

Devotion – Ninth Week after Pentecost
Rev. Jeanne Simpson

I've been watching the Olympics, as I'm sure a lot of you have, and been on the edge of my seat when a USA team member is close to finishing a race, a swim, a volleyball or basketball game, or a gymnastics routine. All of the athletes this time seem so close in scoring or times. One competition Sunday night had several swimmers 14/100ths of a minute apart from each other. I don't even know what that equates to in time. Is it a blink of an eye? Is it a heart beat? I think it's faster.

I marvel at all these young men and women who defy gravity and speed and injuries to do incredible things. Triple somersaults in the air and landings on the floor in gymnastics that make me wonder how their ankles don't break. Breast strokes where the head and shoulders are almost 2 feet out of the water. Volleyball lobs that somehow go over the net from impossible directions. And how in the world does someone do backflips on a balance beam barely wider than one's foot? Somehow these athletes have an incredible sense of space, even when they're going backward. It's all I can do to maintain balance on stairs.

I am reminded of the text from Isaiah 40 I read at Carole Masdon's funeral last Saturday:

He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

I hope you take pride over the next few weeks in these young people who have trained so hard for 5 years, having to figure out for a while how to train at home during the pandemic. That dedication is something that amazes me. These men and women are gifted with stamina and grit and determination, and I am proud to be an American when I watch them perform.

God promises us that he will renew our strength as well and allow us to run and walk without getting tired, if we just wait for the Lord to help us. I may not be able to do backward flips on a balance beam, but I know that God gives me strength when I feel weak or tired or sad. I hope this week brings you strength as you navigate your daily routines, and that God will guide your feet as you walk the path that Jesus showed us. And may you soar in the air along with these athletes that we can all be so proud of.

Jeanne