

To the women of the Midwest Fellowship,

We are again approaching our yearly retreat, and many have been going to much effort to prepare so that we can gather together on April 3 & 4 to study God's Word and fellowship across our presbytery. I look forward to our theme on missions, in fields ranging from our own pews to the ends of the earth, and I am thankful for those whose work will make that possible.

In particular, I'd like to thank our Vice President, Maggie Allyn, for all the work that goes into preparing a program for us. She has selected a theme that reflects the history of this retreat, which originated as a gathering of women in support of missions in our denomination, and it be valuable for us to continue to reflect on our role in that work. In addition, many thanks go to the ladies of the Sterling congregation for their work to host us, preparing food, lodging, meeting space to make our time comfortable.

As president, I have participated in publicizing the retreat, finding a host for next year's retreat, and reminding officers to prepare their reports for our meetings. Before the retreat, I will find a parliamentarian and prepare for the meetings and the retreat.

As the retreat approaches, please join me in praying for the preparations remaining for Maggie, the Sterling ladies, and in particular our speakers - LB, who will speak on Global Missions, Maria Rockhill, on the Home Mission field, and Nicole Bachman on missions in our local congregations - that the Lord will give them good words to share with us. Pray, too, for each of our hearts to be challenged and encouraged from His Word and our fellowship together.

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!" Psalm 67

#### ADDENDUM:

At the time that I wrote this report, we were not aware that the COVID-19 pandemic would require cancelation of all large group gatherings in the Spring of 2020. In response to CDC restrictions, I sent the following note out to the presbytery:

"Hello ladies,

As the coronavirus pandemic has developed, the officers have been in conversation with our hostesses in Sterling about how we should proceed.

We had initially hoped that we would be able to continue as planned, perhaps with a live feed for any who did not want to risk coming, but given the CDC update recommending that all gatherings with 50 or more people postpone or cancel for the next 8 weeks, we have decided to cancel the retreat in 2020. We're thankful that we serve a sovereign God and need not make these kinds of decisions out of fear, but given this recommendation, and in order to protect the vulnerable in our churches, neighborhoods, and families, we believe this is the wisest course of action.

The officers are discussing how to proceed given the implications of this cancellation on next year's retreat, and we will communicate as appropriate, but we plan to have a retreat as usual next year, Lord willing.

We're very thankful for the work that many have already done in preparation for the retreat, the Sterling ladies and Maggie Allyn, our vice president, and our speakers, in particular. We will miss this opportunity to fellowship this year, but pray that the Lord will bless each of you and your congregations, and continue to care for His people.”

As we have continued to see the impact this virus has on our congregations, cities, states, nation, and the world, we continue to seek God's grace and mercy to care for His people in these extraordinary times.

In Christ,

Laura Wallace  
MWF President  
Manhattan RP Church