

Faces of Hope



Photograph by Pat Ring

“This is a day that the Lord has made. Rejoice and be glad in it.”

My grandmother raised me on this and many scriptures including, “make a joyful noise”. In September of 2006 my life was full of joyful noises and I was glad in every day. I had no inkling how life would change for me and my family and friends. As I write this in May 2007, I realize that October became the beginning of whole new life experiences.

On October 6, 2006 my doctor told me if you have to have breast cancer, this is the best kind to have. He told me I had DCIS in my left breast. Even with his reassurance I was very frightened. My mother and both of her sisters had died because of breast cancer. I followed his recommendation for treatment – lumpectomy followed by radiation.

Many wonderful people have come into my life and increased my circle of friends because of my ‘journey’ that I would learn was far from over. I also found out how blessed I am to have a caring, devoted husband and a thoughtful caring support group.

Chapter 2 began when I went to my surgeon for a checkup following the completion of radiation therapy for my left breast. He noticed something in my right breast and sent me immediately from his office for a mammogram followed by an ultrasound and then a biopsy. You know, even though you have not been told, that you are in trouble and maybe more so than in the first diagnosis.

It was a different cancer this time and he called it lobular. I had no idea what the difference would mean and he assured me that the lymph nodes would probably not be involved. I signed consent for sentinel lymph node biopsy and in the recovery room he explained that many lymph nodes were malignant.

Next, my doctor recommended scanning to be sure the cancer had not metastasized to my bones. He was confident that it would not have spread. Wrong again! My entire spine was involved in this ‘journey’ which seems more like a bad trip. I can tell you this: it is sometimes more and more difficult to make a joyful noise.

When I saw my surgeon the next time he said he hated to even come into the examining room with me because he always seemed to be the bearer of bad news. I responded that I had begun to notice that about him too!

I am now in treatment for ‘setback’. I believe the face of cancer for me is one of hope and gratitude for a joyful life. My caring medical team provides optimism along with treatment. They regale me with stories that make me laugh with my heart and that is good for my soul. They keep me believing that I can make this ‘journey’, survive many years and make many ‘joyful noises’.

It is not possible to thank everyone in this one page, but they know who they are. I need them, their prayers and support. And, I am specially blessed to live with a husband that keeps me up!

Brenda