

# Youth In ACTion!

Attachment to the CJM Reporter - Spring 2021

## CROSSOVER JAPANESE CHURCH OF CALGARY *by Hugh Park*

### My Journey to Crossover Japanese Church of Calgary

Ever since moving to Calgary from South Korea last summer amid the global pandemic, I had only attended online worship services on YouTube hosted by my church in South Korea. Initially, I was going to wait for the pandemic to be over before attending a church in Calgary, but it didn't seem like that was going to happen any time soon.

My longing for in-person worship service had reached a point where I just couldn't wait any longer. So, at the end of October last year, I had decided to attend a church in Calgary. My initial plan was to attend a Korean church, but at the time, I was watching a video about a Christian Korean American Japanese couple on YouTube, and all of a sudden, I became curious about whether there were Japanese Christians in Calgary. I had never seen or met a single Japanese Christian in my life. My family and I have always had a

fondness for Japan and its culture, despite the historical tension between Japan and Korea. I even took some Japanese classes in high school and college.

To search for a church, I googled "Japanese Church Calgary" and I came across Crossover. After touring the website for a while, I emailed the pastor and the following Sunday, I attended the service. Pastor Taniguchi and his family welcomed me graciously, and they were among the nicest people I had ever met.

My church in Korea is heavily involved in Japanese ministry and we even had some Korean missionaries from Japan as guest speakers, so I was aware of the minor presence of Christianity in Japan.

I was extremely happy to finally meet Japanese Christians. I am so grateful to have found Crossover and it has been an absolute joy and pleasure to be part of Crossover. I hope and pray for Japan to become a nation that glorifies God and proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ! □



*Hugh Park*

## VICTORIA JAPANESE CHURCH *by Rika Yasuda - Youth department leader*

Praise the name of the Lord! These past 6 months have been tough with the continuing COVID situation, but God has been faithful and has given us many blessings.

We are pleased to announce that the two of the oldest members of our young adults group got married in January. They have been active members since Pastor Ishiguro came, helping our church with worship, technical things, arranging and leading young adults meetings, etc.. Due to COVID, there were very limited people allowed to attend their wedding, but everyone who was there got to witness God's perfect love and plans for these beautiful young souls. The bride specifically, who has been a believer for a while but not been able to be baptized for a long time, due to opposition from her family

member, was finally able to convince the person and got baptized in November! We were planning her baptism in the 2020 Easter service, but of course, it got postponed due to COVID. Our church members have been praying for her and got to see that God faithfully used this waiting time to convince and speak to her family member! Hallelujah!!

No matter what problem we face, God listens to our prayers and provides the best solution, as it's written in the Bible: "*And this*

*is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.*" - 1 John 5:14.

Though many people have been in difficult/strange circumstances since COVID with seemingly little light in this world, our God has been, and always will be in control, with great plans for all of us. □



*Asaka & Johnathan (L) - wedding day*



*Asaka's baptism at pastor Ishiguro's home*

## JAPANESE GOSPEL CHURCH OF TORONTO *by Adam Shih,*

Greetings! The winter was quite tough for our ministry with the youth and families.

On a personal note, my family and I found our world rapidly shrinking. Small unexpected events became huge mountains in our minds that threw life into a chaotic mess. Under normal circumstances I'm sure these would just be small bumps in the road that we would easily overcome. But now as our world and perspective narrows, small things become big - and big things become enormous.

I can say that our students are going through the same thing, except they are even less prepared to cope. Students are going through so many transitions already, they are asking themselves such large questions, and there are very big unknowns in their life (identity, future, belonging, etc.). COVID-19 has amplified this and our students are struggling to develop coping strategies. Our provincial government has just recently announced another (third) lockdown where students will be staying home for school full-time once again. I know that the students are happy about this.

Recently we have been watching the show 'The Chosen' together. It is an episodic show that chronicles the life of the followers of Jesus. It is unique in that it is the first crowd-funded show of its kind, and the show's focus is not on Jesus himself but on His followers. Jesus, of course, makes an appearance but most of the time is focused on Jesus' followers like Peter, Andrew, Mary Magdalene, and Matthew. The show is really great in transporting us into the world of the New Testament, where

there are two empires at war, Rome, and the Kingdom of God that Jesus is ushering in. You really get the sense of the oppression and pain that people are experiencing and the real hope that Jesus brings to the situation.

I think the show has been great in de-centering ourselves and widening our world as we are transported to another time and place yet still meet the same Jesus.

Jesus is, of course, dealing with very different issues and people than we see today but his Kingdom values and ethic of love remain the same. We have the chance to dissect and reflect on each episode in a discussion after and they are always very vibrant.

Going forward I believe utilizing forms of media and watching them in 'watch parties' together will be extremely helpful in assisting the youth to expand their worldview and perspective as their walls are closing in due to lockdowns. Our vaccine schedule seems ahead of schedule so we are also looking ahead to when mostly everyone who is eligible is vaccinated and we can gain some flexibility to meet in small settings.

Thank you for praying. Let's keep running the race together. □



## VANCOUVER JAPANESE GOSPEL CHURCH *by Mari Fukusaku, Assistant Pastor*

The year 2020 had many challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic, in midst of this, two of our high school students were baptized in our church. In 2021, the Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church (VJGC) Youth and Young Adult ministry is about to change dramatically. At the present time, we have many children under Grade 7, so it was decided to add the Preteen ministry as a part of the Youth/Young Adult ministry.

Youth and Young Adult ministries are now divided into four groups that consist of Grade 6 - 7 Preteen, Grade 8 -12 Youth, University Students group and Career Group. Each group will be lead by two or three leaders and plan to carry out separate ministries. The leaders will meet once a month to pray, encourage each other, and grow to form unity within each group and with each other. We are hopeful and trust-

ing the Lord that through these organized small groups, especially for the Youth and Preteens, to be able to grow in faith together. They face unique challenges and changes in their lives and as they learn from each other and interact with the family of God we trust they will learn to keep their eyes focused on the Lord Jesus.



Japanese students following Bible teaching by Mari sensei and her sons Yuya & Kazuya

Gospel Night 2021 (GN2021) will be once again performed as a ministry to evangelize towards the Japanese. It will be held virtually and preparations have begun. I continue to pray that the young generation will shine as the salt of the earth and the light of the world even in dark times.

*"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth."*  
Ecclesiastes 12:1 □