



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



WEEKLY PRESBYTERY LETTER - JULY 22, 2015  
Rev. Graham Hart, General Presbyter

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART

### A Thank You and Lessons Learned:

#### **The Human Body - The Body of Christ and the Intricacies of How They Work**

I have a new and deep appreciation of this amazing, complex, and miraculous creation called the human body. I also have a new understanding of how debilitating pain can be, and am so grateful for skilled surgeons, and physical and occupational therapists who, unlike Humpty Dumpty, actually help put you back together again.

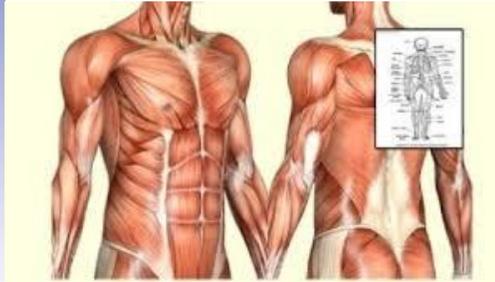
But first - thank you for your prayers and thoughts while I was on medical leave for some necessary and planned surgery to deal with a common male issue called BPH. My doctor recommended that I have my surgery done at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis which, along with Mayo Clinic, are they only places in the country where they do what is called the HoLEP procedure for treatment of BPH, which he felt was the best treatment option for me (*Note: I trust this is not more information than you need to know, but wanted to be open with you so no one was left speculating on what was going on. Also, I will gladly share my learnings with other men – apparently there are a lot of us – who are dealing with these same issues*).

The surgery and my healing from the actual surgical procedure were text-book. The pathology reports were all clear (for which I am deeply thankful). I was just to lay low and rest, and when the time came for me to be discharged, I was good to go.

But 3 days later, what I did not plan on was how my muscles, ligaments, tendons, and bones responded to being on an operating table for 3 hours. To make a complicated story short, what I thought was going to be a couple of uncomfortable days followed by a pain-free time of recovery turned into 2 weeks of not being able to walk or get in or out of a car without a searing and crippling back/hip pain that made me want to do nothing more than sit or lay down.

Fortunately, I was able to get an appointment at a Physical Therapy Clinic relatively quickly. The first two therapists worked me over, but I had no relief. Finally I saw the head of the clinic and Josephine, a seasoned PT, who figured out what happened and how to fix it. They even went on an internet medical site to watch a video of the surgical procedure, so as to figure out what might be going on. Apparently during the surgery I was positioned in such a way that all my weight was on an old injury in my lower back, and my legs were in a position that they did not like, so my back, pelvis and hips, which normally work together effortlessly, all rebelled. They didn't like it, so the muscles went into spasms and everything went into lock down.

What amazed me was how Josephine could see how I was out of alignment, could feel how the gaps that should be between my vertebrae and pelvis and hip had all closed. So she pushed, pulled and prodded in places that I did not know were part of me until she got everything in alignment, and gave me exercises to strengthen everything to keep it from happening again.



Her teaching tool was George, a model of the human skeleton, which she would pull up next to me to show me what bones and muscles she was working on and why. A couple of times, while looking at George, I couldn't help but think of that old African-American Spiritual composed by [James Weldon Johnson](#): "Dem Bones... dem bones... dem dry bones" which was based on Ezekiel 37.

It's all connected...

*Ezekiel connected dem dry bones,  
Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones,  
Now hear the word of the Lord.*

**Verse 1**

*Toe bone connected to the foot bone  
Foot bone connected to the heel bone  
Heel bone connected to the ankle bone  
Ankle bone connected to the shin bone  
Shin bone connected to the knee bone  
Knee bone connected to the thigh bone  
Thigh bone connected to the hip bone  
Hip bone connected to the back bone  
Back bone connected to the shoulder bone  
Shoulder bone connected to the neck bone  
Neck bone connected to the head bone  
Now hear the word of the Lord.*

**Chorus**

*Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.  
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.  
Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around.  
Now hear the word of the Lord.*

If you want to hear the Delta Rhythm Boys version of this ([click here](#))

**The Body of Christ – the Church – and the Work of Peace River Presbytery**

We are all connected, too.

The Apostle Paul, in his letters to the early church, chose the image of the human body to capture and illumine how the church is to exist and function in the world. At every ordination service we hear from [1 Corinthians 12](#), "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ..."

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” Just as in a human body there are different parts, so it is in the church – we each have a part, a gift to share.*

So what happens when the necessary and essential parts of the body are not working together? What happens when the normal stressors that impact every congregation occur and the body goes into lock-down? Who is it, like a surgeon or physical therapist or occupational therapist, who can help us when we cannot seem to help ourselves or when we can't get unstuck? Ultimately and finally it is the work of the Spirit, but the Spirit works in and through us.

I want to lift up the work of the Committee on Ministry and our Presbytery's Trustees who, at the request of one of our congregations, formed a joint task force of 5 members, to come along side that church and help them get unstuck and find ways to move forward. Often that kind of work, which the Presbytery does, is behind the scenes. It is a work not loudly publicized, but it essential to who we are as a presbytery, and is critical in helping a congregation be all it can be for the glory of God and for the sake of Christ's mission to the world.

One of the aims, hopes, and outcomes of a presbytery's work is, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus: <sup>4</sup>*There is one body and one Spirit...* <sup>15</sup>*But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,* <sup>16</sup>*from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. ([Ephesians 4](#))*

That's the goal. If you have a story to share, or ideas and resources to lift up as to how we can help one another, as the PT helped me, to be fully alive in Christ and fully and actively engaged in the world as Christ's Body for the world, I would love to hear from you (see e-mail address below).

“Dem bones...” are connected. Our bodies are amazing creations ... complex, beautiful, and sometimes mystifying. The church too is an amazing creation of the Spirit, beautiful and sometimes complicated and mystifying. The church, as the Body of Christ, is always meant to be God's gift to the world. Each and all of us have a part to play, as we live as the Body of Christ, for the healing, redemption, reconciliation, and transformation of the world that God so loves.

*With gratitude for the gift of healing and walking,*

*With a new appreciation for health care professionals who seek to make us healthy and whole,*

*And with a deep appreciation for Peace River Presbytery and each congregation of the Presbytery who together are part of the Body of Christ,*

*Graham*

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

[graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

#### **You may find the following articles interesting:**

[Reframing the question about Pope Francis' trip to America](#)

Crux: What if it's not how Francis will play in the States, but how the States will play with Francis?

[How to grow your church: Get better at what you do](#)

Christian Today: Churches grow by being better at what they do, not by a laser-like focus on numbers, according to a Church of England expert.

[Franklin Graham's turn toward intolerance](#)

The Atlantic: The famed evangelist, who made his reputation with humanitarian works, calls for a halt to “all immigration of Muslims to the U.S.”

[Muslim fundraiser for burned black churches close to \\$100,000 goal](#)

Aljazeera America: Campaign, which has raised nearly \$90,000, closes Friday at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Washington Post: [The 25 most moving photos from Ramadan](#)

["I was a wild man": how to decode evangelical testimony](#)

Religion Dispatches: Paul's conversion and the parable of the prodigal son have been deployed by countless Christian ministries as rhetorical templates to be studied, learned, and mimicked.

**The next STATED MEETING of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY is scheduled for:**

Thursday, November 19, 2015

at Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood

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**SAVE THE DATES!**

In lieu of the August/September Stated Meeting, Peace River Presbytery will hold

**FALL REGIONAL GATHERINGS:**

**Thursday, August 20 @ Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice**

9:30 a.m. (with lunch)  
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**Thursday, August 27 @ Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples**

8:30 a.m. (with continental breakfast)  
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**Thursday, September 3 @ Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch**

9:30 a.m. (with lunch)  
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*Attendance and Lunch Reservations are to be made with the host churches,  
not the Presbytery Office. Contact information will be provided soon.*

These are not Stated Meetings, and Presbytery business will not be conducted.

The purpose is to build relationships between churches, connect churches missionally,  
and to give opportunity for churches to share with one another.

More details to follow.

**BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.**

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*

**Back To School Appeal**

Every summer Beth-El Farmworker Ministry reaches out to its mission partners in the collection of back to school supplies. From pencils and paper to backpacks and new shoes, every year Beth-El helps over 500 returning students with much needed school supplies. To learn how your congregation can help or to receive a complete list of needed supplies, please contact Beth-El Farmworker Ministry at [813-633-1548](tel:813-633-1548) or email: [info@beth-el.info](mailto:info@beth-el.info). Gracias!

[July Newsletter](#)

[Back To School Supplies List](#)

[June 2015 Update and Financial Appeal](#)

**CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

*A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.*

[Web Site](#)

### **MISION PENIEL**

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

**Pastor Miguel Estrada is on Study Leave for the month of July. Please direct any questions or requests to:**

Mary Ellen Frost, 239-240-9178, [tmefrost@yahoo.com](mailto:tmefrost@yahoo.com); or

Pete Rodino, 201-841-9977, [pvrodino@aol.com](mailto:pvrodino@aol.com)

Pastor Miguel will resume being the main point of contact on August 1.

The Mision Peniel Task Force continues to meet and build the support and structure for continuing this vital ministry. If you want to make a donation to support this recovery effort you may send the check (marked *Mision Peniel*) to:  
Peace River Presbytery | 5600 Peace River Rd. | North Port, FL. 34287

- Collection Centers for Mision Peniel Supplies ([click for information](#))
  - Critical Needs List ([click for information](#))



July 30 – August 1, 2015  
University of Tennessee Campus  
Knoxville, TN

*Be inspired... Become equipped... Get connected!*

Experience that deep sense of community one would expect at a national gathering of Presbyterians—a great big family reunion! Join us for a wide variety of workshops, all under one Big Tent, a conference that will inspire and equip Presbyterians to live missionally. In past year each the General Assembly Ministry areas has hosted their own conference... this year you will be able to move between areas and interests in this 3 day event. Also, note the cost has been greatly reduced. The registration is \$395 per person, which includes accommodations, seven meals, campus parking and outstanding programming. Fees for children and youth are no more than \$150 each.

**Register Online Now!**

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

Saturday, January 23, 2016 ~ Church of the Palms

[The Soul of Caregivers: Nurturing and Reorienting Our Lives](#)

with Rev. Marjorie Thompson



## CHURCHES OF PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

(click on church name to link to its web site)

<a href="#">Braden River Presbyterian Church,</a> Bradenton	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Bradenton
<a href="#">Kirkwood Presbyterian Church,</a> Bradenton	<a href="#">Palma Sola Presbyterian Church,</a> Bradenton
<a href="#">Westminster Presbyterian Church,</a> Bradenton	Palmetto Presbyterian Church, Palmetto - <a href="mailto:kcooper@ppcfl.org">kcooper@ppcfl.org</a>
<a href="#">Christ Church of Longboat Key</a> Longboat Key	<a href="#">Peace Presbyterian Church,</a> Lakewood Ranch
<a href="#">Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church,</a> Sarasota	<a href="#">Church of the Palms,</a> Sarasota
<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Sarasota	<a href="#">Northminster Presbyterian Church,</a> Sarasota
<a href="#">Pine Shores Presbyterian Church,</a> Sarasota	<a href="#">Presbyterian Church of the Covenant,</a> Sarasota
<a href="#">Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church,</a> Sarasota	<a href="#">Siesta Key Chapel,</a> Sarasota
<a href="#">Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a> Venice	<a href="#">Venice Presbyterian Church,</a> Venice
<a href="#">Community Presbyterian Church,</a> Englewood	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Arcadia
<a href="#">St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,</a> North Port	<a href="#">Burnt Store Presbyterian Church,</a> Punta Gorda
Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte <a href="mailto:devon.ducheneau@gmail.com">devon.ducheneau@gmail.com</a>	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Port Charlotte

<a href="#">Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a> North Fort Myers	
<a href="#">Faith Presbyterian Church</a> Cape Coral	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Lehigh Acres
<a href="#">Buckingham Presbyterian Church,</a> Fort Myers	<a href="#">Covenant Presbyterian Church,</a> Fort Myers
<a href="#">Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church,</a> Fort Myers	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Fort Myers
<a href="#">Hope United Church (PCUSA),</a> Fort Myers	<a href="#">Chapel by the Sea,</a> Fort Myers Beach
<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Bonita Springs	
<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a> Naples	<a href="#">Lely Presbyterian Church,</a> Naples
<a href="#">Moorings Presbyterian Church,</a> Naples	<a href="#">Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church,</a> Naples

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The following are position openings in PRP churches.  
Click on the title for more information.

[Organist / Accompanist](#) – Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda

### **PRAYER NEEDS:**

#### **Please continue to pray for:**

- Alex Herrera (Lil Rea's Son-In-Law) – Recovering from mugging.
- Rev. Graham Hart – recovery from prostrate surgery and back pain.
- Rev. Dr. Margaret Towner – recovery from hip revision surgery last week.
- Robert Dennis, Son of Rev. India Dennis – mental health issues.
- Anita Adkison, mother of Rev. Dr. Stephen Adkison, Pastor of Chapel By The Sea – undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Lives in Arkansas.
- Rev. Susan Rice, Associate Pastor of Faith, Cape Coral – health

- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – on kidney transplant list. Greg is also diabetic and underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery in June 2013.
- Glenn Beisser (father of Rev. Devon Beisser Ducheneau, Stated Supply Pastor for Wintergarden P.C.) – lung cancer and heart issues
- Grandson of Tim and Martha Halverson - suffering from a rare autoimmune disease.
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Misión Peniel
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar
- Les and Cindy Morgan, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Bangladesh
- Pastors and Educators in transition
- Nations in crisis

**CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE: JULY 2015:**

July 5	<a href="#">Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch</a> Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Deibert email: <a href="mailto:edeibert@mindspring.com">edeibert@mindspring.com</a>
July 12	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres</a> Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Winston Lawson email: <a href="mailto:lehighacrespresbyterians@embarqmail.com">lehighacrespresbyterians@embarqmail.com</a>
July 19	<a href="#">Christ Church of Longboat Key</a> Stated Supply Pastor: Rev. Dr. Norman Pritchard email: <a href="mailto:revnmp@comcast.net">revnmp@comcast.net</a>
July 26	<a href="#">First Presbyterian Church, Naples</a> Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Will Browne email: <a href="mailto:willbrowne@yahoo.com">willbrowne@yahoo.com</a>

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: JULY 2015**

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)

**July 27**

Mision Peniel Task Force at Covenent Presbyterian, Fort Myers

