



## *Paul & Melissa Ewing*

MISSIONARIES IN JAPAN



FEBRUARY 2022

## FAITHFULLY WAITING

### *Praise*

- Being able to gather as a church body to celebrate Jesus' birth.
- Health and safety for us here on the field and family members in the States.
- Transition: though hard and often disconcerting, it is part of ministry/life. The praise is that God is faithful; He is our rock and He walks with us through the troubling waters.
- Trusting and faithfully waiting on the Lord. While we wait, we trust and we continue to be faithful to the work He has given us now.

### *Prayer*

- Pastor Saijo and Komyo leaders as the end of March approaches, when Paul will no longer be part of the pastoral staff.
- Continued prayer for how to evangelize when large groups are not gathering.
- Japan is still not issuing new visas, including tourist visas/waivers. Pray that the situation will change soon.
- Our missionary team to increase. We are earnestly praying for short- and long-term missionaries.
- The future church plant: future team members, new location, family relocation, et cetera.

*God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself.*

*Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30 (NLT)



Happy New Year! When you wish someone Happy New Year in Japan on or after January 1, there is a set phrase: "Happy New Year, and please be kind to me during this New Year." I think to most North American ears this is a strange phrase and you might even chuckle at it. Yet, if you stop and think about it, it's a very lovely sentiment. "Please be kind to me this year" has a deeper sentiment than just kindness but includes a sense of let's continue to care, respect, and help one another throughout the following year. Of course, it is often said in passing and has become a rote phrase, but if one really stops and takes to heart this phrase, it



reminds me of the song “Auld Lang Syne” (a phrase made popular by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns). His poem was later used as the lyrics for the song. Paraphrasing: we are reminded to fondly remember good times or good friendship, bring them to mind, and raise a glass to goodwill, friendship, and kind regards (or kindness). We bring New Year’s greetings to you from Japan and ask for kindness and favor for another.

The COVID-19 virus continues to cause problems on this side of the ocean, as it is doing all over the world. Japan’s borders are still closed to tourists, as well as new visas being suspended, and the Japanese government has limited the number of visa holders who can enter the country per day, with state and home quarantine mandates. The rules are in continuous flux, and various prefectures are having quasi-states of emergency.

Komyo Christian Church continues to follow the three safety protocols of social distancing, mask wearing, and disinfecting hands and the area that is being used. Our space is not large enough to have large gatherings and maintain these safety protocols, so we thought Christmas Eve service would need to be cancelled, but God had plans. One of the church’s members took it upon herself to contact a community center with a large venue close by to see if it was available for rent. December 24 was the only day it was available. ☺ I love the way God surprises us and moves us. It was wonderful to gather as a full church (we have three services in order to keep numbers small enough to social distance) and celebrate Christmas together. We were blessed to be able to host 32 people as we sang and celebrated the birth of Jesus! God is so good!

We were also able to have a small but fun Christmas party for the church kids and English

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students. Not all attended, but those who did enjoyed hearing the Christmas story from the perspective of Yuri Nakano’s lamb puppet, along with being able to sing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus while receiving a cupcake to take home.

We will start our Home Assignment year in September 2022. That means we are beginning the process of preparing to leave the field for a year. Since Japan’s fiscal year is April–March, March is a natural stopping point of working at Komyo Christian Church. After that, we will be focusing on prayer, research, and visitation for the next church plant. We will be preparing in other ways as well, which includes starting to schedule North American church visits. We look forward to meeting with your congregation in any form that works for your body of believers. We would love to start scheduling times to visit you to share the work of Japan and to say thank you for partnering with us. If you are able, please contact Paul ([pemedicus@yahoo.com](mailto:pemedicus@yahoo.com)) and let him know when and how you would like us to visit. We do look forward to spending time with you all to say thank you face to face, but of course these days that may mean virtually. We truly appreciate how you all have continued to support us and ask for another year of “kindness and favor.”

Thank you for your faithful prayer and financial support.

