



Spotlight on Crestwood: New Beginnings

Crestwood is blooming! The grounds are coming to life with bright yellow jonquils. Bushes are sprouting tiny green leaves. Easter, with the promise of new birth and new hope, is here. Spring has arrived!

I have noticed some refreshing and new growth within the functioning of Crestwood, as well as on the grounds. So, today we shine the spotlight on the emergence of new ideas and renewed enthusiasm. Most of these activities have been mentioned in passing or advertised in our publications, but I find it inspiring to think about them together as a spring time at church.

As mentioned in the last Spotlight, our spiritual leaders, the Elders, have been busy reexamining their commitments and practices. Together they have reread and talked about the book, *"Your Calling as an Elder."* They are also reviewing and renewing their commitment to the Elders Covenant, which guides them in how to be spiritual leaders at Crestwood.

At the same time our ministerial staff has also been refreshing. In February, they escaped to Shaker Town overnight, where they relaxed and bonded in a two-day staff retreat. They talked and planned and worshiped together. Each was responsible for leading the group in a spiritual exercise. They toured the grounds, shared meals together, and paved a path towards our future. They did lament, however, that it was too cold to hike.

Back at home other thoughts were sprouting and finding new life. The Pick-a-Potluck Suppers began. I am told that years ago there was a similar Dinners-for-Eight, but this was a new approach. And, I must say, it was a lot of fun. It offered a nice chance to visit with new people we didn't know, while at the same time chatting with acquaintances in a new, more informal setting. Hopefully this rebirth of more casual, personal gatherings will continue.

On another front, as a "plain" member of the congregation, I was particularly impressed that the Administrative Board reached out to ask everyone's opinion about church staffing needs. A Staffing Task Force has been formed to get our input. We had a chance to respond online to a questionnaire. And, for those of us who are technologically challenged, there was an opportunity for a two-week period to meet with a task force member after each service.

With a recent change in staff, we are presented with an opportunity to reassess our needs. For now the Children's and Student Associate ministers have increased their commitment to thirty-five hours a week (with an increase in pay), while the Minister for Pastoral Care position is filled with a ten-hour commitment by Rev. Kelly Hale. Each of our ministers has taken on additional shared responsibilities. We are told the current arrangement will be examined and adjusted as a result of our input and the Task Force's discussion. It is a time of innovation and revival.

A new Sunday School class was formed during the period of Lent. Led by Amy Treneff and Amy Wheeler, it has attracted a nice group of interested people. Hopefully, it or another Sunday School class can take footing and grow in the near future.

Within the last 6 months a group of us have met in the Chapel with Rev. Wilcoxson for a spirited and interesting discussion of two books. The first was *American Idolatry* by Andrew Whitehead. We just finished up *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee. As part of our study, we attended a related play at UK, where Rev. Wilcoxson was a discussion panelist before the production. Our group hosted Jeremy Gillett, who has preached at Crestwood in the past. The following week his father, Don Gillett, our Disciples Regional Minister, joined us. Idea-seeds are being planted for justice-related community activities involving interested people of our congregation.

And, lastly, you might guess that Crestwood is again turning to food! As long as I don't have to work the kitchen, I love the eating ideas. Eating together takes on an aura of communion within the church activities. On Baptism Sunday, I'm told, there will be a congregation-wide breakfast in lieu of the first service. What a nice chance to mingle with those in different services.

Outside on the grounds, our church is ringed by multi-colored daffodils or jonquils (or whatever the part of the country where you grew up wants to call them). I haven't dug into this deeply, but we should appreciate that these beauties didn't show up on their own volition. Loving hands have planted them over the years, leaving long-term gifts for Crestwood members. I know of one female church member who last year was digging deep within the soil, planting the ones blooming today around our sign. But I will honor her in my mind only, because I suspect many people have added bulbs over the years, and I don't want to leave anyone out. Our gratitude extends to all the anonymous people who give so much to Crestwood.

Spring has indeed come. Things are blooming at Crestwood in many forms. Easter, spring, and new beginnings are all part of our Christian community. Let's continue to explore together. If you have any ideas for future Spotlights, contact me, Gaye Holman, at gdholman@bellsouth.net.



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