

PETERSON PERSONALS

email: peterson@mail.wind.ne.jp

Notes from Gunma; December 1999

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

Winter Days

Sunshine, blue skies, majestic mountains and one more thing; a fiercely strong and cold north wind. These are the images that best describe winter in Gunma. But as we first said almost four years ago when the church planting work began here, a new wind is blowing in Gunma. After two years of planning and two years of actual church work our group is still small, but the Spirit continues to shine on us, the horizon is very bright and promising, and we have already had many mountain top experiences.



Christmas Activities

On December 6th we will be gathering with the other Covenant pastors and their families in our district for a time of celebration and fellowship.

On December 7th Hydi's Tuesday morning English class members will be coming to our home for a Christmas party. Jim will have the opportunity to share the Christmas message with them.

On December 21st there will be a Christmas gathering at the local civic center, put on by a Christian friend of ours who attends another church. The room holds 500!

On December 23rd we will hold our 4th annual Children's Christmas Program at the church. Last year we had 85 kids show up and we hope for as many or more again.

On December 24th we will be joining with the Shibukawa Covenant church to go caroling at several hospitals. We hope to share some of the joy and comfort that comes from knowing that God loved us enough to send his own son.

On December 26th we will celebrate Christmas at church with our regular worship service and a meal to follow. We will invite many newcomers and are praying for a special work that day.

A Trip to Thailand

Jim had the privilege of going to Thailand in October for 5 days to attend the first Asia Church Planting Consultation in Udon Thani. Over 80 people came together from Covenant churches in Thailand, Taiwan, Laos, Japan and the U.S. to talk about working together in Asia. This was the first time all the Asian Covenant denominations had ever come together, and it was fantastic. The delegation from Japan included 12 Japanese pastors



and 4 missionaries. Everyone came back with a renewed vision for the work of God in Asia.

Family News

The big news for our family is an upcoming move. No, we aren't leaving Gunma or even Yoshioka. We just need to find another house. The lease on the house we are now renting runs out at the end of February since the owners will be returning from a 3-year work assignment overseas. We love this house and expect to have a hard time finding another one as nice. But we are trusting in God who always meets our needs in ways that exceed our greatest expectations. Perhaps by the time you read this we will have already found our next house. We hope to find something close to church and close to the elementary school.

Kendra is very excited about playing the "Mary" part in the kindergarten Christmas pageant. Eli will probably be a shepherd or a star. I seem to recall being relegated to the role of a sheep year after year, and worse yet a tree one year! Miles loves school and is working hard to keep up with his English studies at home as well.

Hydi continues to juggle the roles of mom, part-time homeschooler, competitive tennis player and English teacher while Jim serves on the mission executive committee, the denominational administrative committee and publications committee while fulfilling his roles at home and at church.

We are hoping to travel to the U.S. at the end of next summer. Jim will spend September through November visiting Covenant churches around the U.S. while the kids get a taste of American school. We plan to be in Colorado Springs staying with Hydi's parents and would love to see as many of you during that time.

Please Pray



- **For the Yoshioka Church**
Pray for the blessing of God on our current members and the work of the Spirit in drawing new people into our family.
- **For the Christmas programs**
Pray that many people will hear the true meaning of Christmas and be prompted to think of the implications.
- **For our house hunt**
Pray that God will supply just the right house in the right place at the right time.
- **For Mrs. Tamura**
She is beginning a baptism preparation class this month and hopes to be baptized soon.

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