

Dear partners,

Passion Week 2026

Greetings! Like many Asian countries, V also has its unique funeral traditions, one of which is playing mournful funeral tunes all day long for several days during the solemn period for honoring the deceased. Someone in my alley must have passed away last weekend, as that tune is being played while I am drafting this update. Rather fitting considering the meaning of this special week.

If I learned anything from last year's frustrations, it is to "Do something, anything you can do, right now!" Even if it is just exercising, or studying the language, and that was a lifesaver keeping me from succumbing to a dark place. Regarding my plans for the upcoming school year, V friends had sent a link to a local English teacher placement center in January. I had previously applied to this place with no reply, along with many other places, so I filled out the online form without much expectation. Within a week, they had sent over the contract! Other good options also arose, strengthening the notion that good things happen in pairs or a set, making the decision-making almost as confusing and nerve-wrecking as when there were no options. After almost 3 months of contemplation, with so many of you wrestling alongside me, I made the decision to go with the English placement center in HN. In addition, I will be zoom teaching English & literature to a class of ladies in one of the closed-access countries through a sending organization. I need to wear a head cover even though it's online, but you can just imagine how excited I am about this opportunity.

My last update was solemn with me feeling as though the foundation under my feet were crumbling. The best way to sum my present state is by relaying what I shared with some colleagues yesterday. My annual B-reading app started on the book of Job this week. In some years, I completely empathize with Job and shed hot tears and groans. This year, reading it has brought deepest admiration of Job, but not so much empathy- I am doing well.

My US visit is always special and warm, but this year was exceptional. Many of you and my awesome family reminding me that I am loved and not useless with thoughtful words and sweet gifts, spoiling me rotten. I told a friend that I am leaving with a staunch layer of blubber to protect, nourish, and buoy me for at least a couple of seasons against the one "going to and fro on the earth" seeking every opportunity to devour us. Partners, thank you for being that indispensable part of this blessed journey.

In our buried and risen L,

*Hannah*