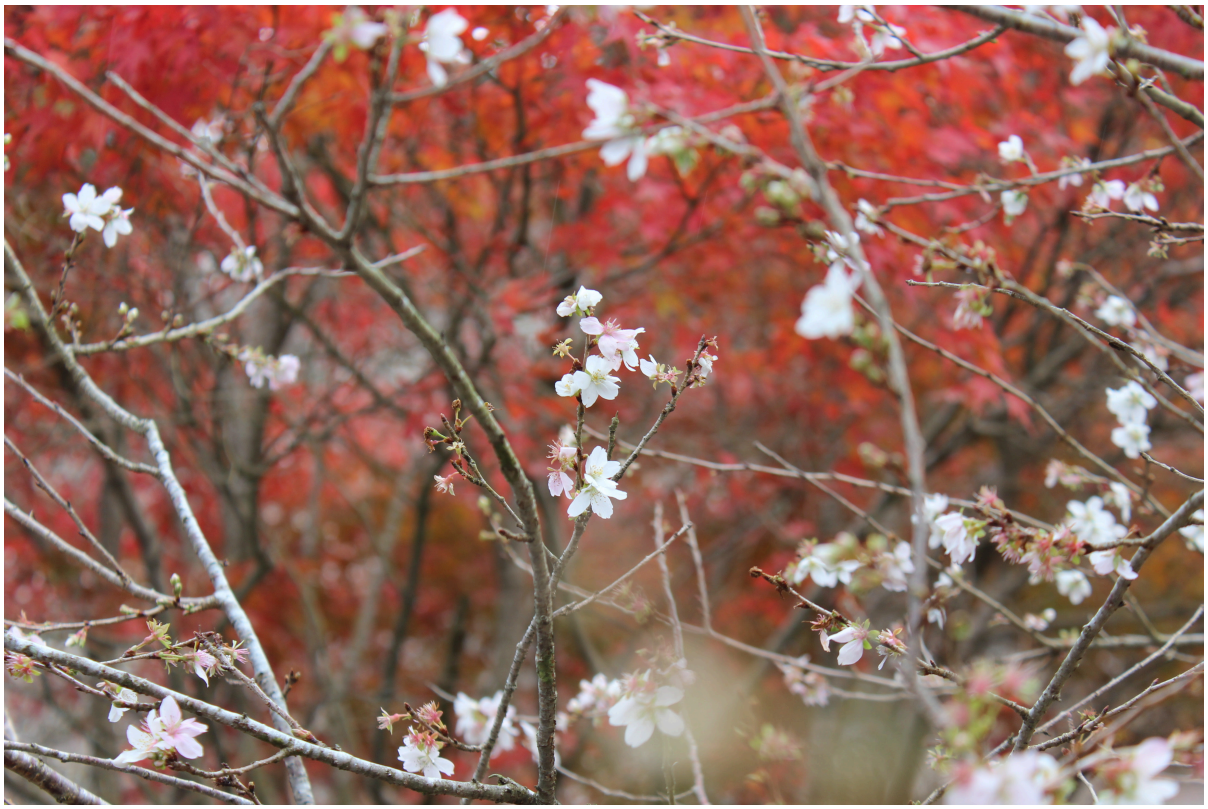

Robert and Lisa Stewart

Serving with Mission to the World in Japan

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A Season of Thanksgiving

One of the beautiful things about autumn in Japan is the appearance of the *akizakura*, or "autumn cherry blossoms." These delicate flowers bloom as the leaves are changing colors and falling from the trees. It is a beautiful reminder of the creativity of our God, who continually brings new life and beauty in unexpected places.

As we approach Thanksgiving, we have so much to be grateful for. This November, we want to share one particular reason for thanksgiving: the Lord's provision of a new pastor for Nisshin Christ Church!



Giving Thanks for the Uechi Family

This October, at the meeting of the Chubu Presbytery (Presbyterian Church of Japan), Kazuya "Kaji" Uechi was officially ordained as a minister of the gospel. After many years of preparation through seminary training and the ordination process, Kaji is now ready to begin a new chapter of ministry. He will be installed as the pastor of Nisshin Christ Church this December.

Kaji and his wife, Ayumi, first came to know Christ through the college ministry of Nisshin Christ Church. They were married in the church, and over the years, Nisshin Christ Church has been an important part of their spiritual growth and development. Through his years of serving as an intern, God has been preparing Kaji for pastoral ministry.

We are especially thankful for Kaji's energy, enthusiasm, and leadership. He has a genuine love for the church and a desire to see the gospel take root in the lives of people throughout our community. We are grateful for those who have walked alongside Kaji and his family,

encouraging them and supporting them throughout this long journey.

What a wonderful picture of what we long to see happen throughout Japan! We want to see young people come to faith in Christ, grow into mature Christian men and women, establish Christian families, serve faithfully in their workplaces, and some of them be raised up as pastors and leaders in the Japanese church. Kaji and his family are a wonderful testimony to God's faithfulness.



Why This Is Such an Important Milestone?

Nisshin Christ Church was started by missionaries and has been led by a missionary pastor for the past 30 years. Kaji's installation this December marks an important transition: for the first time, the church will have a Japanese pastor, serving alongside a Japanese session (the church's elders).

This is about more than simply changing pastors. It represents years of investment in the lives of Japanese believers and the development of a church that is increasingly able to lead and sustain its own ministry.

This transition also allows our missionary team to invest more intentionally in other areas of ministry. We can continue to work alongside Kaji to strengthen Nisshin Christ Church while also investing in college ministry, discipling young believers, and helping establish other churches throughout the Nagoya area. We are excited to see how the Lord will use this new season in the life of the church.



Praying for the Next Generation of Japanese Pastors

(Back left to front right: Church Elder Mr. Yabahara, Hayato Tomita, Yu Sunagawa, Kaji Uechi, Atsushi Kabeya)

Kaji isn't the only one! Nisshin Christ Church is also helping three other pastoral interns work through the ordination process as they prepare for future pastoral ministry. At that same October presbytery meeting, all three were approved to advance to the next stage of their preparation. Each is at a different point in the process, with one having completed three years, another two years, and another just beginning.

Please pray for these men as they continue through what is often a long and demanding process. Pray that God will sustain them, provide for their families, and give them wisdom and perseverance. Pray also for the financial and ministry partners who will come alongside them. We are thankful that our team has the opportunity to be part of this work of preparing and encouraging the next generation of Japanese pastors.

With Thankful Hearts

Dear Friends,

Ministry is often the work of many years, and many people, before we see the fruit. We are thankful for God's faithfulness, for the Nisshin Christ Church members who are growing and serving, and for the missionaries and supporters who have faithfully invested in this work.

Just as the autumn flowers remind us of God's creativity and the beauty of His creation, we are reminded that He is also at work bringing new life through the gospel. What a privilege it is to be part of His work of redemption!

We have so much to be thankful for, and we know you do too. May the Lord continue to work in each of us, wherever He has called us, as we seek to make His kingdom known.

Happy Thanksgiving!

With gratitude,

Robert and Lisa

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Thinking of becoming a ministry partner? Click the link below!

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