



September 2019

Dear Praying Friends,

As we approach the end of summer, we are so thankful for how God has given us the grace we need to serve Him over the last several months. Fall brings many opportunities to serve, and more opportunities to trust in His grace!

SUMMER FAMILY CAMP

August is the only month children have summer vacation. Because of that, it's the busiest month for travel in Japan. The second week of August is the peak of that travel rush, but for a different reason. It's called "Bon week." It's the week everyone travels back to their home town to celebrate and worship their ancestors, who are believed to return from the dead during this week. This is probably one of the most difficult weeks for your Japanese brothers and sisters here in Japan, as the families' expectation for them to worship their ancestors can be intense. Several Baptist churches in the greater Tokyo area use this national holiday to encourage their church families by providing an opportunity to spend time with Christians from other church families. This year, Pastor Uchijima (who spoke at our church cookout) and I were given the opportunity to speak. It was so encouraging to see men, ladies, and young people gather together after the services to springboard off the sermons to encourage each other in their walks of life.



FRUIT THAT ABOUNDS: AKIRA AND ELIZABETH FUJITA



Akira Fujita was already a Christian when he started coming to our church 7 years ago. A year later, he started bringing his friend Elizabeth to church, and soon after that, Elizabeth trusted Christ and was baptized. It was my great joy to marry them a few years later. Akira and Elizabeth Fujita have grown to become an integral part of our church family, as they have a hand in serving in many different areas of the church. Elizabeth plays a key role in our children's ministry, faithfully teaming up with Bethany to teach Sunday school. Akira edits and uploads the sermons to our church podcast each week. Akira and Elizabeth are fruit that abounds to your account. As you pray and give, you continue to invest in their spiritual growth. But what you may not know is that your investment in them is also being dispersed around the world.

The sermon podcast that Akira uploads each week was originally set up for those in our church family who weren't able to attend a service due to work or travel. Over the years though, it has become a helpful resource not just to our church family, but many Japanese Christians throughout the world. There have been regular listeners all throughout Japan, but also in over 20 other countries including the U.S., Canada, the U.K, Australia, India, and South Korea. It makes heaven that much more exciting to discover all the ways God graciously uses each of us to reach people that we may never meet until then!

The podcast does highlight a great need for access to good Christian material in Japanese. Because of the small ratio of Christians in Japan (less than 1%), it's very difficult to find material that is designed specifically for the Japanese. Pastoral helps that are available to Japanese pastors are very small compared to the plethora of material available to English speaking pastors. We're in the VERY beginning stages of something that may help our co-laborers here in Japan, but more on that in another update. As you can see, we've reached the end of the page. ☺ Thanks for faithfully praying and giving!

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan