

CHRISTMAS 2020  
SERVING WITH CADENCE INTERNATIONAL

Sarah  
Rooney

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Glory to God  
in the highest heaven,  
and on earth *peace*  
to those on whom his favor rests.

LUKE 2:14

*Dear Friends,*

Here we are rolling into the holiday season. It seems like just the other day I was sitting on the beach. Oh, wait...I live on a tropical island, so it really *was* just the other day! But now the weather is getting cooler, and anything below 70 degrees is freezing in my book. The change in temperature and drop in humidity brings about a feeling of excitement and renewal.

As I look towards the future, I look with hope and gratitude. The past few months have brought about a heart change. I realized that I had been spending too much energy focusing on the “can’ts” and being filled with cynicism. I was encouraged to start being grateful. Don’t get me wrong, there is still a time and place to grieve. But my perception has shifted, and I have started to see where God is working in the little things. Even on the hard days, I can see where God has given me the strength to make it through them. My hope is not in my circumstances, but in an almighty, all-knowing, loving God.

**Let me catch you up on the highlights of the last few months!**

**School** started again in-person near the end of September. I easily convinced my chaplain to dress up with me to welcome back our students. We stood outside with full-body t-rex suits and saw huge smiles on kids’ faces. It was an exciting time to meet some new families.

**Sunday School** started up in-person at the end of September as well. It was like preparing for the first day of school again and I loved it! I never thought I’d be doing the math of figuring out how to socially distance children at max capacity, but it worked. The kids have been fantastic at following all our mitigation rules during services. It’s been a joy to see how the ministry has grown since a year ago. We’ve had numerous new families start coming over the past two months.





**Trunk or Treat** was our first event since COVID-19 began. It required more coordination and involved more changes than last year's event. The volunteers showed up in force and we had double the number of trunks and attendees than in 2019. The most common thing I heard among families was how appreciative they were to have something that felt "normal".

**Baptisms!** I had the honor of baptizing two of my students, a high schooler and a middle schooler. These kids face many different challenges than I faced growing up. I have seen these boys grow over the last three years and have had some great conversations with them. One of the boys said he was "ready to sacrifice his life for the Lord." Walking alongside this family as they have all grown has been a joy. We were surrounded by our chapel community on the beach and celebrated together afterwards with a cookout. A sense of "normalcy" seems to be slowly coming back and we are all excited about it!

**Here are our upcoming plans and things to pray for:**

**Christmas Program.** This is one of those areas that I don't particularly enjoy because most kids that I've worked with don't enjoy it either. (You've probably seen kids that just stand there on stage and never make a sound, even though you've practiced the same songs for over two months!) However, this year the kids are excited to sing. This makes things much more fun! Pray for this time to be more than a performance—that it will actually be a time of worship.

**Christmas plans.** I feel like we have plan A–ZZ! No one knows what rules and restrictions will be like from week to week. Please pray for patience, grace, and flexibility as we try to navigate the Christmas season. We want to make sure

everyone is taken care of, from the barracks to family housing. We also want to be wise with how we put large gatherings together. Pray for our leadership as they decide how to care for our community while also keeping everyone safe.

**Restrictions to lift.** Please pray restrictions will ease up so that I can travel back to the U.S. soon. I am required to follow both the U.S. military restrictions and the Japanese guidelines. Many people in my community are feeling the stress of these restrictions, especially as the holidays approach.

Thank you for your letters and emails, and for checking in on me in these days. Will you prayerfully consider giving a year-end gift to see our military community reached during the holidays and new year? Will you pray over your finances for the upcoming year to see if God is leading you to become a monthly partner in the ministry to our military? Thank you for coming along with me on this journey to serve those who serve for us.

Love,  
*Sarah*



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Partnership Involvement

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