



PRAYER GUIDE

APRIL 2022

Empowering National Churches

The EC Global Ministries Community (GMC) continues to seek to enable our international churches to be self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating through the leadership we provide, and the support of the local EC Church in the United States. This mission demands a strong connected relationship between the EC Church USA and our international partners.

This month we highlight the ministries of our EC churches in Japan.



Ranked as the most expensive country in which to live, Japan has grown over the last decades to be one of the chief economic powerhouses in the world. Known as "The Land of the Rising Sun," from the literal meaning of the kanji characters which make up its name, Japan is comprised of over 3,000 mountainous islands. Japan's capital city of Tokyo currently ranks as the largest metropolitan area in the world with over 30 million inhabitants living in greater Tokyo. Though rich economically, Japan is one of the most spiritually bankrupt areas of the world. About 84% of Japan's population follow the rules of Buddhism or Shintoism with the remaining total population claiming no personal connection to any religious practices at all. More than 67% of the 2,568 towns in Japan that have a population of between 15,000 and 30,000 people do not have a single church in their town, and even in this highly developed nation, there are still rural areas that have never been introduced to the gospel.

Our response? ... Recognizing the need to reach out to a hurting culture, the Evangelical Congregational Church strives to be the face of Christ in a place where 99% of the population is non-Christian. The EC Church of Japan consists of three congregations in the greater Tokyo area whose average morning worship attendance is over 100 people.

The EC work in Japan was begun almost 40 years ago when Rev. John Masuda and his wife Machi returned to their homeland after finishing their higher education in the USA. John had become involved with the EC Church when, as a student at Houghton College, he was befriended by John and Ron Miller, fellow students and members of Seibert EC Church in Allentown, PA. Rev. John and Machi Masuda were commissioned as EC missionaries and returned to Japan with their young daughter Ruth to reach post war Japan for Christ and plant the mother EC church.

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FROM THE DESK...

Hello everyone!

On behalf of the GMC, it's our privilege to express to you our gratitude for your faithful prayers, your financial support, and your continued partnership in the ministries of our EC missionaries and international churches. Those who go and those who serve as senders are like two units on the same cross-cultural outreach team. Both equally important and dynamically integrated...moving toward the same goal of fulfilling the Great Commission.* We are so glad you are a valuable part of this larger team with great passion to see the Gospel of Jesus Christ shared throughout the world.

Joel & Charity

Joel and Charity Hildebrand

St. Paul's EC, Reamstown

GMC Board & Member Care Team members

(previously served as missionaries in Turkey)

*excerpt from *Serving as Senders*; Neal Pirolo

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*Facilitating Mission Workers
Empowering National Churches
Engaging the Local Church*



Current ECCJ Chairman, Rev. Nobuo Abe, pastors Sagamihara Grace Chapel. (His son, Tomoyuki and daughter-in-law Jessica, are also EC missionaries currently serving in France) Yoriyoshi Abe, nephew of Nobuo, completed a M.Div. degree at Evangelical Seminary in Myerstown, and he and wife Emiko returned to Japan after graduation to continue church planting throughout the Tokyo region. It is exciting to see the continuation of the EC Church in Japan through several generations.

But Japan is still a very difficult country to evangelize, with only about 1% claiming to know Jesus as Savior. Our churches have been reaching out through various ministries: daycare, English classes, training for young mothers, etc. to reach the needs of the Japanese people. Please continue to uphold our pastors and church members in prayer as they reach out in love to their family, friends and neighbors in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Nobuo & Keiko Abe



Yoriyoshi & Emiko Abe

Thank you for joining your hearts in prayer for our EC Church of Japan.

April 1-8 Praise the Lord for...

- all that He is doing in and through the ECCJ
- the relationship between the ECCUSA and ECCJ and all the Lord is doing through the work of the EC Church around the world
- the three church plants in the Tokyo area: Kyodo, Sagamihara, and Ebina
- the Kyodo church and some members who have started exercising their faith through a homeless ministry
- the Sagamihara church and those reached by the use of One Mission Society's Train & Multiply curriculum
- the Ebina church and the many children and younger families that are gathering, including non-Christian families
- the non-Christians that have started understanding and responding to the Gospel
- believing church members that have taken their extended family to church.

April 9-16 Pray for...

- the churches as they continue to have to manage and deal with various government restrictions and occasional lockdowns because of COVID upticks
- continued wisdom on navigating any lockdown times by having to hold services virtually
- the vision of the ECCJ to ignite in the hearts of those the Lord is reaching while meeting virtually or in person
- creative ways to connect with non-Christians during the occasional lockdowns which make relational ministry difficult
- evangelism events and fellowship meals to be fruitful when lockdowns are lifted, and they can be held
- the ECCJ as they develop strategies to raise up the next generation of leaders
- the effective use of the OMS Train & Multiply curriculum being used in 6 church groups
- the newly formed homeless ministry born from these groups

April 17-23 Pray for...

- the Kyodo church and their concern over aging pastors and the need for the call of the Lord to serve Him among the younger men and women
- continued provision to meet the needs of these churches
- the ECCJ to be focused on Jesus Christ and for all those who have come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to remain committed and faithful followers
- the ministries of the ECCJ to be effective and meaningful in this struggling period of time in our world
- the Lord's blessing on each of the ECCJ's pastors and leaders; especially **Chairman Rev. Nobuo & Keiko Abe, and church planters Yoriyoshi & Emiko Abe**
- the Ebina church to find childcare workers and space for them
- space to be provided to house a pastoral care/counseling office for the Ebina church

April 24-30 Pray for missionaries...

- **Tomoyuki & Jessica Abe, Randy & Chrisanne Amberman, Ron & Brenda Anderson, Chris & Deb Bowers**
- **Jamie & Anita Farr, Kurt & Nancy G., Beth Grimm, Dave & Emily Hershey**
- **Ivy Limbert, Dan & Melinda Moury, Dan Quigley, Dave & Conce Roof**
- **Robert & Bettina Schaeffer, Ed & Valerie Schubert, Ken Sears, Gloria Smethers**
- **Jim & Janet Stahl, Gene & Bethanie Stevenson, Lamar & Janice Stoltzfus, Joe & Wendy Toy**
- **Brian & Missy Wagner, Cassie Wells, BJ & Rachel Whitaker**
- **Dan & Mary Lynne Wills, Jonathan & Kathy Wilson,**

— Happy Birthday —

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 - Mary Reimer* | 24 (2008) - Jared Farr |
| 5 (2007) - Abigail Farr | 24 (2014) - Elijah Hershey |
| 12 - Deb Bowers | 28 (2014) - Junia Hershey |

*retired