

# Land of the Risen Son

## イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

Dear Friends and Family,

Christmas is once more at our door, and seasonal preparations are underway: designing Christmas cards in a land where you can't just pick up a set from a stationary shop, setting up our tree, and of course taking some time to send you each a message, stuff your cards, and remember you fondly.

This year hasn't gone the way that any of us expected—and Peter and I started off the year with very few expectations indeed! January saw us still back in Canada, coming to the end of the therapy necessary for healing from our psychological wounds. We began to feel ready to return to Japan as the month's end neared. When we prayed about this, God was very specific in telling us exactly which week He wanted us to fly back. We obediently booked our tickets, but wouldn't realize how precisely He'd orchestrated everything until a few weeks after our return.



Picnic in the park

God had one other preparatory message for us around that time. "Valerie," He said while I was having devotions one morning, "the ministry I give you when you return will be very different from the one you used to have. Don't be distressed. I have a plan."

We left when there were just a few coronavirus cases in Western Canada. The week before was Chinese New Year, a high time for air travel to and from Asia. The week after, coronavirus cases in Japan began to ramp up. Within two weeks, Japanese schools closed down for the first time. Though we would have normally been quite distressed at the way our ministries seemed to be falling apart, we were able to mentally let go of them very quickly. God's message enabled us to be excited about the future, and released us from focussing on what was lost so that we could instead apply our energy to being creative.

As the church navigated the first wave, God used us and a few other key people to shut down services ahead of the government's emergency declaration announcement. This gave us the chance to advertise our love and concern to people in our community. Having a certain set of technical skills that no one else in the church possessed, we were able to also support the church in holding video services through the coronavirus shutdowns. These services continued even in times when shutdowns were not in effect because they were so well received. People in our community, in various parts of Japan, and even in Korea have been listening over the past number of months. Spiritual growth within the church community has increased because church members are able to listen to sermons more than once through the week.

We also started other video ministries: first, an online cooking club, which has proven popular. It's a great way of keeping in touch with people we would normally be meeting with in person. We've also been doing loads of texting with our various contacts, which has paradoxically served to further deepen our relationships. (Remember, Japanese people tend to be more open with their feelings over text than over the phone or in person.)

No longer able to host home outreaches, we've recently focussed on meeting with people in a socially distanced way now that restrictions have been lifted somewhat. This has taken the form of hosting small picnics (of 2-6 people, including one or both of us) in the park across the street from our apartment.

This month, we're also starting up a third YouTube channel, called バーラリの3時茶 ("Tea with Valerie", in English). We're using this channel to have spiritual conversations with our existing friends and acquaintances, as well as people who are new online friends through the cooking channel. We've included a special mentorship platform, designed by Power to Change Canada, in this YouTube channel. Through it, we're able to have private online conversations with people who are seeking to know more about Jesus and want to ask specific questions. We're excited about its potential to enhance online outreach not only in Okinawa but in other Japanese ministries; and are hoping to continue partnering with Power to Change Canada to work on a full Japanese-language component in the months to come, so that people who only speak Japanese can also become spiritual mentors online.

We're excited to see what other ministries God brings our way in the coming months. How grateful we are that His love, joy, and peace are not limited by our own physical or social capabilities. We hope that you, too, experience a deep sense of His love and peace this Christmas, wherever you are, whomever you're with.

Merry Christmas!

With Love,  
Valerie & Peter

Easy Apple Pie (See reverse for the recipe.)





*Socially-distanced kids' ESL class*



*Sunday service via YouTube during shut-down*



*Filming and editing various videos*

# Easy Apple Pie

*When I was twelve, I made my first pie under the careful tutelage of a lady from church. Since then, I've been scared of making another one without 'adult supervision', but I recently found a great crust recipe that's really easy.*

## INGREDIENTS

### **Crust:**

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (plus more to dust)  
 ½ tablespoon granulated sugar  
 ½ teaspoon sea salt  
 1 cup unsalted butter, diced into ¼-inch cubes  
 6-7 tablespoons ice water

### **Filling:**

6 cups thinly sliced, peeled apples  
 ¾ cup sugar  
 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 ¼ teaspoon salt  
 ⅓ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice

*Crust recipe from: natashaskitchen.com  
 Filling recipe from: allrecipes.com*

## DIRECTIONS

### **Crust:**

1. Place flour, sugar and salt into a food processor and pulse a few times to combine.
2. Add cold, diced butter and pulse the mixture until coarse crumbs form with some pea-sized pieces. Mixture should remain dry and powdery.
3. Add 6 tbsps ice water and pulse just until moist clumps or small balls form. Press a piece of dough between your fingertips and if the dough sticks together, you have added enough water. If not, add more water one teaspoon at a time. Be careful not to add too much or the dough will be sticky and difficult to roll out.
4. Transfer dough to a clean work surface, and gather it together into a ball (it should not be smooth; do not knead). Divide dough in half and flatten to form 2 disks. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour. Afterward, roll out crusts.

### **Filling:**

5. Meanwhile, place all filling ingredients into a large ziploc bag. Shake to coat. Let sit for ½ hour.

### **Assembly:**

6. Heat oven to 425°F. Place 1 pie crust in ungreased 9-inch glass pie plate. Press firmly against sides and bottom. Trim edges to be slightly longer than pie plate sides.
7. Remove filling ingredients from juices in the bag, and spoon into crust-lined pie plate. Top with second crust. Trim edges to be slightly longer than the bottom crust. Wrap excess top crust under bottom crust edge, pressing edges together to seal; flute. Cut slits or shapes in several places in top crust.
8. Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until apples are tender and crust is golden brown. Rest on cooling rack at least 2 hours before serving.

*Total time: 2 hours  
 Yield: 8-10 servings*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Thank You**

*Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us.*



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