

The Ofunato Update

Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society

Chikako and Fred Whitwer

August 2014

News

- The lease for the base house was renewed for another year. However in June of 2015 the owner plans to move back to his home. This will leave Ofunato without a convenient place to host volunteers.
- Team from our home church in Campbell CA came to serve in July. The team is pictured at right.
- A large percentage of temp housing residents are moving out by next year. Those left behind are facing many more years without a permanent home.



Prayer Requests

- Blessing for the marriage of our son Kenneth and his fiancé Jennifer Kwan.
- For Emi-san – that she will continue in the faith now that she married her boyfriend.
- Morita-san – For his continued openness to the Gospel. He tried a number of times to visit Grace House while no one was there. His wife is often at work.
- Ministry direction for us beyond June of next year.
- Balance between events with large numbers of people and visits to individuals.

Praises

- The patchwork class at the church is well attended. The teachers and their pastor that come from Mizusawa have two more visits planned. They come again in September and November. Mizusawa is about a 90 minute drive from Ofunato. A Patchwork camp is planned for late September at a Christian camp near Ofunato.
- Sister Nobuko-san has been released from the hospital. She attended church for the first time in 6 months with her mother in July. Her mother is a not yet believer. Please pray for Nobuko-san's further recovery and her mother's continued openness to the Gospel.
- Kids outreach at Furusato Center (next to Ota kasetu) was attended by 20+ elementary kids. Anpanman clay figures were made by each child following Stephen's directions.
- The son of Sakiyama-san and the son's family were met during the Obon week. They live locally just one block from the Baptist church that we attend. They seemed to have a interest in outreach events.



Close Up

Kojima-san (pictured at left) was re-injured in the tsunami. Her back is in continual pain and some walking is good, too much is bad. She has been prayed for numerous times outside her temp housing unit. She is reading the Bible and has attempted to visit the church for worship service.

Tsunami Zone Information

- The Lord is opening doors to host events at nearby community centers. With the future in mind this is a good change. Temp housing areas are slowly closing as folks move out. The community centers may or may not be as open to evangelistic efforts as are the temp housing areas however.
- A public housing structure is being built a few hundred meters from the Baptist Church. Many of the folks we have met in temp housing will be moving to this new building. We hope to connect many with the church.



Hand Bells at Nochinoiri

Donation Information

Make checks payable to JEMS
948 East 2nd Street, Los Angeles CA 90012
(leave memo line blank)



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

Updates

The rainy season ended and was replaced by hot humid weather. Thus far there has been two consecutive days above 36C. Not hot by California standards of course.

The team from Santa Clara Valley Japanese Christian Church (SCVJCC) came to help the people of Ofunato. This is our home church located in Campbell CA. Fifteen people in all came to sing, play hand bells, share meals and be with tsunami survivors. The group was large enough that 4 of the men stayed at the church and the rest stayed at Grace house. The photo above shows hand bells being taught at Nochinoiri. The team worked very hard and faired well under the hot weather conditions. After Ofunato the team then moved to Kashiwazaki for yet more work. There the team taught English to mostly elementary age kids (around 30 in number). Bible stories, skits as well as personal testimonies were mixed with English teaching.

Funano-san has been hard to visit. He was invited to attend a talk by Hugh Brown a well know ex-terrorist from Northern Ireland. Even though Mr. Brown speaks fluent Japanese Funano-san was not interested. Then a month or so later Funano-san had some doctor visits planned and could not join Fred for lunch. Please pray for Fred’s discernment of the situation.

Kids Club at Hassendo has seen a change in membership. A group of 3 boys continually attend. Their names are Tokiyasu, his younger brother Ruito and their friend Rui. Sachi has stopped coming. Please pray that Sachi’s friend Ayaka will continue. Genshu is a faithful attendee. Please pray for all of them.

There appears to be a connection between the Japanese Tea Ceremony and Christianity. The website (<http://www.iwarock.org/>) and the book (武将高山右近の信仰と茶の湯, Lord Takayama Ukon’s Faith and the Tea Ceremony) explain something of this connection. One of Fred’s English students (Kinno-san) has a deep interest in Tea Ceremony. Pray that Fred will be able to bridge her interest in tea ceremony to include Christianity.

Hirayama-san who is reading Christian books is showing openness. She prays to an unknown god. This god has shown her many visions that had come to pass including the tsunami. However we recently confirmed that the visions are demonic in nature. She is quite open to our prayers. Please pray that our prayers will help her to distinguish between demons and Jesus.

Email: cfwhitwer@sbcglobal.net

Websites: www.jems.org,

311.ichurch.jp

Church Contact Information

Santa Clara Valley Japanese Christian Church, 40 Union Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008 USA
Morioka Seisho Baputesuto Kyoukai, 3-6-36 Ueda, Morioka-shi, 020-0066 Japan