

To all the churches throughout Japan, thank you for your daily support and encouragement. Lately there have been several big earthquakes and there are many people here in the Tohoku area in worry and fear, reminded of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Please continue praying that the issues surrounding the nuclear power plant accident will be resolved. The profits made at the disaster area handcraft corner opened at the convention general meeting was 11,800yen. This will be handed to those who made the crafts, living in the Midorigaoka temporary housing estate. Thank you very much. In this issue we would like to share about the aid carried out in the Midorigaoka temporary housing estate and the visitations carried out at Wataricho.

Fukushima Now - Reports from the Aid Work Carried out at Midorigaoka Temporary Housing Estate.

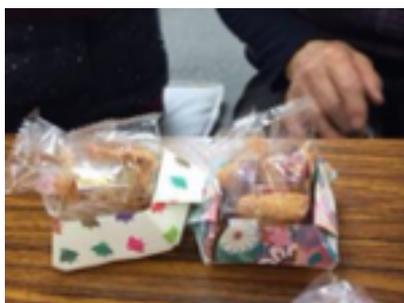
In August 2016, there were 200 households residing at Midorigaoka Temporary Housing Estate. Now there are 48. When we visit in the evening to invite the residents to tea, there are only a few lights lit here and there. It is a lonely sight. The goal for the residents was to leave the temporary housing in good health, but even for those who have achieved this, what awaited was a lonely life in a new neighbourhood where there were no friends or family. From next year there will be more areas that will have the evacuation order lifted. However many of the younger generation that have left have started new lives in different places. There are also many who are reluctant to return to their homes in fear of the radiation risk.

“I can no longer live with my children and grand children. But what can we do. Make sure you visit their new homes won't you?”

These are the words we hear from those who's families and friends have been separated.

The number of children who have or who are suspected to have thyroid cancer is 175. Now we are starting to detect cancer in children who have gone through their second round of tests. There are a rising number of pneumonia patients. Under a long and drawn out environment of health risk and stress, there are some who are starting to say that they do not want to be tested. They do not want to think about, know about, or hear about radiation any longer. There are some scholars that say it will take 100years to decommission all nuclear power plants.

This year, there were 120 apples on the apple tree that was planted to celebrate the church. There was no radiation detected in the apples, but at the inspection centre, there was a mountain of mushrooms that did not pass the radiation inspection. Mushrooms alone are showing higher radiation levels than before. When will Fukushima become a safe place for people to live in? It seems that as the days and months go by the troubles simply increase. My heart feels torn apart. (Koriyama Kosumosu Dori Christ Church Chikayo Kaneko)



Top left: Tea Party
Top Mid: Walking exercises to guitar music
Top Left: Stretching exercises
Bottom: Snack boxes made of Origami paper

Miyagi Prefecture Wataricho Now

In the news letter published in November 2015, we announced the closing of the tea party at Miyagi Prefecture Wataricho Miyamae temporary housing estate. This is because the residents of the estate were few and the facility we were using had been closed. However, we as a church set out a goal to encourage the residents until the very last person walked out of the temporary housing. Therefore, though we closed our tea party, we continued to visit the houses of those that are still in the temporary housing.

May 2016, the last family left the temporary housing. The buildings were demolished and the land was returned to the original baseball field.

"I am happy but also feel sad." The reason people feel this way is because the community that had supported them the past 5 years was completely demolished. After moving out of the temporary housing there are those who are having a difficult time with settling down in their new communities. There are elderly people who end up staying cooped up in their new homes.

Because of this reality, we have continued to carry out visitations even after people have moved in to their new homes. This is so that we as a church can support and encourage those who have started their new lives despite the many difficulties they face.

Lately we have also been attending the lunch gatherings that have been set up by those that have moved out of the temporary housing estates. These lunch gatherings are not only for those that have move out of the temporary housings, but also for those that live up on the mountains to all gather together. It is a time where they cook and eat together, sing and play games together. It is also becoming a place where, those on the shore side who were direct victims of the tsunami waves, and those on the mountain side who were not victims of the waves, can come together. Compared to Otsuchicho and Fukushima, Wataricho is moving on to a new stage. However there are still many issues that are unseen. We would like to cherish the relationships we have built over the past 5 years and 8 months and ask God how we can continue supporting those in Wataricho. We hope that we can continue our regular visitations. Please remember this in your prayers. We thank you all.

(Sendai Chomeigaoka Christ Church Makoto Kanamaru)



Top left:
Visiting those that
are in their new
homes

Top right:
Community building
Lunch gathering



Bottom left:
The temporary
housings being
demolished

Bottom right:
Handmade lunches