



Happy Advent to you all!

Well, it has been a long time coming. We are finally heading to Japan December 11. It has been quite a journey getting to this place, and there is more still to be worked out. We're going in as tourists for three months, working toward longer term visas. Initially, this will be to develop a relational structure to our future service there. While predominantly serving through and from the Town Tea Garden in Ome, Japan (<http://rosetownjapan.com/>, Facebook: Rose Town Tea Garden), the possibilities for engaging in other outreach and ministry are abundant and exciting.

Since February when we last wrote, we have had an amazing journey. Cathy and I have been ordained as Deacons, and we've been living out the spirit of that ordination. While we have not fully settled in a single community, we have continued to offer ourselves as hands and feet locally in California, as well as having the privilege of taking on some special assignments that God has granted us elsewhere across the country. In the midst of all that, I (Kurt) have continued with my studies and my target date for graduation is this coming June. Over the last 10 months, our hands have been far from idle.



This has been a beautifully rich year spiritually as well, and many of you have been influential in that. A daily rhythm of deeper understanding of God's word through lectio Divina and more deliberate prayer has come through engaging our daily prayer calendar, built through gathering people's favorite scripture verses. Through this we have both found a new richness and purposefulness to our walk. This prayer has included not just those who have shared scripture with us, but also the many people who we are connected to in life. The devotional writing that has come from that may well be published in the near future, as the Lord leads. Continue to let us know your prayer concerns, we will pray for them, and please pray for our decisions for what lies ahead.

Like many of you, this has been a year of joys and losses. We would be remiss if we did not recognize that. The volume of support that we have received in such a variety of ways from many people has been tremendous and for that we are truly grateful. In celebration and sorrow, we also remember those whose lives have had a tremendous impact on ours and their passing reminds us that this is not our permanent home. We believe there is much more joy to come, and in Jesus we should love generously now.

Our current home is idyllic from the outside, and has a stunning view. We live in the top floor of the Tea House where we are currently living, and from that floor we see this lovely bridge. However, this reveals something of the story of Japan. Beneath the outer beauty and pleasantness, there is a deep sense of need. Two days after I took this photo of the bridge, there was a suicide from it. It is our hope that we



might be a light to those who walk in the darkness of depression here. Already we've had a couple of events where we've been able to connect with people and share the good news of God's redeeming love given through Jesus.

Prayer concerns for us currently are:

- ❖ Decisions about visa applications
- ❖ Establishing and assimilating into our best service roles
- ❖ Phone service
- ❖ Arthritis, particularly in Cathy's left hand
- ❖ Language acquisition and application



Life for us has always been a faith venture, and our future season of ministry is yet to be defined. It will continue to be in service. To facilitate that, we have created a mission fund through our home church. If you'd like to partner with us financially, please consider an end-of-year or recurring gift for our mission. Online giving is through <https://fathershouse.net/give>. Use the dropdown menu on that page and identify HELPS Japan as the fund and select recurring or one-time gift. Checks can be mailed to the address for the church at the bottom of that page and include HELPS Japan on the note line. Support can also be given through PayPal and Venmo (purucker51@gmail.com), though we wouldn't be able to offer a tax receipt through them. Our website is soon to be available, information about that is forthcoming. Additionally, updates are posted on the Helps Japan Facebook page, where you can also post your prayer requests. Thank you in advance for your prayers, love, and support.

Make room at the table.

Christ is coming! Christ is here!

A Blessed Christmas to you all,

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