



RCA Global Mission

2020 Year in Review



Wayne and Miho Jansen - Japan

Wayne and Miho (Wayne) provide theological and practical training for seminary students and church leaders through the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ). With a shortage of trained clergy, we are building up the next generation of local church leadership and are preparing them for various challenges within the ministry of a church.

Blessings of 2020

One exciting outcome of the past year was that, although all of Wayne's classes were held online, the students were very intentional at making the classes work as well as possible. Technical difficulties frequently arose while Zoom-ing, but those problems became catalysts for stimulating cooperative collaboration. As the year moved along, Wayne and the students created a virtual classroom setting that was not only a learning space but also a community builder.

An interesting story from Midoricho Church where we attend in Tokyo was a unique way of celebrating Christmas 2020. As we bounced back and forth between online worship and three services dividing the congregation for social distancing during Advent, each member was encouraged to write their name on a cutout from tracing their hand, and church members build the collection of hand cutouts into a tree to display in the church sanctuary. The symbolic meaning behind this was to illustrate that amid the pandemic which keeps us apart, we are all together in Jesus Christ symbolized by the Christmas Tree. The youth also decorated the outside tree in front of our church with handmade ornaments—an activity which they could enjoy without being close together in a room.



Challenges of 2020

The ongoing challenges were basically due to COVID-19 restrictions. Many events and classes had to be canceled as states of emergency were declared twice. This was most challenging since first, there was no precedent for dealing with this, and second, there was no complete agreement as to what measures should be taken or on what policy to enact. Both anxiety and depression increased among many people.



Three schoolboys in uniforms and masks commuting on the train

Hopes for 2021

1. To learn to implement discoveries from online classes and work them into the classroom when we return to regular in-person sessions.
2. To create a classroom environment where students not only learn from the instructor but actively learn with the instructor.

How We Can Pray

- Pray for us to be able to encourage others during this pandemic which still has many months to go.
- Pray for us to be creative as we connect to both our students and colleagues remotely. Fellowship is an essential part of Christian living, and we need to find alternative ways of “being together.”
- Pray for COVID-19 infection numbers to decrease, and for success in vaccine distribution in the coming months.

Thank You

Our partnership with our supporting churches has been an uplifting encouragement for us. Christmas cards arrived by dozens, and emails were received telling us of the prayers being offered for us. We have also been praying for our supporting churches as we know the pandemic has been difficult for our partners-in-mission as well. Our two main prayers related to supporting churches are one of thanks to God for their commitment to our ministries here in Japan even as they are struggling, and one that they will find out how God is calling them to minister in their communities at this time so that the light will shine through them even as they are challenged.

Serving together,
Wayne and Miho



Tokyo Union Theological Seminary chapel worship during the pandemic



Youth decorating the tree in front of Midoricho Church.