



First Baptist Church

SHELTON, CONNECTICUT

*A loving & life-transforming faith community,
centered on Jesus Christ*

Mr. Hiroshi Kihara
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Hinomoto Gakuen
890 Koro, Korera-cho
Himeji-City, Hyogo 679-2151 Japan

Dear Mr. Kihara,

The members of First Baptist Church of Shelton, Connecticut would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to the board of directors, administration, faculty, staff, students and friends of Hinomoto Gakuen as you celebrate your 125th anniversary. We joyfully celebrate the many generations of girls and young women who have benefited from an exceptional education at your school.

We feel a strong connection to Hinomoto Gakuen in light of the efforts of Miss Ella R. Church in helping to establish the school. Miss Church was a member of First Baptist Church of Shelton near the time of our founding in 1882. Miss Church's memory lives on the life of our congregation even one hundred years after her death. A memorial plaque and photographs of Miss Church and some early colleagues and students at the school greet everyone who enters the doors of our church.

Miss Church was born in a time of turmoil in our nation during the American Civil War. She became a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ as a young woman. Before God called her to Japan to serve as a teacher, she graced the lives of students in Shelton. Her love for Japan and its people appears to have coincided with a time of significant change in both Japan and America – a time when girls and young women were also increasingly granted the opportunity to receive a full education.

Miss Church's legacy lives on at First Baptist Church through our congregation's interest in Christian education and world missions, and in partnerships with brothers and sisters around the world who endeavor to love and serve Christ as Savior and Lord.

We continue to pray that God will bless Hinomoto Gakuen's students, your students' parents, families, and friends, and all who serve through the school, as you strive to live in the spirit of Christianity – loving God, serving your neighbors, and decorating your hearts with the love of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Smith
Pastor of First Baptist Church of Shelton, CT

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