

The final Sunday afternoon of the year finds us enjoying the last pieces of Christmas pie and the birds outside the window, catching our breath after the whirlwind of the last couple months. It has stayed below freezing the last several days and we're so thankful for a warm house. In the mid 1980's we lived in a house a stone's throw from here where a glass of water would freeze in our bedroom this time of year. Tomorrow's New Year's Eve game night which we're hosting for our international church group will be our last formal responsibility of the year, ending with a prayer time at midnight. Meanwhile, outside the church, hundreds of Japanese will be braving the cold to line up at the neighboring Shinto shrine for the obligatory New Year good luck rituals. If only they sought for Hope and Light in Jesus instead!

In our last update we shared about Yasuyo Takahashi's baptism in Iiyama on 12/16. The 20th we had a joyous Christmas celebration with our community group, where I shared a short message. On the 21st I spoke at a Christmas outreach meeting held at the Christian conference center where we were on staff 30 years ago. Two non-Christian couples we had invited attended and really enjoyed themselves. 12/23 was the Iiyama Church Christmas service in the morning and outreach meeting in the evening. I spoke both times and Katie baked mountains of cookies for the events. Several non-Christians attended the evening meeting, including the Miyajimas, our apple farmer friends from Nakano. We're so grateful for the many special opportunities we've had to share the Gospel this time of year.

Amos and Elizabeth came up overnight for a quick Christmas Eve dinner and Christmas morning breakfast before we turned around and all drove back to Tokyo. The rest of Christmas Day and the 26th were spent in a Tokyo hospital helping with preparations for our friend who has brain cancer to travel back to the US on January 2. Her father is here from California to accompany her, and there have been hours of interpreting for meetings with doctors and nurses, translating documents, making phone calls, and coordinating logistics. Please pray Stephanie will be able to handle the long trip home to be with family and friends.

Traditionally the last days of the year are reserved for major house cleaning in Japan to prepare for the New Year. Our pastor used this illustration in this morning's message to challenge Believers to clean out the sins in their lives in preparation for a new year in the Lord. It's something we can all take to heart.

We trust you had a wonderful Christmas Season and want to wish you an early Happy New Year. We pray God's Kingdom will move mightily forward in 2019.

Blessings in Him,
Tim (& Katie)

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with a note that it's for the ministry of Tim & Katie Cole in Japan.

Thank you for partnering with us.