

## MISSION PRAYER

April 3, 2021

**Attribute of God: *Savior of the world***

**Key verse: 1 John 4:14, *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.***

**This month's focus is on:**

**Les and Lynne Ginoza, Todd and Jayne Fong, Nick and Erin Petkoff, Roy and Nancy Toma, Patricia K., Julie Nitao, Daisuke and Cheryl Ikegami, Jon and Maki Robison, Mitsu and Karen Nakamura, and Cornelio Natividad**

**Missionaries: Les, Lynne, and Garrett Ginoza**

**Country: Thailand**

**Praises and prayer requests:**

1. Les had a fabulous 60<sup>th</sup> birthday! He and Lynne took off the week just to relax. Due to COVID restrictions, they did not travel anywhere but enjoyed just puttering around the house and exploring the city...something they don't do too often but always enjoy.
2. The Ginozas were extremely sad when they learned that one of their ZOE security guards and his wife lost their first baby, who was born at 7 months. Les was asked if he could do the funeral for their baby. When the funeral ended, Lynne looked up to heaven and said a little prayer for their baby daughter, Kellie Aiko Ginoza whom they lost during their 2<sup>nd</sup> year on the mission field. She was born at 8 months and survived for 12 precious hours.
3. Lynne had the awesome privilege of speaking to all of their homeschooled kids in their ZOE Learning Center. They are recently rescued teens that either the government has placed temporarily at ZOE or they have an active court case that prevents them to go to regular school. But they everyone was so HAPPY when the 2 newest girls walked in because they had just arrived at ZOE just a couple days before. Praise God! Lynne was excited because she was planning to share her testimony of how Jesus has been the key in her life, ...and ultimately, the assurance of having eternal life with God in heaven. They believe that seeds of God's love and truth were planted in their hearts. Ultimately it will be Jesus who causes that seed to grow.
4. **Please pray for Myanmar (Burma) Crisis.** The Ginozas felt it was important to add this to their newsletter, even though it is not associated with ZOE or what they are doing at ZOE. They want to bring awareness and ask that you would pray for the Burmese people.
  - a. They've had several Burmese staff and Bible school students at ZOE. Two of them, Grace and Change, decided to return to their home country because they had a heart to reach their own people for Jesus. But there was a military coup at the beginning of February. The military has taken hostage the elected leaders and have overtaken their country. People are scared, angry and many are dying every day in this conflict.
  - b. They know that God hears the cries of the Burmese people. Pray for provision for their families and loved ones. If you feel lead to help financially, email them (lynne@gozoe.org) and they can put you in touch with someone or a ministry that is involved in helping the Burma crisis (Note: please do not send donations to ZOE for Burma).
  - c. Please pray for Wan as she also started out as a Bible school student and is currently on staff in their accounting office at ZOE - what a faithful one she is! But they know her heart is back in Myanmar because her family is there. She had wanted to go back for a visit but due to COVID and now the military coup, she cannot go back.
5. **Please pray for Garrett Ginoza as school has been a challenge this year for him.** He is hanging in there and doing well. He still is involved with undergraduate research with the head of the Undergraduate Biomedical Engineering department.
6. Garrett found a great church called "TKC" that he enjoys because it also has a thriving college group. He's also been greatly involved with the Jericho House of Prayer (JHOP) on campus.
7. The Ginozas would love to increase their fundraising goal this upcoming year. Could you please pray about helping them reach their goal? They are asking if you would be willing to share about them to just 1 or 2 friends, family members or churches. **Their goal is to be a blessing to ZOE through their donors!**

**Missionaries: Todd, Jayne, Jeremy, and Ayumi Fong**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise the Lord for:**

1. English conversation group continues to grow!
2. Partners volunteering to join English conversation on Zoom as "English guests"!
3. Upcoming opportunities for Todd to serve as a photographer including an arts workshop and film festival.
4. Jayne's opportunities to serve others with her special education experience.

**Please pray:**

1. That they will be able to resume more face-to-face ministry soon.
2. For unity in the Japanese churches to reach out to those who are hurting due to social isolation and anxiety about the future.
3. For their application process for permanent residency in Japan to go quickly and smoothly.
4. For a smooth transition to their new ministry model over the next several months.
5. For the development of a new ministry for Jayne to use her experience with special education to serve families in Japan.
6. That the Lord can use Todd's writing and photography skills as a blessing for telling stories of the history of Japanese Christianity.
7. Jeremy had been accepted into a study-abroad program in Italy for this Spring quarter, but due to the pandemic, it had to be canceled at the last minute. So, he decided to apply again for another program, this one in Germany in the fall. He is unsure of what he will do this summer. His options are to return to Japan, go to California, or stay on campus at Carleton. Please pray for a clear vision of what is best for him.
8. Ayumi was accepted to Wellesley in the Fall and is excited to attend. Meanwhile, she has plenty of work to do to finish her Senior year strong and continues to work hard. Unfortunately, many of the trip and activities the Senior class has to look forward to are canceled this year, so they hope to do something as a family instead. They know it won't make it up to her completely, but it will give her one more chance to travel in Japan before going to college.

**Missionaries: Nick and Erin Petkoff**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise:**

1. The Petkoffs finished their two-week quarantine and feel adjusted back to their life in Japan. During this transition time we've even had the chance to post a new blog on their website, which was inspired by some of the recent conversations they've had with various friends and supporters.
2. For anyone who has been considering missions, they share a bit about their experience in discerning God's call. For those who are continuing the daily work life and might be feeling a loss of purpose lately, they tried to shine some light on the impact you actually have. Their hope is that people are finding contentment whether God is calling them to take a new step or to stay right where they are.
3. Nick and Erin have still been working on their next steps in Japan. There seem to be a few irons in the fire regarding internship opportunities, but they'll wait to share about that when it becomes clearer. So, keep an eye out for that news as they expect it will be out soon!
4. Praise that their Japanese friends have been consistently willing to meet with them (some online and some in person).

**Prayer points:**

1. Please pray for Nick and Erin to be flexible as they try to navigate how to be involved in ministries they *can* do during the pandemic and what ministries God *wants* them to do.
2. They have a decent number of opportunities to use Japanese language again, but it still seems slow to come to mind. That is both a praise and a prayer!

## **Missionaries: Roy and Nancy Toma**

## **JEMS Japan Missions Director**

### **Prayer requests:**

Roy's wife, Nancy, does not like moving. Since they got married, they have moved to a new city (or country) 6 times. Moving is difficult. Packing is stressful, having to decide what to keep and what to get rid of because of airline baggage restrictions; saying goodbye to friends, traveling, getting used to a new city, looking for a new car and house, new schools, new church, new job, loneliness-missing friends and family, language learning, etc. These can all affect our marriage relationship and our relationships with our children.

This year three of their missionary families are moving. This can be a stressful time for them too.

### **Please read and pray:**

**Munetaka (Morry) and Sandy Mori** are nearing the end of their 3-year mission to Amakusa. The Lord has called them to come back to the States this May. The Lord has used them in the lives of many people and they will be greatly missed. But they know that seeds of the Good News of Jesus Christ that have been planted and will continue to produce fruit in its season. **Please pray that they would finish well in Japan, and for a smooth transition and guidance as they move back to the U.S.**

**The Nakamura family (Mitsu, Kristin, Zeke (Kengo), Mika, Chiyomi, and baby Hosea)** moved to Aomori in Northern Japan, on March 19. **Please pray for them as they start this new season in their lives. Pray for their relationship with the Lord, good friends for each of them, strong marriage and family relationships, and for a fruitful ministry.**

**The Tsukayama family** will be taking a vision trip to the Nagasaki area in Kyushu to seek the Lord's guidance in this next season of their lives. They will be driving from Machida, which is a 14+ hour drive. They hope to move this year to start a new ministry. Please continue to keep them in your prayers.

Thank you for your prayers for **baby Serenity** this past year. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Serenity had her routine check-up at the hospital. Thankfully she is doing well but they did even more test this time as all the medications she is taking may be affecting her kidney function. She is now down to 7 different medications. She takes 4 different immunosuppressant drugs, which are not so good for her health but important to get her body adjusted to the new organ. They adjusted the kinds and doses she is taking to see if it will improve her kidney function. Thank you for your continuous prayer and encouragement!

**The Tomas** thank you for your prayers and support. Please let them know how they can be praying for you.

## **Missionary: Patricia K.**

## **Internet ministry to C----**

### **Praise and prayer requests:**

1. Praise the Lord, Hawaii's new Covid-19 cases have been decreasing.
2. They continue to work on setting up the "Issues I Face" website. They've been focusing on the content and technical aspects but an even more important aspect is, they hope to have 50 C----- mentors before launching the site. They plan to divide these mentors into groups of 10 and have a Mentor Coach oversee each group. They have 1 MC, so Patricia was going to oversee the other 40 mentors until they have some others to be MCs. But God provided a 2<sup>nd</sup> MC. Praise the Lord! **Would you please pray they can raise up 3 more Mentor Coaches, as well as find at least 50 dependable C---- mentors who will have a heart for reaching people on-line.**
3. It was a blessing for Patricia to work on their C---- on-line Bible studies. Praise the Lord, there are still over 2,100 people subscribing to these studies. Among them are leaders from house churches who are searching for solid Bible teaching so that they can shepherd their flock.
4. Their study on the book of Romans has been especially helpful to them because it's an in-depth study on theological truths. They are grateful to the Lord for encouraging them in seeing how these studies are blessing people in C----. **Would you please pray for these 2,100+ people, both seekers and believers, as they learn God's Word through the various Bible studies.**
5. **Please continue to pray for the work in setting up "Issues I Face" C---- website; so many details, so much to do.**

**Missionary: Julie Nitao**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise:**

1. God was faithful in so many ways during these past 3.5 years of ministry, “planting the seeds” of the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:6) with Oasis Chapel. His plan is much greater than Julie’s and He has allowed her to see much more than what she imagined through the relationships she’s been blessed with. Here are some of HIS works that Julie wants to share for HIS GLORY:
  - a. God brought so many people to the Church’s Café Oishi-an. Through one workshop, “Biblical Parenting Workshop,” one mother actually wanted to learn more about the Bible afterwards and started a Bible study with one of the church members. And guess what? She actually did come to know Christ!
  - b. God is nurturing the youth. Julie learned so much from them through the times they hang out and fellowship. The two youth girls who got baptized in the summer of 2019 graduated high school and are going to college this year. Julie is always encouraged by their faith with God. They are trusting God with their future and also taking on the challenge of bringing their friends to Christ through prayers and actions of kindness. How exciting to see the next generation become disciples of Christ!
  - c. Relationships with the locals were definitely all through God. Most often, you might be the only Christian friend, family, or connection in a non- believer’s life. It was God’s plan for Julie to build a relationship with a girl in her 20’s and actually do a Bible study in Japanese. Julie feels her Japanese and knowledge to share the Gospel weren’t perfect but with the support of Oasis Chapel, and the Holy Spirit leading, this girl accepted Christ as her Savior after several weeks of Bible Study. Julie doesn’t think she will ever forget that moment of salvation!

These are only the top of the iceberg stories of what God has done and is still doing. Like she mentioned in the last newsletter, she can probably write a whole novel of His good works. How can we not praise His name!?

2. God has deepened Julie’s faith and joy in who He is through these past 3.5 years. These years have had her relearning what her identity in Christ meant. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!” 2 Corinthians 5:17*  
Through much time of reflection, she came to realize that she had nothing to offer. She had to come before God and ask for forgiveness for not trusting Him and in humbleness asked Him to renew her once again with the identity of Christ to plant the seeds of the Gospel. She believes there are things we can learn from both (and all cultures) but ultimately, His way and His cross are where we set our heart and eyes. His way and His cross are where we want to lead people. There we find true freedom, not bound in people, culture, or society.

*“I am the way, the truth and the life....” John 14:6*

**Prayer requests:**

1. The next 3 years of ministry starting in April 2021 will focus on watering the seeds of the Gospel from 1 Cor. 3:6. The vision is to raise the next generation especially with the word of God! Upon seeking God for the vision to stay another 3 years in Rifu, this scripture spoke to her:  
*“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deut. 6:6-7*
2. Through children and youth ministry, and also learning from the families of the church, Julie saw the importance of planting and watering the word of God as young as possible. They pray and hope for each child to come to know Christ as their personal savior and that their identity will be formed as a Child of God. In order for that to happen, the children need to continue hearing God’s word.
3. Oasis Church and Julie have been discussing a few ideas to water the seeds. One way is opportunities for 1:1 Bible studies with the youth girls. This can provide a place for them to think about their relationship with God in a personal space. Another is to provide Biblical parenting resources and support for the families of the church. When parents are filled with truth, it will flow down to their children. All this is not possible without teamwork with the local church.
4. Miyagi’s Coronavirus number has been rising. Pray for it to settle down and for God’s peace.
5. April is a new school year in Japan. This means many transitions and changes. This includes their church, with people coming in and leaving this community. In Kid’s Chapel they have a new friend joining them as he enters elementary school. Please pray for each transition to be held together through God.
6. With Julie’s new term starting, please pray for a good start to these next 3 years. To hold on to the vision of planting and watering seeds of the Gospel but trust His timing and His word with each relationship.

**Missionaries: Daisuke and Cheryl Ikegami****Ministry: Young Life Chiba****Praise:**

1. Usually, Daisuke and Cheryl are with students on their one-month homestay trip to America. Being unable to travel to America this year, they prayed for an alternative trip that they could use as a way to spend time building their relationships with students, have fun, and share more of their love for God with them. God has orchestrated a snow trip to Niseko, Hokkaido through the help of several Christians in Hokkaido and around the world.
2. The six students are Koji Koshizuka, Kazuki Mukai, Takahito Shinohara, Shun Shimaya, Sonon Senami, and Kodai Hara. Along with these 6, there were 6 adults joining them on the trip as well - Daisuke and Cheryl, Michael Wallace, Brett and Bong Cocreham, and Akemi Tonoike.
3. In Niseko, the local pastor, as well as a few missionaries and Christians helped them with snowboard instruction and all their logistical needs. They are so grateful for all they help they were given.
4. The first time Daisuke came to America he had the opportunity to join Cheryl on their Young Life high school snow trip. One of the things they remember the most is how open everyone became to sharing more about their life and God. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to move mightily in the lives of the 6 students.

**Missionaries: Jon, Maki, Aki, Leon, Hugo, and Rhea Robison****Country: Japan****Praise:**

1. It took Covid church building closures to convince Maki and Jon to go out into the community, instead of hoping the community come to them. Recently, they went to a friend's house for lunch. One of their baseball mom friends invited them. That was the first time in six years that Maki and Jon have been invited into the home of a Japanese non-Christian to share a meal, and only the second time ever!
2. Through their local kids' baseball club they are finally building meaningful friendships that they hope to evangelize. They are trusting God that He will continue to give them a witness to His Gospel as community insiders rather than a bunch of random outsiders.
3. Another project that Maki has been putting a lot of energy into recently is her new web magazine. She is almost done with layout and now trying to fill in some content.

**Prayer Requests:**

1. Pray for Mrs. Ku and family. Recently, Mrs. Ku stayed after English circle to chat with Maki and Jon brought some lunch downstairs, and she didn't mind that Jon prayed before the meal. This week she invited them over for lunch and even asked Jon to pray for the meal before-hand! Because of Covid, her husband was even working from home, so Jon got to pray for his lunch too! Please pray for continued spiritual interest for Mrs. Ku and family!
2. Pray for Mr. and Mrs. O, for continued spiritual interest as well, Mr. O comes over weekly with tapes of the kids' baseball games for them to analyze. Sometimes they talk about family and spiritual things, sometimes they just hang out. The past two weekends, Leon has been hanging out at the O house while Maki and Jon watch Aki's baseball game. Please pray for wisdom and for the Spirit's work in bringing the O family to Christ!
3. Recently, Jon feels they are becoming closer friends with the Sa family on the baseball team. The other day Mr. Sa and son (on Aki's team) rang their doorbell just to say hi and show them their dog. The Robisons hope they have a chance to invite the Sa family over for dinner or in some other way continue their friendship.
4. There are probably 20 families associated with the local baseball club (upper and lower elementary teams) that they spend hours with every weekend. They spend time with some outside of baseball, and some are baseball only for now. But Jon thinks any of them would come over for dinner if Covid was over and they had energy to have 20 families over for dinner in a short period of time (pray for balance).

**Missionaries: Mitsu, Karen, Abe, Mie, and Emi Nakamura**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise:**

Recently, Karen was touched by a quote from James O. Fraser, a missionary to the Lisu of China in early 1900's. (I preach and teach here), "but the amount of progress made thereby depends almost entirely on the state of the Spiritual Tide in the village—a condition which you can control upon your knees as well as I."

Thank Him for:

1. The many who heard the message of His love at Christmas.
  - a. Two friends and Karen planned two online parties to reach their pre-Christian friends. On Dec. 23, over 20 people, plus many children came. They played Nativity bingo and made paper snowflakes.
  - b. On Dec. 27, they had music by a young professional violinist, and a song by Emi. Karen's message was from Luke 1:78-79, that at Christmas, God brought light into our dark world, through forgiveness of sins. About 25 pre-Christian friends came and commented, "The beautiful song, violin, and Karen's message all brought healing to my heart." "Today's meeting really soothed my heart."
2. Three of the friends who came to the Zoom Christmas party were from the multilingual club. Karen had just participated in a 2-day online "camp" with the club and hesitated to invite club friends. She was surprised when three said they would come and commented how, after a busy camp, the Zoom Christmas party soothed their hearts!
3. His healing work in Karen's friend and her daughter. Thank you for praying with Karen for her friend whose daughter was self-harming. She is getting better and is choosing life. Though there are still ups and downs and still much need of prayer, Karen's friend recently wrote: "(daughter) is getting better. And I myself am recovering. I previously could not feel God's love. But I have felt His love through your faithful praying and going through Recovery with me."
4. Their staff who gained great Bible wisdom for their ministries from Mitsu's class. Mitsu taught Doctrine of God, Christ and Holy Spirit. A lot to cover in a 2-week intensive course! Taka taught 2 Peter and Jude. Their new young staff studied hard and gained a firm foundation for their faith and ministries.
5. Spring is here! In Japan, March is the season for graduations, and April is the beginning of the new school year! This is a crucial time for all of their campus ministries to meet new students. Last year, all campuses closed in-person classes and everything went online. Many students experienced depression and the suicide rate for people under age 20 skyrocketed to the highest ever, since records have been kept.

**Please pray:**

1. That God Himself would open hearts to His message, to receive Him and walk with Him—that He Himself would turn the Spiritual Tide in Japan.
2. That friend "C" would make a clear decision for Christ.
3. For God's continued work in their staff team, humility before Him, increased understanding about cross-cultural awareness.
4. This spring, some colleges are starting in-person classes with the option to go online. Most colleges are doing their student physical exams (health checks) on campus as usual, which they didn't do last year. This is a chance for their staff and their Christian students to meet the students. At most schools, the health checks go on through the month of April, and at some, they are spaced out until June. So, these few months are a window of opportunity to meet students who may be ripe to hear about the true meaning in life, in the midst of anxiety and uncertainty of life under Corona. **Pray for many divine appointments! Thank you!! Your prayers make a difference!**
5. That Karen, Mitsu, and their children will walk closely with Him.

The Nakamura family is deeply grateful for you!

**Missionary: Cornelio (Jondy) Natividad**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise and request:**

1. Jondy's life has drastically changed in the last 4 months as he was offered a new teaching job in Takayama, Gifu. It's in the middle of the mountains, the Japanese "Alps", the "heart of Japan." Jondy hopes that he will get to engage and connect more with the Japanese people he meets there in Takayama, something he couldn't do well in Ito.
2. In less than 2 weeks he was able to wrap up his teaching assignment in Ito, say goodbye to his schools, clean out his apartment, say good-bye to his church in Ito. Jondy's pastor gave him the opportunity to give his testimony his last day in Ito. He rented a car and drove 6 hours to Takayama! Early the next morning, he went to Hiroshima for 5 days of training for his new job and began his first day of teaching Tues. March 30<sup>th</sup>!
3. **Please pray God use him mightily, may His love, hope and joy be felt by everyone he encounters. May seeds be planted in the Japanese people's hearts... may the Holy Spirit continue to guide him as he needs Jesus every day!**