



March 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

Over the past month we've seen a wide range of responses, from careless ignorance to unfounded hysteria concerning the corona virus pandemic. It is in these times that our church family (and I'm sure your church family as well) has been reminded of how our eyes must be firmly set on our Heavenly Father, Who is in control of all things, and Who deeply loves His children. We can confidently rest in His care for us, and by faith ask Him for wisdom to guide each step of our paths.

HOW IS THE CORONA VIRUS AFFECTING US HERE IN JAPAN?

Because of its proximity to China, Japan is a popular tourist destination for Chinese. This undoubtedly had a lot to do with how quickly the corona virus made its way to Japan. During the initial stages of the virus entering Japan, not much could be done, simply due to not knowing the characteristics of the virus. About two weeks ago, steps to prevent the spread of the virus started ramping up significantly. Schools have closed for a month (including the two weeks scheduled for spring break), and most sporting and social events have been cancelled to prevent large groups of people from gathering. Panic buying has occurred here in Japan too, with the main affected commodities being masks, and... you guessed it, toilet paper.

For us personally as a family, our youngest, Asher, has been home from school for this month, which has given him the chance to catch up with English studies (he's currently attending Japanese school). The English school where I teach to develop Japanese relationships and to supplement our support has closed for the month of March. While this will make the next month or two a little difficult financially, it has given me much needed time to focus on other much needed areas of our ministry (see below for details 😊).

Our church family has been taking necessary precautions as we meet. We are advising those with weaker immune systems and the elderly to stay at home. Because we have a weekly sermon podcast in place, it has made it easier for those who are unable to attend to hear the sermons. Thankfully, we haven't had anyone in our church family who has been infected.

NEW CO-LABORERS!

We are incredibly excited about two missionary families who are going to be training and working with us!

The Benjamin Edwards family has been working with Japanese in military churches here in Japan for about a year, and have decided to put the full focus of their ministry on reaching Japanese with us here at Akigawa BC. This is such a needed help! Having someone to help share the ministry load has been something that I have been needing for a long time. They got settled in about two weeks ago, and have hit the ground running. Ben is starting his language school training in a few weeks (depending on the corona virus situation), and the whole family has jumped in to immerse themselves in our church family.

Joe and Sierah Pliska are from our home church in Louisville. They came to see us on a missions trip last year, and while they were here, they felt God's calling to reach the Japanese. On returning to the U.S., they began the transition to begin their missionary journey. One of the first steps of that journey is to spend a few months here in Japan to better understand how to minister to Japanese, and how to prepare for life in Japan. They will head back to the States to begin deputation in May. If you are looking for a missionary couple to support, I HIGHLY recommend the Pliskas! They are deeply needed here!

Please pray for both new missionary families in their transition to new stages in life, as well as for Bethany and me as we also begin the new-to-us role of training missionaries to minister effectively to the Japanese. And finally, pray for grace for our church family as they also adapt to their role in patiently supporting these two families to reach their fellow countrymen.

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan