

"The Storm"



You can call me nosey, but I do enjoy digging around to find out what really happens when things are turned upside-down. A cancelled and pasted-together church service online and more cancellations the following week indicated there had been some shuffling around at Crestwood. I had anticipated some interesting tidbits, but it sounds like Crestwood just kept on operating in spite of the difficult events. Things were greatly changed, but I was unable to uncover cases of panic or admitted angst.

Calm seems to describe Crestwood's reaction to all the weather tension in the community the past few weeks. Rev. Kory Wilcoxon said he always keeps one eye on the weather this time of the year, and as the forecast got more dire for the weekend, the need to cancel the Sunday service became obvious. He consulted with staff and church leadership (Board Moderator and Vice-Moderator, Elder Chair, Property Committee Chair). Kory chatted with fellow minister friends in the area to see if they were on the same page, and they were.

Once the decision was made, it appears we have a pretty efficient notification system in place. That's impressive, considering how many groups use our facilities. Kory says he always worries about people showing up who didn't get notified. The Childcare Center is independent and makes their own decisions.

All staff were told to use their own judgment about physically coming into work. In this age of advanced technology, everything needing to be done can be done from home, I'm told. Everyone was still working and being productive. Again, I couldn't find any humorous stories about difficulties. "Trying to make the call about whether or not to cancel church, and then trying to throw together a worship video from my apartment was probably my greatest adventure during the time off," reported Kory.

About the latter, Kory thanks Covid for being able to piece together the cancelled worship service, as they had a similar situation then. When cancellation was certain, he reached out to the ministerial staff and asked them to record their parts of the service and send them to him. He recorded the sermon in his apartment, then used video editing software to put everything together. "It was a pretty slap-dash effort – I have enough knowledge about putting together videos to be dangerous." I think everyone worshipping together online had to admit they were successful and it was a meaningful and well-done service.

When the 8:30 AM service and Sunday School the following week were again cancelled, staff called those who they thought might not have internet access to tell them. And a few days ago I received a sweet check-up call from Kelly Hale, obviously calling the older members of the congregation. I don't know how I feel falling in that category, although my age demands it. I'm not growing old gracefully! But I have to admit it's nice to know someone official in the church is thinking of me. I suspect others ministers were doing things involved with their areas of responsibility.

Still looking for a twist in the story, I couldn't even get our facilities manager, Jim Cristi, to admit to being worried. He said there was no concern about frozen pipes, etc., because our water lines are not on outside walls. He left the heat on at a steady temperature which he thinks is ultimately the most economical way to operate. And, if in doubt, the controls to the Mission Center and Fellowship Hall can be adjusted by an app on his phone.

Everywhere in the community – and my neighborhood – there have been cries about the plowing process. But not so at Crestwood. While the approaching streets are difficult to travel, our lot has remained plowed, salted, and safe I'm told. Kory says that questions about when and where to plow are "a moving target" but that's worked out without much concern. We have contracted with the same individual for over twenty years for snow renewal, Jim said. While it takes a big chunk out of the budget, it's not something our staff has to worry much about.

Groups are coming back into the building now. Nothing can keep down the basketball players it seems! But it sounds like Jim, our facilities manager, has some trying times ahead. As the snow melts, often water backs up behind the frozen gutters he said, and may cause leaks around the church. And he groans as he talks about the gym—the floor now coated in a salty film from shoes that have been outside. Recently resurfaced, the grime must be removed from the floor before it eats into the wood and finish. A special neutralized cleaner will have to be used. That falls on his shoulders, so be nice to Jim when you see him.

It looks like Crestwood is well-positioned to handle crises. It may not produce the amusing stories I was looking for, but it is comforting that our response to difficulty is stability and calmness that gives us a business-as-usual feeling.

Let's explore Crestwood together. If you have an idea or suggestion for a Spotlight, contact Gaye Holman at [gdholman@bellsouth.net](mailto:gHolman@bellsouth.net).



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