

Spotlight on Crestwood The Elizabeth Evans Library

My interest was piqued when I saw brightly decorated tables in the Crestwood hallways. Each table had books propped on it surrounded by adornments related to the season or titles. Then I noticed the decorations and books changed frequently. My questions brought me to the Crestwood Elizabeth Evans library.



The tables, I was told, are laughingly called the “branch libraries.” They are decorated regularly by Peggy Falace and her dedicated library committee. Each month or season, the ladies confer as to the next theme, often questioning the ministers about their upcoming sermon series. Next month the sermon theme is story-telling, and I’ve heard the displayed books will include biographies, stories, etc. If you are an interested reader, pick up one of the books, sign the card in it, and leave it on the table. When you want to return the book, place it in the nearby basket.

Although it has taken some time for the library itself to get back on its feet since the Covid closure, the “branch libraries” remind us that we have a library that is protecting some interesting items. I met up with Peggy and some of her helpers one day and got a tour, although I confess, I had earlier begged a key and explored it on my own.

The library used to be where the Lollis Chapel is now but was moved to the Mission Center, off of Chalice Hall, when the center was built. It is easily overlooked, but it is worth a visit. It has just reopened, and you can (and should) visit it any Sunday. If you’d like to look around for reading or study materials during the week, the office staff will be glad to let you in. Self-checkout is handled the same as with the “branch libraries.”

The room brings back nostalgic memories with familiar old-book smells and the sight of books neatly labeled by sections following the Dewey Decimal System. There is even an old wooden card catalogue that was kept up to date until Covid times. But now on the desk is a modern computer where the books have all been entered and can be easily found. There is cozy, comfortable, conversational seating where Loren Broadus’ class used to meet.

My personal take is that the library is a bit forgotten except by the dedicated committee members. It has a yearly budget of only \$200 and operates solely on donated books given when someone moves or dies. So, the collection, with some exceptions, is old but interesting. Occasionally it gets some funds through dedicated giving (when someone donating to the church designates the gift should go to the library).

There are sections of books labeled: Life Issues, Youth, Bible Study, Christian Life, Sermons, Church History, Social Issues, Health Issues, Literature, Fiction. There are some page-turning contemporary fiction books. Choices are prescribed by a book of rules and procedures and are deemed “not offensive as determined by team members.” The team members work to find homes for any donated books they cannot integrate into the collection.

I think it is fascinating how many church members have written books that are in the library. Just off the top of their heads, the committee members thought of books by James and Lorraine Lollis, David Blondell, Loren Broadus, Virginia Elder, George Buchanan, Bill McDonald, and yours truly, Gaye Holman.

I have to admit the most interesting finds for me were the old church picture directories going back to the 1970s. There I found pictures of my much younger family as I poured through the directories, remembering old Crestwood friends and how we all looked thirty and forty years ago. The committee kindly moved the directories to a lower shelf so we could reach and enjoy them with leisure. They are on the shelf near the double doors if you want to see your younger self.

The library is named for Elizabeth Evans. She was a charter Crestwood member and was the president of the first Crestwood Christian Women's Fellowship in 1959-60. The fledgling CWF group made a donation in her honor to start what would be known as the Elizabeth Evans library. You will find her picture and plaque hanging on the wall inside the double doors.

On the opposite wall near the other door, there is a beautifully framed original page from an over four-hundred-year-old, first-edition St. James Bible. It, along with three other ancient Bible pages housed elsewhere in the church, was donated by Earl Pfanstiel.

Peggy Falace has been our faithful librarian since 2008. A retired physician, she has kept the library organized and functioning for years and has endured the pain of transferring all the books to a computerized system. My hat is off to her, and she has my sympathies especially when the computer program rebels as it was during my visit.

As I move the spotlight off the library and on to other areas, I am left with a few unanswered questions and a few suggestions:

- There is a little neighborhood lending library nestled under the trees at the north-end of our property on Bellefonte. I assumed it was under the care of our library committee. Not so. All I could find is that it was a Baptismal project some years ago, but no one is aware of anyone caring for it now. When I last checked, there were some books in it, so obviously someone is taking advantage of it, but it is neglected. It seems like a good, easy, volunteer project for someone. It's on our property. We should care for it.
- Our church does not have a library for the children. I will leave the statement there and hope that someone agrees with me that we should have one.
- Lastly, there are many theologically-based, spiritual, and devotional books published each year that are important – at times ground-breaking in our modern world. Our library cannot fund them. The public libraries stock some, but not most, of these. If you are like I am, you buy a few, read them, and stick them on your shelves. They stay there until we move or die. What about donating this current literature now? If you ever get a yearning to read your book again, you can visit the Crestwood Elizabeth Evans library and check it out.

If there is some area of the church you would like to know more about, please share your ideas with me. Let's explore together.

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