



# Sneller Salute



Greetings! Rebecca here. It is my absolute pleasure to introduce you all to our friend, Mara, whose testimony you will read below. Many of you have heard me express how much I love women's ministry at The Harbor, specifically the annual women's retreat. I first met Mara at the 2020 retreat, just before COVID-19 shut down almost all our in-person ministry. I got to know her better as she began attending (virtually) women's Bible study and Friday nights, and we invited her to join the Servant Team in the summer. (Interestingly, she joined the servant team before ever setting foot inside The Harbor building!) This summer she will PCS and leave Okinawa for the States. It's been a joy to know her, watch her grow in her faith, and use her gifts to bless and impact our community.

## NO GOOD THING WITHHELD

I have been a part of The Harbor for approximately one year now. I am a firm believer that God positions people, and even locations, in your path at appointed times to guide you to your next level in Him. All you need to

do is trust. Everything He does is well-thought-out and designed for your, and ultimately His, greater good. And I'd say my introduction to The Harbor was just that: divinely orchestrated.



It was March of 2020 (pre-realization of COVID-19) when I saw that a friend had posted about a women's retreat event hosted by The Harbor Women. I remember it like it was yesterday. Scrolling through Facebook, I stopped on her post and thought, *"This would be great to attend!"* At this point, I had only been on Okinawa for a few months and had not found Christians to fellowship with or a spiritual home to be a part of. Her post was exactly what I needed, so I signed up.



I could not wait for Friday night. Coming off a busy workweek, the promised allotted time of reflection and worship sounded lovely. Plus, the inspirational retreat theme, "Rest," was also timely. The retreat speakers spoke about God being the Good Shepherd and how sheep without guidance are always complicating their lives when all they need to do is rest in and rely on him. **I was a sheep; the sheep was me!** God's character as the Shepherd is consistent and His ever-faithful guidance is what we need to protect us from life's challenges. Who would know that in order

to “survive” the year’s chaotic events (2020), I needed to be connected spiritually to a place like this?

My time at The Harbor not only included rest, but also growth. A lot of us seek growth but don’t anticipate what it can feel like. It is not always a pleasant feeling and may be hard to see, but it’s needed to be at the level God has called us to be. After months of wanting to be more mature in Christ, I finally had opportunities to get out of my comfort zone and to strengthen my spiritual gifts. From praying for my fellow sisters in Christ, facilitating a small group at women’s Bible study, teaching a couple of Friday night Bible study lessons, and brainstorming on how to improve connections with unbelievers, I was constantly reminded that if I was to develop, my walk with Christ needed to include others and not just me.

As my time closes in Okinawa, I am reminded of one of the scriptures from the women’s retreat. Psalm 84:11 says, “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” As the good Father, He does not

hold back the good things in life when you are resting in and relying on Him. God knows what you need and, more importantly, *when* you need it. He showed me His love and grew me through The Harbor at a time when I needed to be both supported and stretched, and for that I am grateful. I will always look back on my time at The Harbor as evidence of His faithfulness. And I will be of good courage, knowing that He who started a good work in me in Okinawa will continue it at my next assignment—I only need to continue trusting and walking with Him.

Sincerely,  
**Mara S. Hood**



What a testimony. Praise God! Stories like this one are why we love doing this ministry. Because of your ongoing prayers and support, you are also part of Mara’s story and transformation. Thank you and God bless,

*Rebecca*



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