

A Generous Seamstress



Spotlight on a Generous Seamstress

Children's Minister Missy Wallace emailed me, "Jeanne Jouett and her talents are the best kept secrets at Crestwood." I think she might be right.

While we see Jeanne in the choir each Sunday, we don't know of the joy other than music that she is bringing to young families and even babies. A year ago, you may remember hearing that she made a large "Prayer Pockets" hanging for the children's wing in memory of her friend, Sue Ann Cowgill. But even years before that she was quietly making fabric children's books for all the babies being dedicated at Crestwood.

The books are beautiful and meaningful. They are made from pre-printed panels on cloth that show colorful pictures of Bible stories. Along with the pictures there are stories written in appropriate age-level language which can be read to the little ones. Pictured are my favorites, Noah's Ark and The Little King (the story of Jesus). She is currently working on one about angels.

The books are a little hard to describe. Perhaps I'm too far away from babies, but my children years ago didn't have such delightful Bible books. The material pages are put together like a regular book with printing on both sides. Each page seems to be gently padded inside with the pages neatly stitched around the edges. Jeannie adds a handle to each book so it can be carried around by little hands or hung on the wall. There is a pretty ribbon to tie it closed when reading time is over.

The book is entirely washable so it can be chewed or slobbered on, Jeanne said.

Jeanne has been doing this quite a while – starting somewhere around 2015. She estimates she has made around twenty of the books. She intended to produce them anonymously, but over time the word has gotten out that she is the talented seamstress behind them. Rev. Wilcoxson lets her know when a church member is expecting a child or when a dedication is planned, so she can start work. Usually, the books are gifted when the baby is dedicated. If there is a young sibling, they also get a book so there will be no sad feelings.

If you missed the Crest write-up about the Prayer Pockets a while back, Jeannie made the hanging from 66 pieces of fabric. It is made of little pockets where the children can place

their written prayers. Then the prayers are given to the DWM, who will pray for them. Both Jeanne and Sue Ann believed in the importance of promoting children and helping them along. "They are the future of our world," Jeannie explained. The Prayer Pockets are hanging in the children's wing, if you'd like to see them.

Jeanne has been sewing since she was ten, when her mother was her 4-H leader. She doesn't sew for herself, but she has made several wedding dresses (which she claims she won't do again!). She said she can barely find time to hem her own slacks.

She and her husband Rick are musicians who sing in the choir. Jeanne used to be the pianist for the cherub choir. Both Jeanne and Rick are Elders –their involvement with Crestwood has stretched over many years. In fact, their second date was attending a Crestwood service. They married in 1980, and they returned to the church after a number of moves around the country. Jeanne's occupations were always in areas involving fabrics and construction.

Jeanne has worked with Rick at the Hall School of Dancing since their marriage. The school was founded by Rick's grandmother and grandfather in 1937 and today is held in the Crestwood Mission Center.

They have two children located at opposite ends of the US. "You want them to spread their wings," Jeanne laughed, "but this is a bit much." The Jouetts have a new grandchild on the way, so another book will soon be in the works.

Our minister, Kory, says, "The books that Jeanne makes for the children being dedicated add such a special touch to that sacred moment. I love that the kids will have a tangible reminder of Crestwood's love for them, made by the loving hands of one of our members. Jeanne has blessed so many children with her handiwork."

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For several years I have enjoyed exploring Crestwood with the Spotlight. I have made a number of new friends in the process and found a real appreciation for the church I have rediscovered after 35 years that there are still many things to explore. I think, however, this is a good time to take a break for a while. I have another project I would like to tackle over the winter. I hope I will be allowed to return at some point in the new year. (Note from Kory - YOU WILL!)

All of the past Spotlights can be easily accessed directly from the first page of our website at www.CrestwoodChristian.org, under "About.....Our Story." In fact, the webpage was going to be one of the next Spotlight subjects. I want to know who has so faithfully kept track of the Spotlights and kept our website going. I am very grateful to that person and to the readers who have been interested in learning more along with me about the ins and outs of Crestwood. Peace to all!



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