

ADAIR UPDATE



Our mission family at our annual retreat

VACCINE FRIENDS

Making friends in the waiting room at the doctor's office

Starting several months after Joseph was born, we spent a few hours at the hospital on most Monday afternoons. He was getting his vaccinations - one at a time - over several weeks. Although perhaps I would've preferred a less time-intensive option, I am thankful for that time now as I met several other first-time moms. Over time, several of us began getting together a few times a month for lunch; often hanging out for 4 to 5 hours.

One of these new friends is a lady from the town of Shiogama (more on this town on the next page). She represented Japan in the Olympics twice as a skier, and she cares a lot about her hometown. She runs a small non-profit that takes volunteers to two tsunami-affected islands nearby to rehabilitate and replant fields of flowers. Additionally, she helps with promoting local seaweed businesses and organizes various programs for kids.

Two weeks ago I had lunch with her and the other vaccinated moms and babies. The next

day I led English games for a kids event she organized and had lunch in her apartment with 2 other friends afterward. The home is quite private in Japan, and I felt very privileged to be invited into her space. Last week, some volunteers from church, Robert, Joseph, and I volunteered with her for several hours on an island, which we plan to do most Wednesdays during the summer.

Please pray for us as we interact with her at least once a week. Pray for her extended family who experienced multiple layers of loss from the disaster (losing parents, relatives, property, businesses, etc.). Pray that she would be a person of peace and experience the love of Christ and his church - and turn toward Him. Pray for the city of Shiogama (which translates *Salt Furnace*)...that we would put the "salt" into Shiogama. And pray, ultimately, that Christ's Kingdom will come to this city, region, and nation.



Small Group

Roba-no-kai (our small group) is going well. We had 13 people at our house on the last weekend of May. Please pray for our community as we begin a study on the spiritual disciplines.

SHIOGAMA

Our church has a vision to plant there...should we?

A 20 minute walk from our current home is an old Shinto complex called Shiogama Shrine. It has a recorded history dating back to at least 665 AD (not 1665) and is viewed as a "Power Spot" for the region. Throughout the year there are several festivals, and it is by far the largest tourist attraction in the area with about 500,000 visitors annually.

Near the shrine is a small church. It has been around for decades but isn't large enough to hold Sunday services. The few aging members meet with another church in a neighboring city. There is another small church with 10 or so people on the edge of town in a similar situation. Shiogama has about 60,000 people, and there is not a vibrant Christian community in the city. Additionally, the port district was greatly impacted by the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami. The need for Christ and his church in this community is overwhelming.

Our church's history

Our partner church's name translates as "Shiogama Bible Baptist Church" (SBBC). That said, the structure and majority of our congregation is located in the neighboring town of Tagajo. Our current pastor was a church planter in Shiogama several decades ago but was asked to pastor SBBC when the previous pastor retired. He has been fruitful in ministry in Tagajo but has maintained a passion to see a church planted in Shiogama.

We, too, see the need and are intrigued about the possibility, but there is not currently a leader in place to lead the plant in the future.

We have a group of young people who could be a core team for the plant, but should we proceed without a leader in place?

I am coaching a pastor who was actually part of a church plant without an established leader at its launch. We are going to spend some time learning about the difficulties and strengths of this approach in the near future. Although not without challenges, church plants can work in Japan with a start like this - especially if there is a team and the mother church is committed.

Some friends

God seems to be leading us in relationships with people in this city. On one of our hikes a few hours away, we met a family who will be moving to Shiogama in the fall. The wife said, "I want friends!" Roberta has a growing friendship with several women with babies around the same age as Joseph in Shiogama.

There are also several families from the English program at church who live in this community. One family has two daughters who are in Robert's classes, and Roberta is friends with the mother. The children attended a Catholic pre-school and are open to Christian things. Also, our pastor's wife's family - fishermen and hardworking people - live in this town, and we would love to strengthen our relationship with them and see them turn to Christ.



Shiogama Shrine

Are these people who could open doors relationally and be first fruits of a work in Shiogama?

Big questions

Can we plant with a team instead of a partner? If so, when, with whom, and how should we pursue this team? Is this God's leading or just an interesting idea? Should we step out in faith or be patient and wait? As we explore how to focus the remainder of this term and think about the next one, these are very real questions that we are asking. Please pray that God would clearly lead us, our church, and our mission as we navigate this decision.

We understand that the spiritual need in Shiogama is huge, and we need God's leading and power. Please pray for us and for our friends as we consider what it means to see the Body of Christ planted in a town famous for its Shinto shrine full of dozens if not hundreds of gods.

Thank you for your prayers and partnership. -R, R, & J

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- Vision as we begin the fourth year of this term.
- Fruit from our relationships in Tagajo and Shiogama.
- Growth as we learn how to parent a one year old.
- Patience as things don't always progress at the speed we would like them to.
- Grace as we continue to work to communicate in Japanese.

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