

Another word August 2, 2022

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

Welcome to August. They call them the “dog days of summer,” I just call them HOT!

Our celebration is fast approaching! August 21, just after services, we will have a cookout and mortgage burning party at the pavilion. A signup sheet is in the gathering area. Lets have a great afternoon of food and fun!

Paul Martin and The Jazz Society will perform here August 8th, at 7pm. Please get the word out, bring a friend, and bring lawn chairs. If it is raining we will be in the sanctuary. There is no cover charge but donations to cover their expenses are welcome. Come out for a cool night of Jazz!

The wedding of Trent Newlan and Ryann Hastings is this Saturday, August 6th. Please join us in wishing them a long and wonderful life together!

Our scriptures for the next two weeks are: Aug.7: Jeremiah 2:4-12, and Acts 19:1-7, 23-41, ‘Paul goes to Ephesus; It’s a riot” Linda Gardner is our lead Elder. Aug. 14: Psalm 80: 1-2, 8-19, and Acts 23: 1-15, “Paul returns to Jerusalem.” Matt Henderson is our lead Elder.

As we go to prayer, please remember Gary Mowry and Bud Strine for comfort and healing, for our shut-ins, and all those in our nursing homes, and hospitals, May we pray:

O Lord our God. We come to You today with hearts that are light and full of love! We thank You for the sacrifice that You and Your Son have given for us! We are filled with awe and wonder at the absolute love and life you offer. We accept these wonderful gifts, and will not only cherish them, but pass them on to those around us in need. Please continue to bless our front line workers, our city, state, and national leaders. May they all be strengthened to follow Your perfect will. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray, Amen.

In 1981, the movie “Chariots of Fire” was released. It is the story of a handful of young runners from England who while facing ridicule and bigotry, dominated the track and field competition during the 1924 Olympics in France. I can still remember where I was when I first watched the movie and how it inspired me to also get outside and run.

The very next day I bought a pair of running shoes and a grey sweat suit, and that evening set out to just “run” a mile. (You may laugh now!) After about 100 yards I found I could barely breathe let alone make my legs keep moving. I was really out of shape! However, I kept starting and stopping until I finished the mile; then walked back home feeling rather dejected. The next night brought about the same result.

Should I quit? Should I press on? Every night for 2 weeks I “ran” the same mile, pushed through pain (shin splints), learned to breathe

properly, and to pace myself. Then one evening, I actually finished the mile without stopping. It wasn't pretty or even close to a world record time, but I finished. Over the next few months as I continued to run, I purchased a book by Jim Fixx, a then famous runner. In his book were many ideas on how to conserve energy, how to breathe, arm movements, length of strides, as well as goal setting. I learned a lot about how to run properly and learned a whole lot about myself.

I eventually settled on a goal to run 5 miles in under 45 minutes every other night. I kept that goal for many years until one evening when I fell into an unmarked post hole while running in Indianapolis.

One of the lines in the running book that really helped me was to "always finish strong." The human body has a tendency to want to slow down or slack off or even just stop and rest when it has been put in motion. I needed to be reminded that how I finish is just as important as how I start. Never give up!

There are quite a few references in the Bible about running and races, and all have to do with how we live our lives. Paul writes, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." (1 Corinthians 9: 24) In Corinth, the people there were very sports minded, especially toward running. He reminds them (and us) that we don't enter a race intending not to finish; we enter to win. He goes on to say, a winner of a race gets a crown that won't last, but we who run our race with Jesus will receive a crown that will last forever. I don't know about you, but I'll take forever!

Finishing the race is most important. Often, especially during the middle of a run or race, we can become tired, lose focus, even want to quit. I dare say, I think we all have felt that way at times during our lives. Eric Liddell, one of the main characters in the movie, after winning a local race spoke to a crowd of folks who were mostly down on their luck. It was just after the First World War and England was in a deep depression, food was scarce, and there were very few jobs available. He ended his message with, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 43:31.

So, if you are tired, weary, or even step into an open post hole, we must not give up but place our hope in the Lord. For you see, as believers we are called to, "run with perseverance the race marked out for us," (Hebrews 12: 1) to finish strong, break the tape, and receive our eternal prize. So, keep on running!

In His Peace,

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