

## MISSION PRAYER

October 3, 2020

**Attribute of God: Strength of my heart**

**Key verse: Psalm 73:26,**

***My flesh and my heart may fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.***

**This month's focus is on: Kuni and Kristen Onishi, Maina Sato, Patricia K., Mitsuo and Akiko Fujishima, Roy and Nancy Toma, and Joel and Seiko Lovestrand, and Julie Nitao**

**Missionaries: Kuni, Kristen, Shion, and Maray Onishi**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise:**

1. Kuni and Kristen heard the news about the wildfires in California. Their prayers go out to us all.
2. In Japan, it's been raining a lot these days. But they also feel that fall is around the corner. Personally, fall is Kuni's favorite season, so he's excited to see all the leaves changing colors.
3. They had their first retreat (via ZOOM) last month and about 10 people were able to join. It was only for about 24 hours (from Wed. night to Thursday night) and since it was on ZOOM, it felt very different from actually gathering together. But still, they were able to learn from the Word together. They also broke out into small groups and were able to keep each other accountable throughout the day. On Thursday, they had a casual and spontaneous fellowship at the beach nearby. Almost everyone came, including kids. Some people said they would just stop by, but they all ended up hanging out for almost 5-6 hours. Looking at everyone, they realized how much they all miss gathering and spending time together in person. Hope and pray that they will be able to gather more often in the near future. At night, they were all tired from the beach but still were able to have a blessed time of sharing and praying.
4. From September 14<sup>th</sup> they had SOMA School for one week as a community. SOMA is a church planting network with those who share similar visions and values. Last Fall, their family drove to Tokyo to attend the SOMA School and they wanted to bring their community members this year. This year they had SOMA School on ZOOM due to COVID-19 and because it was on ZOOM, their leaders were able to join! Pray that many were encouraged as they connected with like-minded Christian leaders in Japan.
5. Maray had an entrance ceremony for her preschool that they couldn't do in Spring due to COVID-19. She started school in January, and now she is playing so well with her friends. There is one new girl who just joined from Sept. who is a year younger than Maray. Maray says that she helped the little girl every day because she's a big sister now. :D
6. Shion is in her last year and she will be in 1<sup>st</sup> grade from April next year!

**Prayer requests: Please pray:**

1. Please continue to pray for their spiritual and physical health so that they can be filled with the Holy Spirit to do the things of the Lord alone.
2. Since the world is changing due to the pandemic, they would like to be creative to still reach and disciple people in Japan. Please pray for wisdom to raise up the disciples of Jesus Christ according to God's will.
3. Please pray that many were encouraged as they connected with like-minded Christian leaders at SOMA School.
4. Please pray for Kuni's father and their family.

**Missionary: Maina Sato**

**International Student Ministry @ UC Berkeley**

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. Currently they have 10 student leaders from UC Berkeley, DVC (Diablo Valley College) and William Jessup Univ. **Please pray for this team of students that they will be a caring community for one another and find joy in serving for the purpose of God.**
2. Thursday Connections is where they gather international students to connect with others and explore and grow in faith. They meet every Thursday 7-8pm on Zoom for fun ice breakers and themed discussion. It is mostly student led and they've had 10-20 students each time. **Please pray for successful outreach as they continue trying to find and invite new students. If you know any incoming freshmen, transfers, or exchange students, please refer them to them! They'd love to welcome them and help them find an authentic, Jesus-following community.**
3. Currently, Maina is raising \$10,000 to support part of her salary and other ministry expenses to adapt and improve their online ministry. Would you prayerfully consider giving \$50-200/mo. more so she could reach more students on campus waiting to find friendship and a Jesus-following community?
4. Maina moved to El Cerrito on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>! Pray for this transition. It is a quieter environment for her sleep and work during the day, she is so excited. Her brother is back in Nagoya for the summer break and looks like her family went on a little trip. She is a bit sad lol. Please stay safe!
5. As their students are moving online, so are their ways of ministering, including their Fall Conference! This year they will be hosting a 3-week online cohort experience starting October 11 called "DISRUPTED: Embodied Hope in our Disrupted Realities". They have been praying and dreaming about engaging ways to make this experience more than just a boring webinar! But to do so, they need your help!  
**connect to our *Disrupted* website**
6. 3 Ways to Foster Radical Welcome:
  1. Join Their Prayer Team
  2. Give a Care Package
  3. Invite Students! Please consider sharing this information with college-aged young adults in your networks!

**Missionary: Patricia K.**

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

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. The East Asia government has shut down many social media accounts. They are very sensitive about what people are saying; it might cause people to criticize how the government is handling the virus situation. A few months ago, their main WeChat account was suddenly shut down. It might be because they posted an article about wearing masks. Their tech had to hurry and set up new WeChat accounts and transfer their articles to those new accounts. Then they heard the authorities were monitoring their team's texts on their WeChat work account as they discussed their work, so their director closed that group account. They are feeling restrictions which they had not felt before, so they need to walk carefully. ***Please pray for protection for the websites and WeChat accounts, that they will not be closed down, and that the Gospel will continue to spread.***
2. Praise the Lord, they still see people coming to their New Life website. Interestingly, they have not received many questions about COVID; people are mostly searching for the Lord. These are some of their questions:
  - Will God forgive all the sins which I've committed?
  - I wish I can believe God exists but my parents and friends are all strong atheists and the education which I've received since I was a child teaches me there is no God. I want to know how to convince myself there is a God.
  - I want to have guidance and direction in life. How can I begin a relationship with God?
3. Patricia has never been interested in politics, although she does vote. A few months ago she began watching FOX News. She has been astounded at what she's learned from FOX news which other news channels don't talk about. It has helped her understand how to pray for America and how desperately we need to cover America in prayer. Let's pray and vote.

**Missionaries: Mitsuo and Akiko Fujishima**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise and prayer requests:**

1. Mitsuo and Akiko sense the change of seasons as the hot and muggy weather has gone and they are now enjoying nice, cool days. They constantly think of us who live in California and pray for the fires to die. They also think of the upcoming US Presidential election. May God's will be done.
2. Thank you so much for your prayers on Mayuko's behalf. She seems to be more stable emotionally, and her relationship with her husband is also improving although it is not ideal. And PRAISE THE LORD! Her daughter, who lives in Shanghai, has given birth to a cute baby girl! God is good! Mayuko is a grandma, now!
3. October 12<sup>th</sup> is the official starting day of the oyster harvesting in their area. As they were praying for direction whether to participate or not, Mayuko's husband asked them to give him a hand. They sense this is God's answer, so Akiko is going to help them three days a week from 7:30 am to noon. They decided that Mitsuo would not work because of his neck condition. **Please pray for Akiko. This is the first time that they will work separately, and Akiko is a little apprehensive. And pray for Mitsuo to know what to do during Akiko's absence.**
4. Their 8<sup>th</sup>-grade neighbor, Iroha, is getting ready for her high school entrance exam, which is next March. She has been coming twice a week to receive help with math and English. They love this time with her, and they think she is also enjoying it. They had the opportunity to pray for her a couple of times at the end of the session. **Please pray that she will experience God's love and desire to know more.**
5. **Please continue to pray for Akiko's 90-year old mother.** Their phone conversations are very short, and it is hard to know how she is doing. The good news is that she seems to be little more open to know about God. Akiko wrote a very simple gospel message: God loves you and sent Jesus to die for you. If you believe in Jesus, you will have eternal life. There is no mention of sin or repentance at this point, but they trust that God will work in her mind so that she will understand. **Please pray that God will indeed speak into her mind and they may be able to visit her to spend some time with her face to face.** (Her retirement home is not allowing visitors yet.)

**Missionaries: Roy and Nancy Toma**

**JEMS Japan Missions Director**

**Urgent prayer request:**

Please join in prayer for Fabio, Elizabeth and baby Serenity Tsukayama. On Wednesday, Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, Serenity was admitted into the hospital for a series of exams. Elizabeth went in with her, and due to Covid-19, the baby is not able to receive visitors, nor is Elizabeth allowed to leave the hospital. After all the exams, the team of surgeons decided she would need a transplant. It was scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. Fabio had many tests done as well and he was approved as a compatible donor. Last Wed. Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>, he was admitted to go through a final test to check on a possible problem they saw in the first test. Thankfully they didn't find any problems in Fabio's body. The scheduled surgery got canceled, last minute, because baby Serenity had a cough and some fever. They wanted to investigate that further before they proceeded.

The surgery was rescheduled for next week, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>. There is still a possibility of doing it earlier, in case her liver condition worsens within this week.

So now there are three possibilities:

1. Everything goes as they planned and they have both surgeries on 10/8;
2. Serenity's liver gets worse quickly and they need to do an emergency surgery with cough or not;
3. They see a miracle in front of their own eyes and no surgery is necessary.

The Tsukayama family thanks you for walking this road with them.

Thank you for your prayers,  
Roy Toma

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

**Country: Japan**

**Praise: THANK God for:**

1. Before their daughter, Akari, returned to the U.S. they decided to have a family vacation together, so they reserved OMF's beach house near Sendai for a week. As it turned out, a funeral came up which took up a considerable portion of their vacation, but they were thankful for this time together before saying good-bye to Akari. She has now settled into life in Pennsylvania, where she is staying with her aunt and uncle for a year before entering college. She now has a job and a car to drive and is starting to get to know people at work and at church.
2. Mrs. Bellwood's joining their church. Her husband is not a believer, but he and their preschool daughter came for the membership ceremony.
3. Mrs. Sedgeplain's completion of baptismal preparation. On Oct. 4 they have a baptism planned. Mrs. Sedgeplain made a clear profession of faith and is looking forward to being baptized. Mr. Palmbrook says he is afraid of catching a cold if he is baptized outside, but it may be that he is getting cold feet. He hasn't completely withdrawn, however, so Joel told him he doesn't have to rush. They can talk about baptism again in the next few months.
4. Thank the LORD for providing a good house and school for the Laus. They have settled into life in Sendai and their two grade school daughters have begun to make friends in the school and neighborhood where they live. They are still considering where to send their son for kindergarten.

**ASK God to:**

1. Give the Laus wisdom in making educational decisions for their children.
2. Draw Leo close to Him and make him a blessing at his school.
3. Deepen the faith of Mrs. Sedgeplain and Mr. Palmbrook.
4. Open Seiko's father's heart and mind to the gospel. Seiko's father's Alzheimer's continues its relentless progress. It seems that the window of opportunity for him to find salvation for his soul is closing, yet he shows little concern.

**Missionary: Julie Nitao**

**Country: Japan**

**Praise:**

1. God has shown countless blessings in their community and Oasis Chapel! They are grateful for all the support and prayers for the ministry in Rifu, Japan. Thank you! And Praise God!
2. A new baby was born in their church. What exciting news during this time of the pandemic. **Please pray for protection over the S. family, especially for the newborn.**
3. Julie was able to take a summer break at the end of August. It was a much needed time to slow down and get in tune with God. Surprising to see how your mind and soul can get without realizing.

**Prayer requests: Please pray:**

1. For God's mercy on the natural disaster taking place. Recently, Japan has been having heavy rainy seasons that end up becoming typhoons. They are also a country with frequent earthquakes. Evacuating and relief work in the midst of a pandemic can be extra draining. As Japan's new Prime Minister, Suga Yoshihide, officially started his term on September 16<sup>th</sup>, please be praying for the people of Japan and the leaders to turn to the one and only God.
2. Fall is here. Time goes by so fast! Pray for wisdom and decision making in ways to fellowship and outreach.
3. M and Julie will be finishing their current study. Please pray they finish strong with this study and also for guidance for their next step.
4. For future plans after 2020. Julie is currently seeking open doors in Japan to continue seed planting with children and their families.