

# AIDAIR UPDATE



Still trying to learn how to take a family photo

## KEEPING EASTER WEIRD

### Earthquakes, angels, atonement...oh my

There is a lot about Christian culture and Christian faith that is weird. Sometimes I (Roberta) am confident in what I believe and the weirdness; sometimes I am uncomfortable if not almost embarrassed about it.

When our friend, E, first came to church and an older man was to be baptized, I was so nervous. It is, after all, both beautiful (a symbol of new life in Christ and being cleansed from sin) and offensive (a ritual of death and getting publicly dunked in a bathtub). I had nervous stomach the whole time, yet God used the joy on the man's face as a significant step in our friend believing that Christ changes lives.

Two weeks ago, 3 mom friends and their kids came to church. I didn't realize it was a communion Sunday, and I once again had nervous stomach. I felt apologetic for not explaining it to them beforehand and even for inviting them at all. It's exclusionary (only baptized believers can receive it at our church) and it's shocking if not offensive (blood, flesh,

and basically saying *kanpai* as we remember Christ's sacrifice for us). I haven't seen any of them since then, yet I want to be brave and ask them what they thought about it when I do.

Last week, we celebrated Easter, which is the most bizarre story of them all. It is what our faith rests on - celebrating not just a good teacher who was able to heal people and walk on water but one who died in our place and overcame death. We were thankful for four friends who came to our partner church in the morning and heard a clear explanation of what we believe. Then 4 women from our community came in the evening to the church plant. They, too, heard about the story and meaning of Easter. After both services, we ate together as it is fitting to celebrate the resurrection of Christ with feasting.

We appreciate your prayers for our friends as they interact with the beauty and weirdness of the Christian faith and for us to be brave as we try to make Christ known here.



When Robert asked a question about the Easter Bunny, the people at the church plant:

- A) Didn't know what in the world he was talking about
- B) Were offended that something so silly could be added to such a sacred festival
- C) Wondered how Santa and his elves made so many eggs in the North Pole



# KIDS COMMUNITY CENTER

## Play pals, food friends, and bunk buddies

When I (Roberta) hear discussions about attractive (“come to us!”) and missional (“we’ll come to you!”) models of church, I usually respond with “yes to both!” Yes, please come to our outreaches, gatherings, and worship services. We often ask for prayer for these “come to us” day camps, church events, and English classes, and we share about friends who come. Yet we also have a high value to “dwell among” people in our community.

We have written several times about the kids community center near our home. This is one of our favorite places to seek to “dwell among” people in our community. It’s where the boys and I go nearly every day, get to know other parents and kids in our community, and are cared for and are able to share our lives with our neighbors.

### Community living room

As homes are generally small, I love that we have this shared space for living life together with toys, books, a trampoline, sand toys, etc. Moms of little kids encourage and commiserate with one another. Right now, there are 4 or 5 moms who come several times a week who have kids B’s age and are all starting pre-school. We are swapping stories and telling each other, “*Okaasan, ganbatte*” (“you can do it, mama”). One of these moms also told me about a recent week-long stay in the hospital with her younger son, and although it feels small, I could listen and tell her I would pray.

### Community meal

On Good Friday, together with our partner church’s food bank ministry, we joined volunteers from the community in providing a

delicious and very inexpensive meal for kids and families in our city. It wasn’t a Christian event, but we were thankful to participate in something that we believe matters to Jesus: showing mercy to people who are really hurting. Many of the kids who came have experienced a lot of sadness and come from difficult home situations.

We were encouraged to hear the staff’s surprise at how one girl who has a lot of trouble opening up to them was playing and chatting with a young man from our church who is particularly gifted with children. We appreciate your prayers as we hope to continue to support the center with these dinners in addition to the English fun days we already do.

### Community island sleepover

This week, we are going on an overnight trip to one of the islands in the bay where we volunteered for several years. It will mostly be elementary school kids with a few parents. We were specifically invited by the staff...and Robert was asked to share a story from the Bible at the campfire. (This still shocks my socks off.)

Please pray for Robert’s talk and for our family. We are a little apprehensive of how our boys will respond to this environment and appreciate prayers that we would reflect the love, compassion, and patience of our Father in our interactions as a family. Please pray for the kids, parents, and specifically for 2 teachers: K-sensei and U-sensei.

Thank you for partnering with us and for your prayers for the people associated with the kids community center.

- R, R, J, B & A



### Partner

To partner financially:  
[www.simusa.org/give](http://www.simusa.org/give) then click  
 “support a missionary” (#038207)  
 Or by mail: SIM USA  
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 Charlotte, NC 28241-7900  
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### Specific Prayer Points

- Our pastor, Yukimasa-sensei, as he transitions from associate to senior pastor
- Our friends who have visited church services recently
- Our overnight trip with the kids community center
- The church plant: growing in our love for God, one another, and the lost; wisdom for the future

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