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Dear brethren in Christ,

Greetings from central New York State! My prayer is that you are doing well. I apologize for the lateness of this letter as more of my time is devoted to taking care of Sonia.

An update on Sonia's health: Tests indicate that the cancer in her lungs and chest bones continue to grow. The widespread cancer was also found in her right heel, and she has completed radiation to that area and to her left shoulder. The goal was to alleviate the pain the cancer was causing in those areas. It will not be long before she will be done with the doctors and hospice will take over. The pain in her chest is being managed with pain medicine. She had to stop taking her chemo pills due to serious side effects. Now there are no more treatments left for her since she's had them all. She is ready to be done with them anyway. In the last couple of weeks, she seems to be feeling better off her medicine, and she is eating better and the weight loss has stopped. But she is in a slow decline. She has good days and bad days. Sometimes she has difficulty sleeping at night and sleeps propped up due to coughing. Her chemo pills may have bought her some extra time, but it's hard to imagine that she will survive the winter. We just don't know. I stopped posting updates on her health to Facebook because she prefers that I don't chronicle her decline. She would rather everyone rejoice in her positive spirit and faith than to mourn over her physical body. (2Cor.4:16 - 5:2). Her attitude remains cheerful. I can't imagine it being any different. She simply doesn't let her situation get her down. On a day like today, she needs rest. But whenever she feels good and has energy, she uses it to encourage other people. She will visit the neighbors or go study with the ladies in the congregation, or visit the shut-in. Sonia is still able to drive. Sometimes she needs to use a walker. But she will always think of others above herself. She is an encouragement and an example to everyone here in New York who witnesses her active faith. In September, the local high school gave Sonia a retirement party for her 10+ years of working in the school cafeterias. The school superintendent, principals, and her boss spoke to all about Sonia's good influence in the district and how much they genuinely love and appreciate her. She was embarrassed by the attention, but I thought it was wonderful and their words so moving and true. Sonia is loved by a lot of people here in New York, and they all know she is a woman of hope who loves her Bible and serves her Lord.

The congregation here is doing really well. We are averaging between 20 and 25 in our weekly attendance. Brethren seem to be maturing in their faith, and more non-Christians are hearing the Word. We have new regular visitors. I'm having discussion with our neighbors who are needing encouragement in dealing with personal problems. I'm aware of 3 other private Bible studies being conducted by brethren with their own neighbors or acquaintances. I continue studying with the men of the congregation on Thursdays/Fridays in our own special class on Old Testament History. On Sundays I just finished a study of Ecclesiastes. Now the men are getting training teaching the adult class on the Patriarchs of Genesis, while I prepare for a study on the book of Revelation for when they are done. In my last letter, I told of our son Joshua's baptism. Joshua is fully engaged in the worship service. Already, he's led singing, led prayers, led at the Lord's table, and done announcements. He's always willing to do what he is asked. This makes me and Sonia very happy to see both our boys as young men actively leading in the public worship.

Please keep praying for us and for the work here in New York. There is much to be done in the Northeast. Your prayers for Sonia are especially appreciated. Some brethren have asked what specifically they should be praying for in regard to Sonia. My answer is: "In the meantime, pray for her pain to continue to be manageable. Pray for her to have more good days than bad. Also, pray that in everything that happens from now to the time of her passing, the Lord will be glorified."

We love you all!

Your brother in Christ,