

Cheering Us On

"So then let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us." (Hebrews 12:1, CEB)

Have you been to a cross country race or ever run in one? I've had the chance to do both.

Most recently, we've watched a number of races that our son, Joshua, ran this fall for his middle school team. Unlike sitting at a baseball/football/basketball/soccer/etc. game where you generally sit in one place for a longer period of time, these races go quickly. You have to be strategic about figuring out where to go during the race in order to see your kid multiple times along the way so you can cheer them on close enough for them to hear you. Those of you who've been to these races know what I'm talking about.

The first day of November has long been celebrated in the Church as All Saints' Day. We will take time this Sunday, November 5 at all of our worship services to recognize the saints who have passed from this life into the eternal. We will also share the sacrament of Holy Communion.

It may sound strange to think of people as saints, but let's consider what the book of Hebrews has to say in chapter 12, verse 1 (see above). We get the idea that as we are living life on earth, running the race laid out before us, we are not alone. There is, in fact, an unseen crowd of people surrounding us, cheering us on - a cloud of witnesses, as the author describes them.

Who are these "witnesses?" These are the saints in glory. Those who have gone ahead of us. They understand what this life is like. They have finished their race, and instead of walking away, they have moved to the sidelines in order to cheer us on. Why? Because they know how important it is for us to persevere, and to end this life well as we prepare for the life eternal.

As you live your earthly life, focused on worshipping God and loving others, I hope you sense the cloud of witnesses cheering you on. You may not be able to see them, but they are there and they want you to succeed.

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor David Rittgers