

The Wards . . . Church Planting in Japan



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May God bless you for your faithful prayers and sacrifices to the Lord on our behalf.

Church Events

While we are on furlough (Dec. 11 - Feb. 13) my Japanese assistant, Yuki Fukumoto, has been holding things together back home in Kato, Japan. Missionary Dan Gardner has also been there to help him bear some of the load. One Sunday, even Dan Gardner, Jr. from Okinawa helped us out.

After Celeste and I left for the US on December 11, Brother Fukumoto and Brother Gardner distributed in Kato about 5,000 flyers inviting folks to the Christmas services, as well as 1,000 gospel tracts on a Christmas theme. Unfortunately, we did not see visitors as a result of these efforts. But we held services on Saturday night, December 23 and Sunday, December 25 to which several regular attenders came.

Furlough travels and events

We began our furlough by flying to Dulles airport in Virginia. We stayed two nights at our son Joseph's house in Ranson, West Virginia. He loaned us his car to use and we traveled to Chattanooga, TN, to BIMI headquarters and spent a few days there getting advice and touching base with people. December 17, we presented and I preached in the AM service at Lakewood, BC nearby. Then we traveled to Katy, Texas, near Houston, where our oldest daughter Teresa teaches, and reported to Westside Baptist Church on December 20.

Then we traveled for two days back to Ranson, WV, where our whole family, children and grandchildren, were able to reunite for the Christmas holidays. We were able to visit First Baptist Church, our son Joseph's church, in Ranson and a supporting church, Tri-State Baptist Church on Sunday December 24, and 31.

Joseph purchased a nice car for us to use for the remainder of our furlough. On December 27, we visited our home church.

On Wednesday, January 3, we drove to a friend's house near Fredericksburg and went with them to their church that evening. The next day, we drove to North Carolina to visit the husband of the woman who led Celeste to the Lord because he was about to celebrate his 100th birthday, and then drove on to our son Stephen's house in Spartanburg, SC.

On January 7, we presented at Calvary Hill Baptist Church in Paolet, SC, in the morning. They took us on for support, thank the Lord! In the evening service we reported to a supporting church, Calvary Baptist in Belton, SC. On January 8, we drove from there to a friend's house near Fredericksburg, VA, and that evening, I picked up Mr. Yuki Fukumoto, my assistant pastor, at Dulles airport and drove back to the friend's house.

On January 10 and 14, along with Mr. Fukumoto and our daughter Sara, who is on deputation to come to Japan as a missionary, we reported and I preached at our home church, Independent Baptist Church of Clinton, MD, during their

faith-promise missions emphasis month. All four of us then drove in one car to Providence, Rhode Island, Greater RI Baptist Temple, where we are staying now.

We stayed at the home of a member of the church and on the morning of January 17, my wife collapsed after she got out of bed. She fainted a few more times as I tried to get her to sit up on the floor and stand up, but finally she was able to stand without fainting.

So I took her to the emergency room at Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro, Massachusetts, and they tested her, gave her a few IVs and kept her overnight for observation. It turned out she had no serious problem like a heart attack, or stroke, or tumor, or a seizure, but she did test positive for Covid, so it was thought that she may have been dehydrated. They released her the following day, and we have been staying in the prophet's chamber here at GRIBT until now. We had to cancel our meetings scheduled in Maine for Sunday, January 21, and move them to January 28. We had to cancel the church in Michigan that we had scheduled for the 28th.

We will leave here on Thursday, January 25, and travel to Maine for the weekend to be in two churches there. Then we will travel to West Virginia and then Maryland, where we have three churches scheduled for January 31, February 4 and 11.

We thank God for keeping us safe on the road, and helping us to recover from flu and Covid during the trip. Please pray for our continued safety and blessings as we finish our time of furlough. We will fly out of Dulles airport on February 12 and arrive in Japan on February 13.

Prayer requests for salvation

- Mr. Yoshikawa, who sold us our car.
- Mr. and Mrs. Kuramae, our church landlords: salvation and health
- Mr. and Mrs. Kageyama, our house landlords
- Mrs. and Mrs. Tokimoto, our real estate agent
- Mrs. Tsunemine
- Mr. Morimoto
- For Mrs. Tanaka and Mrs. Fujimoto
- Mr. Manabu Matsumoto, the cousin of Miss Hiroko Matsumoto, a Japanese missionary in Senegal.
- Mrs. Fujiwara, the grandmother of Mr. Komi
- Mr. Tokuhara, owner of the bike shop where I bought a scooter.
- Mr. Taro Kuramae, the man who did our plumbing
- Mrs. Taitano, the wife of Mr. Taitano
- Mrs. Yamada: to come to church again and be saved

Other prayer requests

- Mr. Fujiwara and Mr. Akita to come back to church
- Property and/or building for the future of Kato BC
- God's blessing on Mr. Yuki Fukumoto, our Japanese co-worker.
Pray that he gets a wife.
- Evangelism of the cities of Kato, Ono, Kasai, and Nishiwaki.