



Dear family and friends: Greetings in the Lord!

Time flies, and the winter fades away to welcome the new spring. February is a joyful month as we were seeing the plum flowers blooming and celebrating the Chinese New Year with our church families. We hope that as you receive our letter, you also receive our warm blessings sent from Japan:



Grateful for the past, thankful for our church families, and appreciative of your continuous prayers!

Looking back, it's been just three months since we arrived in Japan. Through the significant change of our lifestyle, it helped us grow in endurance, and learn that less is better from His perspective. The experience God has given to us is precious. When Love is in the heart, the joy of His touch is abundant.

With a fresh eye, the church home is a little old and worn out, especially the weekly gathering place and children's room. Out with old and in with the new, Joan started some needed changes:

The old sofa in the meeting room have been replaced with new one. We're thankful for a church sister to help Joan. Despite being nine months pregnant, she enthusiastically accompanied Joan to many stores. After much comparison, they found a new sofa that was affordable, beautiful, and practical.

Additionally, the tatami mats and carpets in the meeting place, being difficult to clean, had accumulated much stains. After researching the supply options in Japanese stores, Joan opted to lay artificial composite flooring. This economical and straightforward update to the meeting area made it suitable for gatherings and meals, making post-meeting cleaning and maintenance much easier. See the comparison picture between the old and new below:



Apart from the larger meeting room, there's also a smaller room for children. As the original tatami floor was prone to damage, carpets were laid to protect it when children used the room. However, over time, it became dirty and worn. To provide children with a clean and safe space for classes and play, Joan updated the room and floor layout. Both children and parents are delighted!



We're grateful for the changes brought about by your love support. We believe that all the good works, underpinned by the love of Christ, and our mission together, are ultimately outlined in Romans 11:36, "For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

Out with the old, in with the new, encompasses not only the visible aspects but also many invisible ones. For instance, one day, while cleaning the kitchen and bathroom dirt, after cleaning the outside, God reminded Joan to unscrew the faucet's fitting and clean inside. Though she found it troublesome, she obediently opened it. The result was startling. This valve, which we use every day for brushing our teeth and washing our faces, was hiding so much filthiness inside:



This photo was taken after Joan cleaned most of it, prompting some reflections and reminding her to document it for herself. We hope that our spiritual condition doesn't just look clean on the outside while accumulating too much dirt inside. James 4:8 reminds us, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Otherwise, we will drift away from God!

Our gratitude:

1, Our monthly Newsletter was sent and often returned with many reply letters. It really strengthened us and tightened our connections in the Lord. The bible verses and reflections you've shared were also a reminder and encouragement from God through your heart and efforts. It's very precious to us.

In this letter, we'd like to share an excerpt from a recent reply to our [January newsletter](#):

"What an encouragement to read your newsletter, and then to click the links and explore your

website...Very moving—a lovely ministry! I enjoyed listening to your inauguration response (so glad that you followed Chinese with English! 😊) . I will suggest to my parents that they also take a listen. What a blessing to have some insight into your lives and ministry... and to be edified by your humble, faithful servant hearts! I was blessed by the verses you shared (Paul also strikes me as someone who was able to persevere in proclaiming the Gospel despite suffering ... maybe due to having seen the glory of Christ. 😊). I appreciate your observations... even how recognizing our own sinfulness is part of the process in making us vessels able to take His message and shine His light, knowing it is not ours.

Thankful that you are chosen witnesses, faithfully pointing to the True light. The false lights are tempting but fall sadly short of eternity... may God help me to find balance as I desire to help solve physical needs —through my new laboratory research job (just a little technician for now), but I hope He will guide me in faithfully pointing to Him through even this process... it is not as impactful in numbers as what you are doing... but I still feel called somehow in this direction. May God bless your ministries and those whom you are encouraging and equipping!"

Our prayer is that the Lord will raise up more people to shine for Him in the workplace! 🙏🙏

2. We're thankful for the joint adult and children's gospel Sunday worship. It's our first in 2024. Breaking away from the inherent dullness of adult worship, we're striving and hoping for a worship experience where hearts and minds are open and lively, like children's.



On that day, Joan led Sunday school for the smaller children, a separate class for the most restless ones. Because it was in the same apartment, everyone was concerned that these children would disrupt the regular meeting. Thankfully, God provided a mother helper at the last minute, and the cooperation was very effective. One of the children, who was considered the most restless one, seemed like a different person, surprisingly cooperative and quiet! 😊

3. With the acceptance and trust of our church brothers and sisters, our connection and interaction with them are increasing day by day. Prayer meetings, family activities, and courtship/marriage counseling are all proceeding smoothly.



4. God has continually brought new people into our lives through shopping, walks, and other daily activities. As we build relationships and look for opportunities to sow the seeds of the gospel in our interactions, we increasingly realize that this is not something short-term

missions can accomplish but requires long-term perseverance, especially when reaching out to Japanese people. Ten days ago, we met a Japanese person who spoke some English, added him as a friend:



We plan to meet for coffee next time and talk about learning Japanese. He also hopes to bring his wife along. Last week, we met another Japanese person, praying for God to open doors and give us opportunities to talk, giving them a heart to know God. Also, our downstairs neighbor enjoys chatting with us and often brings gifts. However, our Japanese is currently inadequate, limiting our conversation. We pray for God's help!

Our prayers:

1. Pray for the monthly gospel Sunday worship. We're, asking God to touch adults with the gospel message preached by Alan and enable children to absorb it, bringing about a change of heart. Starting this year, the sermon themes will revolve around the following four ministry directions of the church:

- Repairing relationships
- Spiritual renewal
- Sacrificial service
- Bearing more fruit

Each quarter's sermon will focus on one ministry direction. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, the right words, and the opening of hearts in the audience. (Click the blue text to view the [February sermons](#)).

2. Please pray for the family ministry of Fukuoka Church. We see a family of five (parents + 3 children) often attending the church's prayer meetings. May God shepherd each family member during prayer time. Particularly, the wife is seeking entrepreneurial opportunities to support the family financially. Pray for God to use the sister not only as an economic source but also as a channel for the gospel.

3. Pray for God to use the connections and activities between church families to expand the church's local influence and reach new seeker families. Strengthen the determination of brothers and sisters to spread the gospel, enabling them to receive God's blessings and pass them on to more people who haven't heard the gospel.

4. In Japan, it's challenging for churches to rent public spaces for gatherings. Pray that every month we can successfully book a public room in the nearby residential area for a larger children's Sunday school. Pray for our middle and high school students to resist the secular influences under academic pressure and steadfastly preserve their faith.

5, Pray for our fellow minister Ken Shao and his wife Winnie Shao. Pray for their ministry at the new site Sawara ku, Fukuoka, and Ken's coming surgery. Ken will have his gallbladder removed Feb. 29th. Pray both surgery and the recovery process will go smoothly.

Blessings,
Alan & Joan

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news," Isaiah 52:7

"在山上报佳音，传平安，报好消息，传播救恩，那人的脚踪何等佳美啊" 以赛亚书 52:7

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