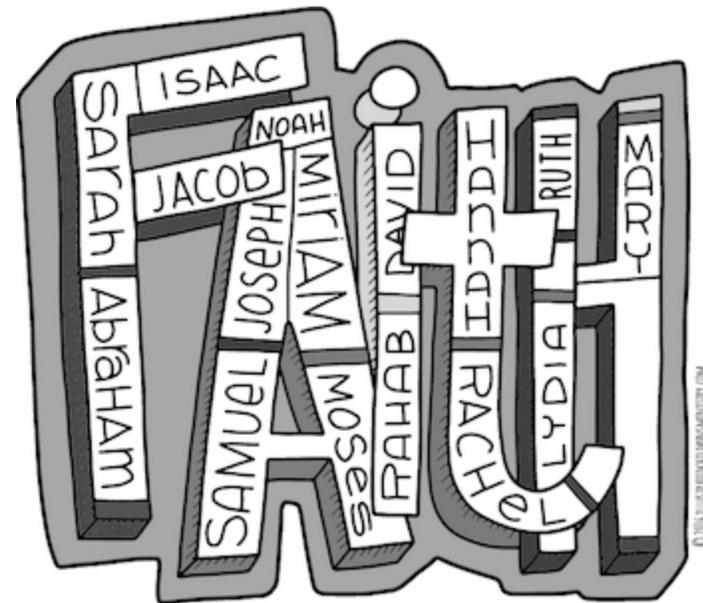


## Parkview Prayer Requests

- Thanksgiving for Birthdays and Anniversaries this week including **Mark and Barb Fuller anniversary** (8/14), **Rachele Hansen** (8/15), **Stephanie Anderson** (8/16), **Ruby Nykanen** (8/16), **Tom and Laura Stevens anniversary** (8/16), **Alex Young** (8/18), **Jill Barr** (8/18), **Tammy Jo Turcotte** (8/18), **Jamie Hoffman** (8/20)
- The family and friends of **Dan (Art) Newman** (Addie Freer's relative)
- The family and friends of **Ryan Solum** (Gary and Dorie's nephew)
- Lynn Steinmetz and her family** following the death of her aunt, **Karen**
- All those college students returning to school this month**
- Beverly Glinski** as she settles into her new home at Monroe Manor in Barron (mailing address is "*Beverly Glinski, 507 East Monroe Avenue, Barron WI 54812*")
- All those suffering from Covid or caregiving for others**
- Becky** (Bev Becker's friend), **Joe Molls** (Harvey's friend), **Jeanette** (Judy Jeska's sister), **Pam** (Georgeina's cousin), and **Bill** (Judy Jeska's friend)
- Lori Andrews** (Sandy White's daughter), **Missy** (Judy Jeska's niece) and **Ruby** (Delores Barr's cousin) as they continue to receive cancer treatment
- God's gracious power and presence to be with **Jeff Heintz, Eric, Mary Mattson, Kevin, Tom** and his wife **Roxy, Beverly M., Mary, Terry, Vivian, Jayna, Anna, Al, Jane, David, Julie, Kim, Gloria Paulson, Teresa, Hayden, Alaura, and Lynn.**
- God to be at work in the heart and life of **Nathan** (Gail and Larry's son), **Scott** (the son of Jerry and Linda), and **Dayne Nygaard**
- All those who have been injured through gun violence and for the families of those who have been killed in recent attacks
- A peaceful and just end to the violence in Ukraine and God's strength and grace to be with all the refugees and hosts.
- School staff, teachers, administrators and students, doctors, nurses, and other frontline health-care workers, police, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders

Welcome to Worship at  
Parkview United Methodist Church



Sunday, August 14

## Gathering as the People of God

Prelude offered by Judy Benes

Welcome and Announcements

Sharing of Joys and Concerns by the Congregation

Opening Prayer

Opening and Centering Hymns

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” #400

“Take My Life, and Let it Be” #399

Little Disciples’ Song Time led by Carol Hougahl

## Hearing the Word of God Proclaimed

Hebrews 11:29-12:2

Sermon offered by Pastor Adam

## Responding To The Word Of God

Responsive Hymn

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” #206

Prayers of the People

The Lord’s Prayer

Offering of our Time, Talents, Gifts, Resources, Prayers, & Witness

## Going Forth In God’s Mission And Grace

Sending Hymn

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing” #664

Blessing and Benediction

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**Thanks for joining us for Worship!**

## Upcoming Events at Parkview

- A “Baby Q” (Baby Shower) for Pastor Adam and Laurie to celebrate the arrival of their first child in October. The “Baby Q” will be a drop-in-anytime party with food and fellowship at the Turtle Lake Village Park from noon-2:30pm on Saturday, September 17. This party is hosted by our families, but we hope folks from Parkview, Elim and Balsam Churches all join us. See the poster on the bulletin board in the narthex for more information.
- Fall Harvest Dinner, Sunday, September 25
- Annual Church Charge Conference Meeting, Monday, October 3rd at 6pm

We are collecting the **financial offerings** through the passing of the plates. The metal plates are for tithes and offerings toward the ministries, missions and operations covered by our church budget. Loose coins and cash that are deposited in the “Noisy Cans” (the coffee cans we pass around) will go toward the fund to purchase and make new banners for the Sanctuary for the various church seasons, holidays and occasions.

If you need to get in touch with Pastor Adam throughout the week please email at [pastor.adamwoods@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.adamwoods@gmail.com) or call/ text him at (608) 513-2937. He has posted his tentative weekly schedule on his office door.

Check us out online at [parkviewtl.com](http://parkviewtl.com). Follow us on Facebook ([Facebook.com/ParkviewUMC](https://www.facebook.com/ParkviewUMC)), and please help us promote our ministries, missions and events by “sharing”our posts.

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

32 And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

39 Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

12:1 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, 2 looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of 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.

A highlight of my high school years was the annual Alumni Run of the DeForest Norski Cross Country team.

Yes, you heard all that right. I ran cross country in high school which is in fact a *real* sport, thank you very much.

And yes, the mascot for my high school was “Norski” which I once heard means “Little Norwegian” in Norwegian.

And yes, you heard that right too, even after people graduate high school they still want to come back and run 3.1 miles on grass with a bunch of teenagers as an alumnus.

I loved the alumni run each August for many reasons, but one was that it gave me a chance to see the former upperclassmen who came back and regaled us with stories of their lives in lands far away from DeForest such as Steven’s Point, Plattville and Kenosha!

With some of them, they lost a step or two as they gained a pound or two, or ten in college and I was finally able to beat them in a 5K race. Other alumni runners seemed to really hit their stride after graduation and left me in the late August dust as they zoomed on by.

But the biggest reason why I have such fond memories of the annual Alumni Run was that it was the first race of the cross country season. Cross country racing is just downright exciting, exhausting, exhilarating and extraordinarily rewarding. Finishing a race is easy, only because starting and continuing a race is where the real work and effort lies.

Which is why I love that our scripture lesson today invites us “to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” We aren’t told we need to win the race, or even run a new personal record. Instead, we simply take the first step and continue on until we step over the finish line.

If I close my eyes and let my imagination catch up with my biblical meditation I find great joy in the image of Jesus panting and plodding along ahead of me as I run a cross country race. Christ, the one who is fully God and fully human, Christ, who is the Incarnation of the God who is our creator, sustainer and redeemer, is running only a few paces ahead of me looking back every few seconds with an encouraging smile.

He remains ahead of me, not because he wants to beat me, but because he wants to motivate and guide me. And all along the course, I see and hear the cheers of those who have run that race before me, saints, as the Bible calls them, and who now are constantly alongside the living God who is always on the move in this world.

This whole passage sounds like an alumni race to me, with Jesus leading the pack. Of course the alumni in the actual alumni race of my high school years had names like Steve, Aaron, Casey, Lance and Zack. Whereas those who first received and treasured this book we call "Hebrews" considered the saints, or alumni of their faith family if you will, to be folks like Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel.

Perhaps the author of Hebrews names these folks so that all of us --- regardless of our strengths, our weaknesses, our successes, our failures, our moral stature or our moral weakness --- all of us are called by God to simply get in 'the race' and trust that God will take care of what it means to 'win.' Because by simply being 'in the race' we are among those who are 'persevering.'

I don't think it's an accident that all of these mentioned by name in this scripture passage and whose stories of 'running this race of faith' are passed along to us are far less than perfect. In fact, some of them stumble and fall in rather remarkable ways.

Gideon, for instance, was an altogether reluctant warrior. He was not confident in his own ability and he asked for proof that it was even the Lord talking to him at all.

Barak refused to go to battle without Deborah at his side, and while to my mind there is nothing wrong with that, still that must have been unusual at that time. More than that, for all of his willingness to put his life on the line, he was told up front that in the end the honor would go to another --- and in this case a woman.

Samson, for all of his superhuman strength, does not come off as all that bright and as his story comes to a close, he dies making his point.

Jephthah, though described as a mighty warrior, essentially traded the life of his only child, his daughter, for a military victory.

David was, of course, the 'ideal king' for the nation of Israel, but for all of his remarkable gifts, he committed adultery with a woman who likely didn't have the power to say no to the king in the first place, and to make matters worse, David arranged for the death of the woman's husband to cover his sin.

Samuel, for all of his faithfulness, failed to convince the people that being ruled by a king would surely be their downfall.

And as for Rahab who is mentioned even before this litany of other "heroes of the faith?" For all the good she did, she was still remembered as a prostitute.

Hearing how even these so-called "heroes" of the faith rarely had it easy or got it right, makes it extra difficult to see where we fit into all of this. When the Bible uses the word "faith" it seems to give us varying and even contradicting definitions of what faith even means!

Indeed, in a world as full of challenges as the one you and I inhabit, it might be tempting to simply turn in our 'running shoes' and head for home. This would seem to be especially so if we thought it was up to us to vanquish all that which causes the suffering and pain in this world which God's people are called to address.

But no, this passage, and the witness of these followers of God, challenges us to endure suffering and to look to Jesus, who endured the cross and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. The call of this passage is not to martyrdom but to endurance. Not to believe in a concept, but have real-world faith in a person.

Which is good because much like running a cross country race, one of the biggest challenges faced in staying focused, motivated and engaged. A race is not the same thing as a chase. Instead, a race on a cross country course and a race of faith is about continuing on even when it's hard, boring, not what you expect, or not so fun anymore.

Do you notice the race set before you is starting to feel different than it once did? Perhaps it feels like a never-ending uphill climb, or a downhill ascent that is making you run at a pace just this side of out-of-control.

Perhaps the race is in a stretch of trail that has not a lick of shade or perhaps is so deep in the forest on a cloudy day that it's hard not to stumble over the rocks and roots below.

Perhaps the race is just going in the same loop and has become boring and repetitive or is taking an unexpected turn to a place you are unfamiliar and unsure of.

Nevertheless, the race continues, with a great cloud of witnesses both watching you and cheering you on. With Christ running before you with an encouraging smile, even though you wished he would just carry you like that poem you once heard about footprints in the sand.

But hear the good news my friends, the race is worth it. Not because you will get a gold medal or a triumphant photo of yourself in a magazine. Not because it will be a chance for you to prove you are better than others or even because it will allow you to finally lose that pound, or two, or ten that is preventing you from looking your best.

None of that is what the good news is about my friends. Rather, it is because it is only through the sort of faith that's like running a race with perseverance can we find real, true, everlasting joy. So run, run the race with perseverance for joy is coming. Nay, true joy incarnate runs with you only a few steps ahead. Thanks be to God. Amen.