



# 2023 Year in Review



## Wayne and Miho Jansen - Japan

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

From 2005, we have been attending Koganei Midoricho Church where we met Ms. Saito, who happened to live only about 100 yards from our place. Due to her age and weakened legs, we took her to church by car every Sunday. In December 2023, Ms. Saito passed away, leaving an empty house in our neighborhood and an empty spot in our hearts. She continued living as a believer even though her entire family were not believers. She showed us the value of living with faith even when one's family members are not Christian. That is one of the challenges in Japan as many believers in churches do not have spouses who share their faith.



*View of the cosmos flowers in our neighborhood. Reminders to us of how God came to save the "cosmos" by sending Jesus Christ. (John 3:16)*

Mr. Iino, a young man who studied philosophy in France, plays the organ at our church and began attending from the time he was seven years old. As he wanted to attend Sunday school and church as a boy, his father took him to church on his bicycle every Sunday. Mr. Iino was steadfast in his faith and was baptized as a teenager. His balance of genius and humility are an example for us and everyone else in the congregation, and his leadership is truly appreciated.

The message of the gospel continues to be proclaimed at our church, and we are thankful to God for witnesses like Ms. Saito and Mr. Iino. Believers in their 90s and their 20s respectively, these two people are evidence that your prayers and support for Japan are accomplishing great things.

## Our challenges of 2023

Many people in Japan continue to hold a persistent fear of contagious diseases, challenging us with the question of how to encourage people to get out and have fellowship while still feeling safe.

Many young people are interested in spiritual things but have difficulty distinguishing between healthy churches and religious cults.



Above left: A photo of Foreign students with the seminary faculty at our annual gathering. About 25% of TUTS' student body is made up of foreign students.



Above right: A photo of the December 18, 2023 program of the “Messiah” at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (TUTS)—The first performance after COVID-19. Wayne sang tenor in the choir.

## Please Pray

- Pray that we can better encourage Japanese churches to evolve to open up to more diversity while maintaining the healthy tradition that has been passed down to them.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us to better proclaim the gospel in a way that enables them to distinguish between the true Christian message and the manipulative language of cults.

Have a blessed new year!  
Wayne and Miho



A flyer encouraging people to attend Christmas worship at the church nearest to them. This flyer was put into all the morning papers in Koganei City, Tokyo, and is a cooperative ecumenical effort of the 12 churches in our city.