

Collingswood

Our Family News

Issue 8 August, 2016



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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe I am writing this as I begin my 4th week at UMC at Collingswood. What an immense pleasure it has been to get to know many of you as well as our associates. I feel blessed to be a part of this wonderful community.

I am pleased to announce we hired a new Social Worker for the 5th floor. Her name is Laura Egle and she brings many years of long term care experience to the table. Laura will begin her duties on August 15th. We are still actively looking for a Building Services Director, but I anticipate also filling this position during August. At that point our team will be complete.

Continued on page 5

8/22—Ira Pimm



Happy Birthday!



Dates to Remember



8/02—Ruth Harrigan 8/09—Joyce Leap 8/02—Eileen Ostrove 8/11—Thomas Black 8/03—Doris Ksiazek 8/13—Dorothy Emch 8/06—Donald Gosnay 8/16—Anthony Cristiano 8/06—Flora Siddons 8/17—Ray Hofknecht 8/08—James Callahan 8/17—Doris Stock

8/09—Ruth Landolt 8/19—Irma Craft 8/09—Walda Crossley 8/20—Alan Gant

8/25—Sydell Sigall 8/29—Elsie Capano 8/30—Phyllis Pierson 8/30—Marilyn Ott 8/31—Carmella Meyers

The birthday parties will be held on Monday, August 15th, beginning at 12:30pm on the 5th Floor and at 2pm on the 3rd Floor Community Room for Assisted Living (Floors 1-4).



United Methodist Communities at Collingswood Family News

Published monthly for our residents and interested family members and friends and may be emailed upon request.

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Having a Problem You Can't Get Resolved?

If you have any problems or concerns please contact:

- Lisa Reifenrath, Administrator (ext. 5505) or Jim Clancy Executive Director (Ext 5501)
- If you feel an outside advocate is needed, please contact the local Ombudsman's office. They investigate, resolve and/or refer complaints to the appropriate agency. By law, callers may remain anonymous and our case files are closed to the public.

To file a complaint:

Call Toll Free Intake Line: 877-582-6995 Email: ombudsman@advocate.state.nj.us Write: The Office of the Ombudsman P.O. Box 852 Trenton, NJ 08625-0852 Fax: 609-943-3479

♦ IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

For more information call 609-826-5090 or 877-582-6995

United Methodist Communities at Collingswood

460 Haddon Avenue, Collingswood, NJ 08108 856-854-4331 | UMCommunities.org



Please "Like" us on Social Media @UMCCollingswood



Entertainment in our Community

8/02—Bernadette Hobon piano concert at 2pm in the Lobby



8/10—Hawaiian Luau, featuring Craig Burgess speaking on Hawaii at 2pm in the Chapel

8/17—Fred the Guitarist at 1:15pm on the 5th floor

8/24—Fred the Guitarist at 1pm on the 4th floor

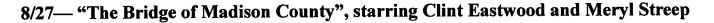
8/24—New Jersey Master Recorder group performing at 7 pm in the Chapel

Saturday Night at the Movies

8/06— "Great Expectations", starring Ethan Hawks, Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert DeNiro

8/13— "Only the Lonely", starring John Candy and Maureen O'Hara

8/20— "Gladiator", starring Russell Crowe



Movies are held in the Library on Saturday evenings beginning at 7:30 pm

Welcome New Residents



We are pleased to welcome new residents to United Methodist Communities at Collingswood! Please give these folks a grand welcome and invite them to join you in our many activities.

Helen Ford—Apartment 307

Jack Roberts—Apartment 221

Trips for August

A Friendly Reminder

If you are on floors 1-3, please go to the front desk for the details on trips and to sign up. If you realize you can't



make it, please be courteous and take your name off the list or cancel with the Community Life Department. The trips will be leaving promptly at the designated departure times.

Sign-up sheets for the month of September will be available at the front desk by 9 am on August 31st.

- 8/09—Lobster House Restaurant luncheon in Cape May for floors 1-3, leaving at 9:45am
- 8/11—Cove Restaurant lunch trip for floors 4 & 5, leaving at 11:15am
- 8/16—Kaminski's lunch trip for floors 1-3, leaving at 11am

- 8/17—Folk singer, Lianne Knott, concert in Haddon Park for floors 1-3, leaving at 7pm
- 8/18—McDonald's lunch trip in Knight Park for floors 4 & 5, leaving at 11am
- 8/23—Captain Cats lunch trip for floors 1-3, leaving at 11am
- 8/24—Fralinger String Band in Collingswood for floors 1-3, leaving at 6:30pm
- 8/25—Scenic Drive for floors 4 & 5 leaving at1:30pm
- 8/25—The Dovell's concert at Cooper River for floors 1-3 leaving at 7:30pm
- 8/30—Scenic Drive for floors 1-3 leaving at 1pm

Our Mission

Compassionately serving in community
so that all are free to choose abundant life.

Notices for August

- <u>HAWAIIAN LUAU</u>—Celebrating Hawaiian style on <u>Wednesday</u>, <u>August 10th</u>, <u>at 2pm in the Chapel</u>. Craig Burgess will be speaking on Hawaii and showing photos. Craig is a local resident of Audubon and has written a book on the Aloha State. Refreshments to fit the theme along with Hawaiian music will also be provided.
- <u>PEACH FESTIVAL</u>—Our annual Peach Festival will be held on <u>Friday, August 19th, at 2pm in the Chapel</u>. Please join us in sampling delicious peach treats including peach pie, peach crisp, peach muffins, peach ice cream and fresh peaches.
- PAINTING WITH ROZ—Painting continues this month on <u>Tuesday</u>, <u>August 9th</u> and on the 23rd at 10:30am in the 3rd floor Community Room. Beginners are welcome with no painting experience. It's a fun way to relax and you will be surprised with the end result and what you can do.
- <u>TOWN HALL MEETING</u>—There will be a Town Hall Meeting for all residents on the <u>4th Wednesday of each month at 2pm in the Chapel</u>. Our new Executive Director, Jim Clancy, will be directing these meetings. This month the meeting will be held on <u>Wednesday</u>, <u>August 24th</u>. Please plan on attending these meetings as it will keep you informed on things going on around the community and throughout the organization.

A Word From Our Executive Director—Continued

Verizon will be starting a project of replacing lines and giving residents an option of choosing Verizon Fios for cable and internet coverage. This work will begin on August 9th and may involve coming into your apartments. You will be notified and a Collingswood Associate will accompany any technician coming into your home.

When we have our first Town Hall Meeting together on August 24th, I will be providing updates on major projects happening in the community.

If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to stop by the office or stop me in passing. I'm looking forward to working with each and every one of you.

Jim

Happening in our Community



WELCOME, MR. CLANCY

On Tuesday, July 5th, Carol McKinley, Vice President of Operations from our Headquarters office, joined our staff and residents in giving Mr. Jim Clancy, our new Executive Director a grand welcome.



Our Annual Blueberry Festival was held in the Chapel on Friday, July 8th. It was well attended and enjoyed by all







Homemade Lemonade & Cheese Tasting on the 5th Floor













The
Associate
Appreciation
Luncheon
July 19th



Gene's Retirement Party











The Volunteer Corner by Mary Moloney, volunteer director

Volunteers Stephen, Joe, and Linda can be found in the Lobby every Friday selling pretzels, hot dogs, bagels, candy and much more. They enjoy each other's company as well as interacting with the UMC-Collingswood residents, associates, and families. Since January the peddling threesome has raised an





incredible \$915.81 for the Fellowship Fund. Upcoming sales for August include bagels, chocolate bars, soft pretzels, fresh baked cookies, and muffins. Please be sure to stop by and say hello to our amazing volunteers and of course make a purchase to support the Fellowship Fund!

Mark your calendars for an entertaining bingo game with fun prizes on August 18th. UMC-Collingswood resident Carmen

Abay's granddaughter, Annie, will be hosting the game. Be sure to check your calendars for more information and be sure to attend the Bingo Game.



This is a recent picture of the intergenerational reading group with the Garfield summer camp kids



SELLING JEWELRY
FOR THE FELLOWSHIP FUND!
We couldn't do it without your
help! Thank you again to all of our
wonderful volunteers in The Shop
A post from Facebook

Taylor's Tall Tales by Jim Taylor, resident

BLOOD ON THE BAY A true story By Elwood (Jim) Taylor

I was still cleaning blood off the 28 foot motorized sail boat while we were heading for one of Chesapeake Bay's popular marinas. Splattered red blood was everywhere and difficult to clean off the floor, the seat, the table, as well as myself and my clothes. How did I get myself into this mess anyway? I never thought this trip would ever come to this, it was supposed to be a fun trip and it started out so great.

It all began when my two sons, Elwood and Ted wanted to treat their parents to a carefree sail boat ride on the Chesapeake Bay. It started out OK with a delicious breakfast in a restaurant where we rented the boat. Then we filled our portable cooler with sandwiches, cookies and sodas along with bags of ice. It was about 9am when our motored boat quickly slipped past the docks of the marina into the shinning rippling waters of the bay. Once past the docks, I began to crank the sail up the mast, but when it got near the top, the crank mechanism fell apart dropping the sail on top of me. Thinking I had fallen overboard, my wife screamed, but I was still on board. I was under the sail trying to save all the parts that were scattered on the deck so we could reassemble the crank. Once the crank was reassembled, I raised the sail and we started sailing off into the sun.

We began tacking the boat across the beautiful bay, when all of a sudden, we were frightened by the sound of a loud horn coming from a large cargo ship. We begged our son, Elwood, to turn our boat away from this oncoming ship, but thinking he could pass the ship's bow before it hit us, he refused. The ship got closer and closer and we once again asked him to please turn away and again he refused. As the ship continued to get even closer, we begged him to please turn the boat, but he continued to refuse. Then as the ship got too dangerously close, I shouted one more time to turn or he was going to be sorry, but even still he refused to do it. That was when it all happened.

God sent a strong wind our way that blew our boat safely past the ship's sharp cutting bow. We were so happy that the danger had passed; but we were not safe yet because the waves that were created by the bow of this huge ship cutting through the water were so big, it threw our little boat around like a cork in the water. When our boat finally did settle down, we stared back at the enormous side of the ship as it angrily blew its horn at us several more times.

With the danger over, we finally started to have a wonderful time, until suddenly, the pleasant sound of the blowing breeze on the white sail ended and there became an eerie silence. The billowing sail had become flat and the boat stopped moving. Then we all noticed a large gray cloud above the water line quickly approaching us. Soon the entire cloud encompassed us with thousands of green head flies which viciously attacked us and the boat. They landed everywhere, on the boat, the sail, the mast, and on our skin and clothes. We had never experienced anything like this before and we started swatting them with anything we could use, leaving red fly blood on everything we hit. This went on for about fifteen minutes before the wind returned and blew the flies away.

Now here we all were, on hands and knees cleaning the blood off ourselves and the entire boat with paper towels and water scooped up from the Chesapeake Bay with drinking cups. We couldn't return the boat in a bloody condition.

The Family Corner by Barbara Crane, resident reporter

To Love and To Cherish

Ella and Ray Hofknecht



Born in 1925, Ella enjoyed her early years in Collingswood, New Jersey along with her older brother, Charles. Parents, Mary and Perry, kept them happy and busy. A friend of Ella's father was a caretaker at the nearby Harleigh Cemetery. Sooooo, that's where Ella, with other kids in the neighborhood played — a great place for hide-and-seek!

Waltzing and jitterbugging on roller skates intrigued Ella. Honing her skills was helped along by a young man named Ray who had been drafted into the U.S. Airforce. They fell in love. Ella left Camden County Regional High School in her senior year to be with Ray. She followed him to Westover Field, Massachusetts where he was stationed. She got a job there sorting mail. Amarillo, Texas was the next stop for Ray. It was there that they married on December 15th, 1942. (More on this later.) Ella returned home after 3 weeks and lived with Ray's parents. She found a job at Esterbrook Pen in Camden, New Jersey but was not happy there.

Back to Ray — he trained at Westover Air Field, MA and Amarillo, TX as an Instrument Specialist. Before pilots took over at the controls, he checked all the instruments in the cockpit to make sure that all was in "A1" shape— a very responsible job for a 1st Lieutenant whose nickname was "Hock". Wherever the planes were, so was Hock. Wherever General Patton was, so was Hock. Discharge from the Air Force came in 1945.

Their marriage in Amarillo, Texas was not the usual kind — thirty couples in all, one minister who conducted the ceremony 30 times in a church parsonage — no flowers.

Back to civilian life — Ray was hired by Public Service, working 36 years as a bus driver. The route was Maple Shade and Moorestown, NJ. They lived in Watsontown (near Clementon), NJ. Ella worked at Lit Brothers in Philadelphia during the Christmas season and then became a bookkeeper with Coca-Cola for 13 years. By this time they lived in Ryan's Run. Nearby, they were members of the First Methodist Church of Moorestown and were invited to visit Collingswood Manor—lunch and a tour which they obviously liked because they moved in on March 29, 2012 on the 2nd floor.

The years passed, family members visited them to play a few round of pinochle. Two young members of the family come to the Manor to entertain us with their saxophones — good selections and good rhythm.

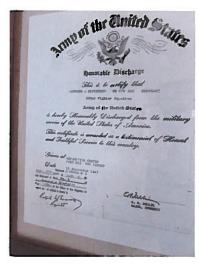
In the good ole days Ella and Ray traveled by car to 48 states. The Mormon Tabernacle and the copper mines were their favorites.

Ella collected bells (brass) — 200 of them — both large and small because she "needed" a hobby. She later sold them to their church. Ray was an expert frame maker. Many pictures in their apartment show the delicacy of his work. Ella loved the smell of the wood that he used (cedar, "good" pine, mahogany and walnut). Ray also enjoyed collecting and selling U.S. stamps. It was quite a business.



There is a special picture in Ray's bedroom sent to him (and others) from General Patton depicting the Battle of the Bulge.





Ella visits Ray three times a week on the 5th floor. He says, "I love you Honey" and kisses her hand. "Life goes on" she says as she expertly turns her wheel chair around. God bless you both.





Happy Birthday and Farewell to Matt Zahal—by Phyllis Pierson

Matt — our fearless leader, our tormentor, our torturer, our mentor and our friend. He makes us bark like dogs, caw like crows, and hop like rabbits — he also makes us laugh (but he laughs harder). He works with us and encourages us to be the best that we can be physically and mentally (we all suffer through "Simon Says" every day) but what would we do every morning without the 9:30am exercise class? We would all sleep in every morning because we wouldn't physically be able to get out of bed! Matt, we all wish you a Happy Birthday and a wonderful year.

As we count down the days before we have to say goodbye to our fitness trainer, Matt Zahal, I thought it might be interesting to get a glimpse of his background and some of his thoughts. Matt began his career here in September, 2015 and the Fitness Center opened in October, 2015 with his first two clients who were Jack Geigelman and Mae Waters. The morning exercise class consisted of 10 or 12 and we now have 20 on the roster. The individual sessions in the Fitness Center were very basic and we have now progressed to more difficult exercises.

The name of the company that employs Matt is Alliance Rehab — they specialize in physical, occupational, respiratory and speech therapy. Matt already had a background in physical therapy specializing in geriatrics when he was hired, but they sent him to different Methodist facilities for experience in the field before coming to Collingswood. His home base will be in Chicago and he can be sent as far west as Arizona and back to the east coast. He will spend about a week at each facility holding classes and training new personnel. His new title is Alliance Rehab Program Coordinator, which came with a big promotion.

Matt has his Master's degree in physical therapy and has already done his thesis for his doctorate, which is now on hold. His next objective is a 2-year run for his MBA. A quote by Matt: "Collingswood Manor (UMC at Collingswood) feels like home. I am humbled by the opportunities and lessons learned and the support of the residents, for their trust and acceptance." Matt is going to check on us in the future so I guess we should behave!

You've done all the hard work, Matt, now it's your time to soar!



Go with our blessings and good wishes for all you've done for us! The gang from the 9:30 morning fitness class.



Regular Monthly Reminders

• United Methodist Communities at Collingswood Business Office Hours Our Business Office is open from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, to assist you with any questions that you might have. (We are closed Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.)

• P.N.A. Banking Hours

Banking is available 7 days a week from 9 am to Noon and 2:30 pm to 4 pm. On weekends and holidays banking hours are available at the front desk. If you have any questions regarding your bills or Personal Needs Account, call Elizabeth Martinez at ext. 124 or visit her in the Business Office. She will be happy to serve you.

Postage Stamp Sales

Postage stamps may be bought at the Receptionist's Desk. The cost is now \$0.47 for a "Forever Stamp." You are able to purchase 10 stamps at a time. (If you need a greeting card or note paper you can probably find that in our Shop.)

Food and Drug Store Shopping

Twice a month a stop at CVS will be added to the Shop Rite Shopping Trip. They will fall opposite weeks that we go to the Acme and will be noted on your calendar. This means on these days the time in Shop Rite will be cut by about 15 minutes. We will continue to stop at CVS on the days that Acme is scheduled.

The Shopping Program

For those who cannot go out to shop, take advantage of the shopping program every Monday. All you need to do is pick up the shopping form at the front desk, fill it out and return it to the front desk with your money NO LATER THAN MONDAY AT 9 am of every week. The shopping store is Acme.

Local Bank Transportation

The bank transportation we provide is for local banks only. We will go to the following towns: Audubon, Collingswood, Haddonfield, Haddon Heights and Oaklyn. If you do not bank at any of these locations, you will need to make other transportation arrangements.

• Free Medical Transportation

Within Camden County, try Sen-Han Transit. Schedule two weeks in advance. Call 856-456-3344.

• For your Convenience: Extended Hours

Maintenance is available from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Sunday Housekeeping is available from 7 am to 11 pm, Daily Main Dining Room is open 8 am to 6:30 pm 4th & 5th Dining Room is always open Security is available 24/7



MISSIONS PROJECT: PACK-A-BACKPACK

If you were not with us or do not remember our winter missions' project, we filled gift bags for Christmas for the children of the Garfield School. We filled 14 bags and made some needy children very happy.

Our project for the summer is called: Pack-a-Backpack. We hope to fill at least 8 back packs for children whose parents have difficulty doing so. The opening day of school is not very far off so we have to move quickly

There are a few ways you can participate: (1) buy a backpack for a school aged child and fill it with grade appropriate school supplies, (2) donate any of the items we are seeking and our team will distribute the items, (3) donate money so we can purchase supplies. Here is the list of needed supplies:

THIRD GRADE

- 1 Black Marble Notebook
- 1 dozen Low-odor Dry Erase Markers
- 1 Dry Erase Eraser or small rag
- 6 Glue Sticks
- 4 Packs of Post-it Notes

Headphones/Earbuds in a Ziploc bag

- 2 Large Boxes of Tissues
- 1 Large pack of Unscented Baby Wipes
- 1 Large Backpack

Markers, colored pencils or crayons

(must fit in a pencil box)

1 pencil box

Pens (1 dozen blue, 1 dozen colored)

- 3 dozen pencils and erasers
- 2 yellow Highlighters

FOURTH GRADE

6 pocket folders (different colors please!)

6 marble notebooks

Pack of glue sticks

Several Pencils and Erasers

1 box of crayons and/or colored pencils

3 boxes of tissues (for the classroom)

Headphones (store in a Zip-Lock bag)

Pack (s) of Post-its notes

Scissors, Pencil Sharpener, Highlighters

4 Spiral Notebooks (different colors)

6 Pocket folders (different colors)

FIFTH GRADE

6 hard cover composition notebooks

1 inch white clear view binder

3 pocket folders (different colors please!)

3 (or more) 3x3 packs of post it notes

3 boxes of 12 #2 pencils

1 pencil case

1 glue stick

1 set of dry erase markers

1 eraser for marker boards

1-2 colored pens (it's okay to bring more!)

2 highlighters (different colors)

1 box of colored pencils

3 boxes of tissues (for the class to share)

1 pair of headphones for Technology

















Bible

Two for One this Month:

Jeremiah and the Book of Lamentations

1. Jeremiah is the "before" and Lamentations is the "after". True or False?
2. These books together are 57 chapters in all. True or False?
3. What is Jeremiah's secretary's name?
4. Who cuts pieces off of Jeremiah's message and throws them into a fire (chap. 36) a. Saul b. Uzziah c. Jehoiakim d. David?
5. To which devastated and deserted city does Lamentations refer?
6. "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases". Where does this verse appear? Jeremiah or Lamentations?
Extra credit: What is the chapter and verse of the verse:
7. When did Jeremiah serve God? a. 1010-970 BC b. 626-586 BC c. 433-393 BC d. 30BC to 11 AD?
8. The prophecy of a new covenant is found in Jeremiah: a. 11 b. 31 c. 41 d. 61?
9. In what chapter of which book does Jeremiah curse the day of his birth? a. 1 b. 12 c. 17 d. 20?
10. "The heart is deceitful" appears in Jeremiah 19:7. Ture or False?
Extra Credit: If the answer to #10 is "false", which it may not be, where can you find the right reference?
10. False – Extra credit answer - 17:9
6. Lamentations – extra credit answer: Lam. 3: 22 7. 626-586 BC 8. b. 31 9. True
1. True 2. True 3. Baruch (Jeremiah 36:4) 4. C Jehoiakim 5. Jerusalem

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS

CHAPEL NEWS

YOUR PASTORAL CARE DEPARTMENT at the COLLINGSWOOD COMMUNITY

I have been thinking about this subject for a longtime, wondering if our residents really understand what their Pastoral Care Department offers them. I am betting that if I asked the majority what they think we do I would get many different answers, and all those answers still would not cover all we offer. So I want to list the tasks we do so that you know where to turn when you have a need with which we can assist you.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Leaver is a professionally-trained chaplain, a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor, as well as a Certified Gerontology Coach, in addition to having pastored churches for 25 years, teaching in seminary, he is certified in Spiritual Direction and Formation. Thus his goal is to bring wholeness to our ministry here at the Collingswood community by adding the emotional and spiritual care our residents require to compliment the work of the rest of our team in its physical, therapeutic, and social care for you.

Dr. Leaver, along with trained Chaplain Volunteers, focuses on supporting your journey toward deeper spiritual meaning and understanding of aging, suffering, sickness and the wholeness that our Creator offers to everyone. So here is some guidance for you:

When to Call a Chaplain:

When you feel anxious or fearful
When you simply wish to share your story
When you desire prayer or spiritual guidance
When you wish to receive a Sacrament
When you have received upsetting news
When you're struggling with the meaning of an illness
When you are grieving a loss
When you are facing end of life issues

What Your Pastoral Care Department Offers:

Spiritual and emotional support
Trained crisis support
Redemptive listening
Help in coping with your critical issues
A caring and compassionate presence
Help in recognizing your own spiritual strength

What Is Available to Residents:

Worship each Sunday in the Chapel and in Health Care Special worship throughout the year Bible studies
Communion for Protestants and Catholics
A Catholic Services each week
Eucharistic Ministers from the local Catholic parish Sacrament of the Sick and Sacrament of Reconciliation Contacting your clergy person at your request
"No One Dies Alone" where volunteers sit with the dying Additional chaplaincy care provided by Hospice companies

Call us at extension 5189 or stop and speak with Dr. Leaver when you see him on his rounds.

Spiritual Services and Schedules

SPIRITUAL SERVICES

The following services and Bible studies will be directed by our Chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Richard Leaver.



SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

10:00 am in the Chapel 11:00 am in 5th floor Community Room

Communion will be served on the first Sunday of each month and at other special times.

CATHOLIC SERVICES

- High Mass is held on the last Monday of the month at 2 pm in the 5th floor Dining Room
- A Short Mass is held each Wednesday at 10:30 am in the Chapel with Deacon Jim Rocks.

CATHOLIC COMMUNION

Catholic Eucharistic Ministers are available during the week to come to your apartment.

BIBLE STUDIES

Wednesdays at 11:00 am
5th floor Community Room
Thursdays at 11:00 am
Library



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN US at 11:00 am in the Library. Every Thursday, Rev. Leaver is leading a study on one of the most difficult books of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. He will supply a lot of back ground information and hand outs are provided to make this most mysterious book quite easy to understand. No one will be left in the dark nor embarrassed in anyway, so do not hesitate to join us. Bring a Bible or ask Dr. Leaver for one, and bring a friend

In Sympathy



Kathleen Connell Sarah Selverian

"My times are in my Father's hand; how could I wish or ask for more? For He who has my pathway planned will guide me 'til my journey's o'er."

(Our Daily Bread)

The Chaplain's Chat by Rev. Dr. Richard Leaver



WHAT IT TAKES TO FINISH WELL



"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have watched some of the Olympic trails where athletes compete to see who will be on the USA Olympic team. In the original Olympic Games, the Greeks had a race that was very unique. In this race, each competitor was given a torch which was lit. The runners would then race against one another holding the lit torches.

This is where the twist came in. The winner of the race wasn't the one who crossed the finish line first. No, the winner was the one who crossed first with his torch still lit.

Like those athletes, we as believers endeavor to run the race of life not simply trying to be the fastest. But we strive to finish with our torches still lit. That's because it's one thing to finish the race, but it's another to also keep the flame of faith lit and burning brightly for Jesus Christ the entire way.

That was the goal the apostle Paul had as he wrote in the passage above in what he presumed to be his final days. Not only was he approaching the end of his race. He had kept the faith as he labored for the gospel until his final breath.

Finish the race. But also keep the faith. When you have that kind of commitment to finishing well, you can be sure your heavenly rewards will be wonderful beyond words!

Pray and ask God to help you live boldly for Him until the day He calls us home. How can any of us be sure we'll keep our flames lit until that day? Think about that.

~~~ Dr. Leaver