

# PETERSON PERSONALS

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Notes from Gunma; October 1999

home page: <http://www.wind.ne.jp/JIM/>

## Summer's Gone

Vacation, swimming, fishing, sailing, fireworks, corn on the cob, watermelon, and hot, muggy weather; the things that make for summer in Japan. And now they are gone again for another year. The kids are back in school, English classes at church have started up again, and we are finally enjoying some cool weather.

## New Faces

In June our co-workers Tim & Andrea Johnson returned to Gunma from a one year home assignment. They are living in Iseaki and pastoring the Covenant church there. It is about a 45 minute drive from our place and we are glad to have them back. On August 18 we welcomed Johnna Hayward to Gunma. She is a new short-term missionary who lives in Iseaki, near the Johnsons and serves the Covenant churches here in various ways. She is a wonderful addition to our team and we thank God for her.

## Lots of Kids!

In our last newsletter we reported that about 40 kids were coming to the Thursday evening English classes at church. Well, we added another class and are almost up to 60! Yikes...

## Life Line Rally

In Japan there are two or three Christian T.V. programs and one of them is called Life Line. Pastor Sakakibara, the regular preacher on that show, recently did a tour of several Gunma area churches. On September 15<sup>th</sup> he came to our church for a special evangelistic meeting as a part of the "Life Line Rally". We were thrilled to welcome almost 40 people, including several new comers. Tim Johnson and Johnna Hayward provided the special music and Pastor Sakakibara preached. It was a great meeting and we hope the faith seeds that were planted will bear fruit.



## Sad News

Mrs. Shibasaki began coming to the ladies' English class at church some time last fall. She had her hands full with a 4 year old daughter and 2 year old son. She also worked as a part-time midwife and social health care provider, but faithfully came to Hydi's class. This spring she suddenly quit coming and no one seemed to know why. Last Saturday we were shocked to learn that she had died the day before, after several months of battling breast cancer. Hydi attended the funeral service held on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Shibasaki was 33. Our hearts go out to her husband and children. We only wish we could have done more. It is easy to become frustrated with the cultural taboos that almost force a person like her to keep her illness a secret. If only she could have shared her burden with us. But all we can

do now is commit her into the Lord's hands and try to support those she left behind.

## Family News

Miles started the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade last April (that's when the school year starts in Japan). Kendra is in her third year of kindergarten, and the big news is that Eli is now going to kindergarten as well. They are all doing great and enjoying school immensely. Needless to say, Hydi and I have appreciated time at home during the day without any little bodies running amuck. It's been eight years since we last experienced that.

Jim spent 3 weeks in Chicago in June and July. He was attending a summer intensive residency for a Doctorate of Ministry in Preaching program. It was a very stimulating and profitable experience for him, and the field work has been keeping him busy ever since. He will make similar trips during the next 2 or 3 summers.

We enjoyed having Hydi's parents in Japan during July and August. We are so thankful that the kids can have at least one set of grandparents nearby during the summer. It is a luxury neither Hydi nor I ever experienced as children.



## Tennis Camp

In early September Hydi attended a Christian tennis camp with some 40 other campers. She was the only non-Japanese person there. Hydi's desire is to use her tennis as an effective means of outreach. Just this summer Mrs. Amano began coming to church after meeting Hydi on the courts and hearing that there is a church in Yoshioka. It was incredibly encouraging for Hydi to be with 40 other people, most of whom are Christians, who feel the same way about tennis, and more importantly, about Jesus!

## Please Pray



- **For the Yoshioka Church**  
We are anticipating one baptism at Christmas and hope for more. We are also thankful for 2-3 new people at worship.
- **For the Shibasaki family**  
Her husband and children need care, comforting, and more than anything, they need Christ.
- **For Mrs. Shiobara**  
She is a neighbor and friend who had surgery for stomach cancer this summer. Pray for complete healing.
- **For Johnna**  
Pray that God will provide just the right opportunities as we initiate new ministries for her.

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