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Evelyn Waite and Kathy Webber are collaborating on this project in an effort to encourage our Christian sisters and possibly *to inspire other women to participate in this effort.*

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### It's Okay

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7

What does peace mean to the individual Christian? In recent weeks, I have discovered peace in an unexpected way. My annual gynecological appointment is always a day of getting the usual screenings, one of which is a mammogram. This time, the technician said we needed to take another picture. She took another picture and sent me on my way.

Two days later, I got a call that something suspicious showed up on the mammogram. I needed to return the next week for a diagnostic mammogram and an ultrasound. Not what I wanted to hear, but it's probably nothing—they are just being overly cautious. That was my thinking; but in the back of my mind, I wondered, what if it is something to be concerned about. Oh well, no use worrying about it until I knew something for sure. That night while attending our midweek devotional prior to Bible classes, I sat there feeling as if there was a huge black storm cloud hanging over my head. The thought came to me that even if it was the worst possible diagnosis, **it's okay** because I belong to God. That became my mantra, and I knew that I could deal with whatever was coming my way. The whole process might not be pleasant, but it would be okay—because I belong to God!

My husband went along with my request to not share this information with anyone other than the elders, although he wanted to enlist everyone's prayers "right now." I opted for waiting to see what we were actually dealing with rather than unnecessarily upsetting everyone.

The diagnostic mammogram was much more specific than the screening mammogram. Afterwards during the

ultrasound, I could see the trouble spot on the monitor. It looked huge, but I knew it must be magnified, so maybe it's really nothing after all. However, I was immediately assigned a "breast cancer navigator." She explained that because of what they had seen, both on the new mammogram pictures and on the ultrasound, I would need to return the next day for an ultrasound-guided core biopsy. Things are getting more serious now...

The biopsy was the next day. The following night, my gynecologist called me with the bad news/good news. The bad news was that it was indeed cancer. The good news was that it had been caught very early and was very, very small. Now that I knew what I was dealing with, the weight of the world lifted off me.

Everything he told me that night about the probable outcome has proven to be true. He recommended a group of surgeons in St. Louis and said they are the best in their field because they do only breast surgeries. I couldn't wait for my husband to get home from his meeting so I could share the news with him. He wasn't quite as excited as I was, but he was finally convinced we could deal with it.

The next morning we made an appointment with the surgeon and set the ball in motion. We notified our two sons about the diagnosis and reassured them that it was good news even though it sounded bad. I also contacted my three sisters and let them know. As soon as we did that, we went to the church building and broke the news to our preacher and his secretary at the same time. By the time we left them, they were feeling better about the news, and the secretary sent out the email to inform the congregation.

Later that day, I alerted my friends, including those on Facebook. Reactions varied, but many women responded that they had been there, done that. Some had gotten their own diagnosis of breast cancer many years ago and have been doing fine ever since.

There is more to the story, but since that Wednesday night devotional, the thought that *'it's okay because I belong to Him'* has been my every thought while going through all the pre-op tests and the surgery itself. There are still hurdles to cross in the coming weeks and months; but I still belong to God, and it's still okay!

Colossians 3:15 tells us, *"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts...and be thankful."* Even though I have cancer, I am perfectly happy and at peace because I belong to Him. No matter what comes my way, He is with me through it all. Jesus is my peace.

Evelyn Waite  
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## Treasures Among Us

### Joyce Pruett

Joyce Pruett was born at Laquey, Missouri. When she was about a year old, her family moved to Raymondville. Her elementary school years were in a one-room school called Vollmar School. For her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years, she went to school in Raymondville, then went to high school in Houston, Missouri. She always loved math and wanted to pursue accounting; so after graduation, she attended Draughn's Business School in Springfield. In addition to accounting, the curriculum included all types of business classes, including modeling so that students would know how to present themselves in the business world.

She is of American Indian (Sauk) descent as both her parents had Indian heritage. There is a town in Iowa named Keokuk, which is named for one of her ancestors. Her daughter, Debbie, is researching the family history because she hopes to adopt an Indian child in the future; and she will have to prove her Indian heritage in order to adopt. Joyce was also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution for several years. In order to qualify for membership, ancestry must be traced all the way back to the American Revolution. John Kelly, one of her ancestors, fought in the Revolution.

Joyce first saw her husband, Jack, at family reunions. They are actually distant cousins but didn't know each other until she was almost grown. When Jack was drafted into the military, her aunt suggested that she write to him while he was away. When he came home on leave, and they had a few dates before he was sent to Germany. They corresponded during his assignment there until he came back home in January, 1960. They were married in March of that year at the Church of Christ which was then on 7<sup>th</sup> and State Streets. They

were attending the congregation in Vichy and continued to worship there for several years before coming to the Rolla Church of Christ. Next spring, they will celebrate their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Jack grew up in a Christian family but was not baptized until he was stationed in Germany. Joyce was not baptized until their oldest son was about six months old. Since becoming a Christian, she has taught just about every children's class from nursery through sixth grade. She also taught in Day School over the years at Highway E and at Highway 63 South. She was in charge of arts and crafts at Little Prairie Bible Camp for several years.

She and Jack have three children and several grandchildren. Some of her favorite memories are of fishing and camping with their children. She also has fond memories of her grandparents. Her grandpa used to play one song for her on the violin—just one each day—but she loves that memory.

Joyce is a breast cancer survivor. Her neighbor was helping conduct a survey on women and breast cancer, and she recruited Joyce to periodically drive several women participants to Columbia. Since she was there each time, she was also invited to participate in the study. She began to have regular breast cancer screenings and learned the importance of self-exams. In 1997, she found a lump, which turned out to be three lumps. Her local doctor confirmed her findings and sent her for a biopsy. When the samples were sent off to be tested, they came back positive for cancer.

It was then decision time as to whether she would have a lumpectomy or a mastectomy. Debbie was studying nursing at the time and suggested that she have a mastectomy to be sure it was all taken care of. Several lymph nodes were also removed, none of which were cancerous. She did not have to have any further treatments, but Evista (a drug that prevents cancer in the remaining breast) was prescribed for her. Evista also maintains healthy bones.

Cancer has been a reality in Joyce's family over the years. Her dad had colon cancer, which eventually spread to his liver and other organs. Her mom also had colon cancer, and now her daughter has colon cancer. Joyce's family members get regular screenings since there is such a strong history of it in their family.

Joyce's life has not been defined by cancer, however. She has had a varied and interesting working life. When her children were small, it was all volunteer work, such as Day School, VBS, camp, etc. When Debbie was in high school, she was in FFA; and Joyce began working with that program. Eventually, that led to helping with FFA Alumni. In 1990, Joyce was named president of the Missouri State FFA Alumni. She has volunteered with the Vichy Rural Fire Department and has held almost every

office in that organization. She sold real estate for several years and also worked for a while doing tax assessment inspections in Maries County.

Her favorite place is the Gasconade River. When they married, their first home was Jack's cabin on the Gasconade River, just off I-44. She teases him that he married her under false pretenses. She thought all she would have to do was fish—and then he bought a farm! She and Jack work side by side on their farm. It is hard work, but it is work they have shared and loved for many years. They cut a lot of hay in the summertime, and they also have cattle. Joyce always has a big garden and cans lots of the produce from it. Meal times at family gatherings always feature a lot of her gardening work. She sums up her life by saying, "I have been Jack's helpmate for almost 55 years."

Psalm 23 is her favorite passage because, "I have been there, done that." Tragedy struck their family a couple of years ago when their 16-year-old granddaughter, Rachel, was tragically killed in a farming accident. Her favorite hymn is "Farther Along," because it is hard for her to understand why Rachel was taken so young and why her dad died at such a young age. She trusts that "farther along," she will understand.

Joyce has traveled some in her life. Her brother served as a missionary in Australia for several years, so she was able to travel there to see him. Her stories of that trip are very interesting! She has also traveled to California to visit relatives and has seen the Grand Canyon and the Sequoia National Park. She would love to travel more to see relatives in Canada, Florida, New Mexico and Arizona.

Joyce's many and varied experiences in life and in the church truly make her a Treasure Among Us.

**NOTE:** *This is the tenth in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.*



## God and You are a Majority

My family has quite a history of breast cancer. My mother, both my grandmothers and an aunt on my father's side all died due to breast cancer. My oldest daughter, Tonya, found a lump in her breast 2-3 years before mine appeared. She had a lumpectomy with no surrounding tissue or lymph node involvement, but it scared me so badly. My thoughts at the time were, "My children are not supposed to have cancer. It should be me." Don't we all think that about our children?

In October, 2011, I found a lump in my breast; and it was quite a shock. I had always been very careful to do self-exams and to have annual mammograms, but it seemed to appear so suddenly. It felt quite large and was even sore. I wondered why I had missed it up to that point.

After finding the lump, I immediately called my primary physician; but she was out of the country at the time. The physician who was taking care of her patients arranged for me to have a biopsy, which was done at PCRMC just a few days later. When the doctor called me, she was so reluctant to tell me that it was malignant. She didn't want to be the one to tell me.

Tonya arranged for me to see the surgeon in Springfield who took care of her. I had already made the decision a long time ago not to have chemo or radiation. But, I wanted the surgeon to remove the lump and then see if it had metastasized, if at all. Then, with God's guidance, I would decide what to do. Through this whole process, my Lord had given me overwhelming peace. I left it in His hands and prayed that His will be done. After the initial shock was over, I was no longer afraid. That big "C" word is very scary to most people, but I found myself being able to use the word without any fear.

Before the surgery, the doctor wanted me to go through both chemo and radiation, but I declined. He even suggested bilateral mastectomies before we even knew what type of cancer I had, or if it had spread. I said, "No," to both suggestions. I told him I wanted him to remove the lump; then we would go from there. My deep faith in God told me that I was going to be okay; but if not, then I would be in Heaven with Him. I could not lose either way.

When the surgeon removed the lump, he was quite shocked because he expected it to be much larger than it was. When all the tests came back, it had not invaded any outlying areas or lymph nodes. Praise God for His faithfulness and care. That was three years ago, and I continue to completely put my trust in the Heavenly Father.

I strongly suggest that **all** women have annual mammograms and do self-exams regularly. If caught early enough, it is completely curable. Whether to have surgery, chemo and/or radiation is every woman's private decision to make with God's guidance. God and you are a majority.

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, MO  
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## *Some Things to Know About Breast Cancer*

October is breast cancer awareness month. Lots of information is available to women on the internet or through your doctor. The Susan G. Komen site has exhaustive information on every aspect, from self-exams through treatment options and follow-up. It can be accessed at <http://ww5.komen.org>.

### **Some things to know:**

1. Regular monthly self-exams are recommended highly. Having trouble remembering to do one? Schedule it (with a reminder) on your smart phone for the monthly date of your birthday; i.e., if your birthday is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month, schedule your self-exam for the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of every month. Doing self-exams every month helps you to know what is normal for your body. When something unusual is detected, contact your doctor immediately.
2. Know your family's history as to breast cancer.
3. Have regular (yearly) screenings, including clinical exams, with your gynecologist.
4. Mammograms should be done every year beginning at age 40. If you are at high risk (strong family history of breast cancer), have mammograms every three years ages 20-39 and every year starting at age 40.
5. Make healthy lifestyle choices, such as getting regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight. Breastfeed your babies if you can.
6. Early detection of breast cancer is a huge plus! Treatment options may be simpler, more easily accomplished and less invasive if the cancer is detected early. If it is caught early enough, you may not even have to have chemo.
7. Guidance and support through the entire diagnosis and treatment processes are very good. You will not have to make this journey alone. Nurse navigators help you find doctors who specialize in women's breast health. Some nurse navigators are breast cancer survivors themselves.
8. Social workers are available if you need them. They can help with transportation, wigs (if needed), emotional support, etc.
9. A diagnosis of breast cancer IS NOT AN AUTOMATIC DEATH SENTENCE! Many women experience it and survive for many years.

Many factors are linked to breast cancer risk. Some factors greatly affect risk, and others affect it only a small amount. The two most common risk factors for breast cancer—being a woman and getting older—are not things you can change. Factors you can control, such as leading a healthy lifestyle, may help lower your chances of getting breast cancer.

As Christian women, we are indeed blessed. We have the expertise and encouragement of medical

professionals. Far more importantly, we are daughters of the Creator of the Universe. We have Christian brothers and sisters who pray for and encourage us throughout this journey. Please don't let fear and lack of knowledge about breast cancer cause you not to help yourself or not to get regular screenings. *Early detection saves lives!*

Much of this information came directly from the Susan G. Komen website.

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### ***THIS TOO WILL PASS***

*If I can endure for this minute  
Whatever is happening to me,  
No matter how heavy my heart is  
Or how dark the moment may be,  
If I remain calm and quiet  
With all my world crashing about me,  
Secure in the knowledge God loves me  
When everyone else seems to doubt me,  
If I can but keep on believing  
What I know in my heart to be true,  
That darkness will fade in the morning  
And that this will pass away too,  
Then nothing in life can defeat me  
For as long as this knowledge remains  
I can suffer whatever is happening  
For I know God will break all the chains  
That are binding me tight in the darkness  
And trying to fill me with fear –  
For there is no night without dawning  
And I know that my morning is near.*

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*Original author unknown*

*Given to Wilma Willy by her granddaughter, Desirae Sterling*

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*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by Kathy Webber and Evelyn Waite, members of the Rolla Church of Christ. If you would like your sisters in Christ or your relatives, friends, co-workers or neighbors to receive it, you can share your copy with them. If they would like to receive it, please send their email addresses to [evelynwa@fidmail.com](mailto:evelynwa@fidmail.com).

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