



Project HEAL

HEALTH THROUGH EARLY AWARENESS AND LEARNING



A SPIRITUAL GUIDE
TO BREAST CANCER
AND SCREENING



Get the Word Out

on *Breast Health*

The next time you're at a church service, look around you. In the United States, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her life. That's a woman's risk—about one in eight. It used to be that we didn't talk about breast cancer. But, we're talking about it more now. Talking to the women in our lives, getting the word out on breast health. Knowledge is power. It is important that the church does all it can to empower women to help themselves.

African American women are at a 41% higher risk of dying from breast cancer than other women. This is because too often the cancer is found later, after it has spread. Too many of us are not getting regular clinical breast exams by a doctor or nurse or regular mammograms (an x-ray picture of the breast that can find lumps before we can feel them). If we do regular screening, we have a good chance of finding breast cancer earlier when it's most treatable. Many women wait too long to see the doctor if they notice a change in their breast. That is why it is so important to know the normal look and feel of our breasts. We may be afraid to talk about or learn more about breast cancer. But remember—most breast changes are not cancer. And finding breast cancer early is the most powerful tool we can use to fight this disease.

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13 [KJV]

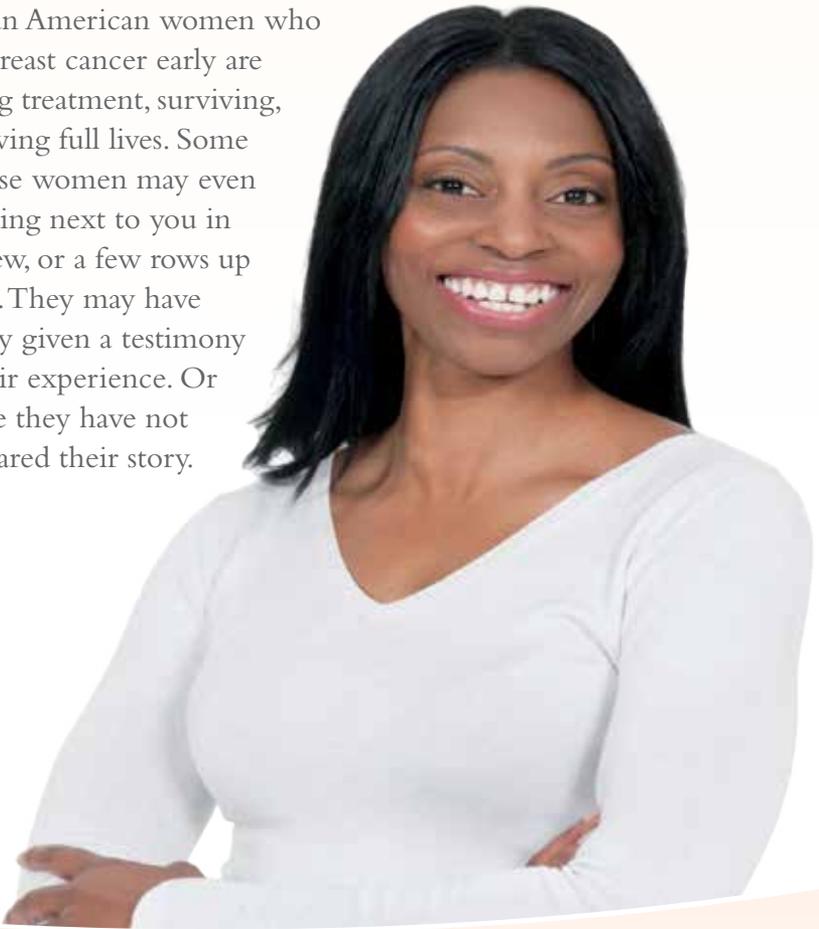
We know *God* will take care of us.

But you have to help yourself, too.

God has given the doctors knowledge and technology.

This is a true blessing that comes from God.

African American women who find breast cancer early are getting treatment, surviving, and living full lives. Some of these women may even be sitting next to you in the pew, or a few rows up ahead. They may have already given a testimony of their experience. Or maybe they have not yet shared their story.



What I know *NOW*

WOULD I LIKE TO GO BACK TO BEING 20 AGAIN?

Only if I knew then what I know now!

Oh, yes. When I was in my twenties, I didn't go to church. My spiritual health wasn't strong. I felt like I was looking for something, and was not satisfied with my life. One Sunday, my aunt asked me to go to Friends and Family Day at her church. So I went and sat through the service. Afterwards, I felt better—more peaceful. I went again the next Sunday. Now, it's Sundays that get me through the week. I come to church to nourish my spirit.

God cares for us and wants to care for our mind, spirit and body. To keep my mind sharp, I read and talk to friends

It's like a balance. You've got to have all three: body, mind, and spirit. When these three parts are at their best, I am whole, and I feel great.

and family about important matters. Part of keeping my body healthy means I go for my well woman exam (a check-up, clinical breast exam and pap test) every

year. Now that I'm in my forties, I go for my mammograms every year, too.

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health,
just as your soul prospers. 3 John 1:2 [NKJV]



Know Your

Family History

FAMILY REUNIONS ARE A SPECIAL TIME where we get the whole family together. There's plenty of good food and good company. We tell stories until the sun goes down. Whether at your reunion or just at the dinner table tonight, take the time to talk with the women in your family. There's an opportunity to share or learn your family history of breast cancer.

Has your mother, sister, or daughter had breast cancer? Did they have it before the age of 50? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, tell your doctor. He or she may say you need to have a mammogram before you turn 40. Talk to your doctor to find out for sure.

It's up to you to find out your family history. Remember that even if breast cancer is in your family history, it doesn't mean you will get it. Most women who get breast cancer don't have a family history. But every woman is at risk, and the risk gets higher as we get older.

She girds herself with strength and
strengthens her arms. Proverbs 31:17 [NKJV]

As you go, Spread the Word

RICH IN OUR HERITAGE IS EACH GENERATION HELPING

and passing wisdom down to the next generation. Picking up groceries for your grandmother, carrying your mother to church, or taking your aunt to the doctor. Taking care of our family is deeply rooted in our culture. They know they can depend on you for these things. But do they know they need a mammogram and a clinical breast exam every year if they are over age 40? And if they are age 20-39, do they know they need a clinical breast exam every three years?

As you go, spread the word to each generation. Tell grandma that she still needs a mammogram every year. Tell mama that because she's over 40, she needs to have regular mammograms, too. Tell daughter that because she's a woman and is getting older, she needs to pay close attention to any changes in her breasts.

Support the women in your life and set a good example by doing the things you need to do for your own breast health. Share this information with them like a good family recipe. Keep the cycle going by spreading the word from grandmother to grandchild. Generation to generation, we tell the story.



Ask your doctor how to check for changes in your breasts like: a lump or thickening, pain, swelling, change in shape of the breast, changes in skin color or texture or discharge from the nipples. If you notice these changes, see your doctor right away.

A mammogram can find a breast lump before it's big enough to feel. At this stage, breast cancer treatment is most successful.

Use the free will and good sense that God gave you – **get your mammogram every year!**

If you are age

What to do...

20-39

clinical breast exam every 3 years

40+

clinical breast exam every year
mammogram every year

What **WISE** Women Know

about **Breast Health**

BERNICE AND MARILYN GREW UP TOGETHER, and they shared everything. After high school graduation, they went their separate ways. At their 20-year reunion, they met again. When they got talking, they found that they have very different views on taking care of themselves. Look and see what they had to say.

If we are not at our best health how can we be a blessing to **anyone else?**

For all the reasons not to have a mammogram, there are stronger reasons why women should. Do it for yourself. Do it for your family. Remember that God gave you your

body as a gift, and we must be stewards of that gift. Don't let embarrassment, shyness, or fear keep you from taking care of yourself. Having a mammogram could save your life. Ask questions, get help, and take charge of your faith.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19 [NKLV]



Marilyn

“I just **don’t have enough time** to get a mammogram.”

“I hear **mammograms are really painful.**”

“What I don’t know **won’t hurt me.**”

“**I can’t afford** to have a mammogram.”

“I have heavy breasts, and **I feel funny about having a mammogram.**”

“I’m **afraid of what I might find.**”



Bernice

“There are things **I always make time** for.”

“It’s not painful, it’s **more like a discomfort**, and it only lasts a few minutes.”

“What I don’t know **could kill me.**”

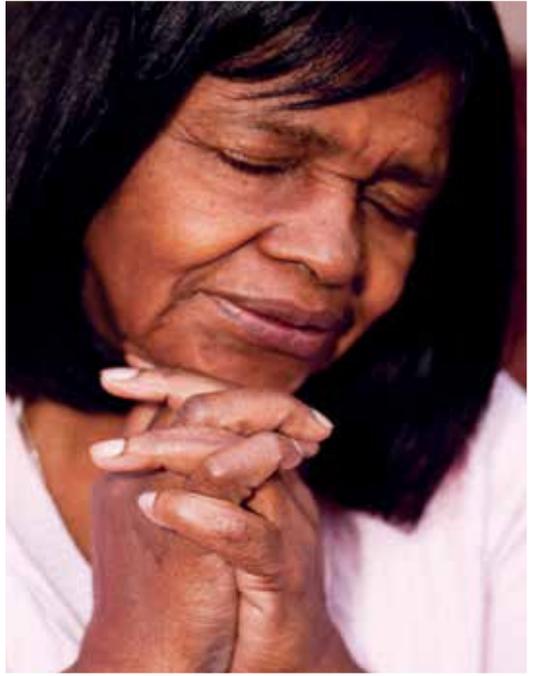
“**I can’t afford not** to have a mammogram.”

“**I haven’t got anything the nurses and technicians haven’t seen before.**”

“What’s scary is when **I don’t have the knowledge!**”

Faith Gets You Through

WE KNOW FAITH CAN WORK WONDERS. Faith gets us through the good times and the hard times. Faith can even help you at your mammogram appointment. You know that God will carry you through this, too. When you have faith, it helps you stay calm through the exam. That makes it go easier. It's normal to be a little nervous about the mammogram. But in a few minutes you'll be set for the year.



Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27 [NKJV]

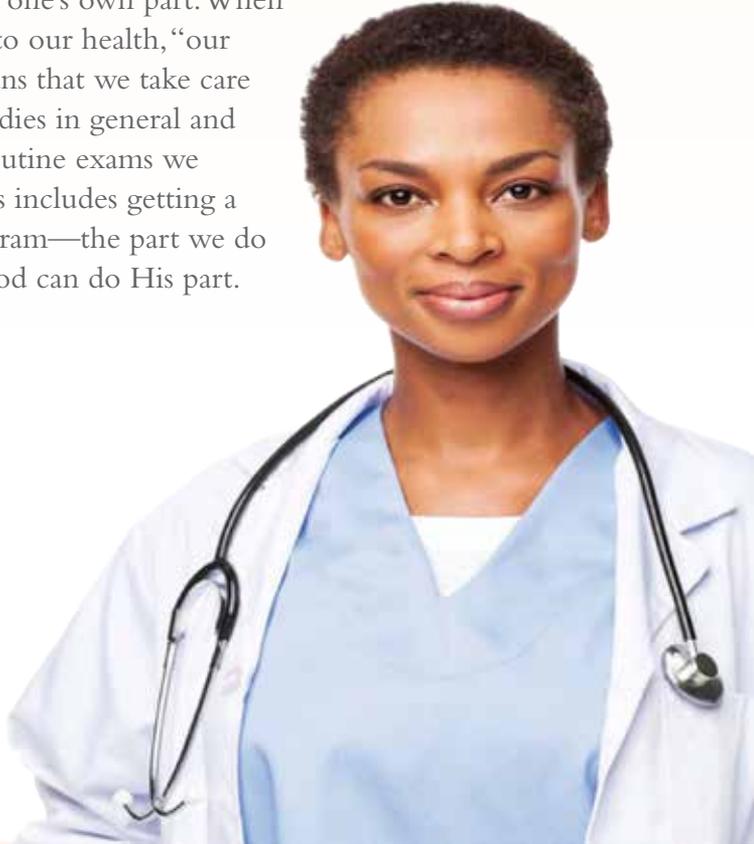
For we walk by faith, not by sight.
2 Corinthians 5:7 [NKJV]

Our body is a temple

So Glorify

God by taking care of your health

TO HAVE FAITH MEANS TRUSTING that God has the perfect plan for you. Your personal relationship with God has gotten you through some of life's challenges. You can probably testify that trusting in Him to carry one through tough times also requires action on one's own part. When it comes to our health, "our part" means that we take care of our bodies in general and get the routine exams we need. This includes getting a mammogram—the part we do so that God can do His part.



Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5 [NKJV]

How Will I PAY for a Mammogram?

THE MICHIGAN BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER CONTROL PROGRAM (BCCCP), promotes women's health by providing free mammograms, clinical breast exams, Pap tests, and pelvic exams to women who qualify. If you are aged 40-65, have qualifying income, and meet eligibility requirements, you may qualify for free services. This program contracts with screening sites throughout Michigan to provide cancer detection services and prompt follow-up care when needed.

To locate a provider near you, **call 1-866-930-6324 or go to: www.michigancancer.org/bcccp/index.cfm**

If you need assistance locating resources for breast health services, including free and low cost mammograms, call Susan G. Komen West Michigan at 616.752.8262.

This booklet is courtesy of the

West Michigan Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure

616.752.8262

www.komenwestmichigan.org

To locate an affiliate near you, visit ww5.komen.org/Affiliates.aspx

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