

December 2018

ADAIR UPDATE



English Event
at kids community
center

EVERYTHING A WALK AWAY

Focusing locally and regionally

Sometimes I (Roberta) marvel at how small our world is here. The store where we buy the majority of our home goods and groceries is a 2-minute walk from our house. The kids community center we go to several times a week is the same distance in the other direction. The pediatrician, post office, train station, and church plant are all about 5-minute walks away. This is where we spend the vast majority of our life.

I often feel so thankful for how small my world is in this season. There are certainly benefits to knowing a place - not just a general city but a specific neighborhood. Our lifestyle last term was very spread out as we helped with temporary housing events in 10 locations, English and park ministry in one town, beach ministry in another, oyster fishing in another, and island volunteering in yet another. Being so present in one place is a new experience for me in Japan, and I'm grateful.

We are intentionally living locally in order to know and be known with the desire to see

people in this location turn to Jesus and form a community of believers. This is one big goal, and we appreciate your prayers for this to happen.

Another reality is that Robert is traveling often and is on Skype calls several times a week. He is involved in supervising other missionaries both in region and in Kyushu. In the last month, he has traveled to Tokyo, Kyushu, Osaka, and Hokkaido for meetings with our Japanese partners and has several trips coming in the new year. Additionally, he is coaching a pastor in a different prefecture, is part of the A2 leadership team for Japan, and is leading A2's partnership liaison team (PLT).

I write about Robert's other responsibilities because we appreciate your prayers as sometimes the local and the broader work feel like they are in tension. We are excited to be a part of the church growing in Japan both locally and regionally and appreciated your prayers as we try to keep these two spheres of ministry in balance.



We ate a traditional American Thanksgiving meal with about 100 friends at a yearly outreach. The word "turkey" (shichimenchou) in Japanese translates as:

- A) Seven-faced bird
- B) Long-beard grandpa bird
- C) Ugly-but-bright bird
- D) Just-try-and-shoot-me bird



BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING

Two annual outreach events in November

Although a lot of energy goes into events, they are ultimately about people. They are simply a tool to expose people to a community, to a way of thinking, and often to an opportunity to hear about and respond to Jesus. Yet our desire isn't to have successful events but to see every aspect of peoples' lives changed by the gospel and for these people to become a part of the body of Christ. (Even as I write this, I am reminded how often I forget this truth.)

Blessing service

Every November, tens of thousands of kids throughout Japan go to their local Shinto shrines for blessings (and a lot of photos). Our church, as well as many others, have a "kids blessing service" around this time with a special meal, family photos, and prayers of blessing by our pastors in front of the church (pictured).

It was encouraging to see dozens of kids prayed for by our pastors and congregation including 2 kids and their moms from the kids community center who came for the first time. At the same time, it was also quite discouraging to get more than a handful of "sorry, we can't come" messages the morning of the service and then to have no kids come to the church plant in the evening after anticipating a large turnout. I felt misled, deflated, and grumpy for a few days (despite living in Japan for almost 6 years, I still don't always understand the various ways people politely decline invitations).

Thanksgiving event

When our pastor's wife told me that there were a few openings for the Thanksgiving event, I cynically sent messages to several friends (many who cancelled for the blessing services). I



rolled my eyes and prayed at the same time with sub-mustard seed-sized faith. About 20 of these friends, kids, and a few husbands came. I was pretty floored - and also a bit overwhelmed. As they were primarily "my" contacts, how could I care for them as I needed to also be focused on our 2 younger boys?

I felt so grateful for our partner church this evening. I watched our senior pastor engage 2 friends for an hour, our pastor's wife talk with another friend, and church friends gently care for others. I've known 3 of the mom friends since shortly after J was born, and it was the first time for 2 of them to come to anything at church. A lady who recently joined my English class also came with her husband and daughter.

When it was time to share what we were thankful for at dinner (B said, "For bats and tushies!"), I was sitting with 3 of my English cafe friends and their families. Typically people say a general and totally boring "for good health." Yet the lady who started the sharing time said, "I'm so thankful that all of you are in my life. I was lonely, and I'm thankful for your friendship." The other 2 ladies said the same thing - both with tears in their eyes. It felt like a sacred moment.

Relationship>Events

As November and December are full of events (in Japan and the US), I hope we remember that events are a tool and not the point. The point is growing a family of believers - people who love God, love one another, and love the lost. We are so thankful for how many of you are modeling this so well for us and are partnering with us to enable us to do this here.

Merry Christmas, R, R, J, B & A

Partner

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Memo: R&R Adair Support #038207

Specific Prayer Points

- Our neighbors, friends, and English students will have several opportunities to hear about the birth of Jesus this month
- Christmas outreaches: kids events (8th, 15th), church plant party (16th), big outreach concert attended by several hundred (24th), etc.
- E will move to Europe at the end of the month (goodbye party picture above)
- Good health for our family and partners

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