



I suspect I'm not the only person who gets nostalgic at Christmas time, but I'm particularly hard-hit this year. I'm blaming Crestwood for that.

Things are bustling everywhere at church. Trees are going up, dinners and activities are planned, and the sanctuary glows with its new decorations. But it was the Children's Service several weeks ago that misted my eyes and caused memories to pour over me in a way they have not for a while. And then we were asked to bring in a family ornament.

Forgive me if this Spotlight is too personal, but I feel the church, its ever-evolving activities, its history, and its influence in our lives over the years is really what I want to spotlight. Each member has their own memories – old memories or ones just in the making. Most of mine are behind me, but I am ever so grateful for Crestwood. This Christmas I see the impact this church has had on me and my family.

Several Sundays ago, as the children gathered at the front to sing, I was mentally transported to our regular family pew in the 1970s at the front left of the sanctuary. I could see our little son Dan (now 53 years old) dressed proudly as Joseph in a child-led manger story. I could hear little Jon Stuckey singing clearly and loudly over all the others, carried away at the joy of the moment. I thought of sweet Laura Lollis (her grandfather our very first pastor) grinning as she presented me, her teacher, a heart-shaped Christmas ornament with her name written in gold on it. It has hung on my tree every year since then until this last year, to my sadness, it finally deteriorated. A long life for a 44 year-old ornament.

Over Thanksgiving, my boys and I rummaged through boxes of ornaments, trying to find one for the new Crestwood Family Christmas tree. Their reminiscences touched me. We remembered their dad cutting slices of wood for the children to decorate as an ornament for a Sunday School project. They found proudly painted ceramic hangings of the Holy Family. We finally settled on a yarn "God's Eye" which I had to promise to recover when the tree is taken down.

Our little ornament looks pretty ragged next to the really nice family ornaments hanging nearby. But each participating family has cared enough to think about the church and their family's place in it. I wax a little too poetic to think of what all the coming years will bring to some of the young families. Crestwood will mold many of them in years to come in ways that they cannot even imagine now. We were only at Crestwood for ten years, 1977-87 (it seems so much longer), but it is amazing what my sons remember and what was important to them. I thank the church and our many WHO Group family friends for all they did with and for us. Many of that group are still at Crestwood, now sitting with their grandchildren – even great grandchildren. The commitment, love, and support continues on.

When I returned to Lexington and Crestwood five years ago, I had trouble recognizing the current vitality of the church today. It took reaching out with the Spotlight articles to draw me back into the church and see the many families and children involved in the same type activities that drew my family in so many years ago. I believe Crestwood will lead the young families forward, help them through hard times, laugh with them through good, and serve them in ways they won't recognize until years from now.

But Christmas and memories are not just about children. Crestwood reaches out to older members and single members as well. Recognizing that life's losses and aloneness can bring sadness along with happy reminiscences for some people, the church stands steady, helping each through the darker memories as well.

Christmas is about the birth of Christ. Through the story of his birth, through his lasting teachings during his short life, and through the story of his eventual death, we learn of love, caring for one another and helping each other grow. I say that Crestwood is a place where Christ's dreams are being carried out.

Merry Christmas everyone!

Let's explore Crestwood together. If you have an idea or suggestion for a Spotlight, contact Gaye Holman at gдохolman@bellsouth.net.