



FAITH matters

August 24, 2026

“My power is made perfect in weakness,” says God

I have kept a faith journal sporadically for much of my adult life. Occasionally I will pick up an old journal to see past entries. Today that took me back to the Winter of 2023, when I wrote:

I have been battling a suddenly painful knee for quite some time. When it first occurred in early May I applied the usual “Bonnie” remedies. ... Assume it was a pickle ball injury ... Ignore it, and “soldier on” ... (Weeks later) — Buy a knee band, ice it, take far too many Ibuprofen ... (Months later) — Contact an orthopedic practice in Traverse City and set up an appointment.

My appointment with Dr. Galdes revealed that what I had assumed was a meniscus tear, was actually fairly severe osteoarthritis in BOTH knees. (I had naively assumed my joints were all just fine.)

Next came .. a cortisone shot which did nothing to relieve the pain ... horribly restless nights and the inability to walk without my knee throbbing in rebellion ... a trip to the Cannabis store in Manistee for gummies (a friend’s suggestion) ...two injections of synthetic gel to get me through our long-planned driving trip to the Canadian Maritimes ... the purchase of Canada’s stronger version of Valtaro (an arthritis ointment) ... an acupuncture treatment from our son ... and finally, finally, finally the realization that “I” was not going to be able to solve this problem on my own, followed by an appointment to set up a January 18 surgery date for a total knee replacement.

Whew! Exhausting, time-consuming, frustrating.

So how you may wonder was God working in all of this?

Needless to say, it was a very long and impactful lesson about how my stubborn insistence on self-reliance can never win out over our Heavenly Father's abiding grace.

I now have a MUCH deeper compassion for people experiencing chronic pain of any kind. I feel a deeper concern for the home-bound and people with disabilities AND a much greater appreciation for responsible, knowledgeable, experienced health care providers of all stripes.

My many sleepless nights allowed me — well actually forced me — to spend many more hours in prayer.

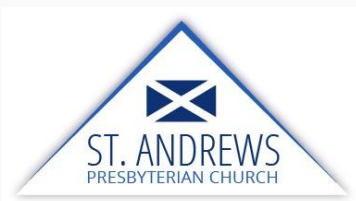
My realization that when we accept it, people want to help — principally my dear husband who has stuck with me through previous bouts of stubbornness for 56 years — but also many others eager to share their experiences, canes, walkers, grab bars, and ice machines.

Recently while attending a summer gathering dressed in Bermudas, a stranger commented, "I see you have had knee replacement surgery." I was almost startled by his comment. The scar has faded and my memories of time leading up to and following the surgery have faded as well.

Prior to my surgery, Jack Harnish told me, "At first you count the days, and then the weeks, followed by the months, and the years. Finally, you reach a point where you almost forget about it completely." He was right, and I have. Thankfully my faith journal brought me back with a strong reminder that God is there in good times and bad times, in strong times and weak times. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

~Written by Bonnie Garbrecht

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