

PETERSON PERSONALS

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Notes from Gunma

Web site: <http://www.wind.ne.jp/JIM/>

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Winter Winds Blow

When the cold north wind comes rolling down from the mountains surrounding us, we know that winter is here. But the beautiful blue skies and sunshine take a bit of the chill off of things. We've entered in the Lenten season and are preparing our hearts for a joyous celebration. We revel in the resurrection hope that is ours in Christ!



Gospel Music

Last spring we wrote about the impact Gospel music is having on Japanese young people. We sense God is opening a new door for sharing the message of Good News through music.



Recently our church received an unusual request. There is a gospel choir in nearby Maebashi city that needs to find a new place to practice. They recently took second place in a large gospel choir contest in Tokyo and are making a bit of a name for themselves. When the group first started there were only a handful of Christians among them. But after a year nearly half of the 30-40 members are believers! The Spirit is clearly up to something.

In March they will begin using our church for practices about twice a month. We look forward to the opportunity to share in that ministry and have one more church event to which we can invite members of our community.

Christmas Report

In our last letter we asked you to pray for several Christmas events. The Christmas parties at our house were well attended and gave Hydi the opportunity to share the good news of Christmas with a houseful of friends. On December 22nd we had our annual Children's Christmas meeting at church. We ran the program twice, back to back with 80 kids at the first one and 50 at the second. The kids especially enjoyed a puppet play telling the Christmas story. On December 23rd we had our Christmas worship service followed by a potluck meal. We had over 20 people including several visitors.



Getting Together

On February 11th the Japan Covenant gathered for an evangelism seminar. Representatives from several of our churches gave presentations on their outreach programs. It was a time when we could



be honest with each other, sharing both our successes and failures. In a country where less than 1% of the population is Christian we are all eager to find new and effective ways of reaching out. Pray for all 25 of our Covenant churches as they seek to share the joy of life in Christ with those around them.

Family News



We enjoyed a few days of skiing and sledding after Christmas. This year's major accomplishment was that all three kids were able to get down the slopes without any help. Miles and Kendra even took to riding the lifts on their own.

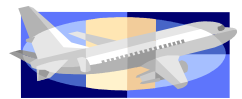
In December Miles had his first big win in a tennis tournament. It was the Gunma Prefecture children's tournament and Miles won the 12 and under division singles and doubles titles!

As you read this Jim will have completed the finishing touches on his doctoral thesis and be in preparation for the oral defense which will happen in late March. Praise the Lord for getting him this far.

February 7th turned out to be quite a day in our home. In the rush to get off to school Miles slipped on the stairs and took quite a fall. A quick trip to the hospital and xrays confirmed that he had broken the middle toe of his left foot. He is limited to crutches for about a month. It is challenging but we praise God for good medical care and for Miles' great attitude throughout it all.

Eli is preparing for two very big events. On March 20th he will graduate from kindergarten and then on April 8th he will be in the entrance ceremony at our local elementary school. These are both important milestones here in Japan and we thank God for Eli.

Kendra recently got a pet bunny named Pudding. That brings the Peterson pet population to a total of 5. Two rabbits, two finches and one quail. Check our web site for pictures of the new bunny.



Home Assignment

We will be in the U.S. for three months next Fall, from September through November (2002). We would be honored to visit your church and ask that the missions committee or other appropriate people consider the possibilities. We will be living in Colorado Springs but are prepared to travel anywhere. Please let us know soon, if you would be willing to extend an invitation as we are already beginning to put an itinerary together.

Prayer Requests

We humbly ask for your prayers. If you would like to support us in that way please visit our website at <http://www.wind.ne.jp/JIM/> and go to the "Ministry" section for prayer requests that are updated monthly.



In Christ,
Jim, Hydi, Miles, Kendra and Eli