

Saturday, March 19, 2011

Report #3 of damage suffered in the Great East Japan Earthquake\*\*

We give reverence to the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of comfort and hope.

This is a revision of the “Report #2 of damage suffered in the Northeast Japan Pacific Coast Earthquake” (damage report) sent to you on March 14, with updated and corrected information about damages.

This report of damages is being sent [for distribution] by the Emergency Response Headquarters (ERH) set up by RCJ’s Diaconal Action Committee at the request of the RCJ General Assembly Stated Clerk, Rev. Yoshinobu Kazama. Please cooperate with our efforts by sending all inquiries concerning the various presbyteries (Northeastern, East Kanto, Eastern, Central) to the responsible person in that presbytery. The ERH will then compile the reports. Please refer to the previously sent “Notice of Reorganization to support those in the area impacted by the Great East Japan Earthquake” for more information.

in the Lord,

Reformed Church in Japan  
Emergency Response Headquarters

\*\*This report #3 contains different information from that given in report #2 and should be read in conjunction with that. This report focuses more on the status of things as of 3/19/2011.]

**Northeastern Presbytery**

1. Sapporo Church (Rev. Kenji Kando)

No damages to report.

2. Aomori Church

The church members are all safe.

3. Hachinohe Church (Rev. Fujimoto reporting)

All members are all right. 3/11 – “We are in the midst of a power outage, and only the water is running, so we are making do with candle light. The aftershocks are quite bad, and there are more tsunamis, however our area is of high enough elevation that we are safe. Because phone calls and emails will not yet go through, we do not have information regarding damage sustained.” (reported by phone)

3/13 – “This morning the power was turned back on. We were finally able to receive news on the television. The phone lines are working again. By God’s grace we were able to hold the worship service. This morning I was able to visit our seekers and church members, and they were all safe. Due to the tsunami, mud was piled up around the city, and cars had been swept about and gathered here and there. The road along the ocean was in terrible shape.” (reported by email)

4. Rokunohe Church

All the members are all right, and there is no damage to report.

5. Morioka Church (Rev. Kubota)

The Kubota family members are safe. The church members are all okay. The church building has no damage. However, several we haven’t been able to contact several inactive members who live in other areas (Ofunato, Iwaki and Sendai).

6. Ishinomaki Church (Rev. Shiratsu)

Rev. Shiratsu and his family are safe, they continue to live at the refugee shelter set up in the Hebata Elementary School. The church building is greatly damaged (from the tsunami), and we won’t be able to have worship as always on the 20th. The water came up into the church, and walls of the

parsonage area collapsed. Clothing, books were mostly made unusable, and there are no utilities. The food at the shelter has been limited mostly to things like candy and chocolate, but we got one rice ball each yesterday (March 18th).

7. Sendai Church (Rev. Yoshida) (Rev. Yoshida is reporting for his church and also for the groups Sendai Church is working to build up, Sendai Eiko, Fukushima and Shiroishi Keiyaku.)

As far as we know, all the members are all right. But worship on the 20th will not be the same as always.

Sendai Church: We are abbreviating the service and having a special message. We aren't able to celebrate communion because we can't get the elements. We won't have any evening service, but instead we'll be sorting commodities for distribution, cleaning up the church, and discussing where we go from here.

Sendai Eiko: There will be an abbreviated service and an elder will give a special exhortation. Then there will be a discussion of how we will proceed.

Fukushima: Worship will be abbreviated and held by those able to gather. Candidate Kurihara will send a message by fax that will be read.

Shiroishi: Those who can gather will have a prayer meeting.

Our prayer requests:

- Pray for the members' health and daily life to be supported
- Pray for guidance concerning the future of the churches
- Pray for wisdom for the churches to be able to discern how to be involved best in the relief activities.

The needs and outlook of the churches:

Many commodities for relief are being delivered in Sendai City, but how to use these best is an important issue for us. Next week the representatives of the Diaconal Action Committee are scheduled to meet with us and the members of the city wide pastors' association.

8. Sendai Canaan Church (Rev. Keisuke Yoshioka)

All of the church members are okay. We plan to have the worship service as always on 3/20. On 3/13, the pastor led worship with about 20 people in attendance, including those who had taken refuge in the church.

Our prayer requests:

- Pray that the condition of the elderly will be maintained after the earthquake.
- Pray that the church will be used well after we've finished serving as a shelter.

The needs and condition of the church:

The church members are all well and healthy. We hope to be able to distribute commodities to those who are unable to line up at the markets. It seems like it will be 3 months before our gas is restored, so we continue to be unable to use the bath. The physical condition of the elderly and the children will be an issue. It would be a great help to be able to get an electric water heater.

9. Higashi Sendai Church (Rev. Akira Tateishi)

Life continues with members who have moved into the church for refuge. We will have a normal worship service [on Sunday].

10. Kita Nakayama Church (Rev. and Mrs. Sakamoto)

All the members are all right. We plan to have a normal worship service on the 20th.

Our prayer requests:

- Pray for the physical and spiritual health of our members.
- Pray that the seekers will come to worship with new eagerness.
- Pray that the members will rise up united for God's glory.
- Pray that the damaged church building will hold up in the face of ongoing aftershocks. The building was built with materials imported from Canada by volunteer from the USA, and it is built more simply than normal Japan earthquake standards.

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• Almost all the members come to church by car; pray that they'll be able to get the fuel they need

- Pray that water will be restored to one of our members who runs a beauty salon. Pray that she'll be able to reopen her business soon.
- Pray that as we go shopping with shortages of many items, we will be able to give a good testimony.
- Please pray for our church members, some of whom have family members who are still missing.

#### 11. Sendai Megumi Church

All the people of our church are all right (9 communicant members, 4 guest members, 2 children, one seeker). We plan to have a normal worship service on the 20th.

Our prayer request: Pray for us! That is the best way to support us!

Our needs and outlook:

- On the 15th and 16th, the OPC members and volunteers from the Kanto area delivered supplies to us. We distributed these to members, some churches in Sendai and to the refugee center near the coast.
- On the 19th, another shipment from them is scheduled to arrive with more goods.
- Even though these goods arrive, we don't have gasoline to distribute them.

#### 12. Watari Church (Rev. Shigeo Hayashi)

Rev. and Mrs. Hayashi are okay after the earthquake. The church and kindergarten building are okay. The roof of the Hayashis' home was damaged.

#### 13. Yamagata Church (Rev. Kazuhiko Yaegashi)

Rev. and Mrs. Yaegashi and the members are all right. There doesn't seem to be any damage to the building.

### **East Kanto Presbytery**

#### 1. Hitachinaka Church ( Rev. Kan Hon Lee)

The members and families of the church are all okay. The church building also seems to be all right. We were able to have our regular schedule of meetings on Sunday the 13th, and also our Wednesday morning Bible reading time and prayer meeting. However, there is still no water, and every day we have to find a place that has a well where we can get some. Like everywhere else, we have a problem getting gasoline for the car. But as we consider the great loss in the damaged places, what we are dealing with are mere inconveniences, and we're hanging in there.

#### 2. Inage Kaigan Church (reported by Rev. Eiji Mikawa)

The liquefaction problem has directly impacted many church members. In some places there is still no water or sewage, and port-a-potties and other public toilets must be used. Because the water pipes don't work, people have to haul heavy containers of water. Because of the rolling power outages, those who live in high-rises have to climb many flights of stairs. All the stores have shortages of goods, and it is very difficult to buy gasoline. But everyone is hanging in there as they consider the difficulties that are being faced by those in the northeast area.

In addition to this problems of daily life, as a church, those who live a distance away and have to deal with interruptions due to power outages of train service on the Keiou Line and who don't have adequate gasoline are unable to attend meetings. This week's evangelistic worship had half the normal attendance, and the prayer meeting attendance was only about one third of normal. I've been encouraging people by email and other means not to overdo things and to attend to their daily needs first. And I remind them that even though distance may separate us and keep us from gathering, we are still one body. We are praying for the day to come when we can again gather, see each others' faces and sing God's praise together, but until that time, those who can gather will sing twice as loud on behalf of those who can't be there, and they'll pray and encourage each other. We are very grateful for your prayers.

#### 3. Hanamigawa Church (Rev. Tasuku Ushioda)

There is no damage here.

#### 4. Tsukuba Mikotoba Church (Rev. Masuo Miyazaki)

When the earthquake struck, we shook strongly for a long time and ran outside, but the roof tiles from the house next door came crashing down in the driveway and we were shocked at the power of the quake. Fortunately, our car was at the far side of the driveway and was undamaged. Because of the strong aftershocks that came continually, we didn't sleep a wink that night. We were without water and worried about the church members being able to use the toilets on Sunday, but we were able to get buckets of water from our neighbor's well. Inside, the TV crashed to the floor. Other than that, it seems like the AC system is down. Including the pastor and his wife, there was no injury among any of the members, and we have pretty much confirmed that everyone is all right. But we have to deal with things like the fearfulness members who live in high-rise apartments feel after the violent shaking they experienced and the inability to get gasoline, which members rely on in order to come to church. And we are postponing the spring mission trip planned for 3/27-28 for the presbytery young people to come and work here.

#### 5. Chishirodai Church (Rev. Kazuo Takase)

Books in the pastor's study and those on his wife's bookshelf as well as dishes were strewn all over. But by the night of the 11th, we confirmed that all the church members were all right. On the 13th, all the people we contacted were in church.

We were scheduled to do the grave cleaning at Kasamori Cemetery, but that was postponed to the 27th. We had been warned by a professional evaluation that the Chishirodai Church building might not withstand the force of a #5 quake (on the Japanese intensity scale), but it survived this #5 all right. Aftershocks were continuing, and I and the elders agreed that if one happened during worship, we would all file outside, but there turned out to be none during the service. Right after worship, we continued with a special prayer meeting for the victims of the quake. There continued to be countless aftershocks from the 13th through the 18th. My wife had a bad cold and wasn't able to attend worship, and in fact couldn't get out of bed until the 17th. But according to the contact made with all the members, everyone is all right. However, they have many family members, friends and acquaintances in Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate and they're worried about them.

#### 6. Choshi Eiko Church (reported by Rev. Yoshinobu Kobayashi)

The church building and Moe Day Care Center and all the people connected with them have no losses. All the lifelines are fine, except it's difficult to get gasoline.

#### 7. Katsutadai Church

Other than scattered books and papers and an elevator that shut down, there is no great damage to the church building. But the roof tiles of the parsonage were a little damaged, and though we contacted a builder to work on it, he had no more plastic sheets to put over it, so if we have rain, the roof may leak. Among the members, other than some who don't have water, everyone is pretty well. We were able to have worship on the 13th (Rev. Shin Ishimaru preached).

#### 8. Funabashi Takane Church

There is no damage, and we even escape the planned blackouts. Maybe it's because there are a couple of big emergency hospitals nearby.

#### 9. Matsudo Koganehara Church

All the members are all right. The elevator shut down, but we've gotten it repaired. All the gas stations in Matsudo and Kashiwa have long lines. Hoarding is continuing. The public transportation system is also confused. Planned blackouts have yet to be implemented. I sent the following information to the members:

1. Sunday schools will be held at home,
2. We will have Sunday service, but those who need a lot of gasoline to come should just go to a church nearby (and not worry about the denomination). The audio recording of the service here will be on the Internet right away.
3. I'll make a bulletin, and I'll send it by email to those members that can receive it that way.
4. We'll postpone the special collection planned for "Tohoku Evangelism."
5. We're canceling the church study session (on worship and prayer). Above all, let's not overdo things. We'll pray together and put our strength together to

overcome these difficulties. We'll pray for all those in the Northeast and Kanto areas who are in the damage zones as well as for one another. To God be the glory! (3/18/2011)

10. Kohokudai Church (Rev. Megumu Okamoto)

On the day of the quake, books tumbled off the shelves onto the desk, the locker door flew open and stuff fell out to the floor. But there was no broken glass and the building did not sustain damage. All the church members and seekers also experienced things falling around them, but even as the aftershocks continue, everyone is all right. However, here are some who had damage to roof tiles and need to get them fixed. We're wondering when those power interruptions are going to be implemented! There's no gasoline, and terrible lines at any station that is open. There's also a shortage of food and other supplies. We have not lost our water supply. Transportation systems are off. Maybe because of the gas shortage and need for picking up, or maybe for other reasons too, worship attendance was down on the 13th and also for the prayer meeting on the 17th. We've canceled some meetings. There are families preparing to take in people who are fleeing from Fukushima because of the reactor problems. We are praying for those who experience great loss.

11. Misato Church (Rev. Hirotsugu Mochida)

All of the members are all right. Dishes broke and books fell, but that was about all. We have continual supplies of water and electricity. There are some members who aren't able to get to church because of the inadequate gasoline supplies.

12. Shin Urayasu Church (Rev. Takayuki Ashida) [repeated from bulletin #2]

The neighborhood around the church has been severely affected by the liquefaction of the ground. But the church is all right. (Inage Kaigan and Shin Urayasu buildings are on land reclaimed from Tokyo Bay. The roads have been severely damaged by liquefaction, and it will be difficult for some of the members to attend the worship services.)

**\*\* (Eastern Presbytery, Central Presbytery, Shikoku Presbytery**

There were no reports included with this bulletin.)