

### Peace Poles - Follow-up and Shalom



#### **Spotlight on Crestwood: Peace Poles, Hidden in Plain Sight**

There is nothing more fun than tracking down a mystery. Digging into Crestwood's history about the Peace Pole and Shalom movement has been a doozy. At the time of the last Spotlight, we had found two of the poles, hidden in plain sight, and I was trying to learn more about them.

Since then, the original Crestwood Peace Pole has been located, still standing where it was solidly planted thirty-six years ago! And yes, it is also embarrassingly in plain sight, right by the main Crestwood sign at Bellefonte and Glendover Roads. I've even taken pictures of the sign for another column and didn't notice it. Did you know it was there?

Once again, we have Jim Christi, our facilities manager, to thank for finding it. And hats off to him for stabilizing the Peace Pole in the chapel and for reorienting the Japanese and Chinese peace declarations on the garden pole, so that they read correctly. If this is all confusing to you, you should go back to read the last Spotlight on the Peace Poles. We have dug further into an exciting slice of Crestwood's past.

The original Peace Pole is a bit worn after thirty-six years in the elements. Nevertheless, it stands as a memory of the day it was "planted" on a Sunday morning following worship, according to our former Associate Minister Liz Woodward. She explained the placing of the pole was a project of the Shalom Committee "as an act of growing roots deep through the world for peace."

This all started back in 1987 at the Disciples' Annual Convention, which was held in Louisville that year. Associate minister Cyd Cowgill was present when the convention passed the resolution and formally declared itself a Shalom denomination. The excitement of the movement was in her voice as she told of her thrill when it passed. Rev. Cowgill was very helpful in explaining the Crestwood Shalom movement, as was Rev. Woodward, who found the formal resolution for me and was able to fill in the many blanks about Crestwood's early strong involvement.

Rev. Woodward says that the late 80s were turbulent times and there was a group of Crestwood members devoted to the ways of peace. She remembers that the group was together even before the 1987 General Assembly and that they had worked together to

keep issues of peace before the congregation. She said the Seekers class was a key component of the movement.

At some point soon after the denominational declaration, the Crestwood Shalom committee began work to have our church formally recognized as a Shalom congregation. There were specific procedures and actions required. Their work was approved by the Crestwood Board and submitted to the General Church for formal recognition. After that application, Crestwood was declared a formal Shalom congregation by the Disciples of Christ. Rev. Woodward said there was a banner that hung on the wall in the sanctuary behind the pulpit stating Crestwood was a Shalom congregation. That banner was made by unknown church members – please share if you know anything about the banner.

Sometime after that, the congregation approved the placing of the Peace Pole. I am still looking for the specific dates of those actions. We also have not determined the dates when the second and third poles were added, but there was one report from 2004 that “another” pole was made by Harriel Gudgeon and the word plaques were purchased by Virgil Hayes.

Our new church historian, Tippy Wallace, was extremely patient and good-natured as she lugged heavy boxes from metal cabinets for us to dig through them. We spent several hours together pouring through old Crests and Board Minutes, drilling backwards, trying to identify the beginnings and scope of the Shalom Committee and any mention of the Peace Pole. In the jam-packed boxes we found fascinating material, at least fascinating if you are interested in the church's history. The Shalom movement began earlier and lasted longer than I had assumed.

In the next Spotlight we will look at the Shalom movement, which was extremely active in our church for over ten years and extended well beyond that. I am both fascinated and appalled that the same general problems of peace identified thirty years ago can be repeated almost without change still today. I keep wondering whether the messages and actions of the Crestwood Shalom group could motivate us today as we yearn for peace. We will look at the issues they worked on and think about the possibilities for today.

Shalom

If you have any information to share about the Peace Poles or the Crestwood Shalom committee, please let me know. Gaye Holman [gdholman@bellsouth.net](mailto:gdholman@bellsouth.net).



Crestwood Christian Church | 1882 Bellefonte Dr. | Lexington, KY 40503 US

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