

KOBE UNION CHURCH

serving Christ and the city of Kobe since 1871

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CHURCH & PASTOR PROFILE

June 2017

THE MISSION OF KOBE UNION CHURCH

Kobe Union Church is an inter-denominational, primarily English-speaking church, serving in love the needs of Christians through worship, fellowship and nurture, and empowering its members to serve and share Christ among those living in Japan and throughout the world

THE VISION OF KOBE UNION CHURCH

To be a grace filled and Christ led church that is a welcoming, growing and sending body of Christian believers in Kobe.

WHO WE ARE



Kobe Union Church is one of Japan's oldest protestant churches, providing an English speaking Christian home for Christians from many different nations for close to 150 years. First established by foreign businessmen who wanted to worship in their own language, the church has served the international community and has been the spiritual home to people from all over the world, from all walks of life, from many different cultures and languages, and from richly diverse church backgrounds. Despite our diversity, KUC has a rich sense of unity. Although many languages are spoken,

English is our common language. We have also become the spiritual home to many Japanese Christians and this has continued to increase in recent years. The vision of KUC is "to be a grace filled and Christ led church, that is a welcoming, growing and sending body of Christian believers in Kobe". That very much reflects who we are. We **welcome** people to our church - every week we have visitors, some of whom are just visiting, many who have come to Kobe for work, or for education, or for business. And while people are with us, be it a month, a year or many years, we help them **grow** in their relationship with Jesus, and then we send. We **send** people back out into the world. We do a lot of sending, and we are constantly saying "sayonara" to people.

Our church is situated high in the Rokko hills in a beautiful setting overlooking the city. At one time we were downtown Sannomiya (the heart of Kobe), but 25 years ago, we moved up the hill to our present site where we have a wonderful building complex, with a beautiful sanctuary, and many multi-purpose rooms that are used on Sundays and through the week. We provide shuttle services from local train stations and we have a large carpark.



MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

KUC has approximately 145 members, with average Sunday attendance around 170 (145 adults, 25 children). Numbers fluctuate widely through the year due to the nature of the international church, with many families leaving Kobe over the summer, and winter breaks. KUC is made up of people from many denominations and nationalities. Our congregation includes international business people, professors, teachers, diplomats, teachers, masters and doctoral students, Japanese nationals and cross-cultural families. Our congregation is made up of people from America, Africa, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as many parts of Asia and Japan.

PRESENT STAFF

Our staff includes an Associate Pastor, Drew Yamamoto who has just recently begun at Kobe Union Church. We have two staff in the office, both Japanese nationals and we have a part-time Property Manager and a part-time Caretaker. We also employ part-time nursery assistants.

WORSHIP TIMES

We meet for two services per week on Sundays at 9am and 11.30am. However, in the summer (autumn) we hold just one service at 10am

We have Special Sunday evening “alternative Taize-style” services from time to time.

And we have Sunday School Programs for all ages on Sundays.

MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

KUC values our children, and we have many children ranging from babies, through to junior high. We provide a staffed nursery during the 9am worship service, with one paid staff member, along with volunteer helpers. During the 9am Worship service, we have either a Children’s Worship Program or Cheerful Notes Program. Children leave the service after the first 30 minutes for their own program of worship (Childrens Worship) or children’s choir music (Cheerful Notes – learning new songs to present to the congregation during worship services). This is for children up to 2nd grade. We also provide a Sunday School program for children up to 5th grade every Sunday (during the school terms). All of these programs rely heavily on dedicated volunteers who faithfully share their time and talent with the children.



MINISTRY TO YOUTH

KUC partners with Young Life to provide programs for our middle-school and high-school youth. Programs include mid-week “Campaigners” on Tuesday evenings for HS Youth, and WYLD Life for MS on Thursdays, along with occasional Friday and Saturday events, and Sunday school classes. The evening groups typically involve food, games, music and discussion. The youth also have a

yearly opportunity to attend a service trip during Spring Break (visiting places like Philippines, Thailand etc) to do service projects and mission. We are currently transitioning away from a paid Youth Pastor on staff which KUC has had for the past 10 years or more, to rely on volunteer leaders for youth ministry.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Our women's ministry includes regular groups called Oasis and WOW, along with occasional fun events and retreats. WOW (Women on Wednesday) meeting at KUC includes fun, fellowship, and Bible Study along with English conversation class and a staffed nursery for preschoolers. Oasis meets on Rokko Island, for Bible Study & Prayer. We also have a Women's Ministry Leader who oversee ministry to women.

MINISTRY TO ADULTS

We provide Adult Christian Education classes on Sunday mornings between the worship services. Along with our Children's Sunday School, we have a number of Adult Sunday School classes, with both English and Japanese Bible Study options, along with a bi-lingual class. We also run occasional Baptism classes, and occasional series on special interest topics. We are actively encouraging the development of further small groups. We currently have a number of small groups that meet during the week in different geographical parts of Kobe, along with some ethnic groups that meet – one Chinese and the other Filipino.

EVANGELISM, OUTREACH & COMMUNITY SERVICE

KUC has active outreach ministries as well as many community service opportunities:



Evangelism to Students; A number of events take place through the year to provide a first connection-point to KUC, aimed particularly (but not exclusively) to Japanese university students. These include Hawaiian-themed Summer-themed and Christmas-themed Parties.

Shinai Children's Home: A Christian Children's home in nearby Mikage. Every December we organise and serve a traditional Christmas or thanksgiving dinner and provide a program, ending with a short worship service.

Homeless Lunch Ministry: Every two months or so, KUC volunteers with a Catholic Church program to provide lunch for the homeless of Kobe. We prepare and serve curry rice meals to 120 – 150.

Other Local & Global Mission. We partner with many different mission organisations both within Japan and globally, providing financial resources to help serve. We provide disaster relief both in offerings, as well as service in local disaster relief. KUC has been involved in providing relief in the Tohoku triple-disaster as well as the recent Kumamoto Earthquake, along with gifts to the Philippines, Fiji and other recent disasters.



FELLOWSHIP

We have an active Fellowship ministry that provides fellowship opportunities throughout the year centered around food on Sundays after the service. These include events around Valentines, Mothers & Fathers Days, Sayonara Sunday, Summer Sundaes, Thanksgiving, Easter along with International potlucks. The Fellowship Team also provide breakfasts for those who like to arrive early on Sundays, and we have many lunches prepared and served by different groups in the church including the youth, African, Chinese and Filipino groups. Fellowship is a very important part of the life of KUC. For many people who come to KUC, this church is their “home away from home”, and fellowship is an important part of their life while they are in Kobe.

WORSHIP



We have a large and very active worship team within KUC, with people participating in many different ways, including instrumentalists (guitars, bass, drums, pianists) singers, sound and projection people. We also have a beautiful organ which is used most Sundays. Our worship is a mix of both older hymns and contemporary music, some liturgy, as well as Biblically-based Christ-centred preaching. We have communion once per month. Most Sundays we have some extra “feature” which may include Mission Moments (promoting one of our mission partners), Cheerful Notes (Childrens Choir), offertory items (groups or solos from our congregation), testimonies etc. We also have a Christmas & Easter Choir.

WHAT WE BELIEVE AT KUC

- **KUC is an interdenominational** church – this means that all Christians (and non Christians) are welcomed, and all Christian traditions and expressions are encouraged and expressed. The word “Union” (in Kobe Union Church) is used to indicate that the membership is composed of Christians from many churches and nationalities who are united through a common faith in Jesus Christ
- **KUC is evangelical.** We focus on Jesus as Lord and Saviour of all. To be evangelical essentially means that we believe salvation comes through our faith in Jesus (*sole fide* = faith alone), and that the ultimate source of authority for our faith & practice is God’s written Word—the Bible (*sola Scriptura* = Scripture alone).
- **KUC is autonomous.** Self-governing, congregational (governance), separate and independent from any denomination or church body. We have links to other international churches, but this is through relationship rather than organization. Kobe Union Church maintains links with other Union (and International) Churches around Asia via the Asian International Pastors Conference and groups like MICN.
- **KUC is missional** We exist to serve others. We take seriously the call of Jesus to “go into all the world” to “preach the gospel” in the spheres in which God has placed us in. Our “primary mission field” are expatriates and international people who struggle through dislocation from their home countries, family & friends. But we also reach out to the local community and the local people and many Japanese are becoming part of our church family.

- **KUC's Statement of Faith** - KUC uses one of the historical creeds of the church, the Apostles Creed as the basis for declaring the essential and foundational beliefs of Christianity. The Apostles Creed is one of the earliest and most widely-used creeds in the Church.

SENIOR PASTOR POSITION

The pastor shall have among his/her duties the following:

- Responsibility for the leading of worship services of the Church, including preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.
- Attending to the spiritual welfare of the congregation, including praying with and for the people, counseling and caring for the members of the congregation, and conducting weddings and funerals.
- Supporting the people in their own ministry by encouraging and assisting them with their tasks within the Church and the world.
- Working with the Moderator of Council, guiding and encouraging Council in establishing plans, setting policies, and developing programs to fulfill the mission of KUC.
- Oversight of all ministries of KUC, with direct accountability of all Ministry leaders to Senior Pastor
- Direction of the day-to-day operations of the Church, its office, and its employees, and ensuring an efficient implementation of the decisions and policies of the Council.
- Acting with Council to initiate and maintain ecumenical relationships with other Church bodies.
- Providing supervision and direction of the Associate Pastor, and any other pastoral staff to ensure that the Pastoral resources of KUC are used wisely and effectively.
- Conducting weekly meetings with staff.

REQUIREMENTS

Experience and Qualifications

- A Bible College or Seminary degree
- An Ordained Pastor by a recognized mainstream Protestant denomination
- Previous proven experience as a Senior Pastor
- Experience in leading diverse congregations
- Have an appreciation for a broad range of Christian and church expression and an openness to diverse theological perspectives
- Proven conflict resolution skills
- Gravitas (words have weight and authority based on experience).
- Interdenominational experience

Relational

- Ability to lead, relate to, bring together diverse groups and ages
- Have good pastoral skills – caring, and a good listener (people person)
- Be a good communicator - with excellent written and verbal communication skills (a good public speaker), and computer skills
- Have strong interpersonal skills (humility, humour, approachability)
- Have a heart for people of other cultures

- Enthusiastic, creative, insightful, energetic
- Excellent teacher / preacher and passionate
- Have a strong mission heart
- Be adaptable and flexible
- Culturally sensitive (previous cultural connection with Japan would be advantageous but not essential)
- Must be capable of taking initiative, articulating vision and building team

Personal

- Be a passionate follower of Jesus, committed to following a life-style of service and worship
- Committed to helping people become life-long followers of Jesus
- Must accept and agree to support the vision and mission of KUC
- Strong pastoral leadership skills
- Native or near-native English speaker (must have very good English proficiency)
- Good administrator
- Healthy with strong family life (if married)
- A healthy marriage (if married)
- Mature, responsible and reliable
- Strong relationship with God

Other Details

This position is full-time. The initial appointment is for a three-year period, however we would anticipate that the position will be longer term.

REMUNERATION

Remuneration will be based upon the applicants experience.

The following benefits are all negotiable:

- Salary
- Health Insurance
- Pension Contribution
- Housing provided
- Utilities
- Home Leave
- Relocation Allowance
- Professional Expenses
- If the candidate is married with school-age children, educational opportunities need to be discussed. This is unlikely to form part of the remuneration package.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Initially, send your CV (résumé) and a cover letter via email to Brian Shaw, Chairman of the Pastoral Search Team kucpastorsearch@gmail.com For those applicants whom we want to consider further, we will email a detailed Personal Data Form which we will ask you to complete, and request copies of sermons, and referees. We recommend having applications in by 31 August, as we will begin interviewing shortlisted candidates following this date.