

# PETERSON PERSONALS

Notes from Gunma

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## Easter Celebrations

Spring has arrived! We see the power of new life in nature around us and in the hearts of many who are hearing the Good News. Our Easter celebrations were a vivid reminder of the joys of being a part of the body of Christ.



On April 19<sup>th</sup> we held our monthly Saturday in the Park event in a local park. About 50 children and parents gathered and enjoyed coloring Easter eggs, hunting for candy filled Easter eggs and hearing the good news of Jesus' victory over death on our behalf!

On Easter Sunday our annual early morning outdoor worship service got rained out for the first time. So we met at church but the amazing thing was that we had 18 people. In previous years it has always been less than 10.

That afternoon we met up with the other 4 Covenant churches in our area and had our annual Singspiration worship and praise event at the Shibukawa church.

We were filled with the joy of new life in Christ!

## April Beginnings

April is when everything starts up in Japan including the new school year and fiscal year. Our kids all moved up a grade, making Miles a 6<sup>th</sup> grader, Kendra a 4<sup>th</sup> grader and Eli a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader. Our church held its annual business meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup> and 2 days later 6 people from our church attended the denominational annual business meeting in Tokyo.



The Yoshioka Church was selected as one of the 3 churches giving a report on recent ministries at that meeting. We prepared a 15 minute video on the music ministries that have evolved during the past year at our church. It was a joy to share what God is doing in our small congregation with the rest of our group. We may be getting an English version of the video prepared before too long.

## Milestones

Our church experienced 2 first time events this spring. On March 14<sup>th</sup> Mr. Koyo Konuma, a member of our church, suffered a heart attack and went to be with the Lord. His memorial service was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. While mourning his passing we were able to celebrate the joyful hope of eternal life in Christ. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> we celebrated our first wedding! Yuko is a member of the gospel choir and really wanted to get married at the Yoshioka church. About 50 friends and relatives attended. None of them were Christians so it was a joy to let them experience a Church wedding.



## Make a Joyful Sound

We will take a moment just to summarize the music ministries taking place at our



church. Over the past 12 months we have gotten connected with the following 6 music ministries.

- As of last August a worship band of 4 has been playing and leading our Sunday worship music.
- Last April the gospel choir Hoshigumi made our church their home base. They practice once a week at church and during the past year performed on 13 occasions. Currently there are 40-50 members.
- A group that has evolved from Hoshigumi is called Trinity. It is a female trio and they have performed with Hoshigumi as well as on their own.
- Another offshoot of Hoshigumi was the children's gospel choir called Konpeito. They practiced for 3 months last fall in preparation for several performances at Christmas time. We hope to do it again sometime in the coming year.
- The newest group is the hand bell choir called Megumi. They just got started in April and among other performances they will be playing during our worship service once a month.
- Finally, the director of Hoshigumi is also a voice trainer and piano teacher. She teaches private lessons at church several days a week.

Our hope and prayer is that through each of these ministries people will be drawn to our church and more importantly, to Jesus Christ himself.

## Family News

The kids are enjoying the world of pets. Our pet population somehow continues to grow, and presently consists of 4 finches, 3 hens, and 2 rabbits with litter of 6 bunnies yet to emerge from their nest. Help!



Hydi made it all the way to the semi-finals in the prefectural tennis tournament this spring, playing in the top division. She and her mixed-doubles partner also won the prefectural Prince Cup tournament, thus earning a spot in her first national tournament in late May. In the process she has had many opportunities to share the good news with friends and acquaintances.

Jim continues to serve as pastor, country coordinator, and as a member of 1 board and 2 committees of the NSKK. He is also getting ready to begin teaching at the Covenant Seminary next fall.

## Prayer Requests

- Pray for those who are seeking the truth but have yet to find faith
- Pray for the future of the Yoshioka church
- Pray for the newly elected leaders of our denomination
- Pray for the Covenant Seminary
- Pray for the seeds planted through Hydi's tennis
- Pray for the kids as they enjoy their last full school year here in Gunma



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