Sports: A Metaphor for Christian Living

“The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat” was the introduction to the Wide World of Sports telecast of long ago. For those of us who are sport enthusiasts, we don’t often find the right words to express to non-sport enthusiasts what the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat really means— it doesn’t seem to make sense to those who just see ball and bat, or ball and hoop, or ball and racket, or ball and feet, or puck and skates, or ball and club, or water and splash, or snow and sleds, or people running around from one place to the next, or swimming around from one end of the pool to the next. Nope, for those who just see the stick figures and the round ball, it may seem nonsensical.

But for those who see the strategy, the skill, the focus intensity, the athleticism, the endless hours of committed practice, the physical prowess, the conditioning, the passion of healthy competition, and the possibility of exhilaration of achievement, sports can and is a metaphor for life and for disciplined living.

With World Cup fever all around us, the NBA finals just ending, the baseball season in full swing, the Wimbledon Tennis Grand Slam starting and many wanting to use the summer months to practice a swing or two, it is just the right time to unite our enjoyment of exercise and sports with our daily Christian walk. The Bible uses quite a few sports metaphors to help us put daily life in perspective and motivate us to live disciplined, passionate and focused living as followers of Jesus Christ and his teachings. For a great athlete training and pushing him/herself to do the very best are not optional exercises, they are mandatory and so should these be for those who want to experience life in abundance.

I invite you to consider the following words of Scripture.

*Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.* 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

“So let us run the Christian race with fun, fitness, family, friends and good food. I encourage you this summer to think holistically about our Christian walk. Even if you don’t participate in competitive sports, there are many ways to get out and exercise and enjoy the outdoors: a walk or a jog in the park or around the block, a bicycle ride, a hike in the woods, and many others. Let’s take good care of our body (the temple of the Holy Spirit), good care of our mind, good care of our heart, and of our spirit (pray, worship the Lord and study the Word). Have a great summer!”

Pastor Mayra
Breaking News: Youth group will be holding it's mission trip July 31st – August 5th in Otego NY. During the day we'll be volunteering at Athelas Therapeutic Riding, an organization that offers various equine assisted activities to individuals with physical, mental and emotional challenges in a caring, relaxed atmosphere. After volunteering we'll be enjoying a variety of activities including swimming, paintball, bbqing, hiking and more.

We'll be meeting every Sunday in July @ 5:00 for devotion, fun, food, and fellowship. Anyone grades 6 – 12 are invited to attend. We're still looking for volunteers for a couple of the dinners and also for drivers for an amusement park trip.

Also we've added a Computer Science course for the summer. It started at the end of June and will generally meet Tues and Thurs from 2 – 4PM. Ages 12 – 30 are invited to attend. We'll be covering high level languages such as MIT’s Scratch and JavaScript, web development, and low level languages and constructs such as C and ASCII. The first week of July we won't be meeting, but may have a review session on Sunday the 6th if interest is expressed. Certificates will be awarded to participants who complete a significant portion of the problem sets. If you are interested in joining us please contact Glen Brown glen@wholestep.org.

Singles Fellowship

The following topics were discussed at Sunday Morning Singles Discussion Group meetings in June.

* Elements of wellness.
* Practical aspects of falling in love.
* How do we use the gift of time?
* What issues are we ignoring?

All are invited to come downstairs for a second cup of coffee and lively discussion.

Maryann Friscia

Correction: Barron Cashdollar’s cell # is incorrect in the Church Directory. It should be 908-202-0054.

Choir Notes

LJ Congratulations… to Song Leader drummer, Devin Araujo, on his graduation from A.R. Johnson HS in June… and to Michael Rosin, one of our 2013 summer organists, who graduated from Montclair State University. Unfortunately, Michael will not be able to play for us this summer as he will be starting a Master’s program in music composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music…

LJ Prayer of Thanksgiving… for the arrival of Avery Marie Mathews, daughter of Greg and Stephanie Mathews, and the first grandchild for Cindy and Bill Mathews, our Minister of Music…

LJ Thanks… to Paul Koslowski for playing piano while Bill Mathews was on vacation on May 25. Paul, along with Glen Brown, guitar, and organist, George Lachenauer, will be leading the music when Bill is away this summer… to Johnny Klikushin for playing clarinet on the Children's Choir anthem, Ken Medema’s Tree Song, on June 1… to our Youth Choir alumni who returned on June 8 to lead the singing for Youth Sunday – Marlee Araujo, Katie Engel, Elliott Johnson, Erin Klein, Jesse and Taylor Kline, Scott Lind, and Colleen and Maggie McGuire, along with Youth Group member, Melissa Winey… and to our instrumentalists on Youth Sunday – Devin Araujo, drums; Jake Brown, guitar; Joseph and Melanie Della Peruti, trombone; Johnny Klikushin, darinet; and Owen Martin, tenor sax.
Congratulations to our 2014 Children’s Bible recipients.
Olivia Morris, Jeffrey Morris, and Michael Singh
and to
The Grace Lee Thompson Scholarship Award recipients.
Devin Araujo, Molly Engel, Trent Gabriel, Tyler Martin, Brianna Virzi, and Denise Virzi.

This is the time of year when there is a transition on the committee and this was a major one. After four years on missions–one as a member and three as Chairperson–Janet Winey completed her service. Although no longer an “official” member of the committee, Janet intends to be an active participant in mission projects. She will continue as Family Promise coordinator. Janet will be recruiting volunteers to cook, serve and be an overnight host. She reminds us that the success of mission service projects depends on the participation of many people in the congregation, not just those on the committee.

Len Gabriel is the new Chairperson and will be using his teaching experience and creativity to lead the committee. Marlee Araujo and Cheryl Rosario are new members who bring experience as well as enthusiasm to the committee. They will be joining Nova Spinner who has led the craft activities for the HomeFirst Children’s Christmas party.

The committee is exploring new avenues of service with a possible focus on beauty and blessings. Combining God’s real presence (blessings) with the beauty that is inherent in God’s creation, the Mission Committee is discerning ways to blend the two in our mission endeavors. There are many possibilities to add beauty and blessings to someone’s life and in turn to help them incorporate it into their own life.
WISHING YOU A
HAPPY & SAFE SUMMER!

Church Staff
Rev. Mayra Castañeda, Senior Pastor
William R. Mathews, Minister of Music
Katie McGuire, Children’s Ministry Coordinator
Glen Brown, Youth Ministry Coordinator
Ricardo Ribeiro, Assistant Youth Ministry Coordinator
Nancy Lambros, Church Administrator
Adriana Rodriguez, Custodian

Our Purpose
Coming together in joyful worship, we’re here...
- To share the reality of God’s love,
- To connect our lifestyles to Christian truth,
- And to put our faith into action through responding to needs in our community, nation, and world.