



October 2021

Dear Praying Friends,

For those of you who haven't been able to meet for a period of time, do you remember that moment when you finally get back together, sing that first song, and hear your voices once again join together with vigor in praising your Father? And as you look around, you see that the emotion welling up in you is also on the edge of bursting out on the faces of your brothers and sisters in Christ as well! We felt that again. And it was SO GOOD!

...AAAAND WE'RE BACK!

I waited a little longer in writing this letter, because I wanted to be able to tell you that we have finally, once again, been able to meet again. And boy does it feel AMAZING! To sing together, to enjoy the warm fellowship between the services, to hear the laughter and warm greetings of one another as they catch up from the week. For me personally, it's a welcome reprieve from staring into the cold, empty lens of the camera that I've been preaching to for most of this year. How refreshing it is to be able to once again see the attentive gaze of our church family as they respond to the words of Scripture!

The most recent state of emergency here in Tokyo ended at the end of September, and we were able to start meeting again on the first Sunday of October. We hope and pray that another emergency status will not be declared, and in faith we're making preparations for outreach events for the rest of the year. (I'm learning to not take these things for granted anymore. 😊) As our church family starts to gradually get back into the flow of attending again, we'll start with a Thanksgiving service and fellowship next month to focus on the goodness and faithfulness of God throughout the year. Please pray for those in our church family who have been away from gathering this year, as well as for the Christmas outreach and winter camp we'll be preparing for over the next several months.

WHILE WE WERE WAITING

In anticipation of the return of our church family, during the month of September, our church family began the task of taking care of some much-needed updates and repairs to the church building. We started with removing the old flooring and installing new flooring in the auditorium, (Here are several men in our church who are beginning the installation of the new floor.) We still have painting, expanding storage, and other projects that we will be working on over the coming weeks. It has definitely helped to give us a sense of a fresh new start for sure.



MEETING THE "REGULAR ATTENDERS" FOR THE FIRST TIME

So far, we've had visitors each Sunday. On our first Sunday, we had a "first-time" visitor, a Christian lady who had been regularly watching the Sunday services on YouTube. It was a little amusing to meet someone that I've never met before who was familiar with me. That being said, I am so thankful that God has used our media ministry to help others as they grow in their faith in Christ, as well as to help others to find faith in Christ. The next Sunday, she brought along one of her friends to the service. We're so thankful for them and for others who have become a part of our church family throughout this year even when we weren't able to meet in person.

Thank you for praying with us throughout this year! While it's true we don't know what the next few months hold, we are confident in knowing that our Father will sustain us and help us, just as He has throughout this year.

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan