

Spotlight on Crestwood #41

The Children Shine on Universal Children's Sunday

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I just pulled out my old Thesaurus to try to find words to express what we experienced at Crestwood on Universal Children's Sunday. It fell short in helping me describe the cuteness, sweetness, eagerness, seriousness, excitement, shyness, and sincerity of over thirty Crestwood children as they led us through Sunday's service. Godlike is the word that comes closest.

November 19 was Universal Children's Sunday. The children, kindergarten through fifth grade, took on all the roles at both services.



I've been to a lot of services in different churches where the children took part, but this was unique. This was a meaningful service in all aspects. The sanctuary was full – and not just full of proud parents and grandparents. The children led us all through a worshipful and wonderful hour. The worship was heightened, not lessened by their participation.

Perhaps we should start at the beginning. This is the second year that Crestwood has participated in Universal Children's Sunday. Children's Minister Missy Wallace explained to me that as soon as she proposed the activity last year to Rev. Wilcoxson, he was totally sold on the children's full participation. The effort and work put in by the children, parents, and staff was extraordinarily impressive.

In reading about the world-wide day on the internet, I learned this is a big deal. Articles explain that Universal Children's Day was established in 1959 by UNICEF "to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and to improve children's welfare." It has since been officially changed to World Children's Day since then, but if Crestwood wants to call it by its earlier name, that's fine with me. November 20 is the official date that the United Nations General Assembly adopted both the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The world-wide theme for this year is "For Every Child, Every Right."

At Crestwood, we demonstrated that all our children are important and have a place in our worship.

An impressive group of Children's Ministry volunteers worked together to lead the children through this meaningful activity. It involved hours of practice and planning. Those most active in the service were from the Bridge Group, which are 3rd through 5th graders. The Bridge Group's Sunday School experiences mirror our larger adult service, so they were familiar with the worship procedure. Together, through discussion, they wrote the prayers and Call to Worship. One in the talented bunch played a beautiful violin solo.

The younger children handled non-speaking parts of the service, taking care of the offering and communion. The youngest down to kindergarten handed out the bulletins.

I shouldn't have favorite parts, as all were superb, but I was most surprised during the call to communion when the youngsters lifted the bread and broke it, and lifted the cup, intoning the usual blessings with meaning. And then at the end of the service, they all raised their arms like the ministers normally do in leaving as they said "The Lord Bless and Keep Us..." They did it all with such meaning and clarity. You could easily see the future of our church in their faces.

I feel I should mention the many hours of concentrated practice, both in their rooms and in the sanctuary. Parents were there in all aspects as they offered warm support and subtle directions. I debated mentioning the names of those participating. But I fear to miss anyone in such an important endeavor – both children and adults. This service was too special for anyone to feel overlooked, so my hat is off to each individually, but mostly to the group as a whole and to their adult guiding forces.

It is a service I will long remember. I will definitely make it back next November to watch the new batch of future church leaders as they grow up.

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The Sue Ann Cowgill Memorial Tapestry: As part of the service, a lovely quilted tapestry made by Jeannie Jouett was presented to the church on behalf of the Disciples Women's Ministry. Mrs. Cowgill, a founding member of Crestwood, was a strong, long-time supporter of the children's program at Crestwood. The tapestry, entitled "Prayer Pockets" features little pockets as part of the design. The children will be encouraged to place their prayer requests in the pockets. The ministers, elders, and Disciples Women's Circles will collect them each week and anonymously pray for each request. It is a fitting tribute to an outstanding lady still with us in spirit. It will be displayed in the flex space in the Children's wing, and will be accompanied by a memorial plaque. Mrs. Jouett and the Cowgill family were there for the presentation.

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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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