



## Wayne and Miho Jansen - Japan

### A glimpse at what your support made possible:

As a professor at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, I am blessed with opportunities to preach at many different churches, giving me a broad view of the diversity of the churches in Japan. Last summer, I preached at a vacant church located in a small town west of Tokyo that stands right across the road from a beautiful vegetable farm.

My missionary relationship with Japan began nearly 40 years ago when I was sent as a missionary associate to teach at a Christian high school in Yokosuka, Japan. At the time, *Little House on the Prairie*, a television series set in the late 19th century close to where I was born and raised in Wisconsin, was being televised in Japan, and knowing I was from Wisconsin, numerous teachers and students mentioned to me how that series had positively impacted them. They were impressed by what they perceived as the love that bonded the family members together.

I had always felt that many from my generation had viewed the *Little House* series romantically as though it was based in paradise. However, my grandparents had personally experienced reclaiming land for farm use, and there were numerous obstacles in making it work. Indeed, the land sometimes seemed cursed and there were times when crops would flourish until inclement weather instantly destroyed them. Relationships between people were often strained as well, so physical and spiritual pain was experienced often. The blessings of those good old days in *Little House on the Prairie* came not from being in a perfect place and time, but from the endless love and forgiveness among the townspeople, and the determination to strive on together. And in the town, there was a church that served as a community center where all could come together. I challenged the congregation to see its church as something more than a worship center for its members. I suggested they begin to understand it as a center of blessing for all people in the surrounding community, Japan, and the world.

After the worship and in emails, several people mentioned to me how they were encouraged to rethink the mission of their church. They are small and are in a country where less than one percent profess to be Christians. Yet, they are committed to a vision to evangelize Japan, and I am encouraged by that. Their church has called a pastor who will be installed in April 2023. May God bless them and use them for the



Christmas day at Katakura Church



Manato's Ordination Service

Kingdom. How thankful we are that God has used us to minister to the Japanese with the Christian partners God raised up in this beautiful land.

### **Our challenges of 2022**

COVID continues to bring on the biggest challenges. Most people in Japan continue to wear masks even when outdoors, so we are not seeing faces enough after nearly three years of the pandemic. This is detrimental in pastoral counseling as reading one another's faces is very important in communication. In the classroom, we are all donning masks, as that is still customary in Japan. Events at schools and churches are few and are restricted in many ways, making face-to-face fellowship difficult.



*Monument to Martyrs and Christmas lights at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary*

### **Please Pray**

1. Please pray for God to give us wisdom in knowing how to minister effectively with the restrictions during the pandemic.
2. Pray that aging churches in Japan will be confident that they truly have a mission, have unique God-given gifts, and that God uses them just as God uses all of God's children of every generation to proclaim the gospel.

Thank you,  
Wayne and Miho