

Since 1951, the Japan Fellowship Deaconry Mission (JFDM) has been blessed by our Lord to work alongside other Christian mission organizations in Japan. The beginnings of our mission, however, date back decades earlier to China where deaconesses ("sisters") from Germany and the USA served the Lord by planting churches and offering dental assistance in remote areas under the umbrella of the China Inland Mission.

With the communist revolution in 1949 and the subsequent expulsion of our mission from China, our missionaries were forced to close their stations and resettle in a nearby country. The plan was to wait and serve for a few years in Japan until the political situation would allow for a return to China. With the sisters' passion for outreach and their medical training, the first ministry emerged on Japanese soil in 1952 at Higashi Naruo in Kobe. As they observed the situation in China, our missionaries slowly began to realize and accept that the Lord was calling them to serve in Japan permanently. They prayed to find open doors for the gospel in this new country.

As the years passed, additional sisters from the mission headquarters in Germany and the USA were commissioned and sent out for ministry mainly in the Kansai region. In those pioneering days of JFDM, two churches in Shikoku were planted; both are now very active congregations served by Japanese pastors. Over time, mission families and young couples from Germany and North America joined the contingent of deaconesses serving in Japan. In 1987, the mission purchased a rustic retreat center in Karuizawa in Nagano and, by God's grace, developed it into a beautiful guesthouse and Bible camp ministry. In addition, the Deaconry Motherhouse Bethel was established in Kobe in 1985.

Presently, JFDM has 11 churches in Kansai, two churches in Tokyo, and the camp ministry in Karuizawa. The churches are predominately led by Japanese pastors, and they work closely together with the six foreign missionaries who assist them. We thank our Lord that he has richly blessed his mission in Japan. We are reminded that all this became possible only because he called and equipped deaconesses, missionaries, pastors, and other Christian laymen over the last 65 years.



Our current fields of activity are:

- **Church planting:** We seek to get to know our neighbors and invite them to church through activities such as cooking and language classes, musical performances, cell-group ministry, and children's programs.
- **Mature churches:** JFDM wants planted churches to mature to the point where the mission's support is minimal. The goal is for these congregations to be led by Japanese pastors, become outreach-focused, and join together as part of the Japan Fellowship Deaconry Synod.
- **Cooperation:** JFDM works together and partners with other Christian groups and churches to support special events, such as evangelistic activities in the Kobe–Osaka region.
- **Bible camp ministry:** We make our facilities at Karuizawa available to various church groups and individual families for spiritual refreshment and physical rest by providing an environment that nurtures genuine fellowship with other Christians and personal Bible reflection (www.kfbc.net).

Our vision:

- Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we aim to plant churches in new areas and strengthen existing congregations so that they mature and become more outreach-focused. For this, we seek to discover how we can meet the spiritual needs of the Japanese people by making them feel more welcome in our churches. We also recognize that we are working in a changing Japanese society where spiritual conditions are in flux.
- Furthermore, through Bible teaching and encouragement, we seek to equip believers to share their faith with others, by word and deed, and thus fulfill the Lord's commission in Matthew 28:18-20. **JH**

