

Pray with Japan Sunday, October 11, 2020

BY [MARTHA MENSENDIEK](#) ON OCTOBER 05, 2020

Lectionary Selection: Philippians 4:1-9

Prayers for Japan:

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Loving God, in the midst of the long-lasting pandemic we pray for the people of the world, especially those who are most vulnerable, those who are grieving, those who have lost jobs, or hope for the future. Inspire our church to embody the Coptic model of resilience, to remain stalwart in the face of calamities and idols both natural and man-made. Let us be led by the example of our Egyptian partners, and help them lead us to you, oh God. Give us the strength to hold our neighbor in this storm.



We pray for those who are blamed for having caught the virus or shunned because a family member has. Let us not let the spread of blaming or shaming add more suffering.

We pray for the leaders of the nations, that they will put politics aside to save lives and uphold democracy at this critical time.

We pray for guidance to keep hope alive, knowing that your Peace surpasses all understanding. Let us continue to do what we have learned through you oh God, to be grateful for what we have received, to continue to pay attention to what we have heard and seen in you, God, in order to make your Peace a reality. In the name of the Christ, Amen



Mission Stewardship Moment from Japan:

Japan may seem to be a country where the cases of COVID-19 have not been so alarming. However, Japan, too, has some aspects of this pandemic that are of particular concern. One issue that seems especially particular to Japan is the blame placed on people who contracted the virus and the shame that is placed on family members. Early on in March, when it became evident that several students of a college in Kyoto were found to have tested positive, there was criticism directed toward the University, leading to a public apology. Some stores and restaurants in the area posted signs asking students and faculty of the University to stay away. Some of my ac-

quaintances who contracted the virus say that more than the physical suffering from being sick, the feeling of shame and social ostracism was a more painful experience. This is in line with traditional Japanese culture that is often explained as being driven by shame, but none-the-less very concerning.

The Bazaar Café (our partner church’s coffee house ministry) was started 22 years ago to minister to those ostracized by society. At that time, the discrimination faced by HIV positive individuals was a concern we faced. Now the discrimination of those who have contracted Covid19 feels all too familiar. The Bazaar Café is committed to keeping a safe environment by practicing procedures known to prevent the spread of the virus. But we are also committed to keeping people from being isolated and helping them be connected, respected, and accepted in community.

