

Second Quarter Report
August,2018

“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word, I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchman for the morning, more than watchman for the morning.”
Psalm 130:5-6

In 1974 when I began my seminary studies at RTS Jackson, I had an interesting part-time job to earn bread and butter for my family. One of my classmates asked me if I was interested in joining him doing some cleaning work in a couple of offices after the offices were closed at night. I took the job and worked with him. The working hours were from about 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight when the offices were completely empty. After several days of working I eagerly waited for midnight when our job would be finished. When I look back upon that experience, I have wondered how often Christians, including myself, yearn and wait for the Lord like the watchman the Psalmist talks about. Indeed, our little congregation also needs to be shown that it is to be desired to yearn for the Lord and learn to hope from the Word of God. As Yamagata Reformed Church expects a great deal of changes in the next few years, such as moving toward joining a Reformed & Presbyterian denomination, looking for a pastor to succeed my ministry, and asking God to help us build a new church building for better expansion of Christ's kingdom in Yamagata, I ask the Lord to teach our people graciously to trust Him in all things and wait for Him as He answers our prayers and rewards our diligent obedience to His Word.

We asked you to pray in my last report for the covenant children in the Yamagata Church. Twelve -year-old Ayumi Sasaki seems to be interested in the idea of coming to profess faith in Jesus publicly. I talked with her encouraging her doing that. She will enter junior high school next spring. It will be a big event for her because junior and senior high schools in Japan demand much from their students in terms of studies and extracurricular activities. As her brothers went on to junior high without making a profession of faith, school activities easily swallowed them up and took them away from being active in church life overshadowing their Christian faith. Please pray that the Lord will keep Ayumi in His strong arms of grace and bring her to a profession of faith in due time. Now as for her oldest brother, 19-year-old Seiji, now in college since this spring, our Young Adult Fellowship has been trying to reach him.

Talking about the Young Adult Fellowship, Shio Yashima (married and expecting her first baby in September) and Nao Muto (student at nursing college) sponsored a BQ fellowship on the first Saturday in July, and 19 people young and old gathered, believers and seekers. Shio and Nao decided since the Y.A.F. is small in number they would invite everybody and anybody for this outdoor activity and share a fun time in the nature God has given us.



Young Adult fellowship with ages 2 from 75!!!
The Blessings of a small pioneer church



From left: Dr. Sasaki with her son Kei, Shinji Sasaki (no relation),
myself & Nao Muto

In the elder training session studying our confessional standard we have covered chapters one through fifteen of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It has been helping to deepen their understanding of biblical teaching on God, Man, Christ and His work of salvation. Please pray for hearty understanding of the confessional standard by Mr. Sasaki and Dr. Yamamoto who are joyfully studying the deeper truths of the Scriptures!

We also mentioned that I had been visiting Tomoko Ota's mother who for two years had been bed-ridden. On Monday, May 1st, Eiko Ota was called home to be with the Lord upon Whom almost till her last breath kept on calling, "Thank you Jesus for today," or "Please ease my pain." Of course, I am in no position to judge her "final spiritual status" when she died; yet I also do not have sufficient reason to doubt her mustard seed size faith. The Lord's timing as always was perfect, for I had visited her just the

day before her death. While she had a breathing problem, she was very conscious and was able to understand me. After praying with her, as I was leaving the house on April 30, I spoke with Tomoko outside the front door advising her to think about what to do while I was to be away on vacation from the end of May till the first week of June. Katie and I had decided earlier in the spring that we would visit our children and the grandkids in New York. Naturally both Tomoko and I were concerned about anything happening while I was gone. As if, however, Mrs. Ota had understood the situation or overheard the conversation, I received a call from Tomoko the next morning telling me that her mother had died early in the morning of that day, May 1st. The funeral service was held the next Sunday evening at which I officiated. The service was filled with many people who are not Christians, so it served as a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel and encourage them with the hope of eternal life in Christ. Because Tomoko is now free from taking care of her mother, she is able to stay for various fellowship opportunities of the church.

We have a new visitor in our fellowship since this April. Mrs. S is a Korean married to a Japanese. Because her mother and sister, who speak no Japanese, came to visit her in May from Korea, she took them to a Korean church in a town adjacent to Yamagata. Then she began coming to our church again since the middle of June. Her husband was baptized when they got married and for a while they went to church. She told me that when they told the pastor there that they wanted to think about joining that church, the pastor refused to allow them to join the church, saying they should go to a Korean church where Korean is used for worship, although she has no problem understanding Japanese. She was hurt by this treatment and her husband felt betrayed by the church and stopped going to services. In April Mrs. S called me on the phone asking me about our church. I found out that her mother church in Korea is a Presbyterian church. She didn't know that there was a Presbyterian church in Yamagata and that's why she went to the other church. At any rate, whatever the circumstances the Lord has seen fit for her to find us. She tells me that the Word of God preached has come straight and impressively into her heart. She also told me that she shares with her husband the messages she hears each Sunday when she goes home. Her husband has not yet come to worship with her, but I am praying the Lord will help him rekindle the small seed of faith he was given when he decided to be baptized. She told me recently that she is considering joining our church and wanted to hear what I thought. I told her we will welcome her with our arms fully open, advising her that rather than hurrying she would take a little more time to become familiar with our church and our people until the Lord gives her the conviction that this is where she wants to serve Him. They own a restaurant which is open on Sunday. This aspect of their life demands certain adjustment which they will need work out. Please pray for Mrs. S and her husband.

We had our annual VBS on July 27th and 28th. Every year till 2017 we had a three-day session but due to lack of man power as well as number of children expected to attend, we had made a two-day VBS. The first day we had only one student, 7-year-old Rei from Ireland, grandson of our member, Mrs. Suzuki. Rei doesn't speak much Japanese. But the Lord brought more children the next day. Seven children gathered with some of their parents. The theme for this year's VBS was "One Lost Sheep ~ No One Can Take Your Place." Shio Yashima was the Bible teacher, with her mother, Mrs. Akiho and Katie as helpers. The children heard of God's sacrificial love in looking for His lost sheep. They also learned some Bible verses from Matthew 18 and Psalm 23, some good hymns, watched a Bible story DVD and played some Bible games. A small project it was; yet lots of effort was made by Shio, Mrs. Akiho and Katie which we are very sure will not be in vain because it is promised in God's own Word:



The Children, Mothers and Teachers at VBS 2018



Mrs. Akiho teaching the children how to weave a sheep's face

As for our health situation, I have had several polyps removed from my colon; fortunately, none was malignant. Other than that, both of us while here and there are getting nearer to "beyond consumption date," so to speak, the Lord has been good in giving us what we need to keep on doing His service.

Prayer Requests:

- 1 That the Lord will continue blessing our three men who are elected officers, but under training for ordination.
- 2 That the Lord will provide Yamagata Reformed Church with funds for a new building that we may bring in more people. In this regard, we have saved up almost half of our projected building cost. We hope to come up with a final building plan and budget by October of 2019 when the Government changes the consumption tax. Please pray that the Lord will bless our plan and help us come with what we need to build a new church in the near future.
- 3 That the Lord will help our people to reach out to the younger generation
- 4 That the Lord will pour mercy upon the covenant children who are away from our close fellowship.
- 5 That seekers, Mrs. Nakamura, Mrs. Kanaya, and Mr. Tada will be brought to

professing faith in Christ soon.

Your servant for Christ's sake in Yamagata Japan,

Kazuhiko (Kaz) Yaegashi

OPC Japan Mission Missionary & Ministerial Member of the PCA
Presenting the report to:
The Presbytery of MS Valley of the PCA
The Committee on Foreign Missions of the Ohio Presbytery of the OPC
The Committee for the Support of Japan Mission
The Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC General Assembly