



Oskaloosa
1st CRC
Newsletter

January – February 2024

Just One Request

Dear Master for this coming year
Just one request I bring:
I do not pray for happiness,
Or any earthly thing –
I do not ask to understand
The way Thou leadest me,
But this I ask: Teach me to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.
I want to know Thy guiding voice,
To walk with Thee each day.
Dear Master make me swift to hear
And ready to obey.
And thus the year I now begin
A happy year will be –
If I am seeking just to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.

--Unknown Author

From Pastor Spronk's Desk

BACK TO BASICS



One of the books I have been reading this fall is a biography of Vince Lombardi, *When Pride Still Mattered* by David Maraniss. Lombardi was the head coach of the 1960's Green Bay Packers at the height of their football dominance (yes as a Vikings fan, I will try now to read a Bud Grant bio sometime in 2024). In the half-century since Lombardi made the Packers the first great TV-era football team, his life has become metaphor for the American experience.

As coach, Lombardi stressed teamwork. For the team to be successful each member of the squad had to fill their roles capably and knowledgably. Moreover, Lombardi emphasized the basics each year. No matter how successful the team had been the previous year, at the start of each training camp the basics were given prominence. The core of blocking, footwork and conditioning were drilled over and over again, even to veteran players who knew their routines well. If the basics of football were absent, if blocks were missed or penalties made, no matter how talented the players or how expert the gameplan, the team would lose. But if the fundamentals were solid, the team was at least prepared to do winning work.

This has been my goal with the recent *Believe* series. Much of what we have read and preached this past fall has been the basics, what we believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, salvation, etc. Now as we look to the next ten weeks of readings, we will focus on the basics of Christian action: worship, devotional life, spiritual gifts, and what we offer our church and community. Again, much of this will be familiar ground to many of us. But may this be a season in which we examine our Christian actions, how we live out our faith, and may we see opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal. And may God bless our Christian lives, for the glory of His kingdom and the body of Christ.

Pastor Jon

Church Family News

In Loving Memory:

Martha Bruxvoort
12/1/23



Creator: MerggyR | Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

First CRC Council 2024

Pastor Jon Spronk	Pastor		641-295-5155 673-5693	(Cell) (Study)
Pastor Erik Kamp	Pastor		641-417-9433	
Keith Brink	Elder	2026	641-660-4031	Youth Elder
Joel De Bruin	Elder	2025	641-295-6364	Evangelism Committee
Rich De Bruin	Elder	2025	641-660-9820	Building & Grounds & Tech. Committee
Lucas De Groot	Elder	2027	641-777-4970	Worship Committee
Brent De Ronde	Elder	2026	641-660-9472	Communion, Care Groups & Bulletin Comm.
Tim Jabaay	Elder	2027	319-899-8343	Council Clerk, Elder's VP, & Pulpit Supply
Steve Plate	Elder	2025	641-660-8133	Elder's Clerk & Council VP
Doug Richards	Elder	2027	641-660-6455	Education Comm. & Library
Luke Roozeboom	Elder	2026	641-660-4150	Communion, Care Groups & Records Clerk
Jeff Van Donselaar	Elder	2027	641-295-3286	Fellowship
Paul Van Donselaar	Elder	2025	641-660-4507	President, Pulpit Supply
Mike Boender	Deacon	2027	641-660-3957	Deacon Chairman & Disaster Relief Coordinator
Adam De Bruin	Deacon	2027	641-295-2111	Benevolence & Enduring Gifts
Kyle De Ronde	Deacon	2025	641-660-2907	Deacon Secretary & Disability Concerns
Trent Meyer	Deacon	2026	319-231-6054	Special Offerings Treasurer
Chris Pierson	Deacon	2027	641-670-0081	Ass't General Fund Treasurer
Brennan Plate	Deacon	2026	641-660-6949	Building Fund Treasurer
Josh Van Donselaar	Deacon	2025	641-295-1942	General Fund Treasurer
Mitchel Veenstra	Deacon	2026	641-660-3653	Vicar & C.E.F. Treasurer

Sue De Bruin	Church Secretary	673-4272 673-7303	(Office) (Home)
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Updated 11/7/23

Nursery Schedule

January - February 2024

A.M.

January 7	Ezra G, Olivia DG Kate DB
January 14 (Communion)	Erica DB, Finn S Kwynn DB, Nora DG
January 21	Ben B, Madi H Leah S
January 28	Rachel B, Dylan R Kohen DB
February 4	Jill DB, Luke B Zach DG
February 11	Joyce S, Arianna J Dawson R
February 18	Trisha VD, Aubrey K Trinity R
February 25	Ki B, Luke VD Hannah B





Sew Day



The committee has set January 23, 2024
as our day to work on quilts.

We will be laying out quilt tops to sew, sewing quilt tops and
tying tops. We have plenty of yarn to use for tying but
bring your favorite needle or sewing machine.

We will meet from 9 to 3, so you can come
when it fits into your schedule.

We will order pizza for lunch and the committee
will furnish snacks, coffee, and hot tea.

Come join us for a fun day of fellowship as we work
to help those who are less fortunate.



Questions?

Contact Delores at 641-295-2983
or Ellize at 641-295-6000.





Since 1937

CEF
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

Reaching children worldwide™

Child Evangelism Fellowship Indian Lakes Chapter

Serving the counties of Mahaska, Marion, Keokuk, Lucas, Davis,
Clarke, Decatur, Wayne, Appanoose, Wapello & Monroe

*"For unto us is born. Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6-7*

CEF of South-Central Iowa has had a great year of ministry! As we look back, we are praising God for his goodness and how he has blessed our chapter. Story here:

Some ministry highlights include:

- We currently have 11 Good News Clubs across South Central Iowa & continue trying to recruit more!
- In June, 11 teens attended CYIA training at Jericho Hills Retreat Center, Lucas, IA. One teen, Jacob Martin, served as a Summer Ministry Assistant with Jill at 2 clubs then asked if he could help with the School year's Good News Club- which he currently IS!
- Throughout the summer, our 11 teens taught at a total of 35 Five-Day Clubs all across our chapter.
- This fall we have 11 Good News Clubs across South Central Iowa:

Omega Church, Oskaloosa
Montezuma Presbyterian Church
Oskaloosa Elementary School
Twin Cedars Elementary School, Bussey
Eddyville Elementary School
North Mahaska School, New Sharon
Eisenhour Elementary School, Ottumwa
Sigourney Elementary
Knoxville Elementary
Madison Elementary, Pella
Monroe Elementary



Needless to say, we covet your continued prayers and thank you for both your prayers and your financial help to continue this much needed ministry to children 'for such a time as this'!

May God richly bless you and your precious families as you gather to celebrate the birth of our Wonderful, Merciful Savior for a VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS!

For the children, Shane VanDonselaar & Jill Lake
From Indian Lakes Chapter CEF Staff and Board!

Shane Van Donselaar + Jill Lake



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Penny Schering: pennyschering@gmail.com
Eric 269-929-7392 Penny: 269-271-8874

Dear Friends at First CRC Oskaloosa, ,

December 2023

A few years ago a young man from Tongujamb, Ishmael Kouman, came to teach alongside Susan (husband Gibson) in the village of Hanasi off the Sepik River. Susan and her husband, you may remember, became targets of people practicing witchcraft, and they lost a baby boy. They thoroughly forgave those involved, reconciled, and continued living for the Lord Jesus right in Hanasi Village.



For a few years now Ishmael (pictured) has been teaching under Susan, the PIM head teacher of the Elementary School. In February this year he gave his report to Alan DeYoung and Penny: "Our family is from one denomination, but here in Hanasi I attend the South Seas Evangelical Church. Their habit of sharing, liking each other, and quickly diffusing anger makes me happy. That isn't typical in our denomination."

Through forgiveness, patience, walking in righteousness, good connections with the church leaders and Pacific Island Ministries, Hanasi village leaders (Gibson is the government "Council") got a cocoa fermentary (bean dryer), then a two-way radio (no cell towers nearby), an elementary school (K-2) and now they have a primary school (3rd Grade and working up year by year). The villages around Hanasi are getting envious of Hanasi's blessings and turning to sorcery in frustration at their own lack of progress: "Let's curse the teachers at the PIM Hanasi school, and they will run away!!"

Ishmael says, "I felt the disturbance in my dreams, and I dealt with a lot of fear, but all this year I slept well, ate well, and continued to teach in my classroom. No harm came to me. All this time God was watching over me and protecting me. I was not seriously sick once. *Maus win* [one type of witchcraft] definitely disturbed us teachers and we had to fight against fear, but this conviction grew in each of us—"There is someone guarding me. My God is around us, protecting us." This kind of thinking is with me."

Ishmael: "I am inspired by Samson in the Bible. Before I came to PIM, I worked like a slave for a man who dished out my pay one kina at a time (K1=\$.30). Samson is a friend and a brother. He went thru hardships, trouble hijacked him, but after all the bad, the good appeared, like when he killed the lion and found honey in the carcass. Samson had strong faith in God. Hebrews 11:32-33 tells about it."

Ishmael's Dad got temporary work in the oil fields a few years ago to support the family. Being gone for months at a time was better than having no work. Ishmael prays his Dad will find work again so they can support his brothers attending school. When Dad is not working, Ishmael is the only wage earner. He says, "I want you to pray for my younger brother that he would have a servant attitude, be able to go to school and be involved in work like I am."

Thanks much for your faithful prayers and generous support!

Penelope & Eric Schering



Your gifts are helping Rebeca share Christ's love with her community in Paraguay.

YOU ARE MAKING
 A WORLDWIDE
 DIFFERENCE
 WITH YOUR GIFTS



People are engaged in
 God's Word



Christians are trained
 to share God's Word



Churches are planted
 around the world

Share the Gospel with a World in Need

God is good! People in more than 50 nations are finding hope in trying times. In 2023, we reached more than 2.8 million people with God's Word. That's an average of 328 people every hour! Your generosity continues to help bring God's Word to millions of hungry souls, leading them to hope in Christ. You're joining God in the work He's doing around the world! Thank you.

With your gifts to provide Bibles and training, you are equipping Bible study leaders, church planters, and literacy teachers to share God's Word. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you are helping people to understand God's Word and come to faith. Thank you for making an eternal difference worldwide. You are a blessing!

God's Word Transforms Lives

Pastor KG's life is anything but easy. Though raised in church, her family, like many in South Africa, encouraged her to mix her belief in God with the worship of ancestors and witchcraft. At age 19, she underwent an initiation to become a *sangoma*, or traditional healer. She learned to consult spirits and brew herbal medicines, believing she was helping her community.

But even as KG started down a dark path, the seed of faith in Jesus kept working in her heart. Through the 10 years she practiced witchcraft, other people never stopped praying for her deliverance from spiritual bondage.

KG later met a pastor who told her God wanted KG to serve only Him. Sensing the need to quit the traditional ways to follow Christ, she enrolled in seminary. "There, I was in the presence of people of God who were praying for my deliverance," she remembers. "More than I was studying, I was being delivered."

At age 30, KG's life as a sangoma stopped. She smiles, "God started to show

Continued on next page



KG is using God's Word to pull people out of spiritual bondage in South Africa.

God's Word Transforms Lives *(continued)*

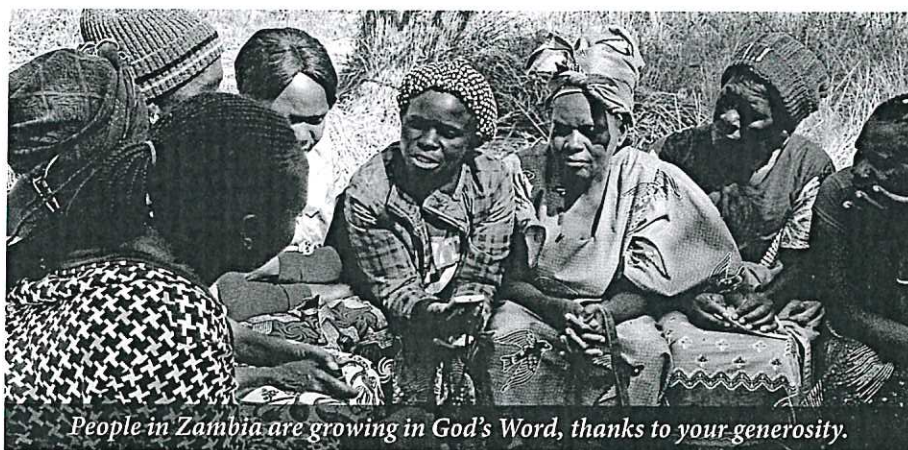
Himself, and I experienced His favor. I understood that you can't worship God and [other] gods. It doesn't work!"

Today, KG uses Bible League's Bible studies to minister to young people caught in bondage and addiction. "I'm impacting many lives. The study booklets are weapons that will save people," she explains. KG confidently trusts God to restore lives on a destructive path like hers once was. "Bible League restores hope for the brokenhearted," she says.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for our partner Brother Perdomo in eastern Venezuela. He recently trained a group of 1,200 Christians from different churches to lead small-group Bible studies. Pray for a rich harvest from this training and ask God to raise leaders to share the Gospel throughout the country.
- We praise God for the 40 church planter trainees who recently attended the training in Mozambique. All participants were excited about learning and committed to applying the lessons. Ask God to bless them as they teach others to follow Jesus.

Join Others in Making an Eternal Impact for Christ



People in Zambia are growing in God's Word, thanks to your generosity.

When you join hands with the Bible League Volunteer Ambassadors to pray and provide Bibles and training, you bring the hope of Christ to communities worldwide. By God's grace and the power of His Word, each \$5 Bible you provide today has the power to transform a life. A family. A community. And as lives are transformed, God's Church will grow—on a global scale! You will help make disciples around the world, just as Jesus commands. Thank you!

Faithfully serving more
than 50 countries worldwide



Serving the under-resourced Church with Bibles and
training to transform lives worldwide through God's Word.



**THE WORD
IN ACTION**
BIBLE LEAGUE PODCAST

Listen to *The Word in Action*—a podcast about how God's Word is transforming lives around the globe. You'll hear from people who are spreading the hope of Jesus each day. Explore new stories monthly of how God is moving in the lives of kids, persecuted believers, church planters, and so many others.

*Subscribe, listen to, and comment on your favorite podcast app,
or tune in at: bibleleague.org/action-podcast*

DECEMBER 2023

FROM THE GROUND UP



NEWS AND STORIES FROM PET FLORIDA PENNEY FARMS

CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF PET MOBILITY IN UGANDA



Recently we were blessed to align with Charleston-based Water Mission for the shipping and deployment of PET carts to countries they serve in East Africa. The first such shipment was delivered to a community in Uganda, and the videos we saw of the presentation celebration showed a large and boisterous community of neighbors there to cheer the recipients. Look at the picture of this man being carried to his own cart. His life is about to change – not just in terms of transportation, but in his ability to find work and shed the cultural shame of disability. Over the years, we have heard many stories of PET cart owners starting businesses, and for the first time, providing for their families. It was our PET teamwork – our volunteer labor + the faithful \$ support of our partners - that made this happen. And with your help, it will happen at least 800 more times this fiscal year. THANKS!

THE PET STORY (Personal Energy Transportation): Designed to provide mobility for disabled persons, a PET cart is a rugged-terrain trike that is powered by the rider's arms. Production labor is provided entirely by volunteers, thus we are able to build the carts for the cost of the parts only. They are given to recipients at no charge.

LET'S KEEP PET ROLLING

Here's another recent recipient of a PET cart in Uganda. These stories, telling how we have been able to raise these dear ones "from the ground up," are not just gratifying – they're our inspiration to keep this vision going, providing carts for many more. Here at our shop we have cart production capacity limited only by the dollars to buy the parts. Our unpaid volunteers show their love and commitment to the PET mission by showing up faithfully to do their assigned jobs, many making financial donations, as well.



As we proceed into the challenge campaign announced recently, would you be willing to make a financial donation to **make mobility happen** for many more? Here are your giving options:

- • Mail a check to the address below
- • Go online to <https://bit.ly/petflorida>
- • Scan this QR code on your phone

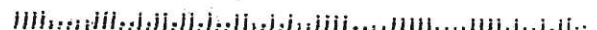
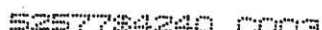


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MCCA Newsletter

MEXICAN CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S AID, Inc.

WINTER
2023

*And whoever welcomes a little child like this
in My name welcomes Me. Matt. 18:5*

Serving the needy children of Baja since 1964.

"Oh Little Town of Bethlehem"

Written by Phillips Brooks in 1868, this song is very familiar to us all at this time of year. I can remember singing this as a child. Now as an adult I have grown to appreciate it's deep and God inspired lyrics. Take a moment to ponder the real meaning of Christmas as you read these words and hear the beautiful tune quietly in your heart ...

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n.
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Luke 2: 8-14

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth, peace goodwill toward men."

** Casa Hogar Belen **

This wonderful children's home is the first of 8 stops on the Tecate Mexico run. We have delivered food and bibles to this ministry for many years. It always brings a smile.



Merry Christmas and may you be Blessed by the Lord!

Tax Deductible Donations can be made by visiting our website at <http://mccaredlands.org/>

Founded in 1964 in Redlands, CA., the Mexican Christian Children's Aid is a, 501(c)(3), Charitable Organization. It began when a group of Christian business people were moved to address the sharp contrast between the affluence in the U.S., and the abject poverty found just across our southern border in Mexico. We purchase and provide monthly bulk food deliveries and other assistance to local Christian organizations in the northern Baja region. We deliver the food donations primarily to organizations that sponsor Children's Homes and or operate periodic Feeding Programs to needy families. Along with the food, Spanish translation Bibles, Gospel Tracts, clothing and other items are generally a part of our deliveries. Our monthly runs consist of all volunteer drivers and riders who donate their vehicles full of fuel and literally everything needed to complete the mission each time we go. The MCCA does not own or rent a building, nor are there any paid staff. **The result is that 100% of all monetary donations goes directly to purchase food.**

The MCCA Newsletter is available by email !

Rather than wait for USPS snail mail, you may want to sign up to receive our Quarterly Newsletter by EMAIL. It's a great way to stay informed about the latest MCCA happenings down in Baja, CA. It also makes it easy to forward to family, friends and perhaps your church group. It's easy to sign up. Just scan the QR Code displayed here with your phone and follow the instructions. Or go directly to: www.bit.ly/MCCA_mailing_signup



- Gabriel House 15 years ago -

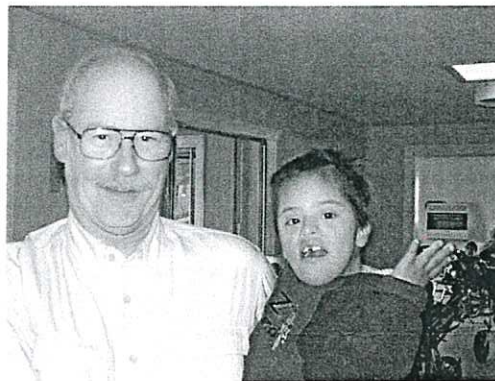
A constant care facility for severely disabled children and young people in the Maneadero area of Baja just a few miles south of downtown Ensenada, Gabriel House tends to be a place that stirs the heart of those who visit. Below are pictures from back in 2008



- Chloe -

John Ysias sits with two children who, at the time were under the care of Gabriel House, and is also shown with some of them out on the swing. John has a great love for the needy kids in Mexico and devoted 18 years of his time and treasure riding with Larry Feenstra on the MCCA trips.

It's hard not to get attached to the children when you see them month after month. Judy Arnett is holding one of the girls who is also seen on the swing with John on the right. This little girl named Chloe, as an infant was born with AIDS, then orphaned and placed in a rehab facility which was Gabriel House. Eventually she was adopted by an American woman who worked as a care giver at Gabriel House back then. Prayers to God for her healing in time were answered. She is now living in Ensenada free of the disease and will be 18 this December. Larry Feenstra regularly visits Chloe on the monthly MCCA runs. John Ysias travels on his own at least every other month to visit her as well.



On the left, Ron Van Grouw holds a happy little guy named Teddy who suffered from severely crippled legs. Herm Verhoeven is standing next to Ron. In the middle pic, Larry Feenstra is also holding Teddy. God gave this little guy a joy that was absolutely contagious. I'm getting a little teary eyed as I write this because the first time I went on an MCCA run we went to Gabriel House and I met Teddy. I will never forget that day and I know we will see him running and dancing with Jesus on the other side one day. More amazing children of Gabriel House shown on the right.

• In Memory of Garrett Brown *

A donation has been received from Lester and Frances Spoelstra in memory of their dear son-in-law who died 1 year ago.

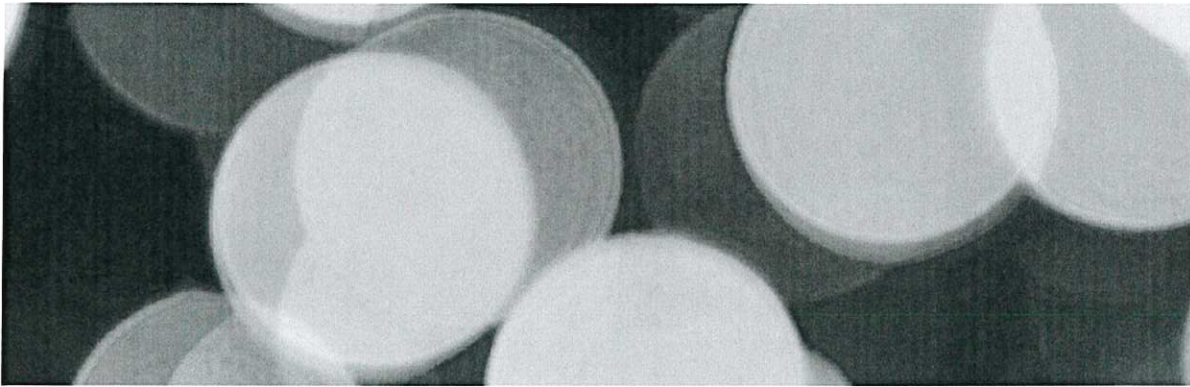
Mission Statement

MCCA is a ministry obedient to God's call to care for children in need by supplying those in Baja California with food, Bibles and the opportunity to know the love of Christ.

MCCA Executive Board Contacts

Paul Vela	President	psvela76@gmail.com
Steve Diaz	Vice President	stevediazwhosoever@gmail.com
Tom Rasmussen	Treasurer	rasmussen.thos@gmail.com
Rich DeWitt	Secretary	rdewitt@yahoo.com

Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/MCCA1964
Web Site:	http://mccaredlands.org/
Mailing Address	PO Box 9931, Redlands, CA 92375



That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.

1 John 1:1-3

Another Christmas is upon us! It's hard to believe we're already celebrating our second Christmas in Tokyo. As you might expect, Christmas here has a sense of the familiar. Walking around Tokyo you will find decorated Christmas trees, European-style Christmas Markets, and Christmas light displays called "Illuminations." We enjoyed Ellie's



Figure 1: Ellie, decorating the tree.

elementary school Christmas concert at the Christian Academy in Japan, and we are looking forward to a candlelight church service and baking cookies later today. Some of what we know and love about the season in the States is here as well.

Still, it's different. On December 25, people will go to work like any other Monday and the train schedule will remain unchanged. Christmas in Japan is celebrated by couples and isn't really a family holiday, so many will share a romantic dinner and perhaps

exchange gifts. Around the watercooler, co-workers will start discussing their New Year's plans. Missed will be the life-altering truth that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The incarnation – Jesus becoming flesh to instruct and redeem us – is the theological foundation for mission. He came to us, became one of us, so that we might have fellowship with him. In imitation, we go to others and share what we know about Christ so that they might have fellowship with us (1 Jn 1:3), and so have fellowship with God. This theological foundation has been sustaining. The last year has had some really high highs and some low lows. Likely you can say the same.

Japanese has been more demanding that anything I've studied to this point.

It's been challenging and frustrating to know what I want to say but be limited by vocabulary, grammar, and the like, but I imagine that "incarnation" often feels like that, at least in the beginning. Christ emptied himself so that we might be raised and exalted with him (Philippians 2). I can bear another round of flash cards and another awkward conversation in broken Japanese. We all can (and should) bear a little more awkwardness for the sake of the gospel.

When we visit another country for a week or two, our horizons expand, and our world grows a little bigger. When you move somewhere, especially when you settle in a place where you don't know the language or customs, your world inevitably feels smaller. The grocery store is packed with unknown foods, going to the doctor becomes much more difficult, ordering food at a restaurant is uncomfortable, and several new fears haunt the margins of your mind. What happens if my kids get lost, or I get pulled over, or there's a medical emergency? So much of your world in a foreign country becomes locked behind the unknown. In the U.S., where you're fluent in the language and culture, these aren't problems that likely cross your mind daily, but they are here. Inevitably, you're pulled to what is comfortable, safe, and known. Which ultimately isn't very much. It takes a constant act of will to push against the unknown and expand one's world.



Figure 2: Joanna is learning to conquer the monkey bars at Ellie's school.



Figure 3: December 22 was the Winter Solstice. In Japan, it's common to welcome the Solstice with a refreshing dip in an onsen full of yuzu, like these on our neighbor's tree.

So, let me tell you from experience just how nice it is when someone approaches you in a language you understand and welcomes you. It's wonderful when visiting a church to have one of the parishioners greet us in English, talk to us, and generally welcome us to Japan. It's wonderful when friends who are fluent in both English and Japanese open up our world a little,

introduce us to a new restaurant, help us with a government form, or explain a cultural foible.

When Christ came to us, he made known the way to God. He pushed back against the darkness and made known to us the depth of God's love. He came that we might have life and have it in abundance. He spoke and acted in ways that we could understand in order that we might have fellowship with God. While we're acutely aware of just how small our world has become in Japan, the more than 126 million people here without the gospel are only vaguely aware of how small their world is without the love of Christ, that there is goodness beyond what they currently know.

As we close out this year and look to the next, we give thanks for the many people who have helped us over the past year – friends, teachers, colleagues, and strangers. We celebrate the growth we've experienced and our growing comfort in this very different place. We are grateful to you for your amazing support and your many prayers. We've been touched not only by your generosity, but also by the many personal letters and your earnest desire to connect with us and what we're doing here. Thank you. Please continue to pray for us and for the people of Japan. It is our earnest hope that next year, Christmas won't be welcomed as just another workday, but that many Japanese people will welcome it as a day to remember God's tremendous love for us and the abundant life that is found in Him.

Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year!

- Perrin, Jodi, Ellie, and Joanna

What Remains

The "Love Chapter" for parents

By Cindy Sigler Dagnan

If I spend my days building skyscrapers with blocks, assembling cool stuff out of Lego's and creating relationships with other moms at Starbucks, but haven't love, I am only the siren of the kids' ride-on fire truck, annoyingly stuck on hold.

If I have the gift of knowing which child attempted to flush the Hot Wheels down the toilet and which one pushed her sister, and if I have faith that somehow we'll survive life's emergencies, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I save all my box tops for school and give outgrown clothing to the local shelter and if I surrender my body to stretch marks and under-eye circles, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient when someone isn't ready to use the big girl potty.

It is kind when my husband has a hard day. It doesn't envy my neighbor who drives the new sport utility vehicle I can't afford.

It is not rude, snapping at my spouse or children when things

"The greatest of these is love."

1 Corinthians 13:13

don't go my way. It is not easily angered at perceived or real injustices.

It always protects the smallest, sweetest family confidences; always trusts God to provide my children's needs; always hopes in



the freshness of tomorrow and the bright future of family; always perseveres amid hardship and doubt.

Where there are sleepless nights, they shall end. Where there are diapers, Little League and dioramas built from shoeboxes, they will cease. Where there is knowledge of baby-care trends, discipline strategies and boy-girl problems, it will pass away.

Now these three remain: faith, lived out in my daily circumstances and instilled in my children; hope, of one day rejoicing with my family in heaven; and love, which covers over a multitude of less-than-perfect moments.

But the greatest of these is love. It is what remains . . . long after I am gone.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Happy New Year! Deacons Mtng.	2	3 Games Day Cadets GEMS IGNITE	4 Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	5 Council Agenda Items Due <i>Elaine Bandstra's Birthday</i>	6
7 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Aft. Worship Begins	8 Council & Elder Mtngs. <i>Rose Van Woerkom's Birthday</i>	9 Coffee Break p.m.	10 Cadets GEMS IGNITE <i>Arvin Van Engelenhoven's Birthday</i>	11 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	12	13
14 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Homestead	15 Blood Drive  <i>Bert Bandstra's Birthday</i>	16 Coffee Break p.m.	17 Games Day Cadets GEMS IGNITE	18 Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	19	20
21 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School <i>Jim Brummel's Birthday</i>	22 Sew Day Set-Up	23 Sew Day Coffee Break p.m.	24 Cadets GEMS IGNITE	25 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	26 Council Agenda Items Due	27
28 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School	29 Council, Elder & Deacon Mtngs.	30 Coffee Break p.m.	31 Games Day Cadets GEMS & Gents Night IGNITE	<div> <h1>January</h1> </div>		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>February</h1>						
4 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School	5 Love, INC Annual Mtng.	6 Coffee Break p.m.	7 Cadets GEMS IGNITE	8 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break a.m. Love, INC Mtng. <i>Marion Vos' Birthday</i>	9	10
11 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Homestead <i>Betty De Ronde's Birthday</i>	12	13 Coffee Break p.m. <i>Rosemary VV's Birthday</i>	14 Games Day Cadets GEMS IGNITE 	15 Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	16	17
18 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School	19	20 Coffee Break p.m. <i>Mary Ann VK & Dorothy G Birthdays</i>	21 Cadets GEMS IGNITE	22 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break a.m. Love INC Mtng.	23 Council Agenda Items Due	24
25 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School <i>Les Fynaardt's Birthday</i>	26 Friendship Class Council, Elder & Deacon Mtngs.	27 Coffee Break p.m.	28 Games Day Cadets GEMS IGNITE	29 Coffee Break a.m. Love, INC Mtng.		