



A Minute with the Masons



Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society

A newsletter of Michael & Chris Mason

Oasis Church, Osaka, Japan

Issue 89 Dec 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

Every December, the Japan Kanji Aptitude Testing Foundation chooses a *kanji* (Chinese character) that best describes Japan's social mood for the previous year. The Kanji of the Year for 2020 is: "*Mitsu*," meaning "close" or "dense."

2020 Kanji of the Year

密

Mitsu ("close")

This kanji was used by the Japanese government as part of their corona virus awareness campaign to remind people to be mindful of the "Three *Mitsu*" or "3C's." These were, 1) **C**rowding (密集), 2) **C**lose contact (密接), and 3) **C**losed spaces (密閉). It is ironic that the kanji meaning "close" was chosen to represent a year characterized by isolation, distancing and division. Thus is the legacy of 2020.

OASIS CHURCH

Despite the craziness of this past year however, we continue to be encouraged by the things God is doing at Oasis Church. Thankfully, we have been able to gather in person every Sunday morning since early June (with safety protocols in place, of course). After being forced to meet via Zoom for most of the Spring, people now seem to have a renewed appreciation for gathering together for worship, prayer, Bible study and mutual encouragement.

A significant highlight occurred this Fall during our study of Revelations 2 & 3. After looking at Jesus' letters to the seven churches, we considered the hypothetical questions: "*If Jesus were to write a letter to Oasis Church, what would He say? What things would He say we are doing well? What weaknesses would He say we need to work on?*" After asking the people to spend the week seeking the Lord regarding these questions, we gathered on Sunday morning and divided into four groups to

share what we thought the Lord might be saying. After a few minutes, the four groups got together to share their results. To our amazement, all four groups felt like the Lord was saying the same thing: specifically, our main weakness was in the area of evangelism and outreach. This was a powerful moment for the church family, as everyone was clearly convinced that this was a word for us from the Lord himself. As a result, the entire church family has a fresh desire to shine the light of Jesus into the darkness around us! Growing in this are will be our main desire as we look ahead to the New Year.



Masking it up at Oasis Church

With this in mind, **PLEASE PRAY** for Oasis Church in 2021. May the Lord give us wisdom, creativity and courage to be his witnesses in both word and deed. May each person in the church be powered by the Holy Spirit to be a light to the people that God has placed in our lives.

In late November, the church took advantage of the nice weather to head to the countryside for an fun-filled day of *mikan* (mandarin oranges) picking, BBQ, testimony, music and fellowship. We had a number of visitors join us, include two of the non-Christian families that often come to our monthly Kid's Cafeteria. This is the first time that any of the

participants of Kid's Cafeteria have joined a church event, so we are excited that they felt comfortable enough to attend. **PLEASE PRAY** for these two families. May the Lord work in their hearts and stir up a desire to learn more about Jesus.



In the mikan orchard on a beautiful Fall day

As we write this letter, Christmas Day is just around the corner. Unfortunately, we will not be able to have any special Christmas celebration at Oasis Church this year. With Covid-19 cases currently on the rise in Japan, the government has recently raised the threat level to red, the highest level. This means that we were forced to reconsider our annual Christmas tradition. Instead, we are going to have a small Christmas meeting on the 20th. In an effort to keep the gathering as safe as possible, there will be no coffee or food provided. In fact, we are even asking each person to bring their own bread and juice for communion! It is too bad that we will not be able to invite visitors this year, but we are grateful that we can at least gather a small group together to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

MEMBER CARE IN 2021

Now that the Covid vaccine is on it's way, we are hoping that we will soon be able to hit the road and visit some of our fellow JEMS missionaries. Chris has spent much of 2020 attending virtual classes and learning about the various aspects of doing member care. While she has been able to meet with some people via Zoom, we are eager to

actually be able to see people in person. **PLEASE PRAY** for the Lord to open doors for us to visit the various missionaries. Whether it be late-Spring or early-Summer, we want to meet face-to-face to support, encourage and pray for our JEMS co-workers.

Well, that's about all for now. We pray that this letter finds you well in the midst of this Christmas season. Even though things will be different this year, our hope is that you will experience the peace and comfort of knowing Jesus as Immanuel, God with us.

Thank you again for your many prayers and generous financial support.

Blessings in Jesus,

Michael & Chris

Michael & Chris Mason



**** IMPORTANT ****

In case you missed it last time,
here is our new address!

Michael & Chris Mason
1-5-6 Kamotani-dai, Minami-ku
Sakai, Osaka 590-0138
JAPAN

 **Merry** 
Christmas



3 Ways to Support the Masons



* On-Line Giving

You can make one-time, monthly, quarterly or annual donations with your credit card via the JEMS' Network For Good donation site. Links to the site can be found here:

www.jems.org/missionaries (click on the donate link under the Mason's bio)

www.masonsinjapan.com (the donate button is on the bottom of the page)

----- cut here ----- ✂

* Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Electronic Funds Transfer (ETF) Authorization Form for gifts preferenced* for Michael & Chris Mason

Monthly Donation: [] \$250 [] \$100 [] \$50 [] \$25 [] \$ _____

Starting Month: _____. I would like to transfer on: ____ 1st or ____ 15th of the month.

I authorize my bank to pay JEMS the amount listed above on the 1st or 15th working day of every month. This authorization will remain in effect until I notify JEMS in writing that I wish to change or discontinue the contribution.

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____
(required for EFT payments)

☐ I have enclosed my **voided blank check** from the bank account to be used for the EFT withdrawal.

Please place this **form** and your **voided check** in an envelope and mail to:
JEMS, P.O. Box 86047 Los Angeles, CA 90086-0047.

** While a donor may express a preference for a gift, IRS regulations state that tax-deductible gifts must be under the complete discretion of the non-profit organization. Please contact JEMS if you have questions.*

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* Send Support by Mail

☐ Here is my gift of \$_____ preferenced* for Michael & Chris Mason

☐ I want to receive a paper version of the Mason's prayer letter

☐ I want to save a tree! Please send me the Mason's prayer letter via e-mail

☐ Please remove me from the Mason's mailing list

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please make **check payable to "JEMS"** and leave the **memo line blank**.

Your check, along with this form, can be mailed to: JEMS, P.O. Box 86047 Los Angeles, CA 90086-0047.

** While a donor may express a preference for a gift, IRS regulations state that tax-deductible gifts must be under the complete discretion of the non-profit organization. Please contact JEMS if you have questions.*