

It was plausible that staying in Britain and continuing his athletic career might fit hand-in-glove with Liddell's desire to preach the gospel. When asked why he'd give up such an opportunity, he'd simply reply, "Because I believe God made me for China." The next summer, he travelled the Trans-Siberian railway overland from Europe through Russia and down to China. He would serve there for 20 years as a missionary.

Undoubtedly the greatest reason to remember Liddell is the way his life ended. With the Japanese invasion pressing further into China in 1944, his wife and their two daughters (and another on the way) were sent overseas to avoid danger. In hindsight, the London Missionary Society probably should have sent all the missionaries, but Liddell was convinced he should stay.

Liddell was able to minister for many months until finally he was rounded up with more than 2,000 others and taken to an internment camp in Weixian (the modern city of Weifang). Even there, his ministry flourished. Despite appalling conditions and death all around him, he poured himself into ministry with the young people of the camp.

At this point, Liddell was already physically suffering from the brain tumour that would eventually take his life. But he was still engaged in ministry to others—leading Bible studies, counselling others, doing physical labour to meet practical needs. Thus he continued until February 21, 1945, when he died.

The apostle Paul wrote about the end of his own life as the finishing of a race: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). In doing so, he exhorted Timothy—and all of us—to give everything we have until the finish line. The Christian life is a race not just to be started but to be run with perseverance all the way to the end. The way we finish speaks the most loudly of the object of our faith.

When you watch the Olympics this summer in Paris, think back not just on the Olympic glory Liddell won there 100 years earlier. Think about his love for China that led him to leave athletics behind for his calling there. Most of all, think about his love for Christ that carried him all the way to the end of his race.

Collect

Living God, whose Son Jesus fed the hungry with the bread of his life and the word of his Kingdom: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us with your true and living bread, Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



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Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

[Isaiah 55:2]

Ordinary 18 (4th August)

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

Psalms 78:23-29

Ephesians 4:1-16

John 6:24-35

Ordinary 19 (11th August)

1 Kings 19:1-8

Psalms 34:1-8

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

John 6:35, 41-51

Olympic Gold to Missionary Sacrifice:

Eric Liddell's Legacy at 100

TGC JULY 26, 2024 MARK COLLINS

There are a host of reasons to remember Liddell. As this summer marks the 100-year anniversary of the 1924 Paris Olympics, we look back on his triumphant victory there in the 400 meters.

That story begins in his rivalry with fellow British sprinter Harold Abrahams, the two entering the Olympics as favourites in both the 100 meters and 200 meters. However, Liddell dropped out of a heat for the 100 meters because it was run on Sunday (a race Abrahams later won). Liddell's decision to skip those races for his religious convictions was immortalized in the movie *Chariots of Fire*.

I grew up loving that movie, the glimpse of a man who stood firmly on his faith and still emerged a champion. Liddell's character famously says, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. When I run, I feel his pleasure." Many a young Christian has been inspired by the fact that, for Liddell, even athletics was a place of worship.

Perhaps an even greater reason to remember Liddell is his decision to lay aside his athletic career for a higher calling. After returning from Olympic triumph in Paris to overwhelming popular adulation, he shocked everyone by announcing his intention to return to China as a missionary.

In an age when sports was becoming ever more popular in Britain, many argued he could reach more people at home than abroad. Indeed, the Sunday after he returned from Paris to preach in a Scottish church, the pews were filled with people. Liddell preached on Psalm 119:18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (KJV).

A guide for our prayers during the week

Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- Kerry and Nancy

Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Op Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council

Dates to Remember

Today	4 pm service
10 August	Rockhampton Women's Conference
13 August	Mark Drama Info Session 6-7 pm
17 August	Clearing/Overflow Sale
24 August	Lay Development Day – Emerald
25 August	Fellowship lunch

	4 August	11 August
Service Leader		Dianne
Read		Russell
Prayers	Russell	Natalie
Shop	Bron & Val	Therese & Peg
Grounds		

The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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