



Things you might not know about the Japanese church

1. Only 30-35% of the Japanese church is men. For comparison, the average percentage in weekend attendance at religious services around the world for men is 46%. In Australia, one study said the ratio of men to women is 40:60.

2. In 1549, Frances Xavier, a Jesuit, was the first person to bring the Bible to Japan.

3. The Japanese church has had three periods of rapid growth: in the 1500s, the late 1800s, and in the years after the Pacific War.

4. Christianity was banned in Japan from 1587 to 1853. Japanese people were martyred in this period.

5. Japan's borders were closed to foreigners from 1639 to 1853.

6. The first protestant church in Japan is still in operation in Yokohama. It was established in 1872.

7. In 1941 the Japanese government ordered Protestant denominations to merge and sought to control what went on in churches. But in 1947 a post-war constitution was written that guaranteed religious freedom.

8. Many influential education and medical institutions that still exist today were established by Christians in the late 1800s.

9. The percentage of Christians in Japan has remained under 1% for several decades now.

These are just a few facts that Wendy's learned as she's produced content in her various publishing roles in the last few months. We hope that they will help you pray for Japan.



COVID-19 update

The state of emergency finished at the end of September. We're not quite clear yet what changes that will make to our daily lives. However it seems certain that we'll still be wearing masks for many months. We're hoping that our church will open up for in-person services soon. They are talking about opening for those who are unable to worship online. Please pray for wise decisions.

Across the nation 75 million people are fully vaccinated, that is 60% of the population. They have been administering over one million doses a day for several months now, which means by the end of October more than 70% of the country could be fully vaccinated.

On 30 September the 7-day average of new cases was 1,904, that's about 8% of what it was at the height of Japan's largest peak only about five weeks ago.

New visas are still not being processed. At our online field conference in September we were introduced to the 13 people who have joined our field, but have been unable to set foot in Japan.

CAJ is still being cautious, but some small changes have already been announced—like students being able to play for 25 minutes after school instead of immediately leaving for home.

Making the most of it

Our sports teams have been unable to play other teams during September. So what have they been doing? Training! They have been practicing and trying to get better at what they do, They have had practice matches within their own teams.

They have been working hard to make sure they are ready to go once the possibility arises for them to play other teams again. Our middle school soccer A-team has already had one game and is looking forward to more. Our other teams are now looking forward to getting their first games in. The cross country team has been able to do time trials and the coaches have had fun putting all the times together.

Other groups have been making the best of limited opportunities. David's quiz team will take part in an online trivia event on October 14, and the schools around Tokyo have managed to host drama workshops online.

No basketball courts or playground equipment have been available, so students have been using our new field as a park (see photo). In addition to soccer, student groups have been trying volleyball-related games, frisbee, and even having a lunchtime snooze. It is quite a comfortable place to sit and chat, too.

So we have been making the most of what we have, and that is a great deal. Our students have had most of their school days at school, and everyone is used to wearing masks all day and washing hands frequently. God has enabled us to persevere in tough times, we are grateful for his grace.



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PLEASE SUPPORT US IN PRAYER

Prayer points

- Continue to pray that God would provide us with all we need to continue to work in Japan.
- For wisdom for the government about how to proceed in this pandemic, especially pray that we'll be able to get religious worker visas for our new missionaries soon.
- For patience as we wait to see what unfolds in the coming months.
- For Doug as he starts driving school this month. Also that he would be able to fix a date for taking the GED exams.
- For Callum as he moves into the second half of the semester.
- For Jamie to continue to persevere through his studies and keeping up with overseas friends.
- We're planning a camping trip with friends, but finding a campsite is challenging.
- For the government of Japan, as the prime minister will step down in early October.
- For God's provision of a new head of school for CAJ from the middle of next year (2022).

Praise points

- That the COVID-19 situation has greatly improved during the last month and that the nation is being vaccinated at a fast rate.
- That Doug can learn to drive in Japan (and that God's provided the funds for that).
- Our financial support remains high.
- Good internet in Japan that allows online meetings.



Photos:

Top right—Doug's birthday with his two favorite books, David's 50th at a restaurant, family dinner after movie.
Left—Spider Lily, an early autumn bulb.

Coming up...

October

4 Wendy doing a Bible study with three missionary friends via Zoom

5 Morning of prayer with women in ministry around Japan (Wendy)

9-12 CAJ's Fall break

8-10 Camping trip?

23 Doug starts driving school.

On the home front

Thank you for your prayers during September.

Doug celebrated his birthday with a family party. He's also enrolled in driving school to get his Japanese driver's licence over the next five months.

Australia recognises Japanese licences, so it won't be hard to get his Australian licence when he gets back to Australia. Getting your licence from scratch in Japan is complicated and done through professional driving schools. He has also applied to do his GED exams (to complete his high school diploma).

Jamie has been catching up with his two US-based friends regularly on weekends (middle of their nights, middle of his day). He's also working hard at the school gym most days, either in class or after school, or both.

David and Wendy went out for a low-key dinner for our anniversary. We also attended the OMF Japan field conference for two days, from home, online. Usually we would go for five days to Hokkaido, but in the current pandemic that wasn't possible. This was a quick alternative that they pulled together. We were responsible for running the prayer meeting on the first night. Even though we were in charge, we were encouraged by praying with our colleagues around the nation.

Wendy had her annual planning meeting with the *Japan Harvest* magazine team. She led nine-hours of online meetings over a day and a half. Both exhausting and exciting: it's a dynamic team. She worked hard on producing content for the month's social media too; the theme was the History of the Japanese church: it was hard work, but fascinating too. She's also bought material and notions to start a new sewing project: a summer skirt, too late for this summer, but she's not in a hurry.

Family outings: one Saturday we went as a family to watch *Shang-Chi* the new Marvel movie and had dinner out together afterwards. We also were able to go to a quiet restaurant for David's 50th. We've rarely eaten out in the last 18 months, so these were enjoyable treats.

In Christ,
David
and
Wendy

