

*Before, during, and  
after pictures  
of Joshua's baptism*



Tom Rainwater  
126 Jay St.  
Chittenango, NY 13037  
(315) 687-9135  
[wtrainwater@gmail.com](mailto:wtrainwater@gmail.com)  
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Dear brethren in Christ,

A warm "Hello" from upstate New York! I hope and pray you all are doing well in the Lord.

An update on Sonia's health: This week we celebrated Sonia's 50th birthday. On Thursday, Sonia and I fly to Colorado to do what she's always wanted to do: see the Rocky Mountains. We are praying her health remains stable for the duration of the trip. This will probably be the last major trip she will be able to take. Since my last letter, we have a clearer picture of the cancer's advancement. Two weeks ago I took Sonia to the hospital because she was having chest pain. Tests showed her heart is fine. However, the CT scan showed progression of the cancer in her chest as the source of her pain. The tumors in her lungs have grown and new ones have appeared. Cancer was also found in her sternum, manubrium, and in her left shoulder. Ribs are going to be affected. The main goal now is pain management. She has been taking chemo pills to try to slow the cancer, and next month we will know if the pills are of any benefit. As things stand, because of her widespread cancer, the doctors are saying she only has a few months left. Because of this, our son Samuel is not returning to Florida College this semester in order to stay home with his mother and help. Observing her, you wouldn't know Sonia has advanced cancer. She looks great and has her same cheerful attitude. She hides her pain well. But she hasn't let her pain stop her from teaching other people. Last week, in spite of her condition, she hosted a ladies Bible study at our house. The living room was full of women and girls, three of which were neighbors. Vicki Copeland, a friend of ours visiting from Alabama, taught the ladies class. Sonia had prepared food for everyone for after the study. Also she provided transportation for some women to come to the study. How she did it all, I don't know. She takes her pain medicine and keeps active, doing what she can while she can. My small role that day was to teach the young boys in a separate class. Watching Sonia serve others in spite of her cancer, I am reminded of the reason I married her: "her worth is far above rubies." (Prov.31:10).

In anticipation of her passing, Sonia and I have made a lot of necessary decisions. We picked out and purchased a burial plot in the local cemetery which is not far from our house and beside a beautiful park. We made a downpayment on a cemetery monument, which should be ready and delivered in a couple of months. We spoke to the local funeral director and have made decisions in regard to her funeral. This may sound depressing, but rather it has been a good experience since we did it all together, and anything Sonia and I do together, we have fun. That may sound odd, but this circumstance is a lot less stressful than, for instance, years ago when my Dad died unexpectedly and all the decisions had to be made at once. In comparison, Sonia's circumstance just feels peaceful. Brethren and friends from many places have encouraged us greatly with cards, calls, visits, and other acts of kindness. It seems like every week family or friends are coming to see her. And everyone is amazed at her attitude. She is very much at peace with everything and her faith is strong. She is showing us all how hope works.

In July, before we knew the cancer had spread so much, I took our younger son Joshua to FC camp in New Jersey, where I was a counselor. Sam stayed home with Sonia and they had a lot of mother/son time together, including celebrating his 20th birthday. Meanwhile that same day at camp, Joshua came to me privately and said simply, "I'm ready." I knew what he meant. He confessed his faith in Jesus Christ and I baptized him. He waited until we got home from camp to tell Sonia and Sam. There was a lot of rejoicing! What a joy that both our children are Christians!

Things are going well in the work here in central New York. We have regular visitors from the area attending with us now, including neighbors. It seems the brethren are growing stronger and closer together. I believe Sonia's example is influencing a lot of people to get closer to the God she serves. I pray my example in serving her is having the same effect. Thank you all for your love, prayers, and for your interest in the work in New York! We love you all!

Your brother in Christ,