

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

Last time, we shared with you about how the church was able to shut down its in-person activities shortly before the government declared a state of emergency for the entire country.

Starting Again

The prefecture of Okinawa ended up being in that state of emergency for just over one month. On May 14th, the prefecture cancelled the state of emergency after having had zero new coronavirus cases for 2 weeks. There are now no active cases on our island, and we have been without a new coronavirus case since the beginning of May.

We've heard it is said that the Asian strain of coronavirus might be less virulent than the European strain, which is prevalent in North America. Based on our experiences, we can't help thinking that perhaps this is true.

In-person church services recommenced on May 17th, with a variety of precautionary measures in place. However, we'd seen such a great response to our online services from both the church and community that Higa sensei requested that we continue filming the services for now, making them available on the Seaside Chapel YouTube channel.



Peter editing the sound for one of our online church services

During Shutdown

During shutdown, we tried out several different ideas for online ministry. We created demonstration materials for each idea, and then floated them to several people within the appropriate demographic. Some of them were successful; some weren't. (Please see the next page for some of the things we tried.)

One new endeavour was our online cooking club, which has ended up being successful beyond anything we expected. It took us a long time to create and edit all the content, and the state of emergency actually ended before we were done. However, we decided to go ahead with this idea anyway because with continuing coronavirus concerns it will be a while before we are able to invite 20-30 people into our 450 square foot apartment again.

We're hoping to accomplish a few different things by continuing cooking club in an online context. We hope that this will help us to continue relationships with the people who normally come to cooking club, especially those with whom our relationships were just starting. We're also hoping that as people share the videos with their friends, many new friends will be open to coming out to cooking clubs and outreach events in the future.

"IT WAS A LOVELY VIDEO! I WAS SO DEPRESSED BY THE SELF-RESTRAINT OF CORONAVIRUS, BUT I FOUND THIS VIDEO VERY HEALING. IT WAS SO CUTE THAT I WATCHED IT THREE TIMES AND TOOK NOTES!"

– Penelope, one of our neighbour friends

Interesting Facts



Business Culture

Japanese business culture tends to be paper-intensive. Before coronavirus, most people did not have computers at home.



New Furniture Needed!

In Tokyo during the coronavirus state of emergency, desks were sold out! Everyone was buying them so that they could work from home.



"Signature" Stamps

Many businesses use special stamps (called *hanko*) to "sign" documents. This means that employees are required to sign documents in person, and during the emergency it was difficult for many people to work from home.

Successful:**ONLINE CHURCH SERVICES**

Based on the YouTube statistics, our advertising worked; quite a number of people from our community watch these as well.

ONLINE COOKING CLUB

In the first YouTube video, we shared the recipe for Valerie's famous chocolate chip cookies!

VIDEOS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

We celebrated events like birthdays and Mother's Day by sharing custom-made videos with everyone through the church's private chat.

10-MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE PRAYER MEETINGS

Via telephone, Valerie was able to pray weekly with several ladies who had never previously attended a prayer meeting! This continues even now!

Unsuccessful:**VIRTUAL ESL CLASSROOM**

Most students don't own computers/tablets, and many don't have internet at home, so a virtual classroom didn't work.

**VIRTUAL CHOIR**

Many were nervous at being filmed, and were also reluctant to use an animated virtual choir. After taking "what I love about mom" clips for Mother's Day, people seemed more comfortable with filming themselves. They might have been open to trying a virtual choir if the state of emergency had continued.

**VIRTUAL PRAYER MEETINGS**

For one reason or another, several ladies who had attended in-person prayer meetings before were resistant to having virtual prayer meetings (i.e., with video) or even praying over the telephone.



Already, most of our friends and contacts have shared the first video with at least one other person, and we keep being approached by people raving about it.

The quote by our friend Penelope (see above) is just one example of similar sentiments expressed by several people. We can't help being amazed to see that the Holy Spirit seems to have infused this video with His peace and presence, even though on the surface it has nothing to do with anything spiritual. We're thrilled to see God using even something as simple as a cooking club video to soothe people's spirits, and help them to feel loved and cared for.

Contact Information**Thank You!**

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us.

Correspondence can be sent to:

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On a separate note or on the enclosed response card indicate: **Ministry-Peter & Valerie Limmer**. Donations can also be made on-line by accessing the QR code.