

Sneller Salute



JANUARY 2021

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”

ISAIAH 43:18-19

Dear friends,

I will likely never be considered an early adopter of change. This acknowledgment may elicit chuckles from those who know me well and they may regard this as a severe understatement. There are numerous stories I could tell, some humorous and others painful, that reveal my reluctance to change. Through the course of this past year with COVID-19, some of my willingness to change has felt about a week or so late, but alas.

Rebecca, being my better half and growing up an adaptable military kid, is more accustomed to change and she usually welcomes it. Regardless, this last year there have been changes we probably would not have otherwise chosen, but many have been positive. Our mantra has been: “Try new things because everything is already abnormal.” The transient nature of our military community provides plenty of freedom and flexibility normally, but even more so now. Our lives are open to new opportunities and what we have “always done” has less leverage than in the past. Yay, God!

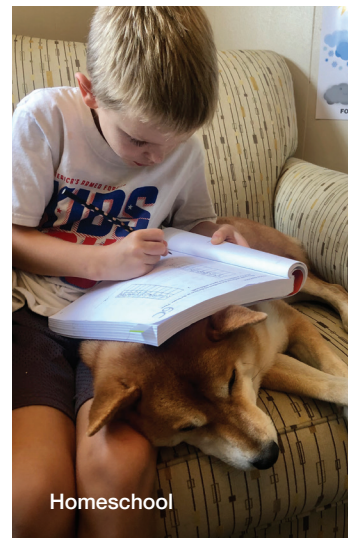
Below you will find our list of twenty new things in 2020, ranging from silly to serious. Some points you may be able to identify with, other points might be familiar to you, and then others still you might be hearing for the first time. There are implicit praises and prayer requests on the list. As always, we hope that it provides some insight into what our lives and ministry look like in Okinawa. We would invite you to come see and experience it for yourselves, but that is not really a possibility with the current travel restrictions. When things do open up, we would love to see you or host you! Send an update as you are able (though it need not be a list of twenty.) Thank you for sharing in our lives and this ministry. It blesses us more than you can know. We really appreciate you walking with us and your support in all its forms.

Much love and God bless,

Deric Sneller (on behalf of the Sneller family)

20 NEW THINGS IN 2020

1. New fashion accessory: We all have our favorite mask, which sounds weird to say.
2. New facial hairstyle: “The Quarantwain”, a variation of the Mark Twain mustache, was my most well-received and longest-lasting mustache.
3. New hobbies: Rebecca got into gardening. We have done more hiking and camping as a family and with others.
4. New ministry formats: Three different ways to do weekly women’s Bible study and at least four very different Friday ministry night formats. These various formats shook things up and we’re actually keeping some aspects that work better than what we used to do pre-pandemic.
5. New family worship: Our kids grew in their “big church” self-control since the children’s ministry at Chapel was closed. All our kids look forward to Sundays and the chapel service.
6. New spiritual softness: Each of our kids has shown a new spiritual softness. Kara often through song. Evan in prayer and Bible reading. Tobin through personal study, attentive listening to sermons, and discussion at The Harbor. Praise God!
7. New classroom: In about one month’s time, we undertook a major purge of Harbor and personal items and built a new wall for a homeschool room.
8. New schooling adventure: Homeschooling is going well with all the kids loving it, but we are unsure if we will continue next year.



Homeschool



Family exercise



The Kelly family

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

MATTHEW 9:16-17

9. New reader: Rebecca has the privilege of teaching kindergartener Kara how to read this year!
10. New exercise routine: Regular family runs, bike rides, scootering, and rollerblading have been fun ways to get exercise together for homeschool PE.
11. New runner: Tobin has become a runner while training for the “Tobin is Ten Ten-miler.” The day after Christmas he and I ran the ten-mile outer parameter of Kadena Air Base.
12. New friend: For the first time the boys have a neighborhood friend! Logan is also a homeschooler and they can bike to his house, which is about a mile away.
13. New outdoor patio: Weekly coffee on the patio with the ambiance of a fire has been a wonderful addition, one we will likely keep in place.
14. New singles ministry: At present, our ministry is almost all singles, which is fresh and new to us.
15. New smaller group: Our Friday night group is an intimate group of about 20–30 people, with at least one new person each week (praise God!). We have been able to do things with a small group that weren't possible with a larger group.
16. New Chaplain: We welcomed a new Chaplain, Ch. Damon Boucher, to the Contemporary Service. He has been very involved at The Harbor and is very supportive of us and our ministry.
17. New teachers on Friday: I have had the privilege of walking through teaching preparation with four very gifted Servant Team members. They taught in our Colossians series and will teach in a series on hospitality in the new year.
18. New Cadence staff: Intern Jon Williamson joined our Team Kadena in September, and Zach and Kara Kelly will join our team in January to do student ministry with Beth Mabry. (They attended the Harbor in our early years when Zach was in the Air Force.)
19. New kids' room: We did an overhaul of currently unused ministry space so that the Kelly family of five can stay with us the first few months to aid their transition to Okinawa.
20. New limits: Need I say more? Our availability and energy look much different than they ever have. We often feel “hard pressed but not crushed,” as we process the stress, grief, and loss that accompany a season like 2020. But we keep looking to Christ to provide all we need to keep on keeping on!



Deric and Rebecca Sneller

PSC 80 Box 13901, APO AP 96367-0042
 Deric.Sneller@Cadence.org • Rebecca.Sneller@Cadence.org
 Cadence.org/Sneller

Deric and Rebecca Sneller
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