

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community



The Olympic Spirit

Hebrews 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In the modern Olympic Games there is a creed used which reads like this:

The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."

The athletes at the Olympics certainly do fight well. Many athletes may hunger for victory. Some participants may participate in multiple events. They all face all kinds of tough contenders as well as a host of other struggles and adversities, including some from their own bodies. This year, they even face the risk of disease -carrying mosquitoes. However, the challenges don't only start once they have arrived at the games. Years of training and various team efforts also lead up to the finish line. Yet while only a few ever medal in their events, many athletes see their triumph simply in the honor of being chosen and being able to face and overcome their own specific struggle. This is what many call the Olympic Spirit.

As Christians, God has embraced us with His own kind of Olympic Spirit. Take a moment and think about just how many events the Holy Spirit is a participant in in any given moment. In the lives of people of every nationality, in countries all around the world, the Holy Spirit is at work to bring people to faith and ultimately give us the victory in Christ Jesus. In the face of great struggles and adversity, the Holy Spirit is constantly at work to provide for God's people, and those who do not yet know Christ, so that whatever we might face, in Christ we will ultimately reach the finish line in Faith and receive the crown of Glory, already won by our Lord and Savior.

As individuals we all may have slightly different races to run. The events with which we are challenged are often not the same. However, through the power of His Spirit, God has equipped each of us with different talents and resources, with which to take on what lies ahead, together. Together we are able to walk, run, pick each other up, and persevere, all because someone stronger than us has chosen us and given us the victory. True, we do have some tough competitors out there trying to trip us up and keep us from the finish line. The devil, the world, and our old sinful nature would like nothing better than for us to forget Christ, give up on this brief time of struggle, and go back to focusing on more worldly things. However, praise God that we all have the one thing we need to overcome such adversity, as Christ focuses our hearts and minds on Him and works the power of His Spirit within us. Our Lord and His Spirit have already finished the race for us and triumphed over the things that want to bring us down, our Lord and His Holy Spirit now run beside us and carry us especially in times of struggle, and our Lord and His Spirit continue to cheer us on from the finish line, as we look ahead to what is to come.

So, as you watch and enjoy the Olympics this August, stop to pause and think of the victory you have in Christ and all the amazing things the Spirit of God is doing in lives around the world every day, including your own!

Additional food for thought: for some powerful words from a Christian Athlete go to <http://www.iamsecond.com/seconds/shawn-johnson/> or search the web for, "I am second Shawn Johnson" and watch the video clip.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoeck



If you have not attended our **ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC** in a while you have been missing a lot of fun!

On Sunday, August 28 at 2:00pm we will gather under the tent at FMLC for food, fun, inflatables, pony rides and a bean bag toss.

Bring a side dish and a nonperishable food item to the picnic. The Grape Cluster is doing a Thrivent Action Team Project collecting nonperishable food items. The proceeds will be put towards the rental of the tent.

All FMLC friends and family are invited.

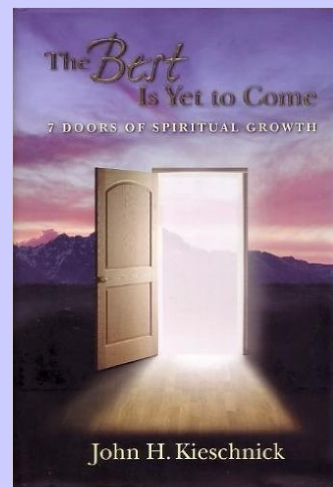
Please join us! See you there!

Thanks to all of you who took the time to complete our “The Best is Yet to Come” small group survey. We had a large number of responses, and many useful comments. Some of the major themes were:

- We attended all or most of the meetings
- The study materials were a good refresher and often enlightening.
- The sermons helped to tie things together.
- The small groups were a good forum to get to know people better
- We would like to participate in a small group again.

Most of the groups are making plans for future meetings. If you would like to join a small group, feel free to talk with the group members and leaders, or, if you have questions, please see Paul Grossnickle, Marilyn Lindner or Paul Nord.

(Leaders, please return DVD's to church office—thank you)



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"God's will?"

How do we discern God's will in our life? For anyone who believes in God, life often brings the question of seeking to discover the will of God. We hear in church about the need to know that will. We pray for it, and then ask to be obedient to that will. Jesus often mentions, "doing the will of his Father in heaven". How did Jesus know or discover what was God's will for his life? For those of us who believe that God plays an active role in our lives, it often becomes crucially important that we know what God desires for us. When difficult decisions face us, we want to know what God would have us do.

In the midst of this seeking, which is not wrong in and of itself, we can become so obsessed with God's will, that if we make the wrong decision, we cannot forgive ourselves. We must not have prayed enough over the decision, or didn't seek counsel from the right person, or our faith wasn't strong enough, or, or . . . God's will no longer reflects the message of grace and love through Jesus Christ. Instead, it has become law that governs and judges us.

Several years ago, a man shared his struggle with me over a career change. While his current job was great, a different job had been offered. Both weighed evenly on the scales. There was not one thing to sway the decision. Which job should he take? Which job was doing God's will? A friend of his made a very wise comment. The issue was not which job was more right or closer to God's will. Each job would have allowed the man to remain faithful to his Lord. The issue was trusting that God could use either job for the work of God's kingdom.

Did you catch that last sentence? God can use the decisions that we make to work good in the world.

And so, what is God's will for our lives? It isn't that we make all of the right decisions. It isn't that we do all the right things. God knows our frailties and weaknesses better than we do. God knows we are not always capable of doing the right things and making the right choices. All God calls us to and all God desires from us is that we live in God's grace, forgiveness, and love, and that we share the same with others.

The Lutheran Chaplain at Westville Correctional Center is in need of recycled Portals of Prayer, or any other type of devotional booklets, for use by his parishioners. He also would appreciate receiving greeting cards or notecards with blank insides for use in writing to friends and family members. (Postage to be paid by the sender). The Chaplain is appreciative and "thanks you for caring".

Collection of these items will be on-going, and may be placed in the cart or given to Nancy Kickbush or Linda Berner.



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES

AUGUST 28

The Youth and Family Ministry Committee has opportunities for you to serve! Faith's Sunday School will consist of 4 classes:

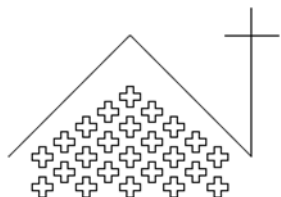
- ◆ Mommy and Me
- ◆ Lower Grades
- ◆ Middle Grades
- ◆ High School

Teachers are being asked to commit to a 13-week session (fall, winter or spring). This will allow every teacher to benefit from adult Bible Study classes for two quarters while providing instruction for our children. If we can successfully staff the current classes, we would certainly have room for more children to come! Please prayerfully consider when you can serve and notify Sherri Nord or Jackie Allwardt.

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Lutheran Church

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A *GriefShare* support group will begin on August 18 and end on November 10 from 7:00-8:30pm, here at church.

Becky Graef will be leading the group. Cost is \$15 for the workbook.

Please call the Church Office at 462-7684 to register.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS MINISTRY, PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH THEM.



FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, August 7, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 14, 9:00am Word and Prayer
The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 21, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 28, 9:00am Word and Prayer
The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 4, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 11, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 18, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 25, 9:00am Morning Prayer

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 40:31