

First United Methodist Church

310 North Rowley, Mitchell, SD 57301

Rev. Keith Nelson, Lead Pastor

keith@mitchellfumc.org

605.630.6586

I'll admit, I'm not the hugest Winter Olympics fan. I'll watch some of the events if I happen to be home and the TV is on. Or if Nancy mentions something about a particular athlete, that might get me interested in watching a performance or two. But I've never been a skier, snowboarder, or skater. I have done some sledding in my younger years, so yes, I think a ride in one of the bobsleds would be a rush. But other than that, I'm not a real big winter sports fan.

The other evening the TV happened to be on to the Olympics. There were 4-5 athletes skating around a short little ice track and they were going really fast. I guess the event is known as "Short Track Speed Skating." I got drawn into it and watched in amazement as these athletes were leaning waaaayyyy over as they went around the corners. They were leaning over so far that they could easily touch the ice with one hand.

As I continued to watch these athletes zip around the track, I caught myself leaning with them. In fact, several times I found myself literally leaning to the left, as the skaters leaned left to go around the next corner. I was so drawn into the moment that I was responding with my own actions, as if I was living it myself.

A day or so later, I was reading in the Bible as a part of my time of connecting, learning, and growing with God. I was reading one of Jesus parables and it struck me how the people, as the story tells it, were drawn into the story Jesus was telling. Even though I knew the story, I found myself listening closely to what Jesus was saying as I read. In that moment, I caught myself "leaning" into the story as the point Jesus was making unfolded. "Why did that person do that?" "How could that happen?" "Oh my goodness...I didn't expect that to happen!" "Wow, could that person be me?" "What would I do?" Those were just some of the questions I asked myself as I "leaned" into the moment with Jesus.

Actually, I believe that is exactly the type of response Jesus longs for from all his followers. As Christians and disciples of Jesus, we really aren't to be long distance spectators to the events of life and faith. We might be long distance spectators to the Olympic Games in South Korea, but even with that we at times get drawn into the emotion and energy of the moment. Jesus desire is that we would be so drawn into the "picture and reality" of the Kingdom that Jesus shares with us through his words and actions, that our response will be to "lean into it" as well. In this way our lives will reflect the very truths that Jesus is portraying.

The Olympics will soon be over. The medal count will end. The athletes will all return home. But the lesson I will take away from these Olympic Games, is that of "leaning" with the athletes – allowing the moment to influence my own actions. My goal...our goal...is to lean into the Bible and our faith is such a way that it truly effects who we are and how we live. Faith isn't a spectator sport...we're on the track...we are on of the athletes "running the race" as the Apostle Paul puts it. Let's run on!! Let's lean in!!

Serving Together,
Pastor Keith

It's been a snowy week...but God's creative power and beauty is evident even in the snow!! Join us for worship on Sunday as we continue with the "Creed" sermon series. This week's focus is "I Believe in Jesus Christ." If you like reading the scripture passages for Sunday ahead of time, they are Matthew 16:13-20 and John 10:10. Hope to see you Sunday. Worship is at 8:30 and 11:00 am.