



"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." -Hebrews 12:1-2a

Dear Siblings in Christ,

We are weary. We are tired. We are worn.

We have had to learn in short order how to adapt, adjust, and amend our lives to a vastly changed reality. We are collectively facing a time in the Church and in the world that none of us could have dreamed or imagined. We are faced as people of faith and citizens of the global community with a wide spreading pandemic, ongoing racial reckoning, and multiple natural disasters. Added to an already heightened sensibility we face additional anxiety around the upcoming elections in November.

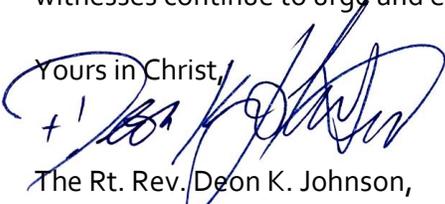
Over the last few weeks, I have found myself needing to intentionally create spaces to disengage from the continuous onslaught of the news cycle and social media. I have also found myself reacting more strongly to small things that in normal circumstances I would generally ignore. I suspect you and those whom you serve may be feeling much of the same. Needless to say, there is much for us all to be weary, tired, and worn.

St. Paul in his Letter to the Hebrews encouraged the then fledgling church to, "run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." I think St. Paul's admonition would serve us well in this moment.

We must keep our focus on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. We must in the words of the African American Spiritual "walk together children, don't you get weary." Jesus in his earthly ministry took intentional time to step away from the demands and pressures of ministering to God's people. If God with us needed time away from the rigors of the world how much more do we? Now, more than ever, the regular rhythm of rest and renewal are important for our spiritual wellbeing as religious leaders. We must encourage each other, walk together, pray together, meet together, as clergy companions on the journey that is before us.

Know that you are each one in my prayers as we navigate the path that is set before us. May that great cloud of witnesses continue to urge and encourage you on to the building of Beloved Community in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Yours in Christ,


The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson,
Eleventh Bishop of Missouri