

No One Runs Alone **Hebrews 12:1–2**

Today, on All Saints Sunday, we remember and celebrate the lives of saints who have touched our lives. We remember Warren Cole, a faithful gardener whose trumpet and quiet kindness sowed seeds of hope. We remember Richard White, a gentle usher and humble servant whose courage shone through his kindness. We remember David Humphrey, a skilled, joyful “it-will-all-work-out” fixer who saw beauty in God’s order and grace in everyday life. We remember Carol Pace, small but mighty—strong and full of love that carried her family through. We remember Linda Reynolds, a gentle spirit who chose kindness to the end. We remember Steve Goins, a quiet encourager whose favorite benediction was a smile and “Fantastic!”

All of them left something behind for us. As you can see on your right, there is Warren’s trumpet, which once filled our sanctuary with joyful Easter music. And here is a “dammit doll” made by Carol Pace. The tag says, “When you think you want to climb the wall or stand up and shout... just grab it by the legs and find a place to slam it. Then as you whack its stuffing out, yell, ‘Dammit! Dammit! Dammit!’” It sounds like a must-have item for a pastor!

Just like the candles we lit this morning, they shared their light with us—making our lives brighter and our faith stronger. They have finished their earthly race and now stand before the throne and before the Lamb, praising God. They are no longer physically with us, but they have left indelible footprints on our hearts and we are blessed by these saints in our lives, who have run before us and shaped our faith, opening the path of faith.

The writer of Hebrews encourages us to finish the race with our eyes fixed on Jesus: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” (Hebrews 12:1–2) We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. We are not running this race alone. No one runs alone. And because we run together, we find strength again and again.

Do you like marathons? A marathon is 26.2 miles long, and most Olympic runners finish in just over two hours. For a long time, breaking the two-hour barrier seemed impossible—an unbreakable wall. But Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge set out to do what no one had ever done. He didn’t run alone. A rotating team of pacemakers ran ahead in a V-shape to block the wind, while a laser-guided pace car and a flat course helped keep the rhythm steady.

After years of preparation, Kipchoge and his team finally began to run. And on that historic day, supported by those who ran before him and beside him, he crossed the finish line in 1 hour, 59 minutes, and 40 seconds—the first person in history to complete a marathon in under two hours. He could not have done it alone. Those who ran with him made the impossible possible.

That image reminds me of the saints—those who ran the race before us, breaking the wind, clearing the path, and showing us how to keep our eyes on Christ. In fact, it is our Lord Jesus Christ who first ran this race and continues to strengthen us. So today, we remember not only the love, endurance, and faith of the Asbury saints, but also Jesus Christ—the pioneer and perfecter of our faith—who makes our journey possible.

And now it is our turn. Friends, this is the race God has set before us. The baton of faith has been passed into our hands. We may grow weary at times, but we are not alone. The same Spirit that strengthened those who came before us runs within us now. Their prayers still echo around us like the rhythm of steady footsteps, urging us to keep going.

So when you feel tired, remember—you are not running alone. The saints run beside you. Christ runs within you. So let us run our race with faith and love, until the day we, too, join that great cloud of witnesses and hear the voice of Christ saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” No one runs alone. So let us run together.