

ADAIR UPDATE



There is a lot of beauty in this part of Japan

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

This is why we are here

While we were on home assignment last year, we asked people to pray for low-hanging fruit in East Shiogama. Shortly after moving to our neighborhood six months ago, we met E. It has been a privilege to see her turn to Jesus. It has also been quite humbling as it is clearly the Holy Spirit working in and wooing her.

Yes, we met with her for Bible study and have spent a lot of time with her. Yet God also used an old Japanese novel written by a Christian, a chance meeting with Christians singing in front of a train station 3 years ago, sermons and worship songs while visiting our church, and various answered prayers to draw her to himself.

As E shared her testimony, several people in the congregation cried. She has a beautiful story of God meeting a young woman in need of a Savior - bringing physical and emotional healing and answering her simple yet desperate prayer a year ago, "God, if you're there, please help me!"

Before she was baptized, we sang a different song than the usual old hymn. Together with the whole church family, we sang a Japanese worship song, which loosely translates as: "You were born to be loved by God...His eternal love is shown to you...You bring Him joy." It's a song that she's heard a few times and is really moving to her. I was struck as we sang at the amazing privilege it is to walk with her in this season and hear how she is internalizing the truth of God's unconditional love.

We ask for continued prayers for her: that she would grow in her knowledge of God and his Word, that her family would also turn to him, and that she would be obedient to what God desires of her in this next season. We also ask for more low-hanging fruit: that God would lead us to people he is already actively drawing to himself to be a part of a community of believers seeking to love God and one another as well as making him known in East Shiogama (and beyond!).



After reading her testimony in front of the church family, E was baptized in...

- A) The ocean
 - B) A baptismal
 - C) A portable bathtub
 - D) A kiddie pool
- (Answer on page 2)

A TALE OF TWO CHURCH SERVICES

300+ in one and 30+ in another

A little over a week before Christmas, Roberta, Benjamin, and I (Robert) joined around 300 parents, friends, etc. for the Christmas pageant and worship service for Joseph's preschool. Then on Sunday afternoon, we had a little over 30 people join us at the church plant for a Christmas candle worship service. The contrast between the two services was disorienting and surprising, but it also gave me a few insights into our context.

Rocks will cry

The Christmas worship and pageant at Joseph's Christian preschool was a beautiful, fun, and funny (3-6 year olds doing a Christmas pageant) experience. A teacher gave a wonderful Christmas sermon, the kids sang Christmas carols, and they worked hard to perform the entire Christmas story. An offering was also taken to help children around the world. I was struck by the fact that we were sitting in a 350 seat auditorium at almost full capacity with only a handful of Christians, participating in a beautiful Christmas worship service.

This experience reminded me of an old Shane Barnard song based on Luke 19:40: *"I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."* Jesus is declaring that he will be worshiped. Not in a commanding, or manipulative way - He is just stating that He, as God incarnate, will be worshiped by his creation.

This was the sense I had at the event. Here were 300+ people, most of whom are not followers of Jesus. They were just going through the motions and following the program. Yet

unwittingly they were gathered together to celebrate and worship the coming of Christ. I found it simultaneously a beautiful picture of God's sovereignty and the need in Japan.

Candle worship

On the evening of December 17th, we had a candlelight service at the church's building in our neighborhood. This was our first official worship service and was the idea of a neighbor. We had no idea how many people would come. We prepared the space, bought candles, practiced songs, made a bunch of cookies (Roberta did), and waited.

30+ people came. About half were from our partner church including our partner pastor who originally tried to plant a church in this area over 30 years ago. Other church members came who have friends in the neighborhood and have been praying for East Shiogama for decades. Also present was our friend E (see front page) who lives a couple blocks from the church plant.

The other half of the group were friends, English students, and neighbors who are not Christians but came for various reasons. It was a simple, intimate, fun candlelight service where Jesus was actively honored and worshiped.

More worship

Please join us in praying that the number of people actively worshiping Jesus in East Shiogama would greatly increase. Also pray that we would know how to best meet the physical and spiritual needs of this community. Thank you for your prayers and partnership with Christ's work in Japan. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

-R, R, J, B, (and another boy on the way)



Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- For a continued healthy pregnancy and for health for the rest of the family during cold and flu season
- For relationships we have through teaching English
- For our neighborhood friend E who was recently baptized
- For wisdom in starting worship services at the church's building in our neighborhood

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