

College is tough. People need Jesus. We're helping!

Not a Sprint

On October 8, I had the privilege of preaching at Wittenberg Lutheran Center, CID's campus ministry at Illinois State. As it turned out, this was an especially good day to be present. The service included the confirmation of two students from the Chicago area, Brian Hershey and Tannor Gierguga. My sermon was largely directed to these two young men.

I mentioned a famous event from the ancient world. In 490 B.C., a Greek soldier named Pheidippides ran 26 miles to Athens. He brought news of victory over an invading army at a place called "Marathon." We still associate that word with a long-distance run.

The Christian life is like this. It is definitely not a sprint. Our Christian lives in this sinful world stretch into a long haul, with plenty of exertion. Young Christians likely have a longer haul ahead of them than others. Yet in any case, life in the Lord resembles the course that Pheidippides ran: much more a marathon than a sprint. It requires persistence and determination. In Philippians 3, St. Paul wrote: "I press on to make it my own . . ."

And why, Paul? ". . . because Christ Jesus has made me His own." When Pheidippides ran, this was not in order to win a victory, but because the big victory had already been won. Much more here: Christ has won. He has triumphed over all His enemies, and He makes us winners. He did so even for a notorious church persecutor like Saul of Tarsus. Writing by inspiration to the Philippians, this same man – now called Paul – wrote that he now counted everything one great big loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, gaining Him, being found in Him, and having the righteousness from God that comes by faith. This is "alien righteousness," that is, being justified by having the righteousness of Another counted to you.

Yet now is no time to relax. Paul certainly did not think so: "I press on toward the goal," he wrote. These were not the words of a spectator. Paul was straining forward for what lies ahead. He knew he was not in a sprint, but a marathon.

If you think that struggles and troubles will end when you have faith in Christ, you will have to think again. For one thing, the devil will target you to a degree that he quite possibly never did before. Then, too, when you know the enormous price paid for your sin, you better understand just how serious sin is. You know how much sin is to be resisted, and how hard this can be. Marathons are not easy, and neither is the Christian life.

So does the Christian life amount to doing our time on a dreary treadmill that we dare not get off? No! Precisely when we understand that what we do is not enough and not good enough to pass muster before the holy God, we are ready for what Paul wrote about forgetting what lies behind.

Only by the grace of God could Paul forget, and so it is for us. Now, by God's grace, he had far better than his own puny and putrid righteousness; he had the righteousness of Christ Himself, the only righteousness that avails before God. So Paul did not have to keep track. He was free to give up his tight grasp on all the things in which he thought he was coming out ahead. So also for us.

Luther reflected that when he began his reforming activity, none of his opponents believed in this alien righteousness. Lots and lots of people do not believe it today. Our campus ministries get to proclaim this Gospel to them. They also tell it to others who do believe, and keep needing it. For when you have God's righteousness God by faith in Christ, you face a marathon – not a sprint.

Dear reader, thanks again for the valuable part *you* play in keeping Christ on campus!

-- Ken Schurb kschurb@cidlcms.org

Please save us future stamps! Send your e-mail address to amyholmes@cidlcms.org

To donate to endowments for Central Illinois District campus ministry:

<https://www.lutheranlegacyfoundation.org/fund/central-illinois-district-campus-ministry/>



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Endowment Funds News

Financial markets still find themselves beset by unsettled times and circumstances. Here are the earnings generated by Lutheran Legacy Endowments to help the Central Illinois District to fund campus ministry this year. In July, 2023 CID received the following amounts:

- For WIU: \$1,833
- For EIU: \$1,547
- For U of I: \$1,129
- For ISU: \$632

In other words, a total of \$5,141 was generated by the endowment funds to which you have contributed. One way to assure that these endowments generate more money for campus ministry operations is to grow the endowments themselves. Therefore, it is delightful to announce:

The Match is Back!

Lutheran Legacy Foundation recently announced that it will match 20% of contributions made to any of the four endowment funds supporting CID campus ministries, up to a total of \$500,000 contributed to that fund or for a period of 10 years—whichever comes first. This gives all four campus ministry endowment funds not only room to grow, but help with the growing.

Contribute \$5, and in effect you will be giving \$6 when the matching money is included. Here's a great opportunity to help assure that campus ministry will remain vibrant into the future—God willing, until the Lord returns visibly and in glory.

Meanwhile, let us keep praying, with the psalmist: "Send out Your light and Your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling" (Psalm 43:3).

CID Campus Ministries

CHARLESTON

Eastern Illinois University

CONTACT: Pastor Kenneth Hoover

pastorken@immanuelcharleston.com

As of October 20, 2023, not counting Lutheran Legacy funds \$14,575.75 has been contributed to the endowment to support this ministry, up \$375 during the last year.

MACOMB

Western Illinois University

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secretary@immanuelmacomb.com

As of October 20, 2023, not counting Lutheran Legacy funds \$15,878.75 has been contributed to the endowment to support this ministry, up \$125 during the last year.

NORMAL

Illinois State University

CONTACT: Pastor Bill Jensen

wittenberglcms@gmail.com

As of October 20, 2023, not counting Lutheran Legacy funds \$19,244.75 has been contributed to the endowment to support this ministry, up \$1,050 during the last year.

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

University of Illinois

CONTACT: Pastor Michael Schuermann

churchoffice@uniluchampaign.org

As of October 20, 2023, not counting Lutheran Legacy funds \$20,955.00 has been contributed to the endowment to support this ministry, up \$125 during the last year.

Please save us future stamps! Send your e-mail address to amyholmes@cidlcms.org

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