



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ September 8, 2016  
Rev. Graham P. Hart ~ General Presbyter

## **SPEAKING FROM THE HART:**

Prayers for my son and his family ...

Life is lived mostly in the expected and routine. Driving down a street, we expect other drivers to heed the laws of the road. When we come to an intersection and the light is green, we confidently drive through without a thought, but sometimes, something unexpected happens. Maybe a driver coming from the other way isn't paying attention, is talking on the phone, or carelessly hits the gas and not the brake. In a split second our car and our world are rocked; we are spinning; everything is turned upside down.

We all have been there at some point. Our prayer and hope, at such time as that, is for life to return to the expected and routine.

I ask for prayers for our son, Nathan, and his family: his wife- Eileen, Genevieve who is 6, and Patrick and Oliver who are 3. Their world was turned upside down last week. He was having trouble breathing when he was running. He went to see his doctor, who ordered some immediate tests and a PET scan. The scan revealed a tumor in the mediastinum area of his chest. Subsequent biopsies determined he has a rare, aggressive Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and the size of the tumor suggested advanced. The oncologist told him he needed to go immediately to the hospital, so he was admitted last Thursday night to Rush/Presbyterian Chicago. Since then he has had all kind of tests and has seen all kind of doctors.

The hope was that he would have started chemotherapy by now. However, since the results of some specialized genetic tests, which are critical in knowing how to treat this type of Lymphoma, are not yet back, his treatment start has been delayed until this coming Monday. Although the wait has been frustrating, diagnosing exactly what he has and beginning the right treatment plan is critical to his long term prognosis. In all likelihood, he will be receiving 5 or 6 different chemotherapy drugs. He may be part of a clinical trial that will add to the treatment plan a new chemotherapy drug used to treat aggressive tumors. He has been told that the first treatment cycle will last 6-8 months.

In the midst of this, Eileen's (Nate's wife) mom, who has been fighting pancreatic cancer, died this past Sunday night. When the family gathered last Thursday to say their good-byes, and the priest came to offer last rites; Nathan and Eileen could not be there since they were on their way to the hospital. The wake will be today (9/8) and funeral service will be on Friday (9/9), so the doctors discharged Nathan late yesterday, so he can be with his family. He will be readmitted next Monday to begin his treatments.

They have a huge amount on their plate. As a family, we have decided that we will each take a week to be with them when Nathan is in the hospital, and help Eileen with their 3 young children, or be with Nathan while he is at Rush, which is about an hour from where they live. I flew up to Chicago last Sunday and will stay until next Tuesday.



*(Hart Family – Nathan, Eileen, Genevieve, Patrick and Oliver on the left)*

Scripture says the rain falls on the just and unjust alike, accidents happen, and life sometimes leaves us spinning. Yet, personally, I know that in times like that EMT's come quickly, doctors respond with treatment plans and hope, prayers are offered, and faith, hope and love can emerge. In and through it all we trust in God's healing mercies.

Over the years I have come to believe that:

Diseases are working, but those in the healing profession are working too;

Forces of evil and destruction are working, but God is working too;

Small minded individuals who spread messages of hate and fear are working, but God and God's people offering the world an alternative vision of love, hope and life are working, too!

Since the beginning - when God's Spirit moved over the face of the deep bringing light and life out of the chaos and darkness - God has been at work, and I believe continues to be at work; and God invites us to join with His Spirit in His work in the world.

Linda and I are feeling sad and bad, and really badly, for Nathan and his family, whose life, routine, and world have been shaken; but I am grateful for the time we have had in the hospital to just hang out, and unfortunately to wait ... and wait ... and wait.

I am thankful for Nathan's faith and the faith community to which he belongs. I am grateful for our family and their friends who have surrounded him in so many tangible ways. I am hopeful because we worship a God of Easter morn. I deeply appreciate the prayers and support that each of you in Peace River have offered. And I am hopeful!

*Grateful for this community of faith, hope and love called Peace River Presbytery, and praying that God's healing mercies and presence will with be with Nathan and Eileen and their family!*

*Graham*

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

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

### [Veteran religion reporter looks for the Bible in public life in new book](#)

Religion News Service: Veteran religion reporter Kenneth A. Briggs has seen the Bible "become a museum exhibit, hallowed as a treasure but enigmatic and untouched."

### [Georgetown's sins & ours](#)

Commonweal: How institutions repent.

### [Why is Christianity declining in the United States?](#)

Religion News Service: David Gushee offers ten proposed reasons why Christianity is declining in the United States.

### [Mother Teresa sometimes didn't believe in God. That makes her an example of faith.](#)

The Week: According to Catholic spirituality, Mother Teresa's struggles with faith and belief are normal -- indeed, to be expected. And it's a store of wisdom, for those with eyes to see.

### [Evangelicals and conservative Catholics, who have voted together for decades, are splitting apart](#)

The Washington Post: Contrasting support for Trump reveals a startling political splintering of conservative Catholics and evangelicals, who have tracked side by side for decades.

### [Mother Teresa fought poverty as an evil -- and lived it as a virtue](#)

The Washington Post: Focusing on the Christian meaning of poverty renders Mother Teresa a more complex figure than the one of popular imagination.

### [Catholics are obligated to care for the planet, just like care for the sick, Pope Francis says](#)

The Washington Post: Pope Francis deepened his vision Thursday of a green church in which caring for the planet is as important a Catholic commitment as caring for the sick and the hungry.

### [The Mountain Goats' John Darnielle loves Amy Grant, Rich Mullins, and the Book of Jonah](#)

Christianity Today: Ahead of The Mountain Goats' fall tour, the lead singer spoke about what spirituality looks like in his life now, from praying with his four-year-old son to grappling with God's message in the Book of Jonah.

## “FUNDING YOUR MINISTRY”

~ Sponsored by the Presbytery's Finance Team/Board of Trustees ~

**Tuesday, September 27, 2016 ~ Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota**

or

**Wednesday, September 28, 2016 ~ First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs**

**9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

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**Workshop Presenters:** Robert Hay, Jr. and John Elder Wray of the Presbyterian Foundation

**Workshop Titles:** (1) Culture of Generosity, (2) Planned Giving, Legacy Funds, and Endowments, (3) Capital Campaigns

**Who should attend?** ... Church Treasurers, Finance Secretaries, Finance Committee Chairs and Members, Clerks of Session, Elders, Pastors, and anyone interested in the financial and stewardship aspects of the church ministry. All are welcome!

**Cost?** ... No cost for the workshops / \$10.00 cost for lunch.

**Reservations are required** for the workshops AND lunch by Wednesday, September 21.

Contact Lori Doyal, PRP Financial Secretary: [lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org) / 941-426-8421

Download [informational brochure](#) for additional information.

## ANNUAL SESSION RECORDS REVIEW

Three Records Review sessions were offered in conjunction with the three Regional Gatherings.\* Additionally we will offer two other review sessions, both on Saturdays.

**Clerks of Session can select the date and location most convenient. Please email or call the contact person listed for the meeting date selected so that we can plan accordingly.**

*As a bonus, Rev. Dr. Randy Moody, Peace River Presbytery Stated Clerk, has agreed to provide a training workshop at Covenant, Fort Myers in conjunction with the Records Review Workshop on October 22. The training will begin at 9:00 with the Records Review to follow at 10:00.*

Additionally, Clerks may obtain a copy of the Handbook for Clerks of Session by calling the Presbytery office or may pick up a copy at the review meetings. This is especially helpful for newly elected clerks. There have been no changes made to the Handbook since last year.

### **\*Records Review Workshops (following Presbytery Fall Regional Gatherings):**

**September 1**, 1:00 p.m., Hope United, Fort Myers, Charmaine Ponkratz, [ponkratz@comcast.net](mailto:ponkratz@comcast.net)

**September 7**, 1:00 p.m., St. Paul's, North Port, Charmaine Ponkratz, [ponkratz@comcast.net](mailto:ponkratz@comcast.net)

**September 8**, 2:00 p.m., (note time change due to called meeting of Peace River Presbytery) Oak Pointe, Sarasota, Sally Kirby, [kirbyjack5030@comcast.net](mailto:kirbyjack5030@comcast.net), 941.351.3115 (former Whitfield Estates location)

### **Records Review Workshops:**

**October 8**, at 9:00 a.m., Northminster, Sarasota, Sally Kirby, [kirbyjack5030@comcast.net](mailto:kirbyjack5030@comcast.net), 941.351.3115

**October 22**, at 9:00 a.m., Covenant, Ft. Myers, JoAnn Leasure, [tcup166@embarqmail.com](mailto:tcup166@embarqmail.com), 239.995.5625

## BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: Saturday, November 5th** ([flyer and reservation form](#))

\*Beth-El Farmworker Ministry is planning its 40th anniversary celebration for the week of November 5th-6th. In preparation, we are seeking individuals willing to donate their air miles to help support national speakers who will be traveling to Beth-El to speak at the event. For more information, or to donate, please contact Kathy Dain at 813-633-1548.

**Job Opportunity:** Mission Outreach Resource Coordinator ([click for job description](#)).

\*Beth-El has numerous mission opportunities for adults and youth. From leading Vacation Bible School, to work groups helping out in our community, to scholarships for kids to go to camp at Cedarkirk, there are many ways your church can help support this valuable mission. Call Javier today at 813-633-1548 ext. 228, or email him at [Javier@beth-el.org](mailto:Javier@beth-el.org) to learn more.

*Kathy*

Kathleen Dain  
Executive Director

[www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)

[September Newsletter](#)

## CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

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

[www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org)

*The dust from summer camp has settled and the singing and laughter of exuberant campers and summer staff have been replaced by the twitter of crickets and cicadas. We are entering our fall ministry of hospitality and look forward to welcoming all of the guests and retreat groups who call this place a home away from home.*

*We invite you to join us as we celebrate 45 years of camp and conference ministry during our annual Homecoming Weekend, September 2-4, 2016. Whether you can spend the weekend or visit us on Saturday only, we'd love to welcome you back to this special place as we fellowship and worship together.*

*Thank you for supporting Cedarkirk and holding this ministry in your prayers for the last 45 years. We look forward to witnessing God's handiwork here in the years to come!*

For additional information, please contact the camp office at (813) 685-4224 or visit [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org).

### MISION PENIEL

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

The Mision Peniel Team 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](#))

### PRAYER NEEDS

#### **Please pray for:**

· Nathan Hart (Graham's son) and his family – (See Graham's letter at the beginning of this newsletter). Nathan was just diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. His course of treatment will be determined within the next few days. Also, Nathan's wife's (Eileen) mother just passed away Sunday night from pancreatic cancer. Nathan and Eileen have 3 small children.

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

- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – recovery from neck surgery.
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – recovering from injuries sustained (and subsequent surgeries) when he was hit while bicycle riding. Also, pray for Phil and Elizabeth's niece and husband, Priscilla and Ron Kosedner, through the loss of their 2 ½ year old son, Elias.
- Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel - health
- Jim & Becky Beckwith - health
- Robert Dennis, Son of Rev. India Dennis – mental health issues
- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – on kidney transplant list
- 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

**CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE: SEPTEMBER 2016:**

|              |                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 4  | <u>Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Jr.<br>email: <a href="mailto:revglennb@gmail.com">revglennb@gmail.com</a>    |
| September 11 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dino Rustin<br>email: <a href="mailto:dino@firstpresbradenton.com">dino@firstpresbradenton.com</a> |
| September 18 | <u>Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Hope Lee<br>email: <a href="mailto:hope@kpcbradenton.org">hope@kpcbradenton.org</a>             |
| September 25 | <u>Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u><br>Pastor: Rev. India Dennis<br>email: <a href="mailto:pspcpastor@verizon.net">pspcpastor@verizon.net</a>     |

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 2016**

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

**September 13**

Committee on Ministry (9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)

**September 14**

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

**September 15**

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Mision Peniel Team @ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers (9:30 a.m.)

Finance Team / Board of Trustees (1:00-3:00 p.m.) \*This is a change from the normal day and time.

Personnel Team (1:00-3:00 p.m.)

**September 19**

Nominations/Representation Committee (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

Planning Team (1:00-3:00 p.m.) \*This is a change from the normal day.

**September 22**

Congregational Vitality and Growth Task Force (1:00-3:00 p.m.)

**September 27**

“Funding Your Ministry” Workshops @ Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

**September 28**

“Funding Your Ministry” Workshops @ First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs (9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

**September 29**

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)



**CHURCHES OF PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY**

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

|                                                                |                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Braden River Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton                                            |
| <a href="#">Kirkwood Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton     | <a href="#">Palma Sola Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton                                       |
| <a href="#">Westminster Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton  | Palmetto Presbyterian Church,<br>Palmetto – <a href="mailto:office@ppcfl.org">office@ppcfl.org</a> |
| <a href="#">Christ Church of Longboat Key</a><br>Longboat Key  | <a href="#">Peace Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Lakewood Ranch                                       |
| <a href="#">Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota     | <a href="#">Church of the Palms,</a><br>Sarasota                                                   |
| <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota         | <a href="#">Northminster Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota                                      |
| <a href="#">Pine Shores Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota   | <a href="#">Presbyterian Church of the<br/>Covenant, Sarasota</a>                                  |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                                              | <a href="#"><u>Siesta Key Chapel,</u></a><br>Sarasota                  |
| <a href="#"><u>Trinity Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Venice                                                                          | <a href="#"><u>Venice Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Venice           |
| <a href="#"><u>Community Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Englewood                                                                     | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Arcadia           |
| <a href="#"><u>St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>North Port                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Burnt Store Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Punta Gorda |
| Wintergarden Presbyterian Church,<br>Port Charlotte<br><a href="mailto:devon.ducheneau@gmail.com"><u>devon.ducheneau@gmail.com</u></a> | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Port Charlotte    |
| <a href="#"><u>Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>North Fort Myers                                                           |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>Faith Presbyterian Church</u></a><br>Cape Coral                                                                         | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Lehigh Acres      |
| <a href="#"><u>Buckingham Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Covenant Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers     |
| <a href="#"><u>Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                 |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>Hope United Church (PCUSA),</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                       | <a href="#"><u>Chapel by the Sea,</u></a><br>Fort Myers Beach          |
| <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Bonita Springs                                                                    |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples                                                                            | <a href="#"><u>Lely Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples             |
| <a href="#"><u>Moorings Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples                                                                         | <a href="#"><u>Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples       |

