

From the editor

In the year to pray for peace, we would like to share a message, "Prepare Your Candle" by Michael Suzuki, a HQ staff worker in Ashiya.

As he wrote, now is the time for us to prepare our candle. We pray for each one of us to light the candle by our praises and bring peace of God and healing of Christ to the most desolate places and people. May God give us true peace on this earth, and end the wars between Russia and Ukraine, and also Israel and Hamas.

Prepare Your Candle

Michael Suzuki

At our Healing Service on Sunday, January 16, there were many candles filling the sanctuary commemorating the 27th anniversary of Great Hanshin earthquake. After the service, while looking at the candles, unexpectedly Mitsuko heard a voice from the Lord: "Prepare your candle."

When I heard this, a scene of the candle service on Christmas Eve popped into my head. From one person to another, from one candle to another, the light is passed on, eventually filling the whole sanctuary. I believe the candles flames symbolize the love of Christ. It is healing, forgiveness and peace of the Lord. We pass it on to others. The time has come for each of us to prepare our candle to pass on His love to many people.



These candles mean the calling that we have received from God who has called us to Kohitsuji no Mure and entrusted the important task to us. We need to prepare our own

candle not someone else's. Each of us is called by the Lord to represent many people who are going through the same sorrow, pain, and anguish as we have gone through, or are going through now.

We pass on the love of Christ from our own candles. Candles are given to all of us. The candle signifies the life to live for God, but most people do not know they have a candle inside them. But when we see the absolute love of Christ, we realize we have our own candle inside us. And its flame can never be extinguished by anything.

From here it is my imagination. After the end of the Covid pandemic, there will be peaceful time when we can move freely and spread the words of God and His love. Such time, however, will not last long. I believe this is the last "daytime" on the earth, and after this there will be "night" when no one can work.

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

(John 9:4 NKJ)

I don't know what will happen. Such catastrophic event as to change the world completely may happen in the phenomenon world. There may be huge natural disasters or man-made tragedies like war or destruction. As it is said in Joel's prophecy: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (Act 2:20)" But Joel continues, "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

This last time is given for us to spread the words about our Savior Jesus Christ on the cross to the entire universe, so that many can call on the Lord when that day comes. The flood of praise songs we are given from heaven may be the sign of it.

We are now halfway through the last chapter of the end time. It is the time for each of us to prepare our candle and light it. In this remaining limited time we are given, may as many people as possible call on the name of the Lord.

Since the beginning of the year 2022, I have had a strong intuition. It was a feeling that I need to prepare for 2024. Pater Peter explained, in the spiritual era classification of Kohitsuji no Mure, that in the year 2024 we will enter a new era called “Salvation of Israel” and “Glory of God.” This is the last spiritual era. I believe Joel’s prophecy of “the great and glorious day of the Lord” is this last era Pater Peter talked about. I feel from the year 2023 something will start moving toward the salvation of Israel. At the same time, our world may face chaotic time. Everyone was shocked when Russia started the invasion of Ukraine but this maybe the sign of its beginning. No matter what happens, however, we believe in the redemption of the Black and White Cross and we will not avert our eyes from peace and salvation of God.

Since the day I became a staff of Kohitsuji no Mure church, or maybe even before then, since my first encountering with Kohitsuji no Mure, I have had a strange conviction that the key to the salvation in the end time is held by Japan and Israel. Salvation of Israel, an important partner of Japan which gave birth to this flock of praise, is near. I can hear its footsteps.

This intuition, the salvation of Israel is near, may be my candle. I will prepare my candle. It is my prayer and wish that the Lord may light my candle and the flame of life from God be passed on to many people on this earth.

March 3, 2022