

# Being His Hands

Mission Report & Prayer Requests: Mito, Japan

Joel & Kristin Osborne and Hiroaki & Megumi Akahoshi



(Above) Joel baptizes Rine and Hiro baptizes Tomomi during our time of worship on Sept 10 after both share their testimonies

## THANKSGIVING: Two New Sisters In Christ

- Twenty-three months after our last two baptisms, two more young women give their lives to Jesus -

On September 10, **Rine (Kokaji) Sakamoto** and **Tomomi Kajiyama** surrendered their lives to Jesus in baptism and began a new step in their journey as disciples of Jesus.

We've known Rine since 2017 when she was a sophomore Elementary Education major at Ibaraki Christian University, and went with us on a 17 day Love & Serve mission trip to Cambodia, Thailand, and Singapore in March 2018. Her boyfriend (now husband!), Ryu, was baptized in May 2019. In her fourth year as a Special Education teacher in Mito, Rine has wrestled with faith, and has been very intentional to share with and involve her family in that journey with the hopes that they too will believe someday. Her mother & one of

her brothers heard her testimony and witnessed her baptism.

Tomomi, a jr high music teacher, met her current boyfriend, Mizuki, at a training time for new teachers. First developing a friendship, Mizuki shared with Tomomi very quickly that he is a Christian and invited her to come to worship with him. As they began dating, Tomomi also began to study the bible. It wasn't much more than a year before Tomomi professed her faith in Jesus and made a decision to become a disciple.

Join us in prayer for Tomomi's mom and sister, and for Rine's parents, two brothers and sister, as well as friends with whom they've shared the gospel so far. God is faithful!

# JULY & AUGUST: Something Every Week!

- Looking at the calendar, we had something



*Top: Hiro speaking on campus at the high school;  
Above: Home visit to a family of a BCS student;  
Below: Love & Serve team with BCS debate teams;  
Bottom: Ryuichiro & Rine Sakamoto's wedding*



Typically in the month of August, we take a step back to rest. Hiro and Joel did have 3 weeks off from preaching. Joel and Kristin took two weeks away - one spent in Chicago with Kristin's family, and one spent in Ontario at a cottage on Lake Erie with Joel's family. The Akahoshis also took time to spend with both Hiro & Megumi's families to celebrate Hiro's mom's birthday, and Megumi's sister Kaori, who was back visiting from Okinawa. We're deeply thankful for this time.

In these 2 months, we hosted Robert & Jan Reagan from Thailand, a potential mission team to Japan from Harding University, and 8 former Mito church members who were visiting.

It was especially appreciated after the previous five weeks that were indeed blessed and led by God, but also required some extra giving beyond the regular rhythms of the week. **Hiro spoke four times** in the monthly special worship **at Ibaraki Christian Jr & Sr High School**, and essentially shared a testimony of how he met Jesus and came to faith (and why). Joel joined the first day, and they did a presentation with Kristin about the mission in Cambodia to almost 30 students in the International committee who will organize and serve in an exchange program with BCS. **Bible studies** began with ICHS students, **Yoku & Runa**. Along with Seika & Matt from Mito church, and Nate & Tammy King from the US, **Joel and Hiro finally led a Love & Serve mission to Cambodia** (first time since Dec 2019), for five days, and we had an interactive Mission Sunday at Mito church the Sunday previous to the team's departure. Additionally, Mito church gathered donations of money and mosquito coils for the **homeless ministry**, and did a **beach cleaning day in Oarai** followed by a **beach BBQ** as a combined outreach, community service and time of fellowship. After the culmination of several weeks of premarital counseling, we celebrated **the marriage of Ryuichiro Sakamoto & Rine Kokaji** on August 5. Joel officiated the wedding. The day brought glory to God and testified to His love!



# Ministry in SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

*- These two months provided many opportunities for both learning and serving -*

We intended to send a new report in September which was postponed to October, and now is finally getting out at the beginning of November! But as we look back on the last couple of months, we can see why that is.

In July and August, the focus of our messages and testimonies had been on how the Kingdom of God and His mission is inbreaking **through the church and through our worship of God**. In September and October, we spent a considerable amount of time focusing on and praying for God's Kingdom to come **into our homes, families, and marriages in every generation**.

Joel took a group of 5 young adults to the **annual young adult retreat** held by Ochanomizu Church of Christ for the nationwide churches at Okutama Bible Chalet located west of Tokyo. Though he had no 'official' role at the retreat, every free moment and meal time was spent in prayer, listening, or counsel with many of the retreat attendees. Over 30 people joined.

Mito Church held our annual **Silver Servants' Blessing** for all in our church family who are 65 and older. During worship, Hiro and Joel share a short message of encouragement and pray a blessing over them. Younger church members hand painted and wrote cards with scriptures, prayers, and messages of gratitude and also prepared gifts which they took in small groups and visited the homes of the older members. **This year, we also used it as a chance to build bridges of relationships with spouses, parents, and grandparents of members who are not yet followers of Jesus**. We were able to bless almost 50 people, and we are already seeing in small ways the impact of those little acts of love. Please continue to pray for us as we intentionally reach out to our families and loved ones with the

hope that they will come to share a faith in Jesus together with us.

On October 7-9, we held our **annual church retreat** in the mountains of Hitachi-ota at Plateau Satomi. Everyone who attended was involved in helping and serving in some way throughout the weekend. Almost 40 attended with Jonathan & Rie Wilson coming from Tokyo to help us learn about dating and marriage built on a foundation of Christ, and it was a much needed and much appreciated time together. We give thanks to God for all of His blessings in big and small ways!

Joel, Hiro and Seika took five others in the leadership team to participate in day long **seminar** being held in Ishikawa, Chiba. It was not only a rich time of learning but also a good bonding time for us. Please pray for us as we soon enter a time of discernment about leaders who will step down, those who will seek reaffirmation of the congregation, and as we consider possible new leaders to affirm as well.

On the same day, Kristin organized an **online exchange** between students from **Ibaraki Christian High School and BCS in Cambodia**. **Seven other church members joined** and helped out. This is another way we've built a stronger connection between the church, the school, and the mission in Cambodia.

Finally, one last highlight to share as a thanksgiving to God was a visit from former mission intern (and our friend), **Charis Lim** and her boyfriend, **Sam Chan**. While here, Sam let us in on the secret of his planned proposal. The good news is she said YES, and we share in their joy as we also anticipate another new family forming who will seek to serve God in His Kingdom mission and live for Jesus.

## Join Us In Prayer

- \* **Seekers**— almost weekly we have a new face (or several!) joining us in worship. In these last four months, more than 30 students from Ibaraki Christian Jr & Sr High School and their parents have joined us at some point for a worship, several of whom have come repeatedly. Gaku has also brought one of his students, Megumi Yusa brought a friend she's known for almost 40 years, and Kanna and Rine have both brought a few of their friends too. Some who visited us in years past recently 'reappeared' so we sense God is drawing people to Himself and we want to welcome them and come alongside them on their journey to faith. Give thanks to God for a church family that proactively connects with seekers, and helps them to feel like they have 'come home'. Please pray that we will continue to be faithful in sharing the joy of salvation in Jesus and demonstrating the power of the gospel through transformed lives and strong relationships with one another.
- \* **Furlough 2024** - it will have been almost 5 years since our last chance to share. Please pray for us as we prayerfully plan for this.
- \* **Huan Family** — please join us in giving thanks to God for sending us a new family (Daniel, Grace, Diana & David Huan) into our church from Qingdao, China. The Huans moved to Japan with Daniel's work but in hopes of having greater freedom in faith and education. They are a good family with solid faith, so we ask you to pray for them as they adjust to life in Japan and seek God's guidance in their lives.



**Top & Middle:**  
Bible study groups for Rine & Tomomi (Hiro & Megumi, Joel, Ayaka & Kanna);  
**Bottom:** The Huan Family (Daniel, Grace, Diana & David) from China



### FAMILY NEWS: BIRTHDAYS, FESTIVALS & TRAVEL

We celebrated both **Megumi's and the twins' (Rei & Kigen) birthdays** in July. The twins turned 2 years old, and they are beginning to talk more and more in these past few months. Sports festivals happen at all school levels, and **Manaka's festival** was in July. Hiro's parents joined to cheer her on. The **twins had their little half-day festival** in October. The Akahoshi family had a few **bouts of illness** run through the family as well, which is pretty typical for families with young kids (it seems all of the families in Mito Church have been facing this!) including all three of the kids getting hand/foot/mouth disease, and all five having nagging colds and fevers. **Please pray for their health.**

This is the year of travel for the Osbornes after four years of essentially no travel. Kristin and 3 coworkers from the Jr & Sr High school led 30 students on a 2 week **exchange program** with schools in **Melbourne, Australia**. Kristin was blessed to do a homestay with a former principal who now does teacher training for the new employees. In September, she helped host students and teachers from those schools for a little more than a week in Ibaraki. This has also provided a good chance for relationship building and opportunities to share faith with her students and coworkers. Joel took a week to **visit Bedok church in Singapore** and spend **3 days in Penang, Malaysia** with three of his ministry buddies (Kon Pak Fook, Paul Tan & Robert Reagan). It was such a good time to be together and to renew connections with beloved people in Southeast Asia following the pandemic. **Give thanks to God for this blessed season, and continue to pray for all 7 of us.**

### Your Partnership & Participation

Financial support can be sent to, or given online through:

#### IN CANADA

Tintern Church of Christ, Attn: Tintern Asia Mission (Joel & Kristin Osborne/Hiro & Megumi Akahoshi)  
4359 Spring Creek Rd, Vineland, ON Canada L0R 2C0  
Phone: (905) 563-6311; <http://tinternchurchofchrist.ca/>  
Email: [tinternchurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:tinternchurchofchrist@gmail.com)

#### IN AMERICA

The Springs Church of Christ, Attn: Missions Ministry  
21477 N. Western Ave, Edmond, OK USA 73012  
Phone (405) 285-7524; <http://thesprings.cc/give>  
Email: [info@thesprings.cc](mailto:info@thesprings.cc)

For questions or more information, please contact us directly at:

**Joel Osborne** — [joelsensei5@gmail.com](mailto:joelsensei5@gmail.com)

**Hiroaki Akahoshi** — [hxa04c@gmail.com](mailto:hxa04c@gmail.com)

We can communicate via **Facetime** and **Zoom** as well.

Check out our homepage at <http://wp.mitochurch.org>