

Crestwood Communication

You may have thought the electricity was out at my house, as the Spotlight failed to re-light at the end of my long trip. I confess the fault is not with Kentucky Utilities, but instead with my inability to get my life organized upon my return. I seemed to need a vacation from my vacation.

I thought I'd slide the Spotlight back with an easy, obvious subject that I presumed I already knew about—methods of communication within Crestwood. But like so many things at our church, things that seem simple and seamless are often complex and multi-faceted below the surface.

It appeared basic. The Crest, long our church newsletter, appears in our electronic and real mailboxes once a month. On Tuesday, the Weekly appears. On Wednesday, Rev. Wilcoxson's devotional inspires us. Every other Thursday, the Spotlight comes on. On Friday there is the Friday Five. On Saturday, we get an email about worship the next day. And Sunday, we are handed the Bulletin.

On first blush, it's fairly simple, although obviously a lot of work. Erin Rusher, our Office Administrator, collects articles from the various ministers and other people with news. She organizes, designs, and finds appropriate clip art when needed, and does something magic-seeming with software. Once prepared, the publications can be scheduled to go out to our emails at a certain time. Erin explained she has a marketing degree so she came to us knowing how to manipulate and design things with software.

There is more than just computer work involved, though. There are about sixty-five people who prefer to have their Crests mailed as hard-copies. Jim Christi, our Facilities Manager, jumps in at times to help Erin fold and put labels on the copies to be mailed. There are also people who worship on Sundays at home who need a bulletin sent to them electronically. Erin takes care of that.

I didn't expect to find our minister and his talents so intertwined in all the processes, but I was wrong. I had no idea who produces the mountain of written stuff, but found most of it falls to Rev. Wilcoxson, who was a journalist before he entered the ministry. That is a background that has served him well, he admits. The communications piece is a big chunk of his job, he says, adding "I love it!" He writes most of the content for all the publications as well as edits and proof-reads any other articles. He separately emails information about the Administrative Board meetings, and each Friday sends out the Elders' Update, keeping the church elders apprised of the pastoral care needs of the congregation.

My brain gets fuzzy as we get into the technology side of the communications. Erin keeps our website updated, putting the Weekly and the Bulletin on the Crestwood website each week as well as the monthly Crest. David Miller has kindly taken it on to put all the Spotlights onto our website. Crestwood and several other departments of the church programming have their own Facebook pages and correspondences. Apparently, there is a lot of formal communication between parents, members, volunteers, and staff.

There are smaller, but important, other forms of communications. The Bradford Seekers Sunday School class has a new weekly newsletter. There are other warm communication channels between the staff, parents, children, and youth. In times of difficulties, our children might receive in the mail a special book or a Care Bear. Recently one received a card from the church when losing a beloved pet. The children also regularly receive birthday cards from the church, Missy Wallace, our Children's Minister, explains.

Keeping up with what is going on in the church is another challenge. Erin keeps track of all the activities in the Mission Center. Weekly she prints out the calendar which Jim posts in several locations. Each year, Missy Wallace and other staff put together a postal mailing of a family ministry calendar of events for the families.

After the turn of the new year, an up-dated church directory will be in the works.

The more I learned about our various ways of reaching out to one another, the deeper and more complex the technological explanations about software, computer programs, etc. became. I was getting lost, so tried to simplify by ignoring the technical details.

The climax for me came on Sunday after this article was written. There, in our bulletin, were two QR codes. Student Associate Minister Steph Wallace explained we could take pictures of them, and we would go to a page where we could sign up to bring chili or other food to the Cook-Off and also, we could volunteer to decorate a door at church for Halloween.

BOOM! My gray, aging head exploded! Imagine that! We can take a picture of a white piece of printed paper and end up somewhere we can interact. There have been a lot of changes from the days thirty-five years ago when I looked forward to finding the Crest in my mailbox.

I rail against technology at times, and I can never explain it, but I confess I think today's methods are better than the snail mail of the past. Crestwood is advancing with the most up-to-date methods of communication as we work to stay tied to one another. We are moving forward to meet an exciting future of possibilities.

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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](#)



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