

Welcome:

- Prayer
- We are so excited to have you all here. We pray you have gotten settled in well.
- If you have any questions or issues as you are here, please feel free to text Madison and/or myself.
- You'll find the agenda on your lanyard and also in your welcome bags. Know that you have the freedom to skip things as needed. This retreat is for you!
- Also, you will be hearing very little from Madison and I. This is not about SITGM, it is about you!
- We are going to start our evening in worship together. I did not provide words for this song since we are sitting outside in the dark 😊, but if you don't know the words, just listen and worship.
- **Worship song - Just give me Jesus, 10,000 Reasons**

Purpose of this retreat:

- A couple of years ago, God laid this on my heart.
- Attended another retreat for widows and spent lots of time talking with Deanna about what we would want to be different (more free time, more connection time with each other and with God, less scheduled and lots of fun).
- As time progressed, He showed the way.
- God opened the door for us to be at Spring Valley, only with His plans.
- We are excited to share what we have learned with all of our churches.
- God brought Madison at the right time and she has worked tirelessly to ensure this is an amazing experience for each of you.

Our hopes for this retreat:

- First and foremost, we want you to walk away on Sunday feeling closer to God.
- We want you to know each other better and know that you are not alone in your widowhood journey or in your journey of leadership.
- We want you to walk away being refreshed and renewed.
- We want you to spend alone time with God.
- We want you to feel connected to God's beautiful creation all around us.
- We want you to go back feeling rooted and growing in Him.
- I am also going to challenge each of us (myself included) to not spend time on our phones (obviously connect with your family to let them know you are good) and if it is your Bible, but let's fast from Social Media, from outside influences, from work, ministry, busyness etc. and just spend this weekend focusing on Him.

Why this verse? - Colossians 2:6-7: (Read Verse)

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

- When we started planning I had a conversation with one of our leaders in Pennsylvania, Nicole.
- She was sharing the importance of having a theme when doing a retreat and recommended having a verse.
- I started thinking and praying about what that verse should be and God laid this verse on my heart.
- This verse talks about the importance of being rooted in Christ. When I think of roots, you think about how they must go deep. They must be watered, fed and taken care of. They must be pruned and they have to be rooted in the right things, not rocky soil, not shallow soil.
- The pruning part is the widowhood part - in my opinion. We all had to make a choice to allow that season (and the pain that exists) to not break us, dry us up or destroy our roots. We had to allow it to be a time of pruning, becoming bare and vulnerable to what God wanted us to do, but our roots did not die. Our roots were planted in the right things.
- Now God is using each of you to bloom into the beauty of what He wants you to be.
- Our hope is that as you are here this weekend, you will grow your roots even deeper and you will understand Christ even more.
- You are here for a reason, God is using you. God is using your story to impact and change the lives of others. We pray that you walk away realizing even more your purpose.
- We love you!

Closing:

- **Worship song - Great is thy faithfulness, How Great Thou Art, Turn Your Eyes (Shane and Shane), It is Well**
- Journal - I invite you to spend some time either by the fire here, back in the lodge or in your room reflecting on what you would like to take away when you leave on Sunday. What are you praying that God does in your life this weekend that you can take with you?
- Fellowship time - We would love for you to play games, do conversation cards, get to know each other etc. We want this to be your time.
- Lights out in the lodge at 11 and back to your rooms.
- Enjoy your time and we love you all so much!

