



Running Through the Finish Line

When our former Bishop Hayes retired, at the opening address of his last Annual Conference, he said something that has stuck with me through the years. He said that as his time was ending at the Oklahoma Annual Conference, he wanted to be sure that he ran *through* the finish line and not *to* it.

He then played a video clip of a college track meet. A runner from the University of Oregon was ahead in the race by a good distance. As he was approaching the finish line, he began throwing his arms up to celebrate. As he did so, another runner from the University of Wisconsin closed in on him. At the last possible moment, the Oregon runner was passed by the Wisconsin runner and lost the race.

The runner from Oregon forgot that the race isn't over until you pass the finish line. He let up at the end, and he allowed himself to get passed. The Oregon runner was running *to* the finish line; he was already slowing down as he approached it. The Wisconsin runner was running *through* the finish line; he was going full speed until the race was in the books.

Bishop Hayes used this race as a metaphor about how important it is not to slow down or let up just because the finish line is in sight. We need to give 100% of what we have until the race is in the books. Otherwise, we might fail right when it counts the most. Bishop Hayes promised us that even though it would be his last Annual Conference and his last year as our Bishop, he would give 100% of his effort.

This year we have been running a very long race. In March we thought it may be a sprint, but it has ended up being a marathon. The good news is that the finish line is in sight! I personally know people who have received the first round COVID-19 vaccine. This is incredibly heartening after a long year.

But as we approach the finish line, let us make sure that we run *through* it and not *to* it. Let us not grow complacent and let our guard down at the end. Let us keep social distancing, wearing masks, and washing our hands. We are so close now. How tragic would it be if we, as a community, stumbled at the end?

While the finish line is in sight, our infection rate is very high right now. The hospitals are still operating at capacity. Many of our own congregation are dealing with COVID-19. Let us continue to pray for those who are sick, pray for our doctors and nurses, and do the best we can to mitigate the virus until the race is over. Let us remember the words of the Apostle:

"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified." – 1 Corinthians 9:24-27



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
From the Church Staff



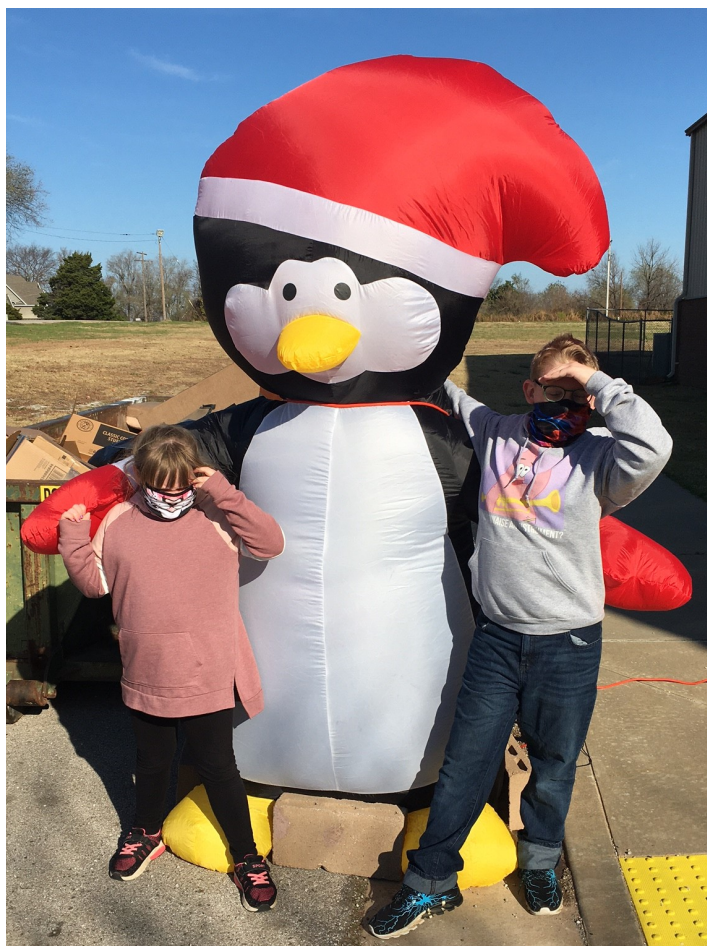
KidZone News
 Super salespersons, Evan and Madelyn with our penguin friend at the KidZone annual fundraiser held at The Well on November 27th &

November 28th. We had to do things differently this year. Our fundraiser was a success and we want to thank all of you for your support. We were able to purchase items and fill 66 stockings which we delivered to Sand Springs Community Services on December 9th.

What fun it was to see some of you on Sunday afternoon and visit for a short time. We have missed all of you and hope we can get back to KidZone Kids soon!!

Ms. Debbie and I want to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus and His wonderful love for us!!

Love-
 Ms. Debbie & Ms. Marty



Offices are CLOSED December 24-January 1. They re-open Monday, January 4th.

Cut out and save for Sunday when we read The Apostles' Creed together...

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic** church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.*

**universal

TITHES & OFFERINGS...

Mail your checks to SSUMC, 319 N. Main St., Sand Springs, OK 74063 or give online at: <https://sandspringsumc.org/>

Click on the "Giving" link in the top right hand corner and fill out the information and click "Continue." You can donate to several funds online including Robyn Coney's mission.

"The Prayer Box"

Philip Comer, Maureen Gibson, Sylvia Johnson, Wava Burt, Ralph Rand, Martha Scudder, Betty & Linda Lund, Suzanne and Valerie Jones, Ralph Ward, Gordonna Fisher, Harry Alford, Jim & Vi McAllister, Barbara McClintock, Montie & Betty Box, Bruce Warren,
 Prayer Chains And Unspoken Requests

