

News from Nihon*

*Nihon or Nippon is the Japanese way of saying Japan.

I have been enjoying summer vacation this month. My impression is that summer vacation will be the longest of the breaks during the school year, between the first and second trimesters. I traveled to Tokyo at the beginning of my time off to meet Rev. Franklin Ishida, Director for Asia and the Pacific in the ELCA, or who I think of as my boss in the American organization. I also met with Rev. Naoki Asano, Secretary of Global Mission of JELC, or who I think of as my boss in the Japanese church. This was my first time meeting both of them in person, unusual due to the coronavirus. We had productive conversations that have given me new areas to stretch into in Kumamoto. I also had the chance to play and sightsee. I've been doing other excursions and taking it easy in the meantime.



Canyoning
outside
Tokyo



Lots of time with new and somewhat new friends. Met Vola, the J3 in Tokyo, and ran around the countryside with Tami-san, Yoko-san, and Naoko-san.



Extended periods of time off at home have never been my strong suit, but I am managing with planned and surprise excursions along with lots and lots of food and good company. I made enchiladas, salsa, and guacamole with my English Conversation Group at Oe Church. That was an experience in and off itself, as we got the fresh jalapeños from the garden of a friend of a friend. You can only buy them pickled here. The feedback was the enchiladas were delicious. We got my mother on FaceTime as they were her recipe and she happened to be in her church's kitchen. I thought it was great fun to call from a church kitchen in Japan to a church kitchen in Texas.

In Tokyo, I went canyoning for the first time, which is perhaps the hardest and scariest and one of the most fun things I have ever done. Hiking in a wetsuit is a much greater challenge than I anticipated and I faced my fear of falling off of high places over and over.

