

Why Me?

by Carole Miller

My BFF, Breast Friend Forever, is Beth Lykins. Yes, I said breast not best. Our paths crossed, not out of happenstance, rather through divine intervention. You see, when Beth was besieged with worry about her cancer, treatment and recovery, God's love placed me next to her. But I am getting a bit ahead in the story. Let me start 12 months before meeting Beth.

I knew that when I hadn't heard from the doctor about my recent biopsy that the news must not be good. My fears heightened when the receptionist at the Breast Center said, "Please hold, you'll need to speak with the doctor about your results." Visions emerged of my mother throwing the Kleenex box across the room when she had learned the same words... "You have breast cancer." As numbness enveloped my body, my first thought was, "My son still needs his mom." Then I asked, "God, why me?" Moments later, the mental flood gates opened: "What do I do? Who do I need to talk to? How can I find out more about this insidious, life-threatening growth? How do I tell my husband and son? How much time do I have to learn the facts, decide on a medical path that's right for me and plan my strategy?"

Time stood still.

I pulled out my phone dialing the only person I knew who was a breast cancer survivor. Linda happened to be a fellow Christian from the church we both attended and she told me her story, giving me insight into the months that lie ahead. Although her journey answered some questions, it solicited many others. My next call was to my Sunday School teaching buddy, Tina, whose brother is a plastic surgeon. Our conversation opened my eyes to radiation's effects on skin, to chemo's toll, to reconstruction pros and cons to the insurance maze. So much to digest in so little time.

My journey ended well as I celebrated 8 years as a survivor in March of 2015. My question, "Why me?," was answered when I finally understood the scope of God's plan. He chose me to help other women through the cancer quagmire

through lending an empathetic ear and strong shoulders to cry on. He knew I had to "walk the walk" before I could have compassion and empathy for others.



Beth Lykins

Now, let's get back to the story of my BFF, Beth. Why did I just happen to volunteer in late 2007 at the organization where Beth worked as a Volunteer Director? Well, God knew that Beth would need a BFF a few months down the road. He knew that she needed a sister in Christ, one that would question science and not her faith. Beth's journey took her on a much tougher one than mine. Her cancer was vicious and required chemo and radiation, resulting in hair loss, weight gain, distortion of taste buds, nausea, lack of energy, a compromised immune system and multiple visits to the operating room.

We talked through many dark days about aches and pains from surgeries, blood work results, the side effects of daily cancer medicine. We talked about God and faith, our kids and supportive husbands, our awesome oncologist, and the unconditional love of friends.

Last year Beth passed her 5-year survivor milestone and although we now live 1,500 miles away from each other, we celebrated through email. I've been blessed to know Beth and help other women too, even if for shorter periods of time.

So back to my initial question, why me? Why Beth? That's easy...it was God's plan.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

If you have questions or are ready to become a BFF (see more details on opposite page), contact Liz Prince-Walter at the church office at (561) 622-8818, ext. 104, or lwalter@firstpresnpb.org; or contact Carole Miller at ccmiller01@aol.com.

Some FAQ's

BCN will connect breast cancer survivors with those who are newly diagnosed with breast cancer. If the diagnosis of cancer becomes your reality, you are probably overwhelmed with emotions, fears, and questions. Who better to talk to than someone who has traveled down a similar road? BCN will provide a comrade who has been on a similar journey and is willing to listen, answer questions and offer wisdom gained through their experience with breast cancer.

How pairing occurs::

A member who has been diagnosed with breast cancer contacts Liz Prince-Walter, Coordinator of Congregational Care, to be connected to a volunteer on the BCN list. The BCN list will be provided and participants will select the survivor that relates most closely to their circumstances.

Be someone's BFF (Breast Friend Forever)

You didn't choose to have breast cancer, but you can choose to help someone else on their survival journey by sharing your compassion, kindness, and love. A Breast Cancer Network volunteer is defined as a member of First Presbyterian Church who has survived breast cancer and is willing to share their journey with others who are battling breast cancer. The volunteer agrees to be put on a Network List that newly diagnosed members may access. The Network List will include the member's name and contact information.