



Christian Reformed World Missions

1700 28th Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407
www.crwmm.org



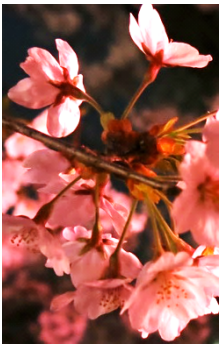
Larry & Ruth Spalink
1-15-24 Shinkawa-cho
Higashi Kurume-shi
203-0013 JAPAN
<LSpalink@aol.com>
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Taxman

Who remembers the Beatles song? Filing income tax returns is not my favorite thing. Why would a missionary write about this, of all things? Well, like most of you, I have to fill out my returns too, the Japanese one as well as the English one! Forgive my whining, but it really is a nuisance. BTW, the USA form is way more complicated than the Japanese one! There, I got that off my chest!

Entertaining visitors

We've had a stream of visitors this spring. Dear friends from Whitinsville, Mass had a full day layover at Narita Airport, so we connected with them, visiting a lighthouse and a famous Buddhist temple and enjoying some sushi. A couple from seminary days, career missionaries to



France, came by, and we spent a day showing them around Mt. Fuji. Overseers from the home office were here, and that involved a lot of meetings (some with me doing translation). Lee Baas, counselor to missionaries, came and stayed in our guest rooms. A team of volunteers from Singapore will be here next. Meanwhile, the lovely cherry trees exploded in light pink everywhere!

Hello goodbye

Ah, another Beatles song! Sorry! We said "hello" to the newly organized Hikarigaoka Christ Church, now an independent congregation of the Reformed Church of Japan. This also meant saying "goodbye;" it feels like sending a child off to fend for herself. Overseeing this church plant has been a big part of my work the last couple of years, so this entails a big shift in my job description. Since the response program to the earthquake disaster 6 years ago has also concluded, the focus of my



work will transition as I work to help congregations become more effective in their evangelism programs, develop worship that is more abundant, and grow in zeal for their calling to preach the Gospel. Already

I enjoy this kind of ministry in a couple of churches, but I will now be concentrating more and more on that.

This may be our last newsletter with the present name and logo! Change is afoot! Stay tuned!

New workers needed!

Two presbyteries, groups of churches in greater Tokyo we work with, had their annual meetings. Several pastors announced their retirements, and a couple are carrying on in their 70s. There are not enough seminarians to replace the waves of those who will be leaving the ministry, and it will be worse before it gets better, if indeed it does get better! So we are delighted that one more person came forward to seek credentials as a lay preacher, and we give



thanks that Tomoki Mikawa, who was mentored by missionary Ken Lee, is slated to begin ministry, with Ken continuing to coach him. Pray for more young people to give their lives to careers in ministry!

Healing and hope, and concerns

--Give thanks with us as God answered your prayers for successful surgery and very good prospects for a newly installed deacon at Hikarigaoka Christ Church (photo).

--Thank God with us for even more growth in the little congregation in Chichibu, outside the metropolitan area. The town is renowned for Buddhist pilgrimages, but new worshippers are coming, and attendance has gone from an average of 13 three years ago to 25 now!

--Things are tense here with the standoff and threats of all out warfare between North Korea and the US and our allies. There have been missile attack drills in Tokyo. It is a bit disconcerting, to say the least. Pray for peaceful resolutions of the issues instead of endless confrontation! Remember, a missile launched from the DPRK will hit Tokyo 10 minutes after launch!

Thank you for your support!

We certainly appreciate your prayers and partnership! Thank you for standing with us to reach Japan for Jesus!

Larry & Ruth Spalink