreckage. Pipe organ damaged. Lectern and communion table toppled in the sanctuary. The sanctuary is currently serving as a shelter for congregation members and neighbours.

Kumamoto Tōjō Church (4/16, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Rev. and Mrs. Nakamura not at home. No discernible damage on the exterior of church

and kindergarten buildings. Joined in prayer and departed from the church.

Musashigaoka Church (4/16, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Kanda and family, as well as congregation members. One congregation member suffered severe damage and collapse of the home, and spent the night in car. Furniture within the church hall was in disarray.

Yashiro Church (4/15, by e-mail from Rev. Nakayama; District confirmed by phone)

Rev. Nakayama and congregation members all confirmed safe. No damage to church hall or kindergarten.

Arao Church (4/15, by phone from District office)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Hoshi and family, as well as congregation members. No damage to church hall or kindergarten.

Yamaga Church [interim charge] (4/15, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Hoshi and family, as well as congregation members. No damage to church or kindergarten.

Amakusa Heian Church (4/15, by phone from District office)

Rev. Kashiwada and family, as well as congregation members all safe. No damage to church or kindergarten.

Waifu Church [interim charge] (4/15, by phone from District office)

Confirmed safety of congregation members. No damage to church building.

Koshi Tomioka Church [dual charge] (4/15, by phone from District office)

Confirmed safety of congregation members. No damage to church or kindergarten.

KCCJ Kumamoto Church (4/15, by phone from Secretary Niibori)

Confirmed safety of Rev. Kim and congregation members. Concrete-block wall beside the church sustained heavy damage.

<Retired Minister> **Rev. KODAIRA Yoshiyuki**, residing in Kikuchi township,

Kumamoto (4/15, by phone from District office)

Confirmed safe. No damage to home.

<Retired Minister> **Rev. HARADA Toshiyuki**, residing in Koshi city, Kumamoto
(6/15, by phone from District office)

Confirmed safe. No damage to home.