

February 2026

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” Luke 19:10

Packing and moving

To prepare for the return to the UK, we will soon move (along with all our belongings) into the church apartment. **Praise God** for the time we've been given to pack everything. **Please pray** for minimal stress as we throw some things away and put others in boxes.

Relationships in the Church

We are currently praying and meeting with church members who are dealing with past hurt in their relationships with one another. The culture in Japan means that people are very keen to avoid conflict (sometimes even at the cost of wanting to leave the church before addressing something face to face).

Please pray that these two church members will be fully reconciled and will forgive one another. Please pray for wisdom for us in applying the teaching of the Bible, and in praying for and advising these members.

The First Wedding at Hanamaki Grace Church

Praise God that, on Sunday, we held our first wedding at the church. The couple are Filipino and American church members who work locally as language teachers. They will hold a bigger celebration in the Autumn when their family can all come to Japan.

Praise God for a really happy day where all the church members came together to serve this couple. **Please pray** for this young international couple to bring glory to God in their new life together. **Please pray** that, as a church, we can support them well going forward.

Handing over Leadership of the Church

Thank you for praying for the leadership handover. From February the 15th, Mark handed over the day to day running of the church to the Eldership Board. **Please pray** that they will quickly get used to the regular tasks that need to be done. **Please pray** for creative solutions where they feel change is needed. **Please pray** that Rachel (our missionary colleague who will be in Hanamaki while we are away) will not end up feeling the pressure to take on too many extra jobs.

Plans for Home Assignment

Praise God for the opportunity to share about the work in Hanamaki whilst in the UK. We are now preparing these talks. **Please pray** for us to prepare engaging and informative talks. **Please pray** for interest at the churches, conferences and OMF events where we will be speaking. **Please pray** that we can meet lots of people interested in becoming missionaries themselves and encourage them on their journeys.

As well as speaking engagements, we are looking forward to getting to know the church members at Broadwater in Worthing (where we'll be staying from June). **Please pray** for a happy and encouraging time among them.

We are thankful for the chance to undertake some study in the coming months (Japanese language and some pastoral training) as well as enjoying a more restful schedule than in Japan. **Please pray** for useful training and a good chance to rest and reflect on the past few years of ministry.

A Visit from Friends in Japan

Praise God that Mark's Japanese friend "Y" is able to visit the UK at the moment and meet Isaac and Sarah's parents. Y has visited the church in Hanamaki and heard the gospel. Please pray for good witness towards him as he is in the UK.

Our Children

Praise God that Isaac arrived safely in the UK last week. **Please pray** for him as he settles into UK life and continues studying for his exams.

Praise God that one of our supporters was able to visit Caleb in Hebron this month. **Please continue to pray** for Caleb to feel settled and peaceful in India.

Praise God that Grace is continuing to enjoy University life. **Please pray** for God's guidance for her as she thinks about the future.

The Gelsthorpes – working for OMF leading a church plant in rural, northern Japan.
mark.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com sarah.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com

February 2026

“For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” Luke 19:10

Thank you so much again for praying for us!

With love from Mark, Sarah, Grace, Isaac and Caleb



Isaac's Farewell Sunday

Isaac Leaving Hanamaki



**The Gelsthorpes – working for OMF leading a church plant in rural, northern Japan.
mark.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com sarah.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com**