



Dear Pastor,

One of my favorite songs is "My Lord knows the way through the wilderness" which continues with the precious truth that "all I have to do is follow!" The Bible is full of passages that bear this truth, which has been a great promise that we have held on to for years, but even more over the last few weeks as we trust Him to guide us through every step.

A few months ago Pam began having some difficulties swallowing on occasion. As these difficulties became more frequent she went to the local clinic where they referred her to a gastroenterologist who then scheduled her for an endoscopy on August 2. As we were thinking they would just need to stretch her esophagus during the scope procedure, the doctor entered the room with the news that they had found a 5cm mass in her esophagus at the entrance to her stomach. The biopsy results came in the next day to confirm that the mass is cancer, but has not spread beyond the mass. She was then referred to an oncologist and a thoracic surgeon.

On August 18 we began a long day at the hospital with a PET scan, a pulmonary test, lab work, and appointments with both the oncologist and the surgeon. The recommended treatment plan they came up with is to begin with 8-10 weeks of chemo and radiation, followed with 4 weeks of recovery and rest and then a surgery to remove what is left of the mass. As the surgeon began to explain the procedure, we quickly realized it would not be a simple one. They will be removing her entire esophagus and the lymph nodes adjacent to the area where the mass is. Then they will pull her stomach up and attach it to her throat creating a new esophagus. This sounded like something that you would only see done on a tv show, but we have already had several friends tell us they know people who have had this done with great success. There is even a man we know that had it done over 30 years ago! As you can imagine there will be a long recovery from this procedure as well as the possibility of more radiation after the surgery. Following the surgery, the surgeon estimated 6 months to 1 year before everything is back to normal, but he believes she will be cancer free at that point. Please know our faith is not in the doctors, but in the Lord to guide and use them and to bring healing in all of this.

When we began our sabbatical in April, we set October 15 to re-evaluate our situation with Pam's mom and her cancer and hopefully return to Aklavik. Her mom's cancer is very aggressive and it was becoming clear that she is going to need continued care, but I was making plans to begin making trips back to Aklavik. With the diagnosis and treatment plan for Pam, I now need to stay here and care for her. I have started making plans to have services in Aklavik through Zoom meetings, or some similar technology so we can have some interaction and fellowship with everyone there. Also the ladies will be starting a new Bible study there in a few weeks. Once Pam is at a point where I could be gone for a few weeks at a time I plan to start making short trips back as well. That probably will not be until early next year.

We do not take the love and support you have given us for granted. We praise the Lord through all of this how he has used each one of you to meet our needs and bless us. If we had not been in the states, it would likely have been months from now before she would have had the first appointment for the endoscopy with the health care system in the arctic. As I sit here and think about it, I could write many pages of testimony of how God has provided and guided us, but I will sum it up by praising Him for His goodness and grace in our lives!

There was a missionary presenting and preaching at church here in Missouri this past Wednesday and when we got in the truck to go home Pam said she could see my heart breaking because we are not able to be in Aklavik at this time. Our hearts desire is still to see the Lord glorified through the spread of the Gospel and the edification of churches in the Canadian Arctic. Though it may be through the internet that we do it right now, we are asking the Lord that it may be in person again one day. All that we can do is follow the Lord through the wilderness and are asking that you would continue to pray for and support us and that through it all He will be glorified!

In His service,
Larry and Pam Noland