

Spotlight on Crestwood The Glass Cross

“Something is different,” I mused when I first returned to the Crestwood sanctuary after many years. I couldn’t figure it out and even questioned my memory about the colorful, beautiful glass cross. “That wasn’t here then, was it?” I whispered to my son.

As I got to know more about Crestwood, I figured out why things looked familiar, but different, in the sanctuary. According to Rev. Bill McDonald, in 1996-97 the sanctuary underwent a massive upgrade, with an expanded chancel and the new cross commissioned as the visual center piece. The glimmering cross was donated by Ruth Landrum in memory of her husband Charles Landrum.

I learned the upgrade took almost a year of renovations, with members stepping around building materials, over spaces with torn up tiles, and seeing changes every week. It was fun reading old church newsletters about the messy construction. The renovation itself may make a good spotlight article in the future, but today the light is on the spectacular cross.

The soaring cross was constructed by the White Stained Glass Company of Sarasota, Florida, the same company which also made our stained-glass windows. The large work was carefully shipped to Lexington and anchored securely in place.

The steel construction that holds the cross in place was covered up for years by large artificial plants. According to members I talked with, the by-then-raggedy plants had reached their point of no return when the property committee went to work during the covid shut-down.

I talked with Ward Ransdell who told me about how the visible wooden structure under the cross was designed and built during the recent covid period. At the time, Ward was property chair and the committee had been discussing for a while what to do about the worn greenery hiding the supporting beams. They were trying to find a permanent solution.

They talked to Joe Rasnick who was an architect, and together the men on the committee tossed around possible solutions. Joe sketched out some ideas about adding an enclosing structure and suggested they mimic the shape of the ceiling. Former member Dave McCall, skilled at carpentry, drew the final sketch, figuring out the necessary angles. He built the two pieces key to the structure. John Gretz took care of the flooring under the structure which makes the cross moveable, if necessary, though not easy. Lastly, Ward Ransdell and Dave McCall put it together, arranged to make sure the paint matched the rest of the sanctuary perfectly, and the cross waited the opening of the church after covid.

It is at that point I saw the cross for the first time and assumed it was all as originally placed. For the Spotlight, I found out about the glass cross itself, but was met with blank stares and empty email responses when I asked what the structure underneath represented. “What structure?” they asked. It was only when I was referred to Ward that I got my answer and realized why many people hadn’t even noticed it.

Ward mentioned that during the same period of covid closure, all the mission center was painted, and the carpet in the sanctuary, which was purple, was changed out for gray. A number of other improvements were made throughout the church. He thinks not many



people have noticed the changes— few have commented. Perhaps they were like I was when I first returned. Something seemed different, but what?

Next Sunday, you might want to give special attention to the beautiful cross and the structure beneath it and decide what you think. Until I talked to the builders, I took it to be a rendition of the hill of Calvary where Jesus' cross stood. But instead, it was built to take on the shape of the sanctuary which is designed as a boat. Either one is very meaningful. The result is inspiring.

“What?” you ask. “The church is designed to be reminiscent of a boat?” Stay tuned. No doubt that's another Spotlight topic down the road.

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You might be interested to know of a side development of the discovery of the Book of Remembrance a few weeks ago. A History Task Force is being formed to help update the book as well as deal with other historical things of importance concerning our congregation. Rev. Kory Wilcoxson is looking for volunteers, so if you are interested, please give him a call. Rev. Bill McDonald has already agreed to serve on the task force. Maybe together you all can find the missing stand for the Book of Remembrance!

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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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