

May 2022

# MARSHALL MUSINGS



## On-field missionary gatherings

We've been to mission conferences in both Australia and Japan. They are quite different affairs. In Australia a mission conference is either a mobilisation event, trying to showcase mission organisations and encourage people to apply to serve, or they are an event put on by a single mission. The latter includes people who serve with the organisation on the home side, people who are currently applying to serve or interested in applying to serve overseas, alumni (people who have been missionaries in the past), volunteers, supporters, parents of missionaries, and missionaries who are on home assignment.

A mission conference on the field looks different. It primarily consists of people serving as missionaries (short, medium, or long-term), their kids, with possibly (in non-pandemic years) a visiting speaker and childcare team.

OMF Japan field has usually held all-field conferences every two or three years. We were about to gather in March 2020 when all plans had to be cancelled for the pandemic.

Since then we've had two online substitutes, but they really have only been "better than nothing" events.

One of the best things about on-field conferences is actually gathering with other missionaries. It's actually pretty exhausting, because not only do you have various meetings and gatherings to attend, you spend a lot of the "free time", coffee breaks, and meals catching up with people you haven't seen in a long time. This is our "family" away from home. The noise is quite something!

So, we're looking forward to gathering with our "OMF Family" in May for the first time in four years. This isn't a full-field conference, but about two-thirds of our missionaries will be there. There will be many new faces, and, sadly, many faces missing—people who've retired or left the field for various reasons. Please pray that we'll enjoy our time together and have the strength to be fully a part of it (and that wearing masks all the time will not hinder our fellowship).



Left: View of the gym at the front gate of CAJ. Below: two of the new play structures at CAJ.



## A late opening

On May 27, CAJ will finally hold an opening ceremony for our new building and fields. Yes, we have been using them as soon as they have become available, but we are looking forward to asking God's continuing blessing on the new facilities. Gathering various members of our community together will also be something we haven't been able to do much these last two years.

This celebration will come at the end of the athletics day for our elementary students, and will feature the year 11 class running some stalls to raise money for charity. The pandemic will not be gone, but we are in need of community gatherings again, despite the ongoing challenges.

The urban zoning regulations for our area say that the CAJ campus is currently at maximum built floor area for the size of our land. Our building plans for the near future include increasing our classroom space. So we have been exploring with the city council how to be re-zoned to a category so we'll have a higher limit for our floor area. There seems to be a positive reception to our requests, so please pray with us that we'd be allowed to expand to fit our projected needs.

Our year 12 students are finalising offers to universities in Japan and overseas. Pray for God's guidance for them as they look forward to moving on.

CAJ  
corner



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**Wendy's blog:**

[www.mmuser.blogspot.com](http://www.mmuser.blogspot.com)

**Webpage:** [ido.com.au/marshalls.php](http://ido.com.au/marshalls.php)

**OMF Japan website:** [omf.org/japan](http://omf.org/japan)

**OMF Japan social media:**

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/OMFJapan/](https://facebook.com/OMFJapan/)

## PLEASE SUPPORT US IN PRAYER

### Prayer points

- Pray our support will increase to 100%. Prices are rising with a weaker yen, pray God will provide all we need.
- Pray that our roof gets fixed soon.
- For our mid-year plans—that our God would go before us. Pray especially for the right supports, opportunities, and conversations to help Doug move forward from here.
- Pray for Wendy as she works with her colleagues to help cover the six-weeks leave she's taking to come to Australia from June.
- Pray for the new head of school at CAJ and the handover in the coming months, along with the 13 other new staff slated to join CAJ in August.
- Pray for our Honshu Conference this month (around two-thirds of the Japan field). It's focus is fellowship and spiritual refreshment. The COVID-related rules are very strict, pray that everyone will be able to attend.
- Pray for Wendy preparing to facilitate a workshop about writing at the above conference.
- For daily strength for all of us as we deal with our various responsibilities and challenges.

### Praise points

- Give thanks for a one-off gift to our support plus a personal financial gift that will help with extra expenses on our trip to Australia.
- For each of our boys and the life God's given.
- OMF Japan missionaries can meet in-person this month at a conference.
- For people who can help us as we process these difficult months (and those yet to come).

## COVID-19 update

Life is getting closer to "normal", just like in Australia. Masks are still worn everywhere, but CAJ has eased some of their precautions (like plastic barriers on desks). All the Marshalls have had our booster shots now. They've announced that close relatives of residents can visit now Japan, so we're hoping Callum might come for Christmas.

## Coming up...

May

5 & 12 Jamie has external exams for physics and calculus.

19–21 Honshu conference (David & Wendy travel 500km north) Wendy helping with music and facilitating a writing workshop.

29 Callum's birthday

**Australian trip:**

18 June arrive Brisbane.

1 Aug David and Jamie leave.

15 Sept Wendy (and probably Doug) leave.

## On the home front

Thank you for praying in April. In particular, you've prayed about our practical needs for our trip to Australia in the middle of the year and it looks like all those needs have been met (still waiting on confirmation for three-weeks pencilled-in accommodation in Corinda). Praise God!

**Jamie** turned 17, though we hardly saw him that day at all, he had his final athletics meet for the season after school and so didn't get home until late. He's done well in shot put and discus, placing in the top three in both at all three meets and, through the season, improving the distances he threw.

**Doug** had a busy start to the month as he renewed his passport at the Australian embassy downtown and also visited both his regular doctors. The roof over Doug's bedroom has a leak when it rains heavily and he has spent a few nights sleeping in the lounge room. The landlord is currently considering how to deal with the leak. It's an old house, and likely to be an expensive repair for the owner. We're hoping to be able to stay in this house until we leave for home assignment in July 2023.



The highlight of **Wendy's** month was staying overnight with a friend/colleague in Chiba Prefecture after an OMF regional meeting. It was refreshing to step away from home for 36 hours and enjoy time with her friend. She also caught up with her language exchange friends for the first time in nearly six months! She's also developed hay fever, but has been managing well with OTC drugs.

**David** had a busy month as he fitted various extra things around his regular work schedule, including OMF Child Safety meetings, and several gatherings with friends/colleagues. He was also part of a virtual team to do accreditation for a school in Taiwan—he got time off work for this, but it extended into hours when he doesn't normally work.

Both Wendy and David are spending time with "trained listeners" to help process and deal with the challenges in our lives. We're working on finding a counsellor to help Jamie also.

We continue to catch up with **Callum** on a video call most weekends. It's been great to hear about his work, as well as talk about our plans for mid-year, and play games together (Doug usually joins our conversations).

*In Christ, David and Wendy*



Photos: workers assessing the leak in the roof; David and Wendy recently did an errand in the city and stopped for afternoon tea on the way home, stumbling upon a stunning display of a park full of flowering azaleas.

