

## Japan Update – Gerald and Rie Neufeld – April 2025



Olive tree in front of the Anabaptist Center

Warm greetings from Tokyo! Thank you so much for your support and prayers. God is at work in our lives. 2025 is the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism. It seems that commemorative meetings are being held all over the world. Have you had any meetings scheduled in your area?

We continue to visit the five Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite churches (TAFMC) where Gerald speaks, and Rie often plays piano. We'd like to acknowledge the retirement of Pastor Inamine and his wife Hiroko of the Minuma Church. At age 86, he's been struggling due to illness. With his



retirement, the few remaining church members decided it's time to close the church. He is one of the pioneer leaders in TAFMC. The Mennonite pastors have limited salaries, small house churches, and hardly any pension provided. This is typical of many churches in Japan where Christians are less than 1% of the population. The story continues. We are thankful that for the churches planted by Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. We're here to work together. Please remember the aging leadership in your prayers.



Music practice with Misato at the Center

Thank you for your donations and prayers for the Anabaptist Center renovations! By the end of last year, the total amount donated was the equivalent of about 89,300 dollars! We feel that many people share similar expectations and vision for the work of

the Center as a place to connect people. It is a great blessing that the Center can now be used to host guests. People have stayed overnight for church retreats, and an international student from Hong Kong is now staying for two years. We continue to work at fixing things up both outside and inside with the aim to become an Anabaptist centre that can be used comfortably. Please visit us when you are in Tokyo!



Hosting Misato church's annual retreat



At the monthly Lay-leader Training, we have had the opportunity to learn from a variety of speakers, including retired Anabaptist/Mennonite professors. Since we do not have any Mennonite schools, people have found this to be a very valuable opportunity to learn theology. Most recently, Gordon Zerbe, a New Testament professor from Canadian Mennonite University, gave a series of presentations teaching about each of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. We always have a lively discussion during these sessions, and many are excited to learn new areas as we dig deeper into the bible. These days, other sessions include updates on Ukraine and Gaza by MCC



Lay-leader training

representatives, and a three-part series on the first chapters of Genesis by Professor Dan Epp-Tiessen.



International Christian University peace workshop

Some of the students were interested in learning more about Mennonite perspectives on peacebuilding. They were very interested in Jesus' words about loving enemies, as well as Christian perspectives on forgiveness. I think it was good to get to know the university staff and make new connections beyond TAFMC. As we build relationships, our ministry becomes richer.

Every Saturday morning, members of our family volunteer to participate in an outdoor chapel at Yoyogi park. This is organised by an ecumenical Christian group. Worship services are held early on Saturday mornings, and food and various items are provided for people living on the street. Honancho Church has been supporting this ministry for many years. More than 100 people join the group each week.



Outdoor chapel at Yoyogi park

### Participation through Donations

TAFMC is grateful to partner with Mennonite Church Canada International Witness who supports us in many ways. Most of the financial support needs to come through donated funds. Donations, whether they are one-time or monthly, and especially your prayers are greatly appreciated.

One supporter writes:

*"I'm grateful for the dedication of Gerald and Rie to this ministry. Although my monthly support is modest, I pray it will help to support their good work and encourage them."*

You can help strengthen the Japan ministry. Please contribute through the Mennonite Church Canada website at <https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/japan>, or you can send an E-transfer to <mailto:finance@mennonitechurch.ca> and designate funds to the "Japan Ministry."

We have a prayer request for our daughter Rena, age 24. She's searching for a place to live, this fall, as she continues to study Naturopathy in New Westminster, BC.

Thank you for all your support. Blessings in Christ!

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