



Spotlight on Crestwood #31

Windows into Faith

Third time is charm, they say. I've had three requests now to spotlight our brilliant sanctuary windows. I've resisted, as there is a lengthy discussion of each of them on our website. But not everyone regularly explores our Crestwood site, I found. And in poking around for new information, I found some interesting things to add.

When we were Crestwood members so many years ago, the stained-glass windows were colorful and pretty, but they were made of brilliant plexiglass. At the time the sanctuary was built, plexiglass windows fit nicely within the tight budget of the expensive building project. But

since then, the original windows have been replaced with stunning stained-glass designs. I set off to find the whens and hows the change was made. I turned to Rev. David Blondell who has a wealth of organized records and a memory that can pull up names and details. The new windows happened during his tenure as pastor.

Sometime in 1990, it became clear that, after thirty years, it was time for a window upgrade. The sanctuary architect, Byron F. Romanowitz (also a member of Crestwood) put the church in contact with the White Stained Glass Company in Sarasota, Florida. The company sent representatives to Lexington to view the church. They talked with Mr. Romanowitz who had designed the soaring sanctuary to represent an ancient ship upon which our faith sails. Boats, he realized, were a major source of transportation for early Christians. The windows represent the openings where the oars were placed to move the ship along. (If you missed it, see the Spotlight on the Sanctuary for further details).

The company artists began designing, and soon returned to discuss their plans for the new windows. Money was raised for each window through individual sponsorships. They cost \$2,500 each, according to Dr. Blondell, which was quite an expense at the time (but a bargain for us in today's terms). Regardless, they "went like hotcakes," he remembers. In fact, there were more requests to be sponsors than there were windows.

There is a donation plaque with each window. Most are "In Memory (or Loving Memory) of..." or In Honor of...", but there are several "Given By...". There is one "In Honor of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," and another "In Honor of the Children of Crestwood."

Rev. Blondell said the new windows were installed just before Easter in 1991. What a perfect time for the new additions to our place of worship! In August of 1991, Dr. Blondell preached a series of sermons about the meaning behind each window. People today still remember those sermons as they have been mentioned to me several times. Details of each window's symbol can be read on the website.

I find to fully appreciate the significance of the windows, you need to sit and contemplate them as the artistic nature of them emerges. With the idea of the sea in mind, each piece of multicolored glass tends toward the hues of blue and blue-green. If you look at the windows as a whole from a distance, you can see streaks of blue running through them all, tying them together. The deeper blues are at the bottom representing the depths of the sea, while the streaks of lighter blue run across the tops where the sky is brighter. When you look for a while, you can imagine waves and white-caps.

I was a skeptic at first, thinking the writer of the website piece was carrying the symbolism too far when discussing the medium that fastens the pieces together. But after visiting the windows several times in solitude, I am becoming a believer. The stained-glass pieces are not joined with traditional lead solder but instead are tied with a thick rope-like medium similar to rough concrete. The writer says the lines represent the fish net which has strong Christian symbolism and ties everything together. Look at the windows carefully and see what you think.

There are nineteen windows, each with a different symbol in the middle of the brightly-colored glass pieces. According to the website, the symbols represent God's Creative Work through Christ, the Growth and Witness of the Christian Faith, and Faith and the Church. You will notice there are three less windows on the left, as the organ was built into the wall there when the sanctuary was built.

In addition to talking about the windows, Rev. Blondell added some interesting information about the skylight which runs the length of the sanctuary. If you will look closely (which I never had), it is still a white or clear plexiglass. There was a period where parts of it were tinted, he said, but wedding photographers complained that they couldn't get colors correct in their pictures. Those portions were replaced.



Now, it is with glee that I may have learned a fact that I bet very few people remember. The joke's on me if others recall this. Dr. Blondell said that there used to be lights at the very top part of the tall walls on either end of the skylights. If you look carefully, you can see where the recessed lighting must be. Dr. Blondell chuckled that when the lights eventually burned out, it seems that the maintenance group must have quietly let them die. He laughingly denies it happened during his tenure. Changing those bulbs would have been quite a task!! Does anyone know the story behind the lights?

I suggest you hang around after the service some day and spend some time with these beautiful windows. Read the plaques. They offer nice memories of people important in our church's history.

And you may remember that the glass cross, added much later to match the windows in brilliance, was made by the same glass company. Can you imagine being the truck driver each time bringing those valuable pieces across the country, all too aware what a wreck could have meant to his future employment!

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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. Gaye Holman@bellsouth.net



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