



the winter's - following His call

Happy New Year! We trust that you have had a wonderful season of celebrating the birth of our Saviour Jesus and welcoming in the new year. As we head into the 2019 we are looking back with thanks on a year of transition and grace. The year to come promises to be intense as we leave our home of almost 17 years and prepare for home service and then returning to Asia, serving SEND Asia more broadly from Thailand when we return.

We look back with great thanks on a year of God's grace and your partnership with us here. It was a year of significant transition as we transferred various roles to our fellow missionaries. In June, Jon made way for one of our new missionaries to begin working with Roan-san at his coffee shop. Roan is looking to retire from the shop over the next couple of years, so we feel like this time is critical as we pray for his heart to be softened to the love of Jesus.



Thanks for **praying** for Karen as she works alongside Roan each week, sharing Jesus as opportunities arise. In June, as Benjamin graduated from high school, Jon passed on his position on the CAJ international school board as well after about 10 years there.

In June Benjamin (left) and Elaine headed into the mountains of Tokyo to serve at camp. Elaine has been camp nurse for many years, seeing our sons attend camp and then participate as camp staff. July we facilitated a retreat for our team and led a self care seminar for our SEND missionaries. Jon worked with a team to revamp the personal review system we have in SEND Japan. Meeting with each missionary to hear how they are doing, asking hard questions as needed, praying and laughing together is a wonderful part of our role in member care. **Pray** for us as we listen, encourage, and come alongside our people.

Over the year, both of us have enjoyed helping a team of new missionaries (*right*) negotiate life here, and building a strong foundation for long ministry. Elaine is the team leader, our first woman team leader in SEND Japan!



In September our friend Jun died of a massive heart attack, leaving his wife Nanami and seven year old son Riku (*left, at our place making cookies*).



We were glad to have Nanami join us for Christmas worship just a few days ago. Also in September, Elaine handed over her responsibilities as area women's rep for the mission after 8 years of serving the women here. This involved representing the women here directly to global leadership. September also saw Benjamin head off to Torchbearer's in England. He is having an excellent time there with solid Bible teaching. A helpful corollary is his introduction to Canadian culture through the many other Canadians attending.

Thank-you to the many who sent us notes of encouragement about the refresh retreat and member care summit here beside Mt. Fuji in

October (right, and header photo of broken pot exercise). As we all introduced ourselves on the first day there, it was moving to hear one of the couples planting churches in rural Japan say that in their 25 years here, it was the first personal retreat they have been able to attend. After three days of training and personal interaction, another remarked that she came knowing that she had come feeling like she had recently dropped all of the balls she had been juggling, and now felt she had the strength to pick up again the ones she needed to and continue on.



In November we made our first and very overdue member care trip to Okinawa. From Okinawa, Elaine took a direct flight to Chiang Mai, Thailand where she took part as a member representative in SEND's annual director's council. It also gave her a chance to ask about some of the practical details of living in Thailand.

That brings us to December, with Elaine's Christmas party with her Happy Moms group. Thank-you for continuing to **pray** for these women, some of whom seem so close to publicly accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord. We also held a special Christmas worship time for our west Tokyo international church plant, led worship in our local church and had some of our team come and prepare Christmas eve day brunch. Between that and having 14 friends for Christmas dinner we have been thoroughly celebrating our last Christmas here in Higashi Kurume.



As we have been traveling through this journey toward being equipped for (as Jon works towards his counseling degree) and focusing on building up the next generation of workers it has been humbling and affirming how many of you have told us that they see member care – what we have identified as the next stage of God's call – as a perfect fit for us. We do want to invest these years of empty nesting and resulting flexibility well, for the glory of God!

The road ahead is still long, and there are many challenges still ahead. Our transition to member care for Asia will not happen without your prayer and partnership. We look forward to interacting about this directly together during our home service this year. Thank-you for the almost 17 years of working together to bring Jesus to so many in Japan who have heard so little about Him, and for partnering together as we raise up the next, growing generation of missionaries to reach Japan and greater Asia for Jesus Christ.

As we prepare for a home service from August 2019 – May 2020, we want to connect with you to reaffirm the commitment we have together, and share more

with you, how God is moving in Japan (our heart is still deeply connected to Japan!) as well as in the other SEND Asia fields.

In January 2019, we will begin scheduling for home service. If your church has a set time for missions conference, please let us know and we will work to visit with you then. We will be in contact with each of our partner churches in early 2019.

We appreciate you more than we can say,

Happy New Year!

jon & elaine winter
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