

NAJO Report 2022

Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto

It has been almost 13 years since Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto came as missionaries from Japan to the Great Lakes Conference (GLC). The Miyamotos, the GLC, and the Detroit area churches, formed North American Japanese Outreach or NAJO to share God's love and Good News among the many thousands of Japanese living in the GLC. NAJO is based at Faith Covenant Church, Farmington Hills, MI, where many of the ongoing ministry events occur. Some of these events include Conversational English Class, American Cooking Class including, Thanksgiving food demonstration, Bible Study (in person and over Zoom), and a variety of crafting classes. 2020 and 2021 saw a decline in ministry due to the Covid pandemic as many of the Japanese here in the GLC who worked for the Japanese auto companies returned home. However, 2022 saw a number of Japanese families return to the Detroit area. In late winter and early spring, the Miyamotos and Faith Covenant Church hosted several special events:

- Feb. 14 - Open House/Valentine's party at the Miyamoto's- This was a meal with over 15 Japanese and Faith Covenant Church members.
- March 31 - Easter Luncheon at the Miyamoto's- There were 12 Japanese adults and 14 kids plus six Faith Covenant Church members. Pastor Mike shared an Easter message.
- April 17 - Easter Sunday - Eight Japanese families attended the service at Faith Covenant Church. Between services many kids had the opportunity to hunt for Easter eggs.

The Miyamotos returned to Japan for a 2-month summer mission trip from 5/22 - 7/18. Shunichi spoke at six venues; he and Masako were overjoyed to see God's work- six new believers, 18 people who returned to the faith, and 17 people who rededicated their lives. One of the highlights of the trip included a reunion in Nagoya for Michigan returnees (Japanese that gave their lives to Christ through NAJO while in the US). Everyone enjoyed a great time of fellowship, talking about church, old memories, and the realities of life back in Japan. Another highlight was participating in a 5-part workshop of a Japanese translation of "BLESS", the discipleship training program from the ECC. They were able to put chapter 3 (eating together) into practice by hosting a potluck with a family from the Japan Covenant Church.



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After the Miyamotos returned to the US, it was time to start looking forward to the fall. In September, ESL classes (renamed “Friends ESL”) restarted at the church. The ESL students were offered more than just the opportunity to learn English but were also given the opportunity to join a Bible study, make American foods like apple pie, and have a fun Thanksgiving dinner while learning about American culture.

In December, two Japanese women professed their faith and become Christians. It was a long, slow process over Zoom, but finally in their last meeting with the Miyamotos, the ladies understood the true love of Christ and believed. Hallelujah!

NAJO and the mission and ministry of Shunichi and Masako Miyamoto stay the same, but the people that are ministered to are always changing as expats come and go. NAJO and the Miyamotos are grateful for God and for the support of the GLC churches that have made this ministry possible.

