

First United Methodist Church

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Wow! What a couple weeks it has been!! Lots of great basketball teams to be cheering for here in our area; from the Ethan Rustlers, the Hanson Beavers, the Mitchell Kernels, to the DWU Lady Tigers, there has been a lot of excitement and energy about women's basketball. So, I'm here to tell Dr. Novak, Coach Christensen, and the Mitchell Kernels Coach that one of their future star players lives just down the street from me.

How do I know a future star lives down the street from me?? Good question. Here's how I know. Last week, a day or so after the blizzard, I saw a young girl out shooting hoops. It was a chilly, breezy morning. Sophie and I were just getting back from our morning walk and I saw movement down the street. There was this girl, I'm guessing middle school age, and she was out dribbling and shooting buckets. Obviously, this young lady had a few minutes before the school bus came or her ride to school was ready to go. So, rather than just standing around waiting, this girl with her mittens and winter coat on, was out shooting buckets. I'm guessing she was inspired by the victories our local teams were having and she was dreaming the dream. Not only that, she was working the dream, doing what she could to improve and get ready for when her opportunity came to be on a team.

So, the question I want to ask today is this; what's your dream? What are you pushing yourself for or toward? What's your dream for making a difference in the world...of leaving the world just a little bit better than you found it? I'm quite sure that Coach Christiansen didn't start the Lady Tiger season by simply saying, "Well ladies, if we just win a few games I'll be satisfied...and so should you." No, I'm sure that with the talent he had in his team and with what he saw within them, he knew this was a year to lean in, to push harder, to reach for the championship. And together...that's exactly what they did! But it took work! It took determination! It took the attitude of a girl out shooting hoops in the cold because she had a dream!

The Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, at the end of chapter 9, draws on the sports enthusiasm of his day (the Roman games in the stadiums) to make a point about living the Christian faith. He says that as followers of Jesus, we should "run the race" or live the faith in such a way that our aim is to win, to be successful, to do more than just exist. Paul writes that he punishes his body (shooting hoops in the cold) to train and discipline his body (and mind) so that he can do his best and not be disqualified. In The Message version of the Bible, Paul's words are translated, "I'm giving it everything I've got! No sloppy living for me!"

So, how are you pressing ahead for the gold in the journey of faith? What is the finish line that you are aiming for? Paul would not say just a nice easy life is the goal. He'd say helping to establish God's presence on earth and God's love in every heart...that's the goal! That's our goal! I don't know about you, but I want the energy, determination, and the dream of the young woman down the street from me. Would you join me in not just cheering on the victors in our area (YAY Lady Tigers!!!!), but let's press on in our own preparation, training, and dreaming of building up the church and God's Kingdom in our city, in our community, and in our world!! It begins with us...right here...right now!!

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

Nancy and I saw "I Can Only Imagine" at the Logan Luxury 5 Theaters here in Mitchell on Thursday evening. I highly recommend it. Great story of redemption, forgiveness, grace and the power of Jesus to overcome anger, abuse, and bitterness. Take some tissues with you. My eyes were leaking by the end!!! Join us for worship this Sunday. We continue in our Creed series. Pastor Jerry will be preaching on "The Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints." Come join us. 8:30 and 11:00 am on Sunday! Wednesday at 6:00 is our midweek casual service.