



On 20th June, Cwmbran Parkrun celebrated its 10th anniversary. Every Saturday, people run a 5km through a beautiful course alongside the Afon Clwyd river. It is an event that I have supported over a hundred times as a course marshal, and on that Saturday, I was there in my “usual” place.

I don't know if you have ever taken part in a parkrun as a participant or volunteer, but it is a wonderful movement of people (excuse the pun). Cwmbran parkrun is a very sociable community. Both the runners and the marshals cheer everyone on, from the elite athletes, those running in groups, those returning from injury and to those who turn out each week to run their own race. The marshals on the course check everyone is ok and applaud them. Many of the volunteers have run the course themselves and they know what it feels like. There are the tail walkers who ensure that no runner or walker are the last people on the course. There are the guides, who become the “eyes” for the visually impaired or blind participants. And at the end there are those who applaud as the runners and walkers cross the finish line and, on most Saturdays, everyone is rewarded with cake at the end 😊.

In the book of Hebrews a similar race is described. Perhaps reminiscent of the athletic prowess of Roman games at the time. Following chapters 10 and 11 of the great examples of people of faith, we read:

“¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
(Hebrews 12:1-2),

As we reflect on our own journeys of faith, I wonder whether this passage resonates with you. We each run our own race of faith, enduring and persevering and fixing our eyes on Jesus. At the same time, there a wonderful phenomenon that happens, we are surrounded by the cloud of witnesses, and we also form part of the cloud of witnesses for those around us. We each endure and persevere in our own faith journeys. And as we are applauded and encouraged, we do the same to each other, as we know what we are all going through, as we all seek Jesus – the author and perfecter of our faith.

In this last month, I have been blessed, humbled and thankful for the great cloud of witnesses of the Cam, Dursley, Stonehouse and Wotton church folk whom I have the privilege to serve. Your words of encouragement and support mean so much as I run and journey towards ordination and beyond.

And so, I share these words, hoping that you will receive them for yourselves. They were given to me by my friend and mentor, Revd Judith Holliman, (who spoke at my Testimony service), to encourage me in September 2024 as I began probation ministry. They remain true today as we each run our races and cheer others on.

“Remember you are just you and God is amazing.

You have been called, you will be equipped, God knew exactly who you were and God called you to be you. You are precious, endearing and worthy, and God is God, so all will be well. You wear God whatever you wear, because God formed you, knows you, loves you and is probably having a bit of a chuckle at you right now”

Every blessing and thank you

Jimmy