

5 Minutes for Faith – “Run the Race”

I wonder how many, like me, have “the fever” right now? Olympic Fever. In this two-week stretch of February, many of us have been enjoying the spectacle and the competition found in the Winter Olympic Games from Italy. It’s fascinating to watch the athletes – around 3,500 of them from more than 90 countries – as they strive for medals and personal satisfaction.

While each is focused on their individual sport or distinct event, collectively they represent the Olympic spirit and ideals. Those fundamental principles include “a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind ... blending sport with culture and education ... the joy of effort ... social responsibility and respect for universal ethics.” At its core, there is something that we can carry over from the Olympic Games to our daily lives – a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play ... of global unity, peace and competition. Let it be so.

The Modern Olympic Games began in 1896 in Athens, and their creation was inspired by ancient sporting games held in Greece as long ago as the 8th Century BC. So, Olympic-type sports were happening well before Jesus was born. Yet we use some of the same athletic imagery – the intense discipline, endurance, and competition of elite athletes – to illustrate spiritual growth.

From First Corinthians, we read of Paul’s analogy of running a race to describe the Christian life. “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. *They* do it to get a crown that will not last, but *we* do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

Just as athletes train, we are called to discipline our bodies and minds, using spiritual exercises such as prayer and study to strengthen our faith. The Book of Hebrews gives us encouragement to keep going when training is difficult, telling us to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.”

Medical experts tell us of the importance to remain active – walking, running, biking, weight training, flexibility and balance exercises, swimming, you name it. And our church offers hiking and pickleball groups as activity choices to share with others. But we also should live our lives focused on spiritual, rather than just physical, fitness.

We should desire to say with Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day (2 Timothy 4:7-8).”

Let us take the inspiration of these Olympic Games and use it to propel us forward in our faith. As these amazing winter athletes strive for medals, we hope to be inspired to reach the ultimate prize.

One final practical suggestion: We are currently in the season of Lent. If you haven't yet picked up a Lent daily devotional book, available in the church lobby, I highly recommend it. I believe it will give us a great opportunity for spiritual discipline in daily prayer and meditation. And, as we prepare for Easter, it is a great spiritual exercise to pray and prepare for our neighbors and family members we wish to invite.

With blessings, Rev. Hyun-Suk Kim (“PK”), Wadsworth United Methodist Church Senior Pastor
2/19/2026