



# ONE VOICE



Churches: ♦Bethany ♦Immanuel ♦Lunder ♦Silver Lake ♦Winnebago

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## *From the Pastor's Desk*

*"They surrounded me like bees; they blazed like a fire of thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! I was pushed so hard that I almost fell, but the LORD came to my help. The LORD has become my strength, and my might; he has become my salvation." Psalm 118:13-14*



The winter weather has once again decorated our landscape with snow. The snow is covering the earth to protect it from the wind. The snow has taken off the sharp edges of the land and transformed it to subtle soft curves. The wind brings a bitter chill and reminds us that spring is always off. We probably don't think much about bees in the middle of winter, but this image of being swarmed by bees came to mind as we find ourselves facing a variety of forces attacking our peace.

Just when we thought we were going to protect ourselves from the COVID with vaccines, the virus adapted and became the Delta variant. Some of us got a booster shots to ward off the new variant. The virus adapted again and soon we heard about the Omicron variant that is very contagious. Even people with vaccines have been catching the Omicron COVID. More and more people we know, or perhaps even ourselves, have suffered from one form or another of COVID. Hospitals are full so other medical procedures that are needed are getting canceled because there are no rooms. The Doctors and Nurses and other medical staff are getting wore out from working such long hours fighting the COVID. Schools are wrestling with being in person, as we now know the students learn a lot better in person than on-line. At the same time, we don't want our school classrooms becoming a spreader event either. Some say masks help, some say not so much. It all seems to swarm around us like a swarm of bees chasing us.

The COVID virus isn't the only thing that seems to be attacking our peace. We have been facing new attacks of inflation upon our family budgets. Experts offer a variety of reasons for the inflation. A contributor to the inflation is again that pesky COVID. The number of people who got sick or businesses that didn't feel it was safe for their workers to come in has led to a shortage of a number of products. There is a back log in our ports, with a shortage of people to unload the docks, a shortage of trailers to unload the empties so they can haul the full storage containers. There is a shortage of truck drivers to transport the goods from the ports to the stores. There is a shortage of gas & natural gas because of some of the same reason, bringing a rise in the cost of not only purchasing gas at the pump to fill our vehicles, but also adding to the price of the merchandise we wish to purchase. Plus, there is a shortage of computer chips needed to build trucks and vehicles, so there is a backlog of new vehicles, and a shortage of used cars as people wait for new vehicles and the prices of cars new and used skyrocketed. Same is true for washing machines, dryers and refrigerators and other appliances. It seems to be swarming all around us like a swarm of bees chasing us.

As we listen to the words of the Psalmist, evidently, we are not the first ones to feel like there are a number of forces attacking us, so it feels like we are being chased by a swarm of bees.

We know that we have a number of people who are working at trying to solve the forces that are attacking us. The scientists and researchers continue to study and discover different ways to defeat the COVID virus. The government is trying to increase testing kits available to us. The government is working to make sure vaccines are effective and safe and trying to make vaccines available to people. The business people are trying to find ways to hire more people. The trucking industry is working to get goods moving faster. Many people are working towards solutions that will help fix the variety of problems we are facing. Some day the correct solutions will be in place and things will work more smoothly.

Meanwhile, we can still feel like a swarm of bees is surrounding us, leaving us in a panic and fear. When the Psalmist felt like he was surrounded by a swarm of bees, he declared, "In the name of the LORD I cut them off. I was pushed so hard that I almost fell, but the LORD came to my help." Sometimes the forces swarming around us can become too much and we feel ourselves ready to fall to the ground. But when we call out to the LORD, like the Psalmist, the Lord is present putting his arms around us, keeping us steady.

The Lord is still our help and strength. The Lord is the one who has calmed the storms with his authority as the Son of God, "Peace be still". Jesus is the one who comes into our midst, revealing the reign of God's love and grace. Our Lord is



greater than the forces surrounding us like a swarm of bees. Our Heavenly Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit created the heavens and the earth. Our Lord has enough wisdom and power to help us. Jesus revealed that we don't have to try and convince God to help us. Jesus revealed that God is our Father, who loves you with his unconditional love. You are his

beloved Child. The LORD has given you his very Holy Spirit to dwell within you. The Holy Spirit bears witness to God's love and faithfulness. The Holy Spirit creates a communion of saints, brothers and sisters to walk alongside each other in worship and life. The Lord loves to bless you in abundance, even in the midst of shortages in the world. Our Lord Jesus blesses you with his peace, not the peace of the world, but his peace of walking alongside you. So when you feel like the forces of the world are swarming around you like bees, cut them off in the name of the Lord. Rest in the mighty arms of your Lord, who is always present with his love to help you, his beloved child.

*Pastor Randy*

