

# PETERSON PERSONALS

Notes from Gunma

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## Flowers Everywhere!



If nature is God's sketch pad, spring must be when he brings out the crayons! In March and April there were blossoming trees everywhere. Now in May the yard is overflowing with the warm colors of spring flowers. Every morning the kids go out and water their own sections before leaving for school. If only churches and kids were as easy to nurture as flowers... But we are truly filled with renewed appreciation for the gift of new life in Christ when we find ourselves surrounded by new life in God's creation.

## Gospel Music in Japan



Does that sound like a strange heading? In fact, Gospel music is extremely popular in Japan right now. During the last week in March Jim and a couple of teenagers from our church participated in a Gospel Music Workshop in nearby Maebashi city, led by Ronnie Rucker. Ronnie is a professional musician who has been called to a dynamic music ministry here in Japan. He travels all over the country leading Gospel Music Workshops and touching many hearts in the process. We had just over 100 people sign up for our workshop, almost all of them non-Christian. For close to a week we sang together, shared, laughed, cried and prayed together. On April 1st we put on a concert at the civic hall here in Yoshioka and performed before a sellout crowd of close to 500! Everyone who participated heard the Gospel presented very clearly and actually experienced it too, through the singing. Many seeds were sown and we treasure the many contacts made through this fantastic experience.

## Easter, 2001



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Once again this year we celebrated the victorious news of Easter at an outdoor, Easter morning worship service. In the afternoon we joined with the other four Gunma Covenant churches for our annual Easter Singspiration service.

The following Saturday we held our monthly Saturday in the Park event. It was a cold, rainy Saturday and we were not very hopeful but God surprised us by sending 50 people; one of the biggest crowds yet. We colored Easter eggs, had a candy egg hunt, and most importantly, told the story of Easter.

## Church News



On April 22nd we held our annual business meeting at church. Thanks to God for another good year and now the start of a new fiscal year. In Japan everything starts on April 1st, whether at church, at school or at work. On April 30th we had our denominational annual meeting in Tokyo. In November of this year we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the denomination. Praise God!

Children's English classes continue to attract large numbers and provide a "soft" introduction of the church to many people in our community. In June there will be a first time ever Children's English Camp at Akagi Bible Camp and we hope many from our classes will attend.

In April we had a farewell party for Mana Watanabe, a member of our church who is going to college in Aomori, about 400 miles north. It was sad to say bye, but good to feel like family.

## Family News



As of April 1st Miles is in the 4th grade, Kendra in the 2nd and Eli in his last year of kindergarten. They all have new teachers and so far they seem to enjoy them. We've just finished parent-teacher conferences (in Japan the teachers visit each home) and received good reports.

Hydi has had many opportunities to play tennis this spring. In the prefectural tournament she won the "B" division, which means she plays "A" from now on. Tennis has given Hydi many opportunities to share her faith with friends, partners and even opponents. (She claims it's easier to give your opponent a tract or invitation to church when you win the match...)

As of April Jim has assumed the role of Country Coordinator for the Covenant Missionary Committee. This is a big job on top of an already busy schedule. In late June Jim will travel to Chicago for three weeks to complete his final summer residency for the doctoral program.

## Please Pray



- Mrs. Kimijima who is preparing to be baptized
- The seeds of faith sown through Hydi's tennis ministry
- The non-Christians who participated in the Gospel workshop
- An urgent need for new short term missionaries

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