



Yuri Nakano

MISSIONARY IN JAPAN



FEBRUARY 2022

YEAR-END BLESSINGS AND NEW YEAR HOPES

Prayer

- For good planning of future women's seminars in the different regions of the JBC churches this year.
- For women leaders who are passionate to see others grow and who want to join a women's committee to plan future events.
- For God's guidance and wisdom to spiritually encourage as I meet with many women and pray with them regarding various issues in their lives.
- For good preparation for transition this year as the Ewings plan to go on home assignment this summer for one year and plan for their next ministry. Pray for the Komyo Church members, Shan Reed, and Pastor Saijo as they work together to fulfill all the responsibilities that are needed at the church.

Praises

- Answered prayer for good opportunities to share the real meaning of Christmas in December.
- Being able to take a short trip at the end of the year to visit friends in other prefectures and to spend some days resting at home afterwards.
- Meaningful spiritual conversations with many people that bring joy, hope, and growth.
- Mentors, coaches, and friends in my life who help me stay accountable and focused on God's priorities.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

EPHESIANS 6:18 (NIV)

God was very faithful in granting opportunities to share the real meaning of Christmas and sow seeds of the Gospel at the end of the 2021 year. I was intent on "connecting" with people this Christmas as the COVID cases were quite low. In Japan, it is sometimes difficult for people to accept gifts or invitations to lunch or dinner to your home because one feels obliged to give back. I invited a lady I volunteer with at the local community seniors center over for Christmas lunch, but she didn't want to accept my invitation because she couldn't pay me back by inviting me over to her house. I

insisted that I wasn't expecting anything in return and just wanted her company and to get to know her better. After much insistence, she finally agreed to come over. We had a lovely time, and it provided an excellent and natural means for me to explain all the nativity sets and the Advent candles in my home. She asked me many questions about my work as a missionary, and I believe she went away truly happy that she came and had a better idea of what Christmas is about. At Christmastime, the COVID case numbers were very low, so this felt quite safe. I brought my puppet Grandma Stella to



the seniors community center and enjoyed talking with everyone outside sitting on chairs. I found out that one of the ladies who enjoyed talking with Grandma Stella lives directly two floors beneath me in the same apartment building! We were both surprised, and since then, I've visited her several times at her apartment. Getting to know more of my neighbors was a highlight of the season.

Another highlight of the season was December 24 for our Christmas Eve service, which we could hold in person because we rented a big hall. Thirty-two people came out, which is a good turnout for us. Many people brought their friends and family members who are not believers yet. I was particularly praising God that one of the church members invited someone from her support group and she came all the way from another prefecture. She must have been really seeking! I was also glad that another woman who has only come to church a few times decided to come that night. We haven't been able to sing out loud in church services, but that evening, being in a big hall allowed us to sing

safely. The chorus of voices singing to the Lord together sounded heavenly! It's such a joy to sing together.

The times of prayer with several of the women leaders of the JBC churches has continued to be a source of mutual encouragement. During one of the sessions, I was in awe of the Holy Spirit's work as we were reading through Romans chapter 12. The woman I am praying with had just shared with me a difficulty she was having with a leader in her church. While she was reading the passage, she stopped at the verses that pierced her heart with conviction. She paused to hold her tears back. It was a holy moment. She said, "You can't argue with God's Word!" She had a teachable heart. She later told me that she was able to meet with that person she had difficulty with, without her previous critical heart, and was very thankful. Praise the Lord!

Please continue to pray with me as I work with Shan Reed and the other women leaders to encourage other women in their spiritual walks with the Lord and try to get women's ministry energized in our JBC churches. We need much wisdom and direction from the Lord. There are many goals and hopes for this year to have ladies seminars in other regions/churches in Japan. We are also praying for Japanese women leaders who would be willing to commit to joining a committee to plan events and coordinate across the conference. All in God's timing and in His ways!

Thanks for praying with me and for my mission team here in Japan.

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