

Dear Members and Friends of Northwood,

Most every year at the beginning of August, we travel to Tennessee for vacation to visit with my family in Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee (a few miles north of Lookout Mountain). This month, after the first few days of our trip, I noticed that the vision in my right eye had grown steadily darker. I discounted the change initially as I have a new lens in my right eye. The lens had become cloudy after cataract surgery last summer and was scheduled to be repaired at an October appointment in what is now called “simple” laser surgery. With the strong insistence and encouragement of my wife Joyce, I made the first available appointment with my eye doctor and returned home for what I imagined would be just a routine eye exam the following Monday, August 7.

Following my exam that Monday, the doctor asked me what I thought was a strange question, “Pastor, have you had anything to eat or drink today?” It was already 2:00 PM so I apologetically confessed, “Well, I’ve had only coffee and toast with strawberry jam earlier this morning...” “No, that’s good!” he said. He went on to tell me that I was having an “ocular emergency” and that I would undergo emergency surgery within the next two hours to repair multiple detachments in the retina of my right eye. (I could sense my blood pressure skyrocket at this news!) Then he added, “Because I will be inserting a large air bubble into your eye to hold the retina wall in place, following surgery you will be required to lay face down for three to four hours at a time during all of August with a one-hour break to walk around. While this schedule will not be as severe in September, you will still not be allowed to drive or preach until the air bubble in the eye is completely depleted. If you decide to preach anyway before I release you, the bubble in the eye will increase the eye pressure so much that it will make you nauseous and dizzy. If all the directions you are given are not followed, then the retina will not heal and you could lose sight in your right eye.” (I did not challenge or ask for any exemptions from any of his instructions except for preaching!)

The surgery that day lasted 90 minutes, during which time I was wide awake. The eye was numbed by lidocaine and injections, none of which caused any pain. A laser was used on my eye and I heard other odd noises as blood vessels were cauterized. All of this said, I felt sustained through it all by the faith we seek to nurture within us and others in so many ways through this church. My faith has so very often been strengthened as I have visited and prayed with so many of you in the challenges you have faced or are courageously facing still. I am also grateful for the gifts and skills of my doctor and my surgical team and the wisdom which God has provided them and us to care for our bodies which are so marvelously made.

Finally, I am on the mend and will continue to be so for some weeks to come. I am working now from home through August and then will return to the office and worship when released by the doctor. I will return phone messages left for me at the office at 796-8090, Ext 25. I can also be reached by email at chriscurvin@northwoodpc.org

I am grateful to Joyce, my wife and nurse! She is always on target with my seven different eye-drops, especially since I can’t even see the eye-dropper! Keep us in your prayers and remember how much you all mean to me. With blessings and prayers, I am...

Your pastor and friend,
E. Chris Curvin

“I will lift my eyes to the mountains – where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” -- Psalm 121:1