

NEWSLINE

Great Smoky Mountains Church of Christ

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"The Race That Is Set Before Us"

After holding up many examples of faithful service to God, the writer of the book of Hebrews concludes:

"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 perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:1,2)

John Stephen Akhwari is not an athlete whose name has been enshrined in history. Yet, his commitment and determination to finish the race makes him a real hero to his fellow countrymen. He was a marathon runner from Tanzania who finished last in the 1968 Olympic race in Mexico. In fact, no one had ever finish so far behind.

Injured on the course, Akhwari crossed the finish line more than an hour after the other runners had finished. Bloody and bandaged from his injuries, with most of the spectators already gone, he was asked why he continued to run. He replied, *"My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me here to finish."*

Many Christians have a good start but a poor finish. The crown of victory is at the end of the race. The apostle Paul told some believers in Galatia, *"You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"* (Galatians 5:7). Sadly, many are diverted by "weights" and "sins" which take their eyes off Jesus. There are always some on the sidelines telling us to give up or to change courses.

The race is *"set before us"*. We cannot stop short. We cannot listen to the distractors. There will always be diversions. Some will come from our "friends". Some from commitments which may seem to be more important at the time. Some will be from family. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, *"seated at the right hand of the throne of God"*, we will cross the finish line...maybe injured...but we will finish!

—Al

Other News

-**Mandi** has been experiencing episodes of fluctuating heart rate and nearly passing out. Her cardiologist has put her on medication to increase her sodium level. Keep her in prayer.

-**Bill Pierce**, father of **Carol Kizer** (wife of Nelson), has been placed in Smoky Mtn. Rehab Center in Pigeon Forge. He suffered 3 broken bones in a fall. He was taken to the VA hospital in Johnson City, and was eventually referred back to Pigeon Forge. Carol also had a fall and is recovering. Please keep this wonderful family in prayer.

-Donna Walker, former GSMC member, was hospitalized this week with possible heart issues.

-The ladies of the GSM church are making **Christmas Care Bags** for children and teens in the PF area to be distributed by the police and fire departments. Tracey, Melanie and Tina are coordinating this effort. A list of items needed is on the ladies' bulletin board and table outside the sound room.

Online Worship: Online worship and Bible class may be accessed at www.greatsmokymountainchurchofchrist.com. For those worshipping online contributions can be made directly into the church treasury. Simply click the "Give" button on the front page of the church website.

Food Contact For Month: Tracey Kihlberg

Elder Contact for Month: Marc Hayes, 732-608-4248

Sermon Topics: *A.M.—Darryl Willis will be our speaker*
P.M.—"Jesus Riding A Donkey" - John 12, Matthew 21 (Al)

Archived sermons and Al's Blogs available at albehel.com

Our Known Sick

- Hubert Compton**—confined to home with health issues.
- June McGowen**, is in Pigeon Forge Nursing Home. Her condition has deteriorated significantly over the past few months.
- Jeanette Dyer** is struggling with several health issues.
- Linda Valentine**— battling cancer.
- Anna Ruth Franklin**— Prayers for several health issues.

Friends and Family News/Prayer Requests

-**Tracey's mom, Judy Pitt**— We are happy to report that she is now cancer free! We give God thanks!

-**Ronnie Pitt**, Tracey's dad, is being treated for A-Fib. Their address is: 313 Monticello Rd., Franklin, TN 37064

-**Treavor Hayes**, 7 year old grandson of Marc and Sue is receiving treatment through a port which has been installed to make his treatment easier. He has a tumor on optic nerve. Please keep hm in prayer.

-**George Tolliver's sister, Mossie Simpson**, is battling COPD. She is staying with her son. Prayers still needed.

-Shannon Wade requests prayers for **Harley Tucker**, who is a 24 year old friend of their family. She just started chemo for breast cancer. She lives in MS.

-**Rick Cliett** is battling bladder cancer. He is receiving chemo therapy and reports that he is feeling better but still having back pain. Please keep Rick and Ginny in your prayers. Rick is a former elder at the GSM church. They are deeply loved by us.

-**Priscilla Dick**, former member, is dealing with cancer but reports that she is feeling better. She has completed her chemotherapy. Keep praying for her and Gary.

-**Cards For Covid Nurses**— Susan Forman has made 24 handmade cards for covid floor staff at LeConte which were taken there by Jacob. She asks prayers for God's blessings and protection of them. A note was added letting the staff know that we would be praying for them. Thanks to Jacob for his prayer outreach to the LeConte workers.

EEM MILLION DOLLAR SUNDAY Fund Raising Campaign

Eastern European Mission Fundraising Campaign to raise money for Bibles and religious literature to be placed in schools in former Soviet block countries is underway. The national goal this year is \$3.2. **Darryl Willis** will be with us this Sunday to speak to us about this challenge. Each year we encourage our members to help. Our goal is to provide 1,000 Bibles this year. That will mean we need to raise \$5,000 to meet this goal. Please give generously to give a child an opportunity to learn about the Lord and His plan for salvation. We look forward to meeting some of the Bible recipients in heaven. A second collection will taken.

Sunday Adult Class
A Study in Acts
Al Behel

Teen Class
Jacob Forman

Wednesday Night Class
Danny Cline—*Colossians*

Monday Night Ladies Study
"O To Be Like Thee"
Polly Cline
Zoom Bible Class Each Monday
Night 6:45-7:45
Follow Email Instructions

Building Loan Balance
\$662,934.33

Additional contributions to building fund are appreciated

Times of Services

Sunday A.M.
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Sunday P.M. 6:00 PM
Wednesday 7:00 PM