

January 2026

“Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.” Revelation 15:3

Happy New Year!

Handing over to the Church Elders

Praise God that Mark has now had his last meeting with the church eldership before Mark and Sarah leave in mid-March. This will give the eldership a chance to run the church from mid-February while Mark is still in Hanamaki to support them if necessary. **Please pray** for good organisation and wisdom for them as they take over lots of responsibilities. **Please pray** for church members to grow in their faith and for many people to continue to hear the gospel while we are away.

YWAM team

Praise God for the international team of 10 people from YWAM (Youth with a Mission) who stayed in Hanamaki for 10 days in mid January. They were able to hold a craft cafe and a cultural exchange event as well as delivering lots of tracts and helping with practical jobs around the church. This year, we have lots of snow so appreciated their help with snow shoveling.

Please pray that all the people who heard the gospel through their ministry will think carefully about Jesus and be saved. They are now in Aomori (to the north of us) supporting a church there. **Please pray** for fruitful ministry for them.

“I believe. I’m just not a Christian yet”

Praise God for M, a lady in her early twenties who started coming to worship services recently. When the YWAM team were here, Nathan from the Philippines had a long chat with her about faith using a translation app on his phone. Her interest in Christianity comes from her time at a local Christian Highschool and she said that she believes but hasn’t become a Christian yet. She is also open to doing bible study. **Please pray** that she will study the Bible and will decide to follow Jesus.

Handing over Bible studies and 1-to-1 English meetings

In order to prepare for returning to the UK, most of our church commitments will finish on February the 15th. Therefore, we are planning with church members and Rachel (our missionary colleague here) how we can continue our 1-to-1 English and Bible study meetings. **Please pray** for good solutions and willing volunteers to take on these good opportunities to share the gospel. **Please pray** that new relationships will be a blessing and not a hindrance to people’s journey towards believing in Jesus.

Fellowship Group and Fellowship Meetings

Outside of the Sunday service, we hold two kinds of fellowship meetings in our church. Every church member is in a fellowship group and these meet once a month after the church service for sharing and praying together. There is also a Bible study or prayer meeting every week on a Tuesday night.

Praise God for our opportunities to study, reflect and pray together. **Please pray** for a growing desire to share and pray amongst everyone in the church. **Please pray** that we can be quick to forgive, open to share and gracious with one another.

Our Preparations for Home Assignment

On March the 18th/19th, Mark will travel to the UK and Sarah will travel to India for two weeks for Caleb’s school mid-term break. **Please pray** for safe travels and for us to quickly settle into the UK. From mid-February, we will be preparing talks for Home Assignment and packing up our belongings. The house we are in at the moment will be sold soon so we will move all of our things into the church apartment temporarily. **Please pray** for efficient work and low levels of stress (this will be the first time we’ve had to pack up our things before Home Assignment).

Grace, Isaac and Caleb

Praise God for good family time over Christmas and New Year and for safe travelling.

Grace is now in her second year in Southampton studying Music with Psychology. **Please pray** for her to grow in her faith as she serves in church and CU and for her study to be blessed. Isaac is studying for A-Levels in Maths and Physics which he will take in the summer (he returns to the UK in mid-February). **Please pray** for good focus for him and for helpful times with his online tutor. Caleb returned to school at Hebron (India) in mid-January and is missing home and the snow. **Please pray**

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for him to settle into the new term well and for help with his studies as he is still catching up on some of the first term's material.

Financial Support in 2025

Thank you so much for all your generous support in 2025. **Praise God** that we were able to receive 92% of our financial needs from donors during the year. **Please pray** that God will provide all our needs in the coming year.

Thank you so much again for praying for us!

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



Christmas



YWAM Team

The Gelsthorpes – working for OMF leading a church plant in rural, northern Japan.
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Caleb at Hebron



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