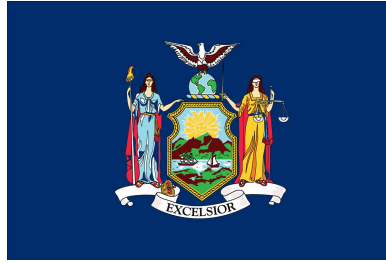


*New York State flag*



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Dear brethren in Christ,

Greetings to you all! I hope and pray you are doing well under the present circumstances. The virus has impacted all our lives in many ways. Some changes will likely be around for some time to come. But one thing hasn't changed — and it will never change: the faithfulness of our Lord. He will always be our source for strength. His promises are unwavering. The pandemic helps us by reminding us of our mortality and our dependence on God. This life is fragile and short, but our heavenly reward is eternal. Praise be to God for His mercy toward us through Jesus Christ!

Another thing this pandemic has done is to help us better appreciate our brethren. It's painful to be separated from our spiritual family due to the lockdown. Online connection with the saints has been a blessing, but it's not the same as being together in person. Lord willing, when things return to normal, it will be wonderful to hug our brethren once again and enjoy laughter and conversation without the needs of masks and distancing. I think now we see the value of a warm handshake. Let us never again take for granted our brethren and our need to meet together in person.

The isolation of the lockdown should be a wake-up call for us to better meet the needs of the elderly and shut-in. They are, under normal circumstances, isolated and in need of social contact and encouragement. It's disturbing to hear the elderly say that the virus has not really changed much for them.

The virus has separated family. My wife Lanna flew to Oregon to help her parents pack as they have plans to sell their house and move. Then things shut down, and she was stuck there for a month before Delta airlines would allow her to fly back home. The Florida College campus shut down while my boys were on Spring Break. So Sam stayed at my Mom's in Tampa while Josh was stuck in Alabama with friends until the students were finally allowed to return to the campus to get their belongings. So I was alone at home for a month, which is difficult for someone like me who likes being around people. I spent the time studying and doing some minor home improvement to surprise Lanna when she returned. Lord willing, I'm flying down to Florida Thursday to help the boys drive home to NY. Sam graduated FC with a 4-year degree, but the ceremony has been postponed until August. It will be wonderful to have all four of us together again for the summer!

Evangelism, that is, in-person communication, has suffered from the lockdown. In general, people don't want to stop and talk for fear of catching the virus. I've chatted with the neighbors when I could, but those conversations were short. At least it's easy to talk about how these strange times make us all focus on what's really is important in life and to get ready in case it's our time to go. It seems everyone knows someone who has had the virus, or knows of someone (at least a friend of a friend) who has died from it.

As I mentioned in my last letter, we've transitioned to being a part of the work in Philadelphia, NY. The virus has limited our contact to being online only, but we pray that state restrictions will be lifted soon to allow us to meet in person. I'm hoping that when I return the boys to NY next week, it will be possible. I'm excited about being with those brethren, and am eager to get things going! There's a lot to be done here.

Thanks again for your interest in the work here in the Northeast part of the country! Spreading the truth in this region in which there are few local churches and brethren is a challenge. The virus has made it more so. Thanks for helping us in the work! We love you very much and appreciate your support! May God continue to bless you in these hard times and prosper you spiritually.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tom Rainwater'.