

# THE NIPPON SEI KO KAI

## (NSKK - THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN JAPAN)

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The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK - the Anglican Church in Japan) was among the first Protestant churches established after Japan was re-opened to the world in 1854, ending 200 years of isolation.

These days, the Anglican population has dramatically declined in Japan, especially for young members. This reflects the Japanese national trends. However, even being a small group within a small church in a very secular nation, we the younger generations have tried to engage in various activities in our local places based on our faith in God.

### Peace and social contribution

Young people from several dioceses of the NSKK have been involved in activities for peace for a few decades; especially in the Dioceses of Okinawa and Kobe (which includes Hiroshima city). These dioceses have put a lot of effort into conveying what happened in their regions in the past to congregations in other dioceses in Japan. They do this by giving opportunities for peace study sessions offering the opportunity to listen to survivors of the war and the atomic bombing.

The NSKK has also tried to contribute to society. One nuclear power facility suffered huge damage because of the terrible earthquake and tsunami in Tohoku in 2011. Radioactive material leaked, and many people became threatened by its effects. The NSKK has declared its opposition to nuclear power plants, and is active in promoting this issue. This also shows the care the Japanese Anglican community has for God’s beautiful created world as we try to protect it. The youth of the NSKK are very much involved in this activity.

In addition, we remember the people who were victims of the big earthquake: the NSKK opened centers for evacuated people to help them relax and share their anxieties with volunteers. Many young members still support this activity, and the people who suffered from the earthquake, by making places for them to enjoy chatting and sharing their feelings.

Motivation for those activities comes from the Bible including Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9) as well as the example of the Good Samaritan. Everyone surely knows these stories and they tell us why we have to take action for a variety of issues in our own places. We should keep these words in our minds as Christians, especially for youth in the community, who will face challenges, yet engage with helping people without religious or national boundaries.

The NSKK has had many opportunities to collaborate through activities for building good relationships with several nearby countries. Some dioceses of the Korean Anglican Church and the NSKK often have held events especially for young people. The Korean-Japan youth seminar was launched in 2008, and young people learned about each other’s culture and histories annually. The Korean church has sent many clergy to NSKK to relieve our lack of clergy.

The Episcopal Church of the Philippines have also built relationship with the NSKK through annual work camps for young Japanese in the Philippines, and through visiting local churches and sharing their thoughts with local congregations. Sadly, these have all stopped this year because of Covid-19.

USPG has also been central to mission in Japan for many years and has helped offer chances for NSKK clergy to study theology in the UK. The NSKK is still particularly isolated because of language and cultural differences even though the world has become so much more open. This isolation could be the next challenge for NSKK, encouraging building and creating links with the wider Anglican world.

The youth of the NSKK hope that our experiences and projects, grown from Japan’s past will help the NSKK and Japan to look to the future. Interaction with younger groups in other nations can be a massive stimulation to any Anglican youth group, and will help them to learn to be able to walk together towards a brighter future. We in the NSKK would like to put more emphasis on connecting with youth in other nations to create this. We really look forward to knowing other churches without any national boundaries.

We hope our experience might be an inspiration to other Christians and churches around the world: that even small groups of young people can do big things for our Lord. ■



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