

MISSION PRAYER AUG. 2019

Attribute of God: A Sanctuary

**Key verse: Psalm 68:5 *You, God, are awesome in Your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and strength to His people. Praise be to God!***

This month's focus is on: Mitsu and Karen Nakamura, Richard and Keri Nakamura, Nick and Erin Petkoff, Todd and Jayne Fong, Rev. Ozaki, Jon and Maki Robison, Charlie and Yumiko Chen, Morry and Sandy Mori, and Short Term Missions

Missionaries: Mitsu, Karen, Abe, Miye, and Emi Nakamura Country: Japan

Praise and prayer requests:

1. Vacation Bible School (English Bible Camp) started at Karen's friend's church, Nerima Baptist on July 29th for five days. Karen volunteered there for two of the five days. Her friend, Eri, has been working so hard, coordinating it all, along with a great team from a church in California, Cerritos Baptist.
Pray for God's protection and guidance for each of the 75 neighborhood children who signed up (first time for almost all of them to come to church) for God's precious Word to become alive in their hearts and their homes!
2. It has worked out that Karen will go to the U.S. (from Friday, Aug. 2 for 1 ½ weeks) for a family reunion and niece's wedding. She didn't think she would go, but when she found that the frequent flyer miles her sister offered her were just exactly enough for the flights and when several friends in Northern California (where the reunion is) offered their homes for her to stay, and even a car to use, it seemed like the Lord was telling her to go! Karen will be able to see all her siblings at the wedding in Seattle and possibly visit friends and a church there, too.
3. There are several things Karen needs to do before leaving, so she would appreciate your prayers for her, and for Mitsu and kids staying in Japan. She is praying she can shine God's love to her family and relatives!
4. Karen hurt her other knee a week ago. It's getting better but she limps, so prayers for that also are appreciated.

Missionaries: Richard and Keri Nakamura

Japanese Diaspora

Praise and requests:

1. Richard asked us all to pray for Mrs. W, who had cancer. He realized that she had some negative experience and images of Christianity, and the Lord led him to talk about and focus on Jesus. She didn't resist at all. Richard asked us all to pray on June 13. He visited the next day and shared the Gospel again, and she was ready. She received Christ without hesitation. He visited her the next week on her birthday, June 19th. She turned 88. Richard asked her if she wanted to be baptized and she said "yes". They went over the Gospel again and she affirmed her faith. Richard baptized her on her bed and she was filled with joy and peace. Praise the Lord! Eight days later, she went to be with the Lord on June 27. Her daughter has come back from Japan for a couple months. **Please pray for S that she too may come to know Jesus.**
2. Hanna is back at the Yakama Indian Reservation with the Faith Bible team for a mission trip. **Please pray for Hanna's own spiritual growth during this time, as well as the kids that she is reaching out to.**
3. **Pray for the Lighthouse Christian Church team as well. They have sent a team to Japan and Richard had the opportunity to open a training seminar on spiritual warfare before they left.** What was exciting for Richard was that the team leader was saved through another lady that he had the privilege of leading to the Lord over 25 years ago.
4. Richard had surgery in his mouth Wed. July 31. There was a bone growth called Mandibular Tori underneath his tongue that has been slowly growing over the years. It was determined that surgery was needed. **Pray for complete recovery and good pain management.**

Missionaries: Nick and Erin Petkoff

Country: Japan

Praise:

1. As of July 15th, the Petkoffs have officially lived in Japan for 1 year! Woohoo! Time has really flown by, but as they begin to reminisce, they realize how privileged they are to have already experience so much of this wonderful culture and of God's goodness.
2. Though they don't get to see them often, they've still been maintaining a relationship with their Japanese host family from 4 years ago.
3. They've made another connection through language exchange with a Christian Japanese girl, which God totally surprised them with! She took them and another TEAM missionary to her church, and she has really been a great resource for them in the realm of learning about Christianity in Japan. Recently a Mongolian girl from class asked if she could tag along with them to church, so they took her with them last week! Now they've made plans to visit another missionary's church together, which is much closer to where she lives.
4. Adjusting to a new culture and learning a new language of course has had its challenges, but ultimately Nick and Erin have learned more about each other and have grown in their marriage because they've clung to each other through it all. In a similar way, since coming to Japan, they've really had to cling to God. They've shared how sometimes it can be hard not having many resources to be spiritually fed in the mission field, but sometimes that just makes them fall back on God even more.
5. The Petkoffs have been completely and sincerely blown away by all of you, their supporters. Whenever you inquire of them, pass an encouraging word, or even just share about life back home, they feel so connected to the body. Beyond that, they are amazed at how many visitors they've had. In just one year they've gotten to see 13 different groups/individuals from home on 13 separate occasions (and that's not even including the next 2 groups that plan on coming in the next month)!! Thank you all for your amazing friendship and support!

Requests: Please pray:

1. While they have lived very comfortably there for the first year, their financial support has dropped a noticeable amount in the last few months. Please ask God if He is asking you to give a recurring amount or increase your giving toward this mission.
2. They are halfway through their language-learning phase, and as you can imagine, the classes only get harder as you progress. Individually they have gone through their ups and downs in school, so please pray for their endurance. That being said, please also pray that they wouldn't be all-consumed by this day-to-day life of studying but to be constantly reminded of their true goal - spreading His glory.
3. Keep all of the friends they mentioned in your prayers as well. When God presents opportunities, may they be able to respond by letting the Spirit work through them.

Missionaries: Todd, Jayne, Jeremy and Ayumi Fong

Country: Japan

Praise:

For the fourth time, they are getting ready to host a large group of excited children coming to sing, dance, have fun but most importantly, to hear a message that can impact their lives forever. Over 350 children have signed up for English Summer Camp this year, the most they have had since they began this adventure lead by the Lord in 2016. They also give praise for another church in their neighborhood, Nerima Baptist Church, which is hosting an event this week (the week before theirs begins) for over 75 children. Praise the Lord for this growing ministry in Nerima Ward, where many young families reside! The vast majority of these children do not attend church regularly, nor do they often have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and experience the love of Christ through Christians.

Requests: Please pray:

- They have an urgent prayer request for one of their California team members who had a serious allergic reaction to something she ate at dinner tonight. She is being treated at the ER of a local hospital, but please pray for good treatment, a quick recovery and her safety as she manages her diet while serving there in Japan.
- Please pray for a smooth program this year. Every year, they are expanding the number of children they register as more and more children and families become interested in the program. This year the program filled up very quickly so they know people are excited. But they also know that each year, they need more and more helpers to grow with the number of kids they register.
- Please pray for good weather. This is the start of typhoon season and they have been delayed by typhoons in the past, but thankfully, never had to cancel any days. Pray also that it won't be too hot for their team members from California who are not used to the humid heat of Japanese summers, or the swarms of mosquitoes it brings!
- Pray for open hearts to the message this year. They want to bless the children, their families and their not-yet-Christian volunteers with love and grace. They want the message of hope in Christ Jesus to ring loud and clear though word and deed. Pray that they can all be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God, inviting all into the abundant life in Christ.
- Pray for the future. After witnessing the rush to register children this year, they know they have hit a critical mass where English Summer Camp will be an event families are looking forward to every year. But they will be dealing with uncertainties every year, the largest being scheduling around the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo which will be held at exactly the same time they usually have their camp next year. Pray that they are able to find creative ways to ensure they can get the California team there again next year and in the future so they can continue building on the momentum that has been created around English Summer Camp. Also pray that they can start ministering to the children and families who have had the gospel message sown in their hearts every year and are ready to learn more about Jesus outside of camp.

Missionary: Rev. Kazuo Ozaki

Radio Ministry: Beach Beyond

Praise and requests:

1. God protected and guided Rev. Ozaki and family throughout this year's annual trip to Japan. Over the course of three weeks they had over ten meetings in churches and with listeners. They visited seven different cities as well as various places around Tokyo. This year, Michio's entire family was able to come and bring music with a Latin American flavor.
2. One of the churches they visited was Showa Bible Church in Osaka. They have been faithfully supporting the Ozakis since 1063! After preaching a special sermon on Father's Day, lunch was shared with the entire congregation as is customary in Japanese churches. In the afternoon they held a listener's meeting. This year they decided to hold it for the first time at this church in Osaka. Over half of the listeners came to the morning service as well. For some of them, it was their first time in a church. It was also the first time for the church staff to meet listeners. It was a very special time of fellowship.
3. After a listener's meeting in the city of Sendai, a former teacher at the Japanese school in Ecuador came to Rev. Ozaki and said, "I want to be baptized." A seed that was planted many years ago in Ecuador was bearing fruit! They hugged each other and Rev. Ozaki introduced him to a church in town. He also sent him a book that will guide him as he prepares for baptism.
4. Rev. Ozaki is so grateful for your fellowship in the gospel and the ministry. In the midst of uncertainty and change we can remain safe and firm as we stay focused on the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Standing with you for Christ! Kazuo Ozaki

Missionaries: Jon, Maki, Aki, Leon, Hugo, and Rhea Robison

Country: Japan

Praise and requests:

1. Jon will be leading/participating in re-booting the college and careers ministry, the singles ministry (older than college and careers, but including college and careers), and English Café, an outreach to aspiring English speakers. **Please pray that people will become excited about coming, or in some cases coming back, to Church. Their next Branch Group (Youngish people) is having a 'make and eat spaghetti night'. Please pray for a good turnout. They are hoping to use this not only to encourage regular attenders at church, but to welcome back some who haven't been around for a while.**
2. The Clay Group (college kids okay, but this is more the 30-54 old singles group) is planning on watching a Christian movie. They'll probably also share some devotions and make Okonomiyaki (think pancakes with meat/fish/cephalopods, vegetables and mayonnaise and fish flakes). **Please pray for this time of fellowship to be encouraging to the group members, and that along with Branch, the two groups encourage believers in their faith.**
3. English Café- In September they'll be re-launching an English café ministry which is basically inviting anyone interested in free English conversation practice to hang out over desserts and coffee and...practice English with Jon and Gary. **Please pray for good connections.**
4. The Robison family recently returned from vacation in Iwate, where they lived for five years and were so blessed to see their old church! Some of the programs they started are still being used to supplement church income and the church is seeing new seekers come regularly. They even met a lady (who held Rhea after church for two hours) who put her faith in Christ and is studying for baptism!
5. They realized that their kids are having a more difficult time in school than they previously thought. Their oldest son, Aki, was being regularly verbally bullied by a number of kids and they realized the stress on him is too much so they are prayerfully considering what's next for his education. They decided not to put him back in the same elementary school when school resumes in the Fall. Instead he will begin his transition to primarily English language school, which has always been the plan, but something they'd hoped to start a year or two later than this. Since telling Aquila that they were proud of him for trying hard in the situation and that want him to move on to the next part of his educational life, he's been a little more cheerful, though perhaps not quite his regular old self. **Please pray for him to have joy and comfort in the Lord during this transition time from local elementary school to home school. They plan on homeschooling him for a year and then evaluating nearby options.**
6. Jon is preaching monthly at church, a faster pace than he's ever prepared Japanese sermons before. It's putting a lot of attention on how the Preacher (author of Ecclesiastes, and most likely Solomon) affirms their yearning for hope in assuring that God is sovereign and good, and ultimately nothing remains in darkness, and everything matters.
7. Last month the Robison family passed influenza around twice and a bunch of other sicknesses and other trials. Jon has been preaching in Ecclesiastes. This has been a very difficult season with adjustments, the bullying of Aki at school, and trying to figure out how to fit ministry in, especially when their ministry team and locations are not fully operational, the cry of 'meaningless' is not always helpful. Of course, Solomon's use of the 'meaningless' philosophy is to show that life without God is meaningless. As Jon and Maki deal with questions of ministry, kids, life as a mixed family in a foreign country, it's funny how Jon's next round of sermons prep will focus primarily on the sovereignty of God. Please pray that they learn the lessons that God wants them to learn in this season. Thanks for your prayers, and thanks also for your encouragements, and for allowing Jon to share these difficult thoughts.

Missionaries: Charlie and Yumiko Chen

Country: Japan

Currently on home assignment

Praise:

1. **The Chens arrived back in the US on July 29 and will return to Japan on September 2.** The last two weeks of July were pretty hectic for them as they had the added responsibility of **taking care of an 11-member short-term Antioch mission team** from Michigan, Texas, and California. The team made a big impact in helping Toke Chapel hold the **Kids' Summer Special**.
2. As they continue with their home ministry and build relationships, **some people are starting to open up to them with their personal struggles.** They felt ill-equipped and were led to **attend a training seminar** taught by Dr. Joe Miller of the Overseas Instruction in Counseling, a branch of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors.
3. The Chens were very busy and blessed by their recent opportunities for getting equipped. They were thrilled to **participate in workshop seminars** led by visiting professors, David and Sasha Chapman, from Covenant Theological Seminary (Presbyterian, PCA) in St. Louis. They also received training from the leaders of the Antioch team.

Requests: Please pray:

1. That God will lead them and equip them for what He has set in front of them.
2. That more believers will bring their non-believing friends to Waffles with Live Music
3. For the salvation of John (Katsuharu) who faithfully comes to English Bible Study.
4. For Makoto's protection from Satan's attacks as he is to be baptized soon.

Missionaries: Morry and Sandy Mori

Country: Japan

Praise:

1. The Moris returned to Japan some six weeks ago and after a slight rest, they began the ministry activities of their JEMS' missionary partner, Lily Suzuki, as it was her turn to be back home to visit with family and attend Mt. Hermon, JEMS annual summer camp.
2. Having spent several weeks with these folks from age 2 to 92, they are blessed by the interactions they had while singing hymns, teaching English and sharing Bible stories.

Requests: Please pray for:

1. Sensei and Mr. Newcomer and the opportunity to answer their questions about Jesus in a way that speaks God's Truth into their hearts.
2. People to come through the door of churches to attend worship services as well as the English classes starting on August 9 and the youth program pilot which will be held on August 20.
3. Blossoming of trusting relationships with all of those with whom they serve in churches and at the church-kindergarten.
4. God's leading for Morry in ministries with men and for trusting relationships to form and interest in knowing the person and love of Jesus.
5. Connections to be made with those whose hearts God has prepared and a spiritual climate where it feels safe to think for themselves.

Short Term Missions: AACF, NAOMI, and OTM

Praises:

For the safe return of the AACF Japan Summer Missions 2019 Hokkaido, Japan - Geneva Lum

For the safe return of the NAOMI House mission team.

Requests:

Please continue to pray for Jondy Natividad and Craig Ng serving with OTM (On The Mission) in Yokohama, Tokyo, and Nagano. Please pray for their safe return on Aug. 6th.