



25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4
Tel: (709) 726-8775 Fax: (709) 726-8780
Email: office@georgestunitedchurch.com

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.
--Hebrews 12: 1-3

Friday, January 14, 2022

Perseverance is not easy. It is an ability forged in resistance a quality discovered when even our own being rebels against some activity of some kind. Long distance runners know when their body is begging and pleading with them to stop and yet they find fortitude to push on.

A fair number of years ago several colleagues and I were training to be educational supervisors, to take up the responsibility of training future clergy for service within The United Church of Canada. We were predominantly male and NHL play-offs were happening so, we found ourselves huddled around a small black and white tv set watching the games and enjoying fellowship with one another.

The Reverend George LeDrew was one of the facilitators of the training and we all knew that he was a runner. Most mornings we would catch him returning from a run, we would ask him how it went and on days when the weather was not pleasant, we would rib him about his choices.

It just so happened that a certain bank was running an advertising campaign about how some of their staff helped some of their clients realize some of their dreams. One commercial was about some woman who wanted to compete in a Triathlon which is a marathon swim, followed by a marathon bike ride, followed by a marathon run. The closing visual was a shot of this client stumbling across the finish line looking very pained and haggard. It was completely opposite the closing lines which were something like, "was she happy? Well, you can tell by the look on her face."

It was such spectacularly mixed messaging that it has stuck with me and my colleagues to this day. It always engenders mirth, and it was something we good-naturedly tossed at George several times a day. Especially if we caught him just back from a run.

We have been running the Covid-19 marathon for almost two years now. Two complete years where the faith community of George Street United Church has spent more time apart than we have together. The cloud of witnesses still exists even if it is largely outside our steady 20 or our tight 10. Without making light of the difficulty, we have experienced because of pandemic restrictions it is important to note that they are designed to keep us from a virus which has the power to kill ourselves or our loved ones and that they are not hostile toward us.



25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4
Tel: (709) 726-8775 Fax: (709) 726-8780
Email: office@georgestunitedchurch.com

As I write this, I have just recently been informed that my mother has contracted Covid-19 and she was not in the best of health before catching it. She was here in NL in October to see my daughter Hannah get married and because of her health we figured it might be the last time we got to see her face to face. So that is part of what we endure in the Maich household at the moment, and I know that it is not something that we have had to endure uniquely.

The good news is that Christ finished his race and because that race has been run and it has been won, we share in that victory as a result of Christ's grace to us. We are not called to run marathons; we are invited to run in the victory lap. We may feel that we do not have the energy, we may not feel much like running at all we still have it in us to persevere and to let the joy that comes in response to the grace of Christ drive us forward and shape our interactions.

As we trust in Jesus I hope that others can tell by the look on our faces as well as the thankfulness and gentleness in our voices.

Grace and peace to you and may you run with joy the race Christ has set before you.

Reverend John Maich
(226) 208-0452
revmaich@yahoo.ca