

# Youth In ACTION!

Attachment to the CJM Reporter - Spring 2020

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

Is this heaven? The atmosphere filled with God's presence and the love for one another is the feeling that rushed into my body at the start of 2020 during our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Winter Retreat. The guest speaker was hospitalized a day before the retreat. The moment the news was heard we prayed as a church, and the committee, had to make sudden changes. The Lord brought peace in our hearts as we decided the youth would share their personal experiences. With the limited time, we prayed and prepared the best we could and God blessed the work and time we all put in.

On the second night of the retreat during the session, half of the youth and young adults decided to take a step of faith to dedicate their lives to the Lord. Following this, there was the New Year's Eve countdown worship session. I was given strength hearing the testimonies shared by our youth. I further sensed a strong connection that was being formed amongst them by faith and coming together as one. Praising the Lord.



In 2020, the Australian forest fire, swarming of locusts in East Africa, and the spreading of COVID-19 around the world is exactly what 2 Chronicles 7:13 proclaims. We do not know what will happen with the upcoming events as we are not able to continue services at the church. However, even in the midst of these uncertain times, the youth leaders have decided to continue youth group online. They are putting in extra efforts to share the Word, encouraging and praying for one another. The Word tells us that nothing



can separate us from Jesus. I pray that through the challenges of 2020 the youth will be able to grow in their faith and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:38-39. □

## VICTORIA JAPANESE CHURCH *by Akira & Rika Yasuda—Youth department leaders*

We have a lot to be thankful for, as many students and working holiday young adults, have been attending the church services and the youth meetings. We are also blessed to have a professional graphic designer in our church, who is the young adults' Bible study leader. He made and maintains our website which is usually the way most young people find our church and youth gatherings.

Through the spring rainy season, our monthly Young Adult meetings typically do not involve outdoor activities. Instead, we remain indoors and like to eat - Yup, eat A LOT. It often includes lunch, snacks, dinner and dessert, all in one gathering in the comfort of our pastor's home. They even prepare enough for the youth to take the food home to eat the next day. Of course,



along with this, we enjoy the Bible study and worship songs, which is the main reason for our gatherings.

Though some may say that it is gluttony to eat so much and in excess, we stand firm in the belief that the more we eat, talk and laugh together, the closer our relationships become. We thank the Lord for letting us grow in numbers as well as in faith and love.

One member of our group will be getting baptized this Easter, and four others became official church members this year. During our Bible sessions, we have been studying two series, "The Disciples of Jesus" and "People Who Encountered Jesus". This has been a wonderful series focusing on people who are depicted in the Gospels whose lives were changed since coming in direct contact with Jesus while He walked here on earth. We've been

learning that these lessons can be implemented and experienced in our lives today, because Jesus is just as alive now as he was then. □



# CROSSOVER JAPANESE CHURCH OF CALGARY *by Yuki Tamayama*

## *Christmas Celebration Skit*

The Christmas Celebration at the Crossover Japanese Church of Calgary, this past year, was not the same as the typical service we have each week. We planned a skit, which was a question-and-answers style. Skit members ask some daily life questions about God, and the pastor answers the questions. Through this, everyone was not just a listener, but participants together. The entire service was created in this format, also using Osaka dialect, which added a lot of fun during that service.



It was a great opportunity for me to participate in the skit since I normally just sit on the couch and listen to the pastor's message. However, being part of the skit, I was up front and could view the audience from the

perspective seen by the pastor. It was not as easy as I expected. What I did not foresee as part of the skit was that I had to read the script and remember the phrases, and describe it with some

gestures and practice it over and over. I believe everyone who participated put a great amount of effort into it and was very nervous as I was before it began. It was a brief skit, but it felt much, much longer than it really was. Following that, I gained a greater respect for the pastor who has to prepare, stand before the congregation and deliver his message week after week. It is easy to say that we understand what people are going through. However, we do not truly understand the joy, emotion, pain, or difficulties without experiencing similar circumstances. I am sure that everyone enjoyed that service and learned a lot from the skit not only about God but also how hard it is being a pastor.

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

At the present time, we are enthusiastically planning our annual summer camp. This camp will be an important one for us. Last year, we took a break to re-strategize and refocus our camp ministry. After running a type of ministry for such a long time (decades) with lots directorship and leadership turnover, there are bound to be things that are taken for granted or must be revisited to better serve campers in their contemporary culture context.

We are partnering with a local camp that has been doing camp ministry for a very long time as well. They have managed to survive through a 'dry season' for Christian overnight camps in Ontario by having a great program and even better staff. We are looking forward to learning from them and partnering with them to serve the campers and the by extension, their families. It is a big change that we are talking through with the youth and



*Youth preparing for dinner together before a sleepover at the church building.*

kids. Change is never easy, even more so for children, so we are trying to remind them that some changes are necessary. We can be thankful for the way things were while still aiming to move forward and grow in faith.

Several of our youth leaders have begun the candidate process with OMF and are planning to head to Japan both short and long-term. I pray that their passion for missions and reaching unreached people will cause our own youth to grow in this area as well.

We continually pray that we will be building relationships with each and every youth that we have. Aside from large group meetings, we have been encouraging our leaders to include the youth in various aspects of their life, and allow the youth to see their faith lived out in everyday life. We pray that this type of ministry will help youth make the jump from head knowledge to faith that extends to their heart and hands. □



*Annual trip to Canada by teens affected by the 3/11 Tsunami. Here they are posing with a flag they made to be given to Canada's national rugby team.*