

Being His Hands

Mission Report & Prayer Requests: Mito, Japan

Joel & Kristin Osborne and Hiroaki & Megumi Akahoshi



More Good News: Another Life For Jesus

We rejoice as Ryuichiro makes a bold step to give his life to Christ, and feel great hope for much more.

In December, it was Misaki - a graduate of Ibaraki Christian who had gone with us several times to Cambodia both as a student, and after she became a teacher. She introduced us to the Education faculty who let us share about Cambodia with the freshman Introduction to Education class.

In March, it was Kentaro - one of two guys who were in that freshman class and went with us to Cambodia at the end of their freshman year. He would later gather a whole group of friends to go the following March, then begin studying with Hiro & I weekly, and doing a time of mentoring monthly with me.

On May 26, it was Ryuichiro Sakamoto who has now confessed his faith in Jesus, and has surrendered his life to Jesus and was baptised.

Ryu was one of Kentaro's friends who went in March 2018, and in his own words he said in his testimony "*I went because my girlfriend and my*

friends were going - not because I had any real interest in Cambodia, volunteer work, or Jesus."

But we know God has been pursuing Ryu for his whole life. Ryu studied with us all year, and he also did mentoring one-on-one with me monthly for this past year. He also was the only student in our campus ministry who came every Sunday without fail to worship, and who has gone on every mission trip to Cambodia (four times now). God has blessed us with a good relationship with his parents, grandmother, and older sister, and we sense that God's saving grace will do even more than we can see now.

In quiet, patient, and deeply loving ways, Ryu has been sharing his faith with his girlfriend (who is studying with us) and with friends, and even his family. Ryu is not an attention seeking or getting person, but his strong, stable character and deep thinking put into the hands of God and guidance of the Spirit will be powerful. - JO



*Above: (above top) Yukie & Crimsen enjoy a laugh under the sakura many years ago; (above) Yukie's confession of faith before baptism; **Below:** (1st) Manaka & daddy in the shade; (middle) the Hakuba crew; (bottom) at the Bezner/Schisler wedding*



Twenty-one Year Prayer Answered: Yukie

In 1997, Yukie joined **Let's Start Talking** at Sendai Church of Christ, studying with the young team from York College. In 1998, she studied with Crimsen (Ruhnke) Hanson on my first LST team as YC students to Sendai and we became really good friends. She took our team sightseeing and hosted us in her home. In 1999, she studied with me for 4 weeks, and then with Ben Berry for another 6 weeks. When we arrived as missionaries in 2002, Yukie taught us Japanese and helped us set up life, but more than that, she was a faithful, caring friend and a 'safe place' for me personally as we adjusted and struggled. Even after I moved to Mito in March 2010, we have kept in contact, visiting when possible, and I introduced her to my friends (Kei & Jared Suzuki) who were living in Sendai. **On April 21, God answered a prayer I have prayed for almost 21 years. Yukie gave her life to Jesus and was baptized!** She wrote 'I wanted you to be the first to know because you introduced me to Jesus and helped me begin my journey.' Thanks be to God, who is faithful! Please continue to pray for Yukie. - JO

Snapshots of April & May Happenings...

This has been an incredibly busy and blessed season:

- * **Easter/Annual Community Celebration** - on April 21, we told the story of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection from five perspectives. In the afternoon, we celebrated God's work in our midst and sought his guidance for a new fiscal/academic year.
- * **Derrick & Jonna (Bezner) Schisler** were married on April 27 in San Diego, CA and Joel flew back for 4 days to help officiate their wedding.
- * **Campus Ministry** began and is busier than ever! We have

about 25-40 students each day coming to Liaison Office. **Megumi and Manaka** come on Tuesdays as well.

* **Golden Week retreat to Nagano** - 14 of us went to Hakuba for a time of rest and worship. What a blessing!

* **New Bible Studies** - at Mito church, we began our new series on 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. Joel is also leading a small group of 12 (including Hiro & Megumi) looking at discipleship from Mark.

* **The Japanese young women's bible study** began again on May 25. **Kristin & Ami** are co-leading and Megumi joins as well. - HA



Top left: Hiro, Joel & Atsushi with the prayer team from Canada on their last day in Mito before heading to Tokyo and back home - this team had powerful testimonies and really ministered to us in prayer so we hope they will keep coming; **Top right:** Riley Osborne & Cassidy Ward spent three weeks hosted by Joel & Kristin before beginning their summer internships and senior year at Harding; **Bottom right:** the girls did a fantastic job connecting with both Mito church members and with students at Ibaraki Christian University, learning about the mission in Japan - they have great people skills, obvious passion for Jesus and are lots of fun!

A City On A Hill: God's Vision For Us

- A House of Prayer, A People of Peace -

Last year's theme for Mito Church was 'Salt of the Earth, Light of the World' from Matthew 5. As we prayed, seeking God's heart and direction for a new year the next set of words in that passage came to mind: **A City on a Hill**. It cannot be hidden. A beacon of hope. Goodness and mercy in the city that belongs to God.

As we prayed, God also brought to mind the verse in Isaiah 56:7, *"These I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."* Of course this is a prophecy with a specific context in the Old Testament. But as we considered God's vision for His Kingdom, and God's call specifically for our church, we were struck in a new way by these words, and our call to be sent out to 'go in peace to love and serve' in the name of Christ, guided by His Spirit, for the glory of God who loves, created, and saves us.

We took a necessary break this year from having and hosting summer interns, having to turn down many good people. We needed rest and some time to refocus. We have also needed more time for all of the young, new Christians and seekers in our midst every day. And we knew furlough prep would be somewhat consuming too. We were blessed, though, to have **Judith Alexander** (former missionary in Japan) bring **6 others** for a week (May 10-16) of prayer ministry - hosting prayer summits, an intercessory prayer open house, and a prayer walk with our church in Mito city. We were also blessed to have Joel's niece, **Riley Osborne**, and her college friend, **Cassidy Ward**, students at Harding, come May 11-31 to visit, learn, serve and grow with us. They each had 7 students at Ibaraki Christian whom they met 3-6 times to share faith in English. We pray that the seeds they planted will some day be harvested and that we'll have more good news.

Getting Involved: Prayer

- * **New Disciples of Jesus** – for Ryuichiro, Yukie, Kentaro & Misaki as they continue to grow in faith and deepen their relationship with Jesus. Offer thanks for this season of harvest spiritually. Ask the Lord to protect them from Satan's attack, and to use them as beacons of light on campus and in their workplaces.
- * **Ongoing Bible Studies** – continue to pray for the 8 students (besides Ryu & Kentaro) we are currently studying with, as well as the 14 students that Riley & Cassidy have studied with. There are yet even more students beginning to show interest and a season of openness is beginning to develop on campus ministry. Ask God to give Joel & Hiro both wisdom and energy for the explosive growth that God is bringing, that they may be led by the Spirit and filled with patience and love as they seek to lead the students to Christ. Pray, too, for the young women's study happening every fourth Saturday of the month, and for the discipleship group gathering to study Mark every third Saturday of the month. Pray, too, that God will bring life transformation and spiritual maturity for Mito church as we study the pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) from May to August.
- * **Upcoming Furlough** – join us in petitioning God for guidance and wisdom as to where we should go, and as we ask for God's provision in this work. We believe and know that God has no problem with resources for His mission, and we believe God wants and is utilizing us to join Him in this Kingdom work, so pray that God will faithfully move in the hearts of more people to partner with us in this mission.



(Above) Jason & Charity Brannan visited us from Chicago (a partnering church); (Middle) Kristin, Jacob & Hitomi enjoying a picnic under the blossoms after worship; (Bottom) Megumi gives Ryu a chance to hold Manaka & learn about caring for babies

WE ARE GOING TO CANADA & AMERICA SOON: FURLOUGH 2019 - Reporting & Fundraising

We (Osbornes & Akahoshis) are blessed with the opportunity to see family and friends, rest and refresh, and share with those who have prayed for us and supported us in God's Kingdom work in Japan. We are excited to share, and we are also seeking new partners in this ministry who will pray for us and participate with financial support. Would you be willing to host a gathering in your home, at a restaurant, or at your church building so that we can share more in depth about how God is at work and where you can join us?

Here is a tentative initial schedule for our time in North America:

Aug 9-18: depart Japan / rest time; adjust to time difference, short vacation in eastern Canada & worship with a church in Nova Scotia

Aug 19-Sept 1: Chicago & Wisconsin / family time - visiting with Hanaoka & Osbornes, joining Joel's niece's wedding; worship with Kristin's home church

Sept 2-10: Tintern & Homestay Program - we'll spend a week with our sponsoring church & have a group from our campus ministry & Mito church do a homestay with them (and hope to do a Japan Day)

Sept 11-17: reporting & fundraising elsewhere in Ontario

Sept 18-Oct 3: reporting & fundraising elsewhere in the States

Oct 4-5: Depart from OKC to return to Japan

Your Partnership & Participation

Financial support can be sent to:

IN CANADA

Tintern Church of Christ, Attn: Tintern Asia Mission
(Joel & Kristin Osborne/Hiro & Megumi Akahoshi)

4359 Spring Creek Rd, Vineland, ON Canada L0R 2C0

Phone: (905) 563-6311; <http://tinternchurchofchrist.ca/>

Email: tinternchurchofchrist@gmail.com

IN AMERICA

S&R Ministries, Inc, Attn: Joel Osborne/Hiro Akahoshi –
Japan/Cambodia Mission

PO Box 563, Edmond, OK 73083

For questions or more information, please contact us at:

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We can also communicate via Facetime.