



August 2023

Dear Praying Friends,

Wow, these past few months have been some of the more difficult months our family has been through in a long while. But at the same time, they've also been a time of inexplicable and unfading joy in the midst of those difficulties. God is so very good!

AN UPDATE ON BETHANY'S HEALTH

Hi, Friends! It's Bethany here! I just wanted to jump in and give you a quick health update. As a quick review, in October of last year, I went in with pain and had a mammogram, which to the best of our knowledge came back clear. However, the pain only grew worse, so I went in again in March of this year and ended up being diagnosed with **Stage 2 Invasive Lobular Carcinoma**, a less-common type of breast cancer that tends to be sneaky and not show up well on scans.

On June 6, I had surgery to remove the cancer, and praise the Lord, surgery went well, and I was able to go home a few days later. The treatment plan I was expecting from that point included radiation followed by hormone therapy. However, when we got the pathology report back about a month later, due to several important pieces of information in the report, my team determined that I should add chemotherapy to that plan. This was difficult and jarring news to receive, as we'd thought that I would not need chemo, but I'm very thankful to live in a time and place that I can receive it if needed.

So, my current plan is **3-4 months of chemotherapy**, followed by **6 weeks of radiation**, followed by **5-10 years of hormone treatments**. I'm not going to lie, personally that feels daunting; like a long, unwanted climb up a mountain. I had my first chemotherapy treatment on July 31, and have my second scheduled in a few days on August 21. As anyone who has walked this path knows, this is not an easy thing for our family to walk through. But God has been so good and so real to us throughout this entire journey, and I can only praise Him! We can trace His fingerprints all throughout our story, and He has never one time left us or forsaken us! Even in the midst of this storm, His blessings abound! Not the least of which, I'm so happy to report, is that, by the grace of God, with this treatment plan, **my prognosis is good, and treatment is considered curative!** God has blessed us so far above anything we deserve! We've been blown away by the number of people around the world who have reached out to let us know they are praying for us! Thank you all so very much for your prayers, your love, and support for our family!! Our Father hears and answers those prayers, and on behalf of our entire family, thank you! We love and appreciate you more than we can say!

A GOD-ORDAINED BAPTISM DELAY

It's been amazing to see how God uses adversity and difficulties for His glory and for our good! Last month, on July 9, our church was scheduled to have a special baptism service at the river near our church to baptize three ladies who had recently trusted Christ, but God had other plans. I (Steve) got a bad case of covid two days earlier, and we had to postpone the baptism until August 27, but again, God was working through all of this.

A few weeks ago, the topic of the upcoming baptism came up in one of our Bible study groups. A lady named Ayumi, who had been coming to church since March of this year, was in the study group. She had been wanting to trust Jesus but was dealing with a few things holding her back from doing so. When the baptism was mentioned, she asked about whether or not she could be baptized too. I asked her about her faith in Jesus, and come to find out, all the issues that were earlier holding her back were gone! She had trusted Christ! So having confirmed her faith in Jesus, we now have another believer in Christ getting baptized along with the other three! Later that day, she said that when she heard the baptism was delayed because of my covid, she wondered if God did that just for her. I have a feeling she's on to something there. God always works according to His glorious plan! Thanks for being a part of that plan as you pray for us and support us! We sure do appreciate you!!

Serving Him,
The Carters to Japan