



January 2018

Dear Praying Friends,

Reflecting on the previous year, I am again humbled by how gracious God has been in allowing and enabling us to share His glory with many here in Japan. The coming year brings great anticipation in seeing the magnificent way in which the goodness of God will lead the lost to repentance (Romans 2:4).

CHRISTMAS SERVICE



On Christmas Eve, we held our annual Christmas Candlelight Service. We had 47 come to the service, which we were delighted with, considering many people were out of town due to the holiday weekend. One of the first-time visitors was Mr. Togura, a co-worker of Elizabeth Fujita (one of our Sunday school teachers). It was his first time to any kind of church service. It was clear that the Holy Spirit was working in his heart as he raised his hand for salvation, and one of the men in our church led him to the Lord after the service!

One dear lady had started coming to our church after having left a cult recently. After attending for just a few weeks, she was thrilled to be able to bring her friend who was interested in Christianity. After the service, Bethany sat with them and started sharing the Gospel with her friend. It was so exciting to see her jumping into the conversation herself to share with her friend what she knew about the saving grace of Jesus! Please pray for this dear lady, as the cult is not wanting to let her go easily, as well as for her friend to put her faith in Jesus.

Over the years we have asked you to pray that God would add more Christian men to our church family. During the Christmas service, I was struck by an incredible realization. After the service, we have a time of fellowship and games, including a Christmas present exchange. In the past, the ladies overwhelmingly outnumbered the men in the present exchange. This year, I had an unexpected moment of joy in discovering that we had practically the same number of men as we had ladies! What joy in seeing the continual working of our Father in the midst of our church family!

MEN'S SERMON DAY

The answer to this prayer continued to be displayed in our first ever men's sermon day, where I asked our Christian men to take about fifteen minutes each to share a truth from God's Word on the first Sunday of January. We had three men in our English service speak, and two men in our Japanese service speak. For me personally it was a momentous day to see these steps of growth in our church family! For several of them, it was their first time speaking in front of a church congregation. Please continue to pray for these men as they lead their families, as well as our church family in living for Jesus.

COMING MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

The combination of the incredibly low percentage of Christians in Japan (around 0.5%) and the decrease of marriages among Japanese brings to light an enormous need: the lack of Christian families. A second generation Christian whose parents are both Christians is rare to see here. For many young adult Christians, this lack of having stable Christian couples to model a Christian home brings a lot of uncertainty: first in what to look for in a spouse, and secondly in how to have a God-honoring marriage themselves. To address this need, the independent Baptist churches in the greater Tokyo area will be having our first marriage conference in February to help young people have a Biblical understanding of these issues. I have been asked to be the main speaker for the conference, and I covet your prayers for the Holy Spirit's guidance in preparation for it.

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan