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Missionaries to



## Greetings from the country of Japan,

As we hear the news across the world, we realize life has changed for many of us, but nothing takes our Lord by surprise. We pray you are all staying safe and well. God reminds us in Joshua 1 that just as he guided and protected the two Israelite spies, he will also provide a path for our daily life. We are thankful we can take precautions but even more so trust the Lord at all times. Up until a couple weeks ago, there had been only two cases of Covid 19 in our prefecture and one was from the cruise ship. The schools are closed but most of the businesses are continuing. We had prayed much about having services and had peace about continuing them until after Easter when more cases started showing up in nearby cities. We are doing online services now and pray that we can soon be able to congregate again at the church.

## God has been working even through the coronavirus.

We were contacted by one lady, Emi, who is interested in coming to church after seeing our church online. She has told us that once the corona virus epidemic subsides; she will be visiting. We are excited to get to meet her one day.

The Lord blessed us with being able to have an Easter service and brunch together with our church family. We praise the Lord that **Mr. Maeda**, Shyoko's husband, came to the Valentines Sunday in February (pictured here). We were praying he would come for Easter as well, but he thought he needed to go to work instead. **Please pray that he will come to church again and his heart would be softened to the Gospel.** We truly desire to make a good friendship with him and see him come to know the Lord. One of the families we teach English to also came! We are excited that Shyoko has been enjoying the new converts class and decided recently to be baptized. Michael is teaching her and Rose by video now. April is teaching Samantha online to prepare her to be baptized as well. **Please pray that God will use the online classes to help them to grow.**



Another praise is that this year when we went to do our Japanese taxes, they told us that we do not owe anything. Our mission had changed from a W2 form to a 1099 and this greatly helped as well as more deductions from furlough and paying higher taxes and 5x more in health insurance last year. After that big struggle last year, what a relief this was. This also means that our health insurance will probably go back down, and things will be cheaper for us this year. The extra money from the U.S. government has also helped as we aren't teaching any combined English classes now. God always provides!

## Praise about Japanese Nenkin (Japan's Social Security)

The Japan Nenkin office had been saying we would have to pay into their system here in Japan even though we were already paying Social Security in the U.S. In October of last year Michael had filled out a form online to be able to get a certificate of coverage from the U.S. to not have to pay into both systems, but we had not received any reply. We called the them but kept getting the run around. In the meantime, the Nenkin office kept sending us bills and told us that without that form from America, we would have to pay. We had pretty much given up and decided to start paying it the next day. Well, that morning we got a message from our mission that the certificate had come! Praise the Lord. We do not have to pay into the Nenkin for this term. The Lord truly answers prayer.

## Visiting Missionaries

It was wonderful to have missionary Chris White and his mission director, Dean McNeese, come here on a survey trip earlier this year. The Lord worked in brother White's heart about coming here with his family for language study and then later working to start a church somewhere in Nagano prefecture much like the Derry family plan to do. **Please continue to pray for the Derry's and White's support to come in to be able to come to Japan and reach the millions in darkness here.**



## Praise for Yuichi Okada's family's visas.

The Lord really worked. Rose and the children only had a three-month visa and were in danger of having to go back to the Philippines because they were having trouble getting a new visa. However, because of the lockdown in the Philippines over Corona Virus, their visas were forced to be extended. God also gave them a really kind case worker to help them and while we were writing this letter we found out that their visas were accepted! Please continue to pray for them to continue to grow in the Lord and also **please pray for them to find a larger apartment or house to rent.** They are living in a small one-bedroom apartment now. Can you imagine being in a one-room apartment with three children during this time? Yuichi's work also requires him to switch from night shift and day shift every 5 days so this only adds to the situation. Please continue to pray for his spiritual condition. We thank the Lord he has come to church a few times. **Please pray that he will get victory in his life and grow spiritually and decide to get a job that allows him to come to church.**

God is working in many ways and He is faithful. May our Lord encourage all your hearts today. We thank you so much for your prayers and financial support that keeps us here. Sincerely in Christ, Michael, April, and Abigail Riffel