



And when they had done this,
they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.
Luke 5:6



祈enzler Japan Newsletter #9

Julian und Karolina want to reach students and staff at Japan's universities with God's good news of love and forgiveness, and disciple and accompany them in following Jesus.

Dear family and friends,

12-11-2022

It has now been a little over five weeks since we moved to Kitami. (Note our new address below!) We are very happy that we could have such a slow start here. First we had two weeks reserved for moving and setting up our apartment. After that we had two weeks of vacation. This gave us enough time to explore everything in detail and get a feel for the city. After the strenuous language school time, this slowdown was urgently needed.

A little bit of Japanese

You may have wondered what the red stamp with the characters

天連

on the last page of our letters means. It is modeled on a Japanese name stamp (a so-called *hanko*), which has the same function in Japan as a signature in Europe.



The real stamp we use for documents, uses our name in the Japanese syllabic script (*katakana*), in which it is pronounced TENTSURA. But we have also found some *kanji* characters that can be pronounced like this. So, theoretically we could have written our name also using them. They have a very nice meaning as well:

- 天 (*ten*) – heaven
- 連 (*tsura*) – to go alongside,
to take with you,
to connect to

During our vacation we had the opportunity to tour the beautiful nature around Kitami – what a contrast to the concrete jungle in Sapporo. Here, after ten minutes of cycling, you are in the forest or next to one of those huge onion fields. We took a day trip to the national park on the Shiretoko Peninsula, where you can have a walk around five beautiful lakes. On another day we were at a remote mountain lake, where we saw lonely nature lovers with tents and fishing rods enjoying the silence. On the way there, two gigantic deer and a fox crossed our path.



Excursion to the Shiretoko Peninsula. The mountain range in the background continues eastward into the sea, forming the Kuril Islands.

We cannot convey with words how cared for and provided for we feel by our Heavenly Father. Also, the whole process of moving here and registering at the city hall worked out great. Unlike in Sapporo, in many government offices here you don't have to wait, nor do you have to fill out a tedious form. You can go directly to the counter, and the clerk enters the data directly into the computer. The farewells to the language school and the church in Oasa were also very blessed. We were able on both occasions to give testimonies in Japanese about God's great deeds and guidance in our lives, and to meet many people in person before we left.

Reboot and Time for God

We also spent the first four weeks in Kitami fasting. We wanted to intentionally begin this new stage of life and ministry together with God, and listen which priorities He wants to put on our hearts and in what direction we should go. A few points that he showed us during this precious time of prayer and reflection on his word are:

- The verse from Lk 5:6 „And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking“ together with two important requirements: First, Peter and his helpers did exactly what Jesus told them to do, even though it went totally against their professional experience. Second, the story continues with them immediately leaving their nets and following Jesus. Their focus was not on their big catch, but on Jesus.
- He also made it very clear to us during this time how important it is to take responsibility for places and people he has entrusted to us, as well as, at the right time, to relinquish responsibility again so that these people in turn learn to take responsibility. Without these things, no growth and no maturing as disciples of Jesus is possible.
- As ambassadors of Christ (2Cor 5:20), we too are sent to Kitami to set captives free, open the eyes of the blind, and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the poor (Lk 4:18-19).

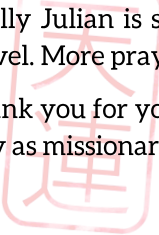
We think these things are not too highly spoken, but are the hard reality that we have to face. At the same time, we are aware that this endeavor is only possible if we live by God's power and from His resources, and do not rely on our own plans. Our request to you, as our supporters and prayer partners, is therefore: Please take Kitami and its inhabitants as a mission for you, too, and take responsibility for them. Every endeavor in the Kingdom of God must be birthed in prayer, and when it is born, bathed in prayer. But we can assure you that since this last time of fasting, indescribable vigor and enthusiasm, but also deep peace have filled our hearts.

Our new Church

Since last Saturday our training at Kitami Megumi Church has officially started. Yesterday we already had our second meeting with Pastor Kitoh. We are glad that he explains everything so carefully to us, and emphasizes again and again that we should start slow and take our time to look at all the activities. So for the first three months we will mainly observe (a very Japanese way of training), and then start preaching, conducting house groups, student meetings and other ministries in February.

Please pray especially for good communication and functioning in Japanese. Especially Julian is still having a hard time getting used to the pastor's Japanese level. More prayer requests will follow in our next prayer update.

We thank you for your prayers and support, and for going alongside us on our journey as missionaries in Japan!



Julian & Karolina

Upcoming events:

28-12-2022	Testimony Service
01-02-2023	Start of our work at Megumi Church

This is how you can support mission in Asia:

- Order our prayer letter (write us an email).
- Become a prayer partner: [Link](#)
- Become part of an OMF team of volunteers close to you: [Link](#)
- Do a short term mission trip with OMF Serve Asia: [Link](#)
- Or does God call you to Asia as a long-term missionary? [Link](#)
- Invite OMF to your church.

Betet für Japan: [Link](#)

Many churches in Japan are without a pastor and about half of all pastors are over 70. Pastor Kitoh will also turn 70 next year and you can see that his age is getting to him. There is no successor in sight. Please pray for a growing awareness for the importance of lived out discipleship in Japan and that more young Christians in Japan will mature to lead others. Becoming a pastor in Japan is a very big step and therefore quite unattractive. Pray that also alternative models of leadership in churches are considered.

Please check out our Telegram channel for photos, videos and stories. (No Telegram account needed)



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