

## MISSION PRAYER

April 2, 2022

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

**Key verse: I John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.**

**This month's focus is on: Nick and Erin Petkoff, Jim and Terui Grace, Mitsuo and Akiko Fujishima, Joel and Seiko Lovestrang, Daisuke and Cheryl Ikegami, Josh and Dana, Patricia K., Richard and Keri Nakamura, and Roy and Nancy Toma**

**Missionaries: Nick and Erin Petkoff**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. The launching of a care center and website (Tokyo Community Care Center: T3C) focused on mental health and spiritual care. The launch and feedback have been great, though the work demand has been increasing. This was expected and is not a bad thing, but the Petkoffs severely lack the manpower to handle the demand.
2. One of the next steps, and current focus, is on developing a model of care that is self-driven using a semi-automated process with options for in-person care along the way as needed. What they need at this stage is to connect with some of you knowledgeable in programming and/or designing a primarily browser-based application. Even if you are not sure or can't commit to assisting, you might be able to help get them going in the right direction or get them in touch with someone who can. **This is really a call out for assistance in mission's work, and it can be done remotely from your own country!** So please get in touch if you can contribute in some way toward this need!
3. If you want to read more about this mental and spiritual care model/idea, they get into some detail the why, need, and vision on their blog here: <https://www.petkoffstojapan.com/updates>

**Other prayer requests: Please pray:**

1. First is that their support level has dropped. With no access to any special fund for this mental health project, most of this early work is shouldered by them. So the Petkoffs ask you to consider stepping on board as a supporter if you aren't already or to possibly increase your giving if you are able. Or introduce them to your church or other circles you think might be interested; they'd love to meet, share, and offer ways to work alongside one another!
2. Help with the development of the care model mentioned above, that would be launched in Japan first with the possibility of eventually moving worldwide. They need the expertise and help from your skills!
3. Education towards a doctorate in Japan. This will actually help the cost on the above point with potential grants, etc...but Nick needs to be able to afford this education. He wants to begin sometime this or early next year, costs permitting. Regardless of how you support them: practically, financially, and/or through prayer, please keep them going! They really do appreciate it and love all the ways you care for them.
4. The Petkoffs recently signed up for a culture-exchange program where they could be hosting Japanese students in their home. Since the borders remain closed, students haven't been able to easily study abroad in the past couple of years. Because of that, many families have been searching for nearby foreign households where their children can have cross-cultural experiences. The Petkoffs are already looking forward to the day they get their first visitors!
5. Speaking of exchanging cultures, the Petkoffs continue to enjoy living in Tokyo where it's easy to get on a train and discover new, nearby places. Funny enough, when they meet up with Japanese friends, their friends often ask *them* for recommendations of places to go. This is probably true all around the world, but apparently, it's not common for Japanese people to tour their own hometowns, so they gladly take them to the beautiful and exciting places they've been fortunate enough to see on their random days off. Now it's even better because they get to make fun memories and strengthen bonds with more people along the way.

**Missionaries: Jim and Terui Grace**

**Country: Japan**

**Praises: Give thanks for:**

1. **John and Madi's wedding in December!** The new couple is in SoCal as Madi does her degree at USC and John works remotely.
2. **Continuing good health at JLCC (Japanese Language Cultural Center);** the only case of COVID-19 happened such that students and staff at the Center were not affected.

**Please pray for:**

1. **New workers settling well** in coming weeks, especially as winter weather lingers into April.
2. **Safety** as the Graces and JLCC students move items to set up apartments in slippery conditions.
3. Roz and Nic attending **OMF's online Orientation Course** before arriving in Sapporo in April.
4. **Those who are struggling with exhaustion** from the daily grind of attaining a new language and from self-expectations.
5. **Preparing for their 6-month Home Assignment** and upcoming retirement at the end of the year. **Pray for the details of planning location, housing and schedule.**
6. Expedite processing of **Terui's application for US permanent residence.**

*Finally, pray that each new colleague would make and feel like they are making progress in language and culture study.*

**Missionary: Mitsuo and Akiko Fujishima**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. With Akiko being in Tokyo to take care of her mother, Mitsuo prayed to God to open doors to another ministry; since some things, such as visiting elderly ladies was not feasible as a man. Upon meeting with the administrators of the local junior-high school, the only one in the southern half of the peninsula, they asked Mitsuo if he could help during the English classes. **This is a miracle since public schools in Japan do not usually welcome volunteers.** It has been a blessing to be able to meet all these students.
2. Some students responded to Mitsuo's offer to give them extra help. They met at their village which is on the other side of the peninsula about 13 miles away from where Mitsuo lives. The place is very isolated and there is nothing other than houses and a port. To show their appreciation, some parents gave Mitsuo two very fresh octopi!
3. There are other students that Mitsuo would love to help, but it is not easy to accommodate them all since they live in different villages. (Two students live on a nearby island.) and parents cannot drive them back and forth.
4. **Akiko heard a loud crashing sound and felt as if a strong earthquake had hit.** When she went out to see what happened, she saw a part of the concrete wall of the next door building that they were demolishing had come down on the side wall of their apartment. Thankfully, there was no damage to the inside.
5. Thanks to this incident, Akiko has been able to get acquainted with their landlord, Mrs. Iijima who lives in front of them. A couple of days ago, she came and visited with Akiko. She is searching for something that could take away her fear of death and has asked Akiko to tell her about the Bible some day!
6. Mitsuo will be 70 years old in July of 2024, and the Fujishimas think it would be the ripe time for them to retire as supported missionaries. Dear friends, they thank you so very much for having been on their team all these years. They would be grateful to you if you could continue to support them until they retire in 2024. Their plan is to travel to the states and thank all of their supporting churches and friends personally for the financial support and prayers throughout the years. They just wanted to give you the heads up.
7. Please pray that Mitsuo will be able to reach out to students, their parents, and teachers at school through teaching English.
8. Pray that God will open the door of faith to the people in the peninsula.
9. Please pray for Akiko's mother's salvation.
10. Pray that God will use Akiko to share the love of Jesus and the gospel with Mrs. Iijima.

**Missionaries: Joel, Seiko, Akari, and Leo Lovestrand**

**Country: Japan**

**Please thank God for:**

1. A good end to the Alpha Course and continuing Bible studies. After the Alpha Course finished in January, Joel asked Mrs. Innerscircle, Mrs. Steward, and an older lady, Mrs. Villatree, if they would be interested in doing a Bible study. Mrs. Innerscircle and Mrs. Steward have begun studying the Gospel of John every Friday night and Mrs. Villatree two Thursday mornings a month.
2. Helping Miss Threeshrine get connected to a church after her move to Tokyo.
3. Allowing Samantha Go and other new missionaries to finally enter Japan. Samantha Go arrived in Sendai in March to begin working with university students.
4. Preparing Leo for the change in schools. Leo has had a wonderful year socially and has made many friends in his class. Academically, however, the Lovestrands felt that it was time for him to get used to instruction in English. Now, after visiting the international school for himself, Leo is much more positive about transferring and even says he is looking forward to it!

**Please Ask God to:**

1. Bless Miss Threeshrine in her new church and guide her to baptism.
2. Work in the hearts of their Bible study members and guide them to faith, and unity as they prepare for in-person worship.

**Missionaries: Daisuke and Cheryl Ikegami**

**Young Life Chiba, Japan**

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. Daisuke and Cheryl took 6 students to Niseko, Hokkaido! The 6 students are: Haruka Takahashi, Shun Shimaya, Sonon Senami, Ayumu Kobayashi, Shota Fumii, and Reon Shimoda. Ayumu and Reon are extremely new to their ministry. Shun invited Ayumu to Lifehouse Club just a few months ago. Since then, Ayumu invited his friend, Reon and they joined the Ikegamis on this trip. Both students are just finishing their 1<sup>st</sup> year of university.
2. All 6 students were able to go over to the Ikegamis house over the past 3 weeks to work off a little of their snow trip expenses. It also gave the Ikegamis an excuse to spend more time with them. They are so thankful for those who were able to financially support these students!
3. Please also pray for others who joined them on this trip. Along with the Ikegamis, a young woman, Michael who serves alongside of them went. Markesia is a young lady from the US and is there in Japan teaching English. She has been attending their church regularly over the past few years.
4. They stayed at a wonderful place owned by a couple from Hong Kong who love Jesus and the Japanese people. Managing the facility is a couple, Andrew and Megumi, who are always ready and willing to jump in and help make their trip a success... including trips to the hospital!
5. JP from OMF, his friend, Minori, and a local pastor, Keita, also helped with snow board coaching.
6. They had the privilege of having Shinsuke Ohtomo join them as a speaker. Shinsuke and Daisuke both went to the same university as these students and they both became believers through Young Life at the same time.
7. Please pray there will be many opportunities to share Christ with these students!

**Missionaries: Josh and Dana****Southeast Asia****Praise the Lord for:**

1. The abundance of encouragement they received during their trainings and in their meet-ups with churches and friends.
2. Finishing the dental work without problems!
3. That they have managed to give away/sell/store most of their belongings.
4. That they have found a good charity for the rest of their unclaimed furniture.
5. That they most likely won't have to go through a quarantine period on landing!

**Please pray that:**

1. Their flight on Wednesday, April 13 and ground transportation will go smoothly and well.
2. Their language and cultural learning will be blessed.
3. Spiritual protection as they transition into a new land.
4. They manage to strengthen their spiritual disciplines.
5. The Lord sends people of peace who will welcome them and help them adapt.

**Missionary: Patricia K.****Internet Ministry to C-----****Praise and prayer requests:**

1. Patricia prays you will have a wonderful Easter celebrating Jesus' resurrection. Now we can have new life in Jesus and a personal relationship with the God of the universe. Hawaii finally lifted mask mandates a few days ago. Hope you will continue to stay healthy and safe.
2. All the tragedies and sufferings in Ukraine have brought them to their knees as they entrust the Ukrainians (and Russians) to our Lord. As soon as the invasion began, Cru emailed them saying they have 130 Ukrainian Cru staff (they also have Russian staff). Many of them have young children so they decided to evacuate and are separated from their husbands (dads) which is so sad. The men have to stay to fight. Some Cru staff stayed in Ukraine to continue ministering to their people. People have such a hunger for the Gospel as they face this tragedy. Let's keep praying for the Ukrainians and give financially to help them. If you are not sure how to give, Patricia recommends Cru's humanitarian aid ministry Unto.com. They not only give humanitarian aid, they also share the Gospel as much as possible.
3. In her last letter Patricia told us about C-----'s new regulations which began on March 1, restricting using the internet to do religious activities. This not only applies to websites, they heard it also applies to on-line Sunday worship, zoom Bible studies, etc. Before the restrictions even went into effect, the authorities were already calling people in for interrogation. One of their techs was called in. It was very stressful for him because he is married and has 2 children. If he is disciplined, they could be sent to the country side (village) which means his children wouldn't be able to have good education and they won't have the conveniences of city life. Praise God, he was able to give sufficient explanations for what he is doing on-line.
4. However, he had to hurry and make their websites and WeChat accounts temporarily "invisible". Since he had to stop introducing their "Issues I Face" website to is Chinese audience, they have been getting very few mentees. These past 3 weeks they have been pursuing paid advertising, which is costly, but they want to reach out to mentees. These are some of the mentees' comments: "My life is a mess. I feel lost. I have no enthusiasm for living." "My husband and I are both Christians but my husband joined a cult. It has resulted in domestic abuse..."
5. Praise the Lord, they can continue ministering to the people in C-----. ***Would you please continue to pray for protection on their websites and WeChat accounts, that the Lord will continue to use them to reach people in C----- and help them know the Lord and grow in their faith.***
6. ***Please pray for more mentors; they now have 32!***

**Missionaries: Richard and Keri Nakamura****SEND International Japan diaspora****Praise and prayer request:**

1. Thank you all for praying for their 2022 RJC (Reaching Japanese for Christ) Conference. It was great to meet in person with so many, along with those online. Combined, there were over 300 participants from 13 countries! Amazing. The 3 main speakers were great and inspiring. You can view the conference and the various seminars here: [Reaching Japanese For Christ Conference \(boxcast.tv\)](https://www.boxcast.tv).
2. One highlight was to meet with new SEND missionaries who were headed to Japan. All were fully supported, just waiting for the Japanese Government to open up the borders (closed due to Covid). Not only were there new missionaries from SEND, but also TEAM, OMF, Converge, and others. There is a definite movement of the Spirit towards Japan as they see evidence of Him raising more workers.
3. Another highlight for Richard was the seminar on Bushido (The Way of the Warrior), taught by Pastor Nakanishi. The spirit of Bushido, which incorporates Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism pervade throughout the people and culture of Japan and could explain why it is difficult to reach the people with the Gospel. But we can use this as a stepping stone to guide the Japanese in discovering the true Way in Jesus. What Bushido does not provide is salvation, the concept of original sin, or an ultimate goal.
4. Kanzo Uchimura, a famous Japanese Christian said, "Bushido values the spirit of courage and sacrifice, but when it comes to the cross of Christ, the way of life that Christianity shows is far superior. Therefore, if we abandon prejudice and face Christianity, we must naturally become a faithful disciple of Jesus." May it happen throughout Japan! **Please pray.**

The Nakamuras thank you all for all your encouragement, prayers, and support!

**Missionaries: Roy and Nancy Toma****JEMS Missions Coordinator****Praise and prayer requests:**

1. One of the benefits of working in Downtown Los Angeles is getting to talk with the people on the streets. During the last three or so years Roy has been handing out the devotional booklet, "The Daily Bread," and having spiritual conversations with people. Last week Roy had his most unusual day. He talked with three people and prayed with two of them. That was cool, but it wasn't what made the day so different. What made the day different was that it was the first time he was assaulted. Thankfully, Roy outweighed her by 50 lbs. and didn't get hurt. He was also cussed out in both English and Spanish for just mentioning the Bible. After thinking about his experience, he came to realize that Satan and his demons hate it when we share the love of Jesus Christ.
2. The Apostle John said, "The thief comes to steal kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The thief, Satan, comes to destroy lives and condemn people to eternal torment, but Jesus came to pay the price for our sins on the cross and give us eternal life.
3. Roy thanks God he is working with a group of missionaries who are sharing the love and the saving knowledge that Jesus Christ with the people of Japan.
4. Please pray for William Jones, A.G. and Richard (the men Roy met Downtown) to continue to ask questions and that they would come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. Pray for Japan to open to tourists, which would allow their short-term teams to restart their ministries.
6. Pray for the establishment of a JEMS nonprofit legal entity and that it would be done in God's timing with His provision.
7. Pray for the people of Japan to be able to find the joy and peace that is only found in a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.