Diakonia Sisterhood in Korea

2007, Newsletter

Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
(Matthew 24:42)

Today we look back at our lives wide-awake through the words of the Lord we read during the weeks of Advent. Awake here does not necessarily mean to stay awake for 24 hours a day without sleep. But rather refers to the attitude of staying focused and calmly identifying what is going on around you, without being emotionally overwhelmed but instead observing reasons through the heart of our Lord. However as weak as we are, we opt to ignore, close our eyes or just beckon for sleep in the face of enormous pain and sufferings, instead of being awake.

In this month we saw countless precious maritime species being killed and lots of fishing villages' residents being threatened due to the major oil spill that occurred after the collision of an oil container and a sea crane. It was disastrous calamity that almost forced us to just close our eyes. We also continue to witness the long-term deadlock situation of a divided Korea, which has been lasting for the past 54 years after the truce agreement of 1953. This has also tightened the economic, social and political scheme that is built around the cold war period and the widening social gap after 1997's IMF crisis. These are enough to make ourselves frustrated. In addition to this, we find it difficult to keep ourselves awake when witnessing constant disasters that happen in this world such as earthquakes, forest fires, wars and military oppression.

However, awaiting the arrival of Jesus gives us hope amidst these dark times. We have spent this year with this hope, and have gained joy and happiness through fulfilling our tasks, which we would like to share with you.
Diakonia Headquarter in Cheonan-si.

Sister Yuna Jeong had a sabbatical year (March ~ December). Sister Jung was able to replenish her body and soul through rest and prayers which she endlessly devoted during the past 10 years in the forefront of welfare mission.

Our sisterhood is also collaborating with women from different churches to participate in the monthly prayer meeting for world peace held by KCWU (Korea Church Women United). Our sisters also participated in the street fund raising activity with members of KCWU for flood victims in North Korea.

On 18~22 of June, The 40th KGK of Kaiserswerth was held in Lahti, Finland under the theme of "Diakonia - Different approaches of living the life of helping others" More than 80 members from 10 countries were there to discuss the past, present and future of their activities while gaining strength through networking and collaboration. Sister Jeongran Kim and Jongsook Ro participated from our sisterhood.

House of spirituality and peace, Retreat Center of Aunae, Cheonan: Silent prayer sessions here have been running for 5 years now. We thanked our Lord when we witnessed participants who looked at themselves through the eyes of faith and started living to love neighbors. In addition, we also shared joy when participants were able to refresh their tired body and mind through the program.

On 26th of November, Sister Geunsook Choi moved into the new Moja sanctuary in Ansan-si, Gyeonggi-do which has been constructed since January. This sanctuary is a shelter for mothers and children who suffer from domestic abuse. Sister Choi will assist mothers and children until mothers can sustain themselves with jobs and raising their kids independently. This shelter is run independently by supporting members without help of Government and will be the serving ground for 2nd Memberships(Diakonisse) of Diakonia.

Family Community of Diakonia (Rev. Hoonyoung Jeong, Danbi Church) has been still under construction for 4 years and one young family is residing there. Rev. Jung is currently cultivating rice and other types of grains through organic methods without using chemical fertilizers. He is selling the crops to churches in cities to share the Lord's energy with each other. The sisterhood is gaining strength by conducting sermons, prayer sessions and sharing labor together with the Community.
Diakonia Registered Welfare Corporation in Mokpo-si

On 5th of November at Hansanchon, we held a celebration sermon and event of breaking ground of an Elder Home (accommodate up to 50 person). We believe this site will be built as peaceful shelter for elders in need, with support of prayers and love from many members.

On 13th of October, the 6th Share Love Bazaar was held in Bethel Church of Mokpo. This event was held under the support from the church, individual members and volunteers, who brought their goods and sold directly. This event was held to raise funds for the Elder Home of Hansanchon, and participants all felt joyful in helping their neighbors in need.

Volunteers and sisters are regularly touring 5 townhalls in Samhyang-myeon, Mooan-gun to provide an acupuncture therapy clinic. It has already passed 1 1/2 years since it started. The clinic is open 4 times a week and this has brought happiness and rejuvenation for village elders and commitments from ever willing volunteers all makes us happy and cheerful.

Our sisters are also supporting poor families by providing money and household goods. Especially the scholarship for children of those families has been successfully provided for past 15 years. These children will graduate and will thus help raise their family.

We are warm with you all the happiness that we shared with our neighbors throughout the year and we sincerely thank our Lord. There are other signs of love such as countless flock of volunteers gathering up at the cost of helping the West coast to remove oil spills or supporting the cause by providing funds and goods. Please pray for this tragedy to be mended.

As Lord wants us to live happily and we wish you a peaceful season's greetings under that name.

Diakonia Sisterhood in Korea
Yours Sincerely,
Jeong-Ran KIM