

## Faith Walk by Diana Biggs

When I think of my faith walk, the first thing that comes to my mind is guardian angels. I think my belief in guardian angels came from my father who used to tell me not to go through my guardian angels too quickly, that angels need to have time to rest too. As I've gone through life, there are many instances that stand out to me when these heavenly beings have been close to me. In fact, there are so many of them, that I'll limit myself to three that stand out in my mind.

One time that I recall vividly is back when I was in my late twenties. My husband (now ex-husband) had recently returned from Viet Nam and was enrolled at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. I was working in an emergency room and had recently found out that I was pregnant. I started having pains in my back, had been to the doctor, and the tests all came back normal. After a couple weeks of this pain, I decided that I was being a big baby; maybe this was what pregnancy was like, so I

decided I might as well return to work. I was walking down the hall of the ER when I felt a kind of flash go through me. A doctor who was walking towards me said that she could see me go white as I dropped to the floor. I was in surgery within about 15 minutes and had lost 5 pints of blood in that time. I had an ectopic pregnancy that had lodged right at the neck of the fallopian tube where it joins the uterus, which was what apparently threw the tests off. If I had not been standing in an emergency room when that happened, I would not be here today to tell this tale. I have always felt that there was a guardian angel urging me to work that day, and staying by my side through the surgery that saved me.

Quite a few years later, I was probably in my mid-thirties, there was another instance where I again felt pushed to an action that kept me alive. I was on a river trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River with the US Forest Service. We were checking out the area for inclusion in a wilderness area. We had been on the river a few days and on this particular day had pulled in at a

long, sandy beach to set up camp. We had been tent camping but it was so warm that day, that everyone just put their sleeping bags out on the sand. Sometime during the night a storm started to move in, it was spitting rain and I kept trying to arrange myself in the sleeping bag so my face wouldn't get wet, but nothing worked. About dawn I decided that if I couldn't sleep, I might as well get up. As I was walking down the beach I ran into another person who couldn't sleep, so we were hiking upriver. Suddenly, in the quiet of the early morning, there was a tremendous crash. It felt like the beach moved. Running back toward camp, we saw the rest of our party gathered on either side of a HUGE ponderosa pine that had toppled onto the beach. When we got to the tree, one of the people there turned to me and said. "Oh my God, we thought you were dead." You could barely see the ends of my sleeping bag poking out from under the sides of the tree. As it turned out, two of the people in our group were injured from flying shrapnel from the tree. One had been pinned between his arm and his chest by a branch that was

buried in the sand. The other had a good chunk of his cheek and nose taken off and we were worried that he would go into shock. It took us a couple hours on the river before we got to a place where we could radio up to one of the forest service towers and ask for help. The storm grounded the rescue helicopter, so we had to stay on the river until we could put out in at Salmon, a couple more hours away even with the high water. Everyone recovered – and I think there was more than one guardian angel along on that trip.

The last “nudge” I’ll tell you about was when I was about to turn forty. It was December and I had a health insurance that had an annual deductible that had to be met. Being a cheapskate, I thought I’d better get in for my annual physical while it wouldn’t cost as much. Luckily, I had a physician I’d been seeing for a number of years. During the physical the doctor thought she felt a mass in my abdomen. She got a surgeon to give a second opinion right then, and before I knew what was happening, I was having a sonogram and being admitted for surgery the next

morning. I had ovarian cancer that had been caught in the very early stages, the recovery and following treatment wasn't any fun, but I'm alive to tell about it and that was over 25 years ago. I still thank my guardian angel – or angels – for that one.

There are many more instances in my life where I believe a guardian angel brought me through a dangerous time, there are probably many more that I don't even know about since I've always been a risk taker and don't really have much fear about anything.

During my life, I think my faith has always been an integral part of me. I've always felt that a guardian angel was with me and I am very grateful for that. I can't say that I can explain why I know this, but I believe it to be true. My physician now, who has patched me up numerous times, once said, "Well, my dear, God isn't through with you yet!" I treasure every moment of life because of the times when things could have ended so quickly. That brings me to my retirement and move to Canon City. I originally planned to visit several churches in the area before

deciding where my new home church would be. Fortunately, Shepherd of the Hills was the first church I attended and my decision was made. As I sat in the sanctuary that day, I felt what an amazing place of grace this church is. I have found a place where I can discuss my total faith in groups such as *Living the Question*, the summer Tuesday evening dinner discussions, the women's discussion group, and the choir. Being elected to the Rocky Mountain ELCA council has opened a whole new faith vista for me that I am just beginning to investigate. This is the first time in my life that my church has become such a huge part of my life, not just a Sunday service. I find the people of this congregation to be remarkable disciples of Jesus. When I was growing up, my father was flying for the Air Force and we attended the chapel on base, wherever we were stationed. About the time I was in high school, my parents joined the Lutheran Church and I was confirmed in San Antonio, Texas. During our travels my parents would take us to places of worship for other religions, where I learned to show respect for

other beliefs. My father encouraged us to read Joseph Campbell to reinforce our knowledge of other faiths. I feel quite comfortable during Native American ceremonies and have participated in many. In truth, I was reluctant to become too involved in church activities because of the hypocrisy I often saw among people who said they were Christians. Here at Shepherd of the Hills, I have found a level of compassion that is remarkable. My heart and spirit are comfortable here and I find myself spending more and more time in this building.

In closing I'd like to express my deep belief that God is present in every living thing. Whether you look through a microscope or telescope, you will see God's wonders displayed for you. Just the incredible intricacy of every cell in your body, and the very fact that billions of them actually work is, to me, proof of God's miracles. I find no difficulty in reconciling science and religion. To me, the more you know "scientifically", the more wondrous God's world is for you.

Thank you for being the compassionate and loving congregation  
that you are and allowing me to share my faith walk with you.