

United Church of Christ in Japan Responds to the Kumamoto Earthquake

In response to the Kumamoto earthquake, which first struck the Kumamoto region on April 14 with a tremor measuring magnitude 7, UCCJ established on April 15 the Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Committee, consisting of several senior staff of the UCCJ national office.

The Committee first decided to send 1 million yen to the affected area as an emergency measure, and immediately dispatched Committee member Rev. KATO Makoto (Secretary, World Mission) to Kumamoto. Rev. Kato joined UCCJ Kyushu District Moderator Rev. Umesaki, Vice-moderator Rev. Kusakabe and Secretary Rev. Niibori as they toured affected areas to assess damages suffered by UCCJ churches, members and the families of children who attend UCCJ-affiliated daycares and kindergartens.

Amid significant aftershocks as great as magnitude 5, the four reverends were able to visit or communicate (directly or indirectly) with all UCCJ churches of the region, as well as the KCCJ Kumamoto Church, by the late afternoon of April 16. The visitation team found that several churches had suffered structural and other damages, and that the home of one church member had collapsed, but thankfully no UCCJ community member suffered physical injury. Several of the churches were serving community members by opening their doors as temporary shelter for people whose homes were damaged, or unstable. The status of each church, as reported by the visitation party, is provided in the UCCJ Home Page at [www.http.uccj-e.org](http://www.uccj-e.org).

UCCJ Moderator Rev. ISHIBASHI Hideo also traveled to Kumamoto on **April 17**, to confer with Kyushu District and Kumamoto Sub-district members about their needs.

Rev. Kato, upon returning from Kumamoto on **April 19**, reports that access to water and other basic life needs have been restored, but road and rail transportation remain disrupted by significant landslides and ground rifts in multiple locations. Aftershocks of **up to magnitude 5** were still occurring, causing residents to remain worried about homes and safety.

Please continue to hold the people of Kumamoto (and neighboring Oita prefecture) in your prayers.

If you, or your church, is able to contribute toward the repair of church and/or preschool/kindergarten facilities, or to their work of serving neighbors in need, UCCJ and the Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Committee will ensure that your gifts reach those who have been most affected.

Donations can be sent to:

Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
Takadanobaba Branch

SWIFT code: SMBC JP JT

Branch number: 273

Account Number: 3291280

Account name: Nihon Kirisuto Kyoudan (United Church of Christ in Japan)

Branch address: 1-27-7 Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku, 169-0051 Japan

*Please designate as “Kumamoto earthquake relief” when transferring funds.