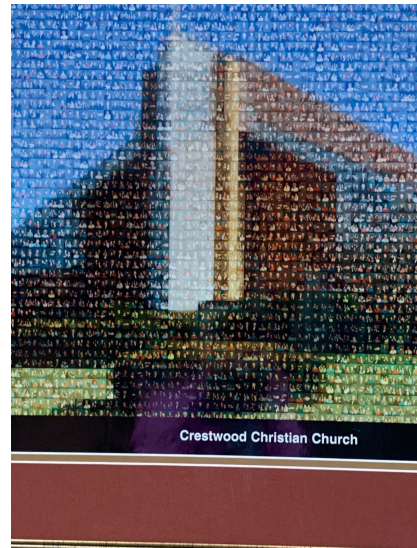


Spotlight on Crestwood This and That

Meandering around Crestwood during a quiet time is a visual adventure. There are pictures, plaques, trophies and “stuff” covering the walls, tables, and shelves. They are easily overlooked as we are chatting with others every Sunday or if we enter by the same doorway, taking the same paths each week. Today the Spotlight is wandering.

One of my favorite finds has no earth-shaking story behind it, but I am fascinated anyway. There is a framed picture of our church that at a distance appears to be a modernistic painting. But when you look closely, the picture is composed of tiny pixels of photographs of church members. It was done in 2007 by the company who was producing our church picture directory. Check it out. It’s on the wall to the left of the sanctuary before you get to the children’s wing.



If, like me, you enter the door nearest the Mission Center, you will find in front of you a table with free copies of the devotional booklet “The Upper Room.” Did you catch the word “free”? My previous church charged 50 cents, so free is a bargain for a well-known and well-respected daily devotional booklet.

Continue on towards the sanctuary, and you will find a table with several racks of greeting cards. There are cards for condolences, ‘thinking of you,’ birthdays, and even a selection of Thanksgiving cards. I have been noticing the cards change by the season. I have mentioned this table before, but could not learn how it came about. Obviously, I did not ask enough people at the time, but I just learned that the table and its gifts are a blessing to us from a card ministry started by an anonymous donor and continued by Monte LaFrana.

A member of Crestwood for over twenty years, and a member of our choir, Monte says she has always enjoyed sending cards. She sends cards regularly to Crestwood “shut-ins” and to people who are part of the Heart-to-Heart group. The cards on the table are a gift to church members to send to others. Monte quietly restocks her table during the week, and changes cards according to the seasons. Christmas cards will soon be available.

Monte presents us with a perfect example of Rev. Wilcoxson’s Sunday sermon series “Common Unity.” Rev. Wilcoxson made the point this week that everyone has a place and a purpose in the church, and that every personal gift matters no matter how large or small. Monte has kept her gift going for us for years with no public acknowledgement or thanks. Last Christmas I picked up a box of Christmas cards, having no idea where they came from.

Cards come from church members so, if you have any extra cards, bring them in and Monte will see they will be shared with us all. They can be left at the table, or there is a “card closet” near the church office. Thanks to Monte for giving us an opportunity to help one another without even knowing it. The price for the cards is right – free – so help yourself!

Also, on the same table are some short booklets that address life’s challenges. They are part of a Care Giver Ministry. Rev. Trish Standifur said they are rotated occasionally to deal with different needs. Currently there are ones for adults on Overcoming Everyday Anxiety, Understanding Thoughts of Suicide and Self-Harm, and “Where is God in My

suffering?" There are some for children – When Bad things Happen, Bye-Bye, Bully! And When Someone You Love Has Cancer.

Wandering next into the Narthex, there is a startling, but also comforting, reminder of our physical vulnerabilities. On the wall is a defibrillator, hopefully seldom used. On the table at the far wall, there is a large sign, "Hearing Devices & Large Print Hymnals Available." Sure enough, there is a large print hymnal – grab it if needed. Unfortunately, I found out the hearing devices have worn out, but I learned we are working on a new sound system that may improve things for the hearing impaired. The components are on their way but their arrival has been hung up by knots in the supply-chain.

Step next into the sanctuary, and you won't see the next item unless you search carefully. There is a hidden lift-elevator that allows access to the chancel for wheel chairs and otherwise physically-challenged members. It was part of the 1996-97 sanctuary renovation. I have briefly mentioned it before, but it deserves more. Minister at the time, Rev. McDonald, wrote about it in The Crest. The article is lengthy, but more interesting than my paraphrasing:

January 22, 1997

Turning hopes and wishes into fact. When we began planning the new chancel for our sanctuary, we noted with some pride that our church facilities are all handicapped accessible - cuts in the curbs outside, all rooms on one level, wheelchair accessible bathrooms, spaces for wheelchairs being cut into the pews for more selection in seating. We quickly realized that the only place that was not accessible was the expanded chancel which was now going to hold the choir as well as the pulpit and communion table. This meant that no one in a wheelchair or on a walker could sing in our choir or preside at the Table or speak from the pulpit. So, Byron Romanowitz, our resident architect, did a great job of blending a wheelchair lift in with the decor on the new chancel. But there was a problem: no money was included for this in the Capital Campaign funds. The Task Force then decided to construct the chancel so that it would easily accept a wheelchair lift at some future time when the church could afford it. After all, none of our choir members were in wheelchairs. But then our Moderator, Jeanne Jouett, who is a member of the choir, wound up in a wheelchair. Even though Jeanne made a quick and miraculous recovery, our eyes were opened and the Task Force realized that waiting was not an option. But how to pay for the \$7,500 lift? So far, several generous and concerned folks have made special contributions toward the lift totaling \$3,375...

It is assumed that the rest of the money was raised by donations. I love the serendipitous way the immediate need for the lift arrived. And then, soon after that, according to Rev. McDonald, Sammie Dotson, who was in a wheelchair, was elected Elder, and was able to use the lift to serve at the Communion Table.

There is much more to see in a ramble around Crestwood that I haven't touched on today. I even had to delete two of the items for the sake of brevity. So, walk on your own. Keep your eyes open, and enjoy your visual trip. There is a story behind everything you see.

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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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