



Tom Rainwater
126 Jay St.
Chittenango, NY 13037
(315) 706-3489
wtrainwater@gmail.com
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Dear brethren in Christ,

Greetings to you from upstate New York! It's been snow country up here as usual. Our prayers are for those of you in the South who also got blasted with snow and had severe power outages. I hope all has returned to normal by now. Luckily we only lost power one day for about 7 hours. In late January, morning temperatures were below zero. At the moment, our temperature is slightly above freezing, so our snow is finally melting. The danger will be when the moisture refreezes at night. So far, we haven't had to cancel worship because of weather, although there was some bad lake-effect snow one evening on the way to mid-week Bible study. All in all, it has been a typical winter for the Northeast.

A major event for me last month was my ear surgery. Over a period of 2 years, I gradually lost most of my hearing in my left ear. It was affecting my ability to communicate. For instance, hearing comments during Bible class was difficult. Thankfully the ENT surgeon scheduled a stapedotomy for me on January 11. I had to quarantine prior to surgery, then stay home for 2 weeks post-surgery to recover and regain proper balance. Last week I had my hearing tested and my left ear is much better. In fact, it is equal in ability to my right ear. I feel better and am more confident in conversation. I am very blessed! God be praised!

Our attendance totals at worship and Bible study have been affected by the coronavirus. A few of our members contracted the virus outside the assembly, thus they have been in quarantine. Thankfully we haven't had any severe cases. Also no spread has occurred from contact between brethren. We continue to social distance and wear masks. A few have not attended due to fear of the virus. We broadcast over Zoom for those who cannot be present. Now that the virus is a year old, some folks are impatient or weary of the circumstance. Hopefully as the situation improves and more people receive the vaccination, there will be less fear and distraction. I'm concerned about those who have become weaker spiritually. But I also see some brethren who've shown strength and endurance in spite of adversity. Many of us long to once again shake hands and hug each other to express our love and fellowship.

I continue to teach Bible classes on the Life of Christ and on the book of Leviticus. Sermons have included messages of encouragement and faithfulness. Though society continues its moral decline and government moves toward instability, we have an unshakable kingdom in Christ and an enduring hope. "Letting go" has been a recurring theme in my lessons. We must let go of the temporary and cling to the eternal. *"This hope we have an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever..."* (Heb.6:19-20).

My prayer is that you all are doing well in the Lord. We live in strange times. But we have a Lord who "is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Heb.13:8). And that gives us great comfort. Thanks for all your prayers and support! We couldn't be here in New York without your help. May God bless you in all you do for Him!

Your brother in Christ,