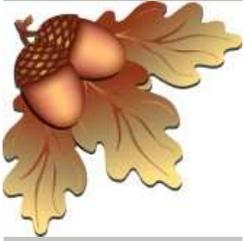


September
2012



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
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Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews probably had the Olympic games or some other similar contest in mind when he penned these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. After having watched the recent Olympics, it is easy to see many parallels between our lives as Christians in this sin-fallen world and what takes place in athletic competitions.

We are very much like the athlete who seems to have no hope of winning against superior opponents. The devil and this sin-fallen world seem far too powerful for us ever to stand a chance of competing in, much less winning, a race. Yet the Lord calls on us by the power of the Holy Spirit to shed the street clothes of our sin and to lace up our running shoes. When the race seems too long and hopeless, He encourages us by telling us to fix our eyes on Him, the one who has already run the perfect race in our place. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and died a perfect sacrificial death on Calvary's cross so that we could be saved. In His race He endured far more than any of us ever have or ever could endure, that we have everlasting life through faith in Him.

In His powerful Word Jesus assures us that He is with us, that He is our God and our friend, even as we struggle and strive. He will also be there at the end of our race, waiting with something more valuable than a gold medal, which will tarnish, or a crown of olive branches, which will wither. Jesus is waiting for us with a crown of righteousness that He gives to all who have persevered in the race of faith.

How wonderful it is to know that the tears of joy and the smiles that we have seen on the faces of those who won medals in the Olympics, those who have sacrificed so much and have given their all, will one day be ours when we fall across the finish line and into the arms of our Savior and see our loved ones who have fought the good fight and won their races. God grant you renewed strength as many of you also begin the race of another school year and His peace rest upon you always.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Skelton

P.S. I would like to encourage each of you to avail yourself of the many opportunities for Bible study that we have here at Holy Cross. Along with Sunday School for the children, we have two adult Bible studies on Sunday mornings, Wednesday morning Bible study, a Life-Light Bible study on Monday evenings, a women's and a men's Bible study every other Saturday morning, as well as confirmation classes for children and adults. Just as exercise is healthy for the body, so the study of God's Word is beneficial for the soul.