

AMP 7-26-15 | 9:00 - 9:30am

Today's Service

- That God would draw unsaved people to our service, and into his kingdom.
- That Pastor Jon would preach in God's power as he preaches a topical series: Questioning Jesus that will cover various texts from the four Gospels and will work through the questions people ask Jesus and the questions Jesus asks people.
- That God's presence would be palpable and that all in attendance would be changed by the goodness, power, and love of God.

RPC Outreach

- That we the people of RPC would desire to be a word and deed church.
- That God would open up great and lasting opportunities of community service for RPC.
- That the congregational meeting on September 13th will be well attended. We will be voting to ordain Tom Harmon as an elder, voting to install a pastor, and voting to petition Presbytery to become a particular church of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Regional Church

- Pray for the other churches of our presbytery: Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Jonathan Holst (Hamden, CT); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bohemia, Meindert Ploegman (Bohemia, NY); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, William Shishko (Franklin Square, NY), Trinity Church, Ben Miller (Syosset, NY), Westchester Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dan Osborne (Mt. Vernon, NY).

Japan | Basic Country Facts:



Operation World Denomination Statistics

Christians	Deno ms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	155	0.44	555,000	-1.1%
Independent	37	0.25	317,000	0.9%
Anglican	1	0.04	57,000	0.0%
Catholic	1	0.40	513,000	0.2%
Orthodox	2	0.03	32,000	1.5%
Marginal	8	0.38	484,000	-0.3%

Ethnic Breakdown: Japanese 98.5%, Koreans 0.5%, Chinese 0.4%, other 0.6%

Major Languages: Japanese

Religion: Shintoism 79.2%, Buddhism 66.8%, Christianity 1.5%, other 7.1% NOTE: total adherents exceeds 100% because many people practice both Shintoism and Buddhism (2012 est.)

Population: 126,919,659 (July 2015 est.)

Life Expectancy: male: 81.4 years female: 88.26 years (2015 est.)

Government: a parliamentary government with a constitutional monarchy.

Economic Conditions: In the years following World War II, government-industry cooperation, a strong work ethic, mastery of high technology, and a comparatively small defense allocation (1% of GDP) helped Japan develop an advanced economy. Two notable characteristics of the post-war economy were the close interlocking structures of manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors, known as keiretsu, and the guarantee of lifetime employment for a substantial portion of the urban labor force. Both features are now eroding under the dual pressures of global competition and domestic demographic change. Scarce in many natural resources, Japan has long been dependent on imported raw materials. Measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis that adjusts for price differences, Japan in 2014 stood as the fourth-largest economy in the world after second-place China, which surpassed Japan in 2001, and third-place India, which edged out Japan in 2012. While seeking to stimulate and reform the economy, the government must also devise a strategy for reining in Japan's huge government debt, which amounts to more than 230% of GDP. Led by the Bank of Japan's aggressive monetary easing, Japan is making progress in ending deflation, but demographics - low birthrate and an aging, shrinking population - pose major long-term challenges for the economy.

GDP Per Capita: \$37,700 (2014 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin: agriculture: 1.2% industry: 24.5% services: 74.3% (2013 est.)

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Education: Primary schools, secondary schools and universities were introduced in 1872 as a result of the Meiji Restoration. Since 1947, compulsory education in Japan comprises elementary and middle school, which together last for nine years (from age 6 to age 15). Almost all children continue their education at a three-year senior high school, and, according to the MEXT, as of 2005 about 75.9 percent of high school graduates attended a university, junior college, trade school, or other higher education institution.

State of the Church: Japan has full religious freedom based on Article 20 of its Constitution. Upper estimates suggest that 84–96 percent of the Japanese population subscribe to Buddhism or Shinto, including a large number of followers of a syncretism of both religions. However, these estimates are based on people affiliated with a temple, rather than the number of true believers. Other studies have suggested that only 30 percent of the population identify themselves as belonging to a religion. According to Edwin Reischauer and Marius Jansen, some 70–80% of the Japanese do not consider themselves believers in any religion.

Nevertheless, the level of participation remains high, especially during festivals and occasions such as the first shrine visit of the New Year. Taoism and Confucianism from China have also influenced Japanese beliefs and customs. Japanese streets are decorated on Tanabata, Obon and Christmas. Fewer than one percent of Japanese are Christian. Other minority religions include Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Judaism, and since the mid-19th century numerous new religious movements have emerged in Japan.

Prayer Points:

- Japan is a nation facing many crises and is a culture with no apparent direction. Accompanying this drifting is its lack of hope or confidence in the future. Pray for the following issues, all profoundly felt by Japanese society:
 - a) A lack of a moral centre. Japan's own leaders called it "a superpower without a moral compass". This is most notable among young people, who struggle with particular challenges such as social phobia or social anxiety (Hikikomori), a suicide epidemic (over 30,000/year), bullying and teenage prostitution. High rates of suicide in other age groups and divorce also reflect this challenge.
 - c) Major economic transitions. The world's third-largest economy, rocked by recessions in recent years, stands at a crossroads. The job-for-life salarymen are becoming outdated, and the younger generation is uninterested in the type of lifelong commitment that forged Japan into an economic giant. Lack of natural resources, increasingly competitive high-tech markets and demographic changes make for an uncertain economic future. The inability (or unwillingness) of many of the younger generation, even well-educated ones, to get full-time career jobs is another recent phenomenon. (OW 1)
- Spiritual openness is mitigated by hindrances to the gospel. There are several ways in which the eyes of the Japanese are blinded to the good news:
 - a) The spiritual powers and principalities that exercise authority in Japan have never been decisively challenged. The powers associated with idolatry in temples and ancestor worship in homes prevail, even in modernistic, "non-religious" Japan. Japanese Christians face notable social and family pressures to conform to Shinto practices, particularly at the New Year and during funerals. Additionally, too many Christians are either ignorant or in denial of the very real spiritual battle.
 - b) The Bible is alien to the worldview of the Japanese – the concept of a Creator God is foreign to most. Strong pressure to conform to the norm causes many new believers to compromise or eventually fall away. The shame/honour mentality held by many Japanese is a different paradigm from that of most missionaries to Japan. Christians new and old must be disciplined to have their entire worldview transformed. (OW 2)
- Specific challenges facing the Church:
 - a) Christianity is still regarded as an outside, Western religion rather than a universal faith with the capacity to be truly Japanese. This is despite 500 years of Christian presence in Japan. This also allows for confusion between various Western cultural imports and genuinely Christian expressions of the good news.
 - f) Non-active membership and backsliding. Church attendance is low; less than half of church members regularly attend. Often, Christians are influenced by the Buddhist/Shinto religions, which have no regular attendance requirements, and they carry this thinking into Christian activities. Although evangelicals number up to 0.5% of the population, regular Protestant church attendance may be less than half of that.
 - g) Too few viable, active congregations. At least 70% of all churches have an average attendance of less than 30. Too much is expected of the pastor. Pray for pastors willing to activate lay people to engage in persistent, innovative outreach to non-Christians. Most churches will not have even one baptism in any given year!
 - h) The lack of men in churches. The drive for success and desire to satisfy the demands of employers make it hard for men to openly identify with and become active in a church. On average, women attenders outnumber men 7 to 1. (OW 4)