

## Dare We Hope

Is it over? Can we start again? What have we learned? I recall when I finished chemo after 9 months. I had developed sores in my mouth, an aversion to foods I normally loved, I could not work the day after, and it would take that day, a Friday, and the weekend and next week to recover. About the time I would feel better, it was time for the next treatment. The doctor had started me out by saying that it would be 3 months of chemo, then he said 6 months, then 9 months. At 9 months he said a year would be best. I said no, it was too much. I was getting sicker and weaker. Finally, it was done, it was over but then I discovered that the cancer would never be over because then began the fear that it had come back. An ache that would not go away, a sore arm, another lump on the opposite side, a headache and I would return to the fear that cancer had come back. Then a small tumor was found in my lung, and I worried about that. It is encapsulated but must be checked for growth yearly. I learned a lesson; some things are never over. I thought of this when I was watching the report on Covid. The numbers are down, deaths are down, things are easing up. Some places still require masks like hospitals and blood labs. No big deal except I had cleaned out my purse and had to ask for a mask while having blood drawn. But is it really over? When we have a sore throat, an unexplained cough, flu like symptoms, will we worry. Will we think is it back? Will it ever truly go away? People have lost loved ones, families have been hurt with the loss of a parent or a child, we have not hugged or sat close to each other for 2 years. Our lives have been upended, we are like Alice falling down the hole and landing in a foreign place where up is down and in is out. We have not been like some countries where medical help is nonexistent, totally overrun by Covid, we have a vaccine and research continues. Eventually it will be something our children and grandchildren will tell their grandchildren about. With cancer I learned that God was with me through it all. That he held me like a precious child. God did not give me cancer, cells that went astray in my body did that, but he stayed with me through it all. He gave me strength and my faith grew. I hope that Covid brought each of us that peace we find only in faith. We dare to hope because we are upheld by a savior who is Christ the Lord.

Isaiah 40:29:31 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessings of these days for the hope you have given us. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, may they be comforted and feel your love surrounding them. Be with the hungry and the homeless, may we serve them in your name. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and be with his family. Be with the people of Ukraine, ease their suffering and give them strength and hope. Be with our church may we reach out to those in our community and share your love and goodness with them. Be with our staff and leaders, may they be blessed by your presence in their lives and in all they do. In Jesus name we pray.  
Amen

Grace Epperson

