



January 2024

Dear Praying Friends,

The last few months of 2023 were jam-packed to say the least! And it seems that 2024 is starting off with a bang here in Japan as well with another big earthquake. We're so thankful for how God is SO faithful in giving us the grace we need for each day!

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

Fall seemed to have been non-stop. There have been a lot of moving parts in both the ministry and in our personal lives that have kept us on our toes over these past few months. Our church family has continued to work hard in sharing the story of Jesus to those around them. Most recently, our Christmas services had 35 visitors attend! And this is with literally half of our church being sick with the flu! One of our church family had the great idea of going to church while not feeling too well and ended up sharing the flu with everyone in attendance the Sunday before our big Christmas events. (Yes, I admit. It was me. I was that church member. Sigh.) Even with all of those who were sick, we somehow managed to make it work, and were encouraged to see all the visitors who had come to hear about the birth of Jesus.

Let me tell you about just one of the visitors. One of the ladies who is in our church now had gotten saved years ago at another church. After trusting Christ, she went through a few years of very difficult persecution from her family. Her children, who were young at the time, were shut out of her life because of her faith in Jesus. After many years, God began to bring her now grown children back into her life. This Christmas, for the first time, she was able to bring her daughter and grandson to our Christmas service! This was the first time they had ever gone to any kind of church service! It's amazing to see how our Heavenly Father patiently works in even the most seemingly impossible situations to display his goodness and grace to those around us! Please remember to pray for our dear sister as she continues to share the Gospel with her family, and pray that her daughter and grandson will also trust in Jesus!

A MUCH-NEEDED VISIT

One huge blessing for us personally as well as for our church family is that we were able to have my parents, missionaries Dave and Glenda Carter come to Japan to visit us for a few months. The main reason for their visit is to help us finish the paperwork for a long-awaited milestone for our church family. Nearly fifteen years ago, when dad was the pastor of our church, he helped us purchase a small house for our church to meet in. And now, through your faithful giving to our ministry, working together with the faithful giving of our church family, we have come to the point where we are ready to pay off the church mortgage, five years earlier than expected! Praise the Lord!

On a personal note, having mom and dad here with us has been a huge help to Bethany and me, especially in how they have helped to share the load of the ministry and daily life as Bethany recovers from her cancer treatments. After finishing chemotherapy in November, she went through a month of daily radiation treatments that lasted through mid-December (a week and a half before our Christmas events). Mom and dad were able to arrive the day after her treatments finished, and jumped in right away, helping in all kinds of ways as Bethany's strength begins to gradually recover. This week and next, we will visit her doctors to learn more about how the treatments went, and what her long-term recovery plan will look like.

Please don't stop praying for her! There is still a long way to go for her strength to return over the next (hopefully) few months. But that being said, THANK YOU for praying for our family through this journey! It's not been easy, but God has clearly and consistently revealed to us His presence and grace in our time of need. We can't begin to express our gratitude for so many of you who have taken time to go to our Father on our behalf!

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan