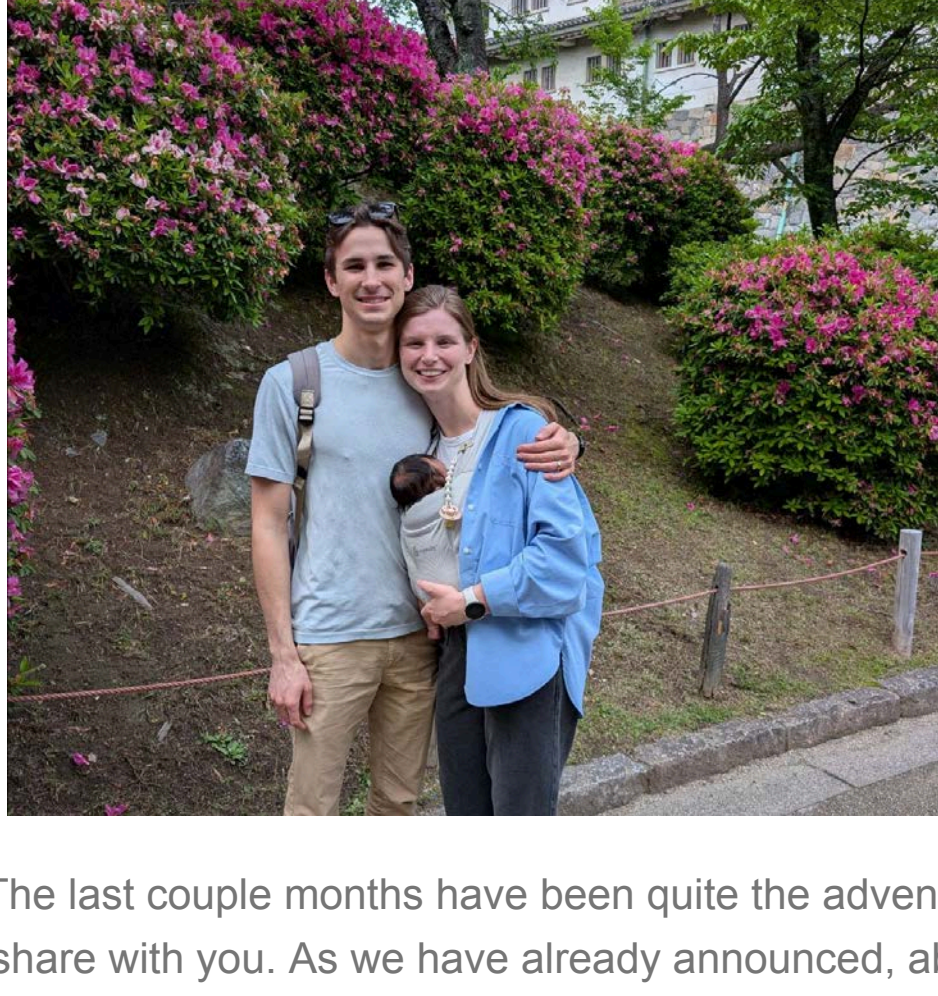


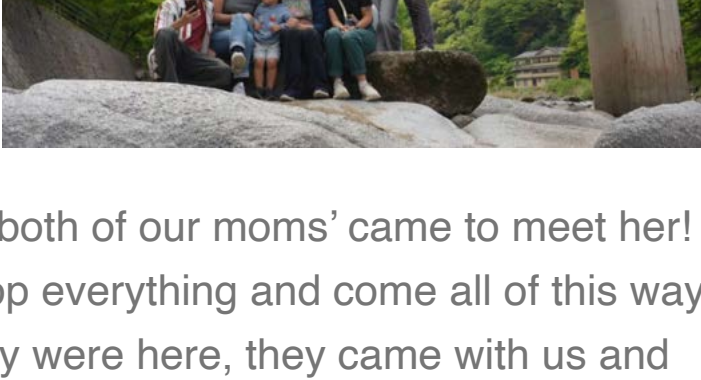
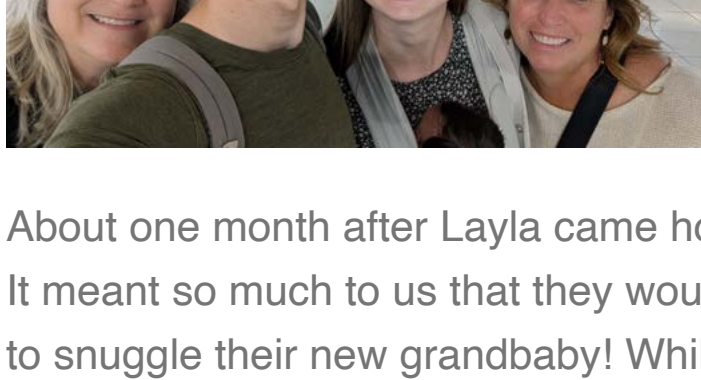


The Heglers

With NEXT



Hello friends! The last couple months have been quite the adventure that we are excited to share with you. As we have already announced, about two and a half months ago God blessed us with the cutest little girl! Layla is growing so well and has started sleeping much better so mom and dad are thankful for that (haha). Emma is very excited to get to stay home with Layla and I (Matt) was also able to take paternity leave for the entire first month of her being home. We are feeling really grateful for all the time we have had to bond with Layla and transition into being a family of three. Our team was so gracious throughout the rapid transition! Over the last couple months, we were able to submit a petition for adoption to the family court and get the legal process rolling. We are now in a period of government visits and waiting that will most likely last about a year. If you would like to hear more details about God's sweet provision and care for us through this process, scroll to the bottom of our newsletter :)



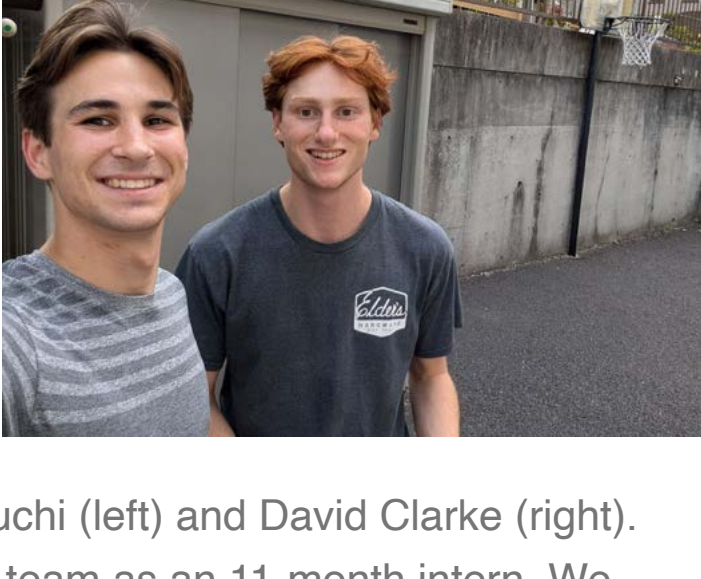
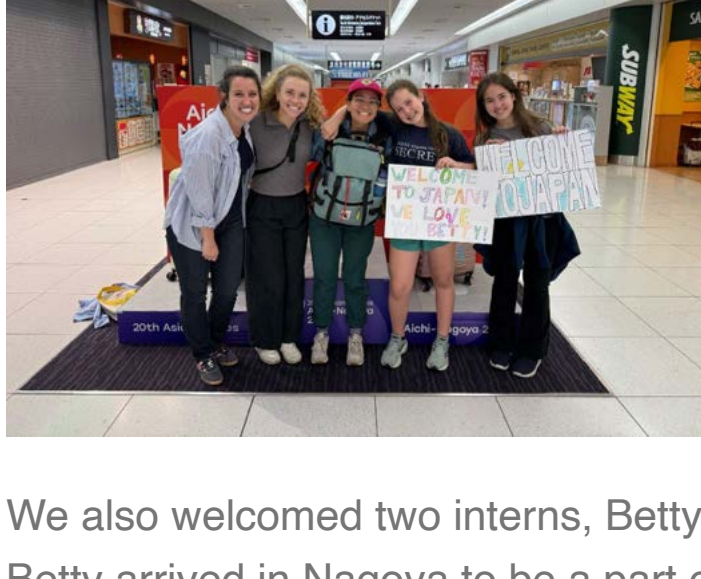
About one month after Layla came home, both of our moms' came to meet her! It meant so much to us that they would drop everything and come all of this way to snuggle their new grandbaby! While they were here, they came with us and our team on a trip to the mountains. They were so sweet and just jumped right in (even braving some adventurous food!).



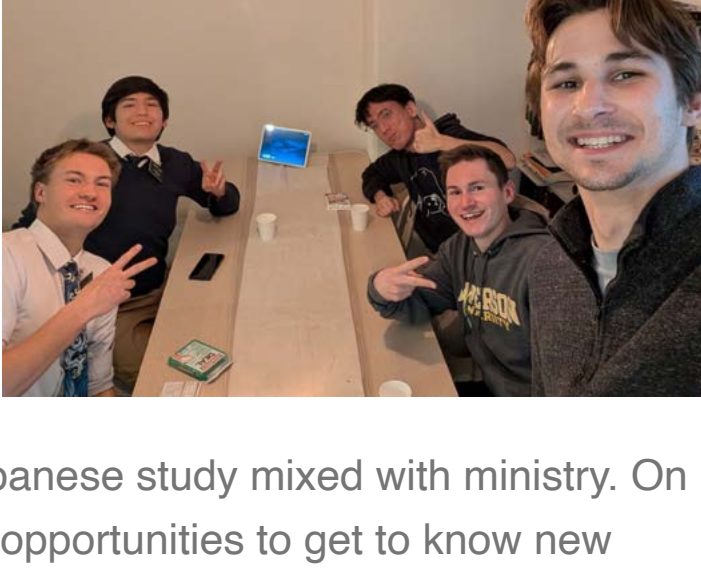
Only two weeks after our moms' left, both of Emma's parents and 5 of her siblings came to visit and meet Layla! It was so special to get to see all of them and to watch them love on their niece/grandbaby. It was hard to say goodbye to everyone and we cannot wait to see them again. Layla has no idea how loved she is by so many people all over the world!



The same week that we received the news about Layla, we had the privilege of welcoming new teammates, Seth and Lindsey Iverson. They have such willing and passionate hearts to serve the youth in our community. It has been a joy to have them here! Please pray for them as they are attending language school and getting plugged into a new church and community.



We also welcomed two interns, Betty Horiuchi (left) and David Clarke (right). Betty arrived in Nagoya to be a part of our team as an 11-month intern. We have really enjoyed getting to know her and are looking forward to seeing how God will use her time here. David is actually from our home church in South Carolina and will be spending the summer here working with a nearby church and with our youth program. It has been fun to have a familiar face here and get to experience living in Japan with him. We have been encouraged by how these guys have jumped right in and sacrificed so much time to serve our team and our community.



I (Matt) am enjoying my new rhythm of Japanese study mixed with ministry. On top of language study, I have had multiple opportunities to get to know new people and share about the awesome things God has done in my life. Hanging out with these guys and getting to hear their thoughts about religion and what they believe to be true has been truly life-giving for me. The picture on the left is my Vietnamese friend who I went skiing with a few months ago. We often play basketball together. On the right is a picture from a game night with some of my missionary friends along with some other friends I met on the street who are Latter Day Saints Missionaries. Throughout the summer, I am spending lots of time with David and have enjoyed that.



Also, right when Layla came home, our team led 43 students on two different retreats! Both Connect and Bridge retreats happened at the same time this year and God was clearly working through each of them. Leaders at both retreats saw kids grow toward Jesus and toward each other. Please continue to pray for the hearts of these kids!

We want to say a huge thank you to all of you who have prayed for us during this transition! Thank you for continuing to give and support our ministry here in Nagoya. We would not be here without you, we would not have sweet Layla without you, and we would not get to see what God is doing in this place without you. Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry. We also noticed that some of you have given extra gifts or increased your monthly giving to help us in this new season! Thank you so much. Really, it is such a blessing.

Please continue to pray for us and with us! Here are some things we would appreciate prayer for:

- Please pray for our team as it grows that we would know how to love each other personally and point each other toward Christ. We are excited that God is growing our team and looking forward to seeing how he may use us to advance His kingdom here.
- Please pray for our family as we get used to life with Emma staying home with Layla while she continues to do part-time Japanese study. I (Matt) am mostly doing language study, but have recently been busy with non-language activities. I only have until September to do full-time language study so please pray that I would delegate my time wisely and that my language would continue to improve.
- Please pray for Layla's adoption court proceedings. Pray that her case would continue without issues and that it would happen quickly.
- Please pray for our teammates as they lead a retreat for MK's in LA in just a few weeks. Please pray that God would be at work in the lives of the youth that attend and that they would feel His deep care for them.
- Please pray for our non-christian friends and for all of Japan that the Lord would make himself known!

A little background on our adoption...

Emma and I have been talking about adopting for many years now and we felt that the Lord convicted us and encouraged us to pursue it here in Japan over the last year. In Japan, adoption is not popular. Therefore, children who cannot live with their biological families get placed in institutions. Around 1-2% of these children get adopted each year in Japan. This is among the lowest rates in the world. 88% of institutionalized Japanese children grow up without a family. Although adoption is not popular in Japan, our small church alone has three adoptive families in it. One of those families being our teammates. An elder at our church (who himself is a foster parent) included in a sermon last fall the fact that adopting is a huge need in Japan. Knowing this, we also saw some information on an adoption agency's website that caught our attention. This adoption agency was advertising a fast track for applicants. They were doing this because there was an overflow of new babies waiting for adoptive families.

We had been excited about starting a family since we got married, yet we never thought that we would first do that through adoption. Even so, hearing about these children touched our hearts and we began praying and talking seriously about pursuing this opportunity. Our love for adoption and desire to adopt had also grown significantly since coming to Japan. Largely because of how much time we spend around adoptive families. At the same time, in our own personal devotions, we had read and prayed over several passages that helped confirm to us that our next step was to pursue adoption. However, we were not even sure yet if it was possible for us to become adoptive parents. This is where we really saw God open the doors. Here are some of the hurdles that we felt God completely handled for us.

- MTW (our sending agency), for good reasons, does not permit first-term missionaries to adopt without approval from the team leader and the Area Director. Because of the love and support of Brooks and Riva (our team leaders), we received the approval we needed very quickly. We could not have done this without the Cains for SO many reasons!!!
- One person in the prospective adoptive couple has to be at least 25 years old. Matt had just turned 25!
- Our Japanese ability was not what it needed to be to navigate this process. Even still, because of this process our Japanese has improved a lot and we also received lots of help from others!
- This specific agency had just recently begun accepting foreigners as applicants after rejecting them for years.
- We did not think that we would be approved because of the short amount of time we have lived in Japan and because of how young we are. We were truly shocked to hear that we had been approved.

After being carried through the process by God's grace since last September, we were approved to be put on the wait-list on March 23rd. We marked on our paperwork that we would be able to welcome a child a week from that day. We did this so that we could serve at our annual youth retreat. However, God had greater plans! We received a call that day and were asked to move our available date to that very same day instead of a week out without any information about a child! We moved our date and the very next day, March 24th, we received a call. After that, everything happened so quickly! Layla was born on the night of the 24th and welcomed into our home on the 31st. God's answer came quickly and abundantly! We feel overwhelmed with gratitude that we have been blessed with sweet Layla and that we get the privilege of being her parents. We are looking forward to the day that she can meet all of you! On that note, we would really appreciate your prayers for Layla, for us, and for the court proceedings to be concluded quickly.

Thank you for sending us to Japan! We are so thankful that we get to serve together with you.

With love,
Matt, Emma, & Layla

Contact us:
matt.hegler@mtw.org or emma.hegler@mtw.org

Add us on WhatsApp by clicking one of our names: [Matt](#) [Emma](#)



Thank you to all who listen to our podcasts! We are planning to shift to a more random posting schedule from now on. This will hopefully give us more flexibility during language school as well as the opportunity to update you when we have exciting or interesting things to share. If we plan to release an episode, we will let you know! You can find our previous episodes on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and now [YouTube Music](#)! Click the link of your favorite platform to listen.

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This is a document that we send to churches or give to individuals who may be interested in learning more about us, our calling to Japan, and how to partner with us. If you know an organization or individual who has expressed interest in learning more, feel free to print or share this with them.

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