

February 17, 2015

**March 11, 2015 Prayer in Remembrance of the Great East Japan
Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster**

(The lines in bold and regular font can be recited alternately as a litany.)

Japan Baptist Convention

Great East Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and

Nuclear Disaster Relief Committee

Rev. Chikayo KANEKO

Koriyama Cosmos Road Christ Church

Our Lord God,

Four years have passes since March 11, 2011. We thank You for giving us this time to join together in prayer.

The earthquake struck at 18 seconds after 2:46 in the afternoon on March 11, 2011, magnitude 9.0, and as of this moment 15,890 people have died, 2,590 people have been declared missing, a further 3,194 people have died from disaster-related causes, 229,897 people have been forced to evacuate, and the effects of the disaster have not waned. And, the nuclear disaster at Fukushima is ongoing.

Dear Lord, four years have passed since that day, and many people still search for their missing loved ones. People are still searching as if there is not a second to waste for a missing daughter, missing son, or grandchild along the fringes of the huge banking to raise the ground level. Little by little, land has been reconstructed, and the chance to find family members is disappearing as people cry out, "I have no more chance of finding my family."

Dear Lord, we cannot rise up without your comfort. Please let us deliver your comfort to them.

Reconstruction housing that is to bring some rest to life is delayed. Reconstruction will be further delayed by the preparations for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, as cries from the stricken areas tell us, and reconstruction of much housing has been stopped midway. In some places, construction of reconstruction housing will only begin in three years. We have seen again and again those scenes where people wipe the tears from their eyes focused far into that unsure future, saying "I won't be alive then."

Dear Lord, please open up the way to grip the hope.

Dear Lord, many people cannot sleep at night. Voices of spouses, “Go on and live,” cries of daughters crying out for their mothers, “Mother!” are etched in our hearts, and many awake in the morning crying. There are dark nights when the memories of the tsunami that swept away homes and there was nothing to do but watch return as if it were happening again. It has been four years of unbroken tears.

“Put my tears in Your bottle” Psalm 56:9

We have offered up to you the tears of those stricken by the disaster. We believe you will bottle up their tears.

Dear Lord, please bring us your comfort. Lord, please give us your encouragement.

Many people still feel burdened that they were saved from the tsunami. Some people can't bear to show their face to relatives of people who died to help them, feeling guilty of being survived. Some feel burdened that people were swept away before their very eyes and they could not save them, and to this day they have been unable to return to that spot and live on with shoulders drooping.

Dear Lord, please give them the hope to live, and the message that it is O.K. to live.

Dear Lord, what will become of Fukushima?

The Fukushima Number Reactor 1 exploded in a hydrogen blast on March 12, 2011. On the 14th Reactor 3 exploded and on the 15th Reactor 4 exploded. From that day on, Fukushima has been covered with high levels of radiation. And not only Fukushima prefecture but the radiation has spread over a very wide area and the ocean has been polluted with high amounts of radiation.

The nuclear disaster is no longer just a problem for Fukushima area. And in the midst of this ongoing disaster this country is aiming to restart its nuclear reactors.

Please show us the correct way, open our eyes. Help us realize the situation, and give us courage to raise our voices.

Dear Lord, we want to protect the children. Please show what it is we should do.

The number of children in Fukushima who have been diagnosed or put on watch for childhood thyroid cancers is increasing and has now exceeded 112 people. Lumps and cysts have been found in many more children. Please protect our children. The

children themselves are groaning behind the adults, worried about that maybe they will never grow up to be adults, that maybe their children will get sick, that maybe they can never have children.

Please help us in our prayer and outreach so that the children can live in Your Word, can continue to have hope, can move forward step by step with You through these difficulties.

Dear Lord, many adults who have been working desperately to help the children are themselves now showing thyroid abnormalities and are experiencing heart problems.

Dear Lord, show us the way to live.

The parents of Fukushima are crying out. They feel guilt, that if only they had evacuated right away, this child would have been spared. Unease and fear mount as they wonder how they should go on living now and into the future and how they can protect the children. But there are things they cannot escape.

We take in the cries of those stricken; Lord please intercede for us so that they can stand.

Dear Lord, please give us knowledge and wisdom to bring an end to this nuclear disaster. It will take 40 years to dismantle the destroyed reactors. There is nuclear fuel rods that are impossible to locate, and the nuclear fuel which have melted out and we do not know even where they are now. Workers at Fukushima first nuclear power plant are shortening their lives to bring an end to the accident.

Please protect the lives of these workers.

Dear Lord, many people live apart from their families. There is many kinds of split between people along with compensation, whether they have been evacuated or not, and their hearts are torn apart.

Please use us and the church so that we may show to everyone the Lord of Reconciliation. Please bind our hearts together.

Lord, we stand "here" as worshippers.

Grant us the ears to hear as You hear the crying out, grant us the eyes to see as You see, grant us Your caring heart as You run forward to the suffering people.

Dear Lord, we thank you for protecting us these four years.

Thank you for leading us to Your Word and doing Your work in the areas stricken by

the tsunami and the nuclear disaster. Everywhere we go, in every situation we encounter, we see You there. Thank you for binding together through prayer of the churches and missions around the country and the world. And thank you for the many people who we have come to know and for the generous monetary contributions. It is with this help that we have been able to continue in our relief efforts.

Dear God, the relief is still far off. Please continue to help us. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.