



Prayers & Squares International



The Prayer Quilt Ministry – March, 2009

President's Message:

We are celebrating our most recent Regional Sit-and-Sew in Pasadena, Texas that was coordinated by Melodie England and held on Feb. 21st. They invited 12 area chapters and had 20 people in attendance. They spent the day working on the "Mystery of the Crossed Path" quilt top, having lunch, getting to know each other and decided to get together again! The pictures below look pretty fun!



Rev. Cheryl Smith gave a beautiful devotional.



Members from First UMC Pasadena, Chap. 485



Everyone together for a picture!

If you are thinking about some type of workshop to get Prayers & Squares chapters together in your area, there are a couple of ways we have found that work.

1. An all day Sit-and-Sew with a mystery pattern or new pattern where everyone gets together for fun, food and fellowship or
2. A regional workshop with speakers in the morning in 3-5 workshops and a Sit-and-Sew in the afternoon.

#1 is simpler, has a small fee or none (depending on lunch needs) and is very fun with sewing, eating, talking, sharing, getting to know each other and you invite 1-10 more chapters in your area. There may be about 25-40 people in attendance. You need a room, outlets, someone to teach a pattern and a way to communicate with those you invite.

#2 Involves more speakers, more attendees (50-150), a wider area of invitation, a fee to cover food and whatever you might need for facilities, janitorial services, or "giveaways" that need to be purchased like tote bags, pattern copies, etc. You would decide your own speakers and workshop topics based on who is in your area. We invite quilt shop owners to come and speak about the newest, hottest tools and techniques in the store and they are welcome to sell items at lunch. We do not routinely pay any of our speakers unless you want to work that into the fee. Up to you! It's your conference. We try to focus on good information that attendees can take back to their chapters to help support their ministry.

There is a Regional Workshop (the #2 type) here in San Diego on March 14th with 150 attendees and 5 workshops to choose from and a Regional Sit-and-Sew in Virginia in April (#1 type). We are looking at next March, 2009 for the International Conference to be held here in San Diego. So let us know if you are interested in putting together something locally!

"God Pressure"

Those of us at last year's International P&S Conference in the Lewisville/Dallas area had the pleasure of attending Eileen Urbanek's workshop on organizing your closet based on the patterns in our book, The Giving Quilt. As you will see in her note below, she then felt called to start a new chapter in her church. Here is her note: (edited for length...)

I am finally taking the time to set down and write you a note telling you about my experience in getting a Prayer's & Squares chapter started.

Nikki Mundt is very instrumental in getting me "in the boat" with this ministry, and I want to say how very much I appreciate her prodding, encouragement, and sharing of info as I gave in to God and sent in the application for a chapter.

I know that God had been placing this on my heart for a while, but I was pushing it aside because I just knew how much work it was going to be and knew that my plate already had sideboards on it so how in the world could I squeeze in anything else.

After being a presenter at your April 2008 conference the "God Pressure" kept building till I finally gave in and put together a business plan and presented it to my Elder, who took it to the Pastors of my church. In the presentation I made it very clear that I would not pursue the venture if I did not have support of both Pastors and the church staff, because I saw how the lack of this caused much frustration for Nikki. I thought that would be the end of it because something like this just had never been done in our church and we already had a Missions Quilt group making quilts to send overseas.

Never underestimate the intervention of God to have His will done!!! My proposal was accepted with GREAT enthusiasm by both Pastors and all the church staff.

Oh, Oh..... Now that meant that I had to step up and get it organized for real and actually make it happen. So I met with my Elder to give him a timeline of how I thought it would play out and since it was already October I figured I would publicize and organize it in 2008 and then be ready to start in January of 2009, but that is not what God had in mind.....

I had put info on the new ministry in our bulletin and had received about a dozen names of people that were interested in finding out more. I held a start up meeting in late October to see just how much real interest there was. I had the meeting in the classroom of my local Quilt shop and took some projects to work on so those interested could get a feel of what it was going to take. I had 6 ladies show up for the first meeting and I had picked 6 quilts from my own collection to donate as our starter quilts, so we put ties on them and then started some construction on other tops.

God showed me through this work session that there was enough interest to make this ministry work and I just needed to keep on trucking because "If He takes me to it, He will take me through it", and I have clung to that ever since.

By the end of October we already had requests from the Pastors for quilts for 3 members of our congregation, so our first Prayer Quilt was presented to the church for tying on November 2nd, just 3 weeks after I made the presentation to my Elder. A much faster start than I had

envisioned but an exciting start none the less. God knew I needed to be reassured that there was interest in the congregation and in the ministry team working on the quilts, and he gave it to me in such a big way that I could not possibly mistake it for anything other than confirmation that this is what he wanted in our church.

So I set a June 2009 goal of having 25 quilts ready to go and about 50 of the Prayer Squares for the Pastors and visitation team to use. I felt this would be a good comfort zone to operate from.

So in 3 months this is what our group has accomplished:

- Given away 8 Prayer Quilts
- Given away 20 Prayer Squares
- Have 27 completed quilts ready to go when needed
- Have 50 quilt tops done and in various stages of completion
- Have accumulated 80 additional Prayer Squares ready to go
- Have 50 more Prayer Squares ready for quilting and finishing up
- Have received a very generous stash of fabric from many folks who are excited about the ministry
- Have grown to about 12 ladies working on making the tops and prayer squares
- We are now working on "Specialized" Prayer Squares
 - + currently building "New Baby" Squares for the Pastors to take to hospital for every new baby in our congregation
 - + working on designing special squares for New Members, Confirmation, & Weddings

The possibilities are endless!!!

This has turned into a much longer note that I had intended, but I just wanted to thank both you and Nikki for bringing me into this ministry. It is blessing me on a daily basis.- Eileen Urbanek.



Eileen at work at the conference.

News From the Gals "Down Under"

(Here is a note from Julie Robinson, Chapter 808 in Australia)

"Greetings from 'Down Under' [Australia]. I thought you might like a little update on Chapter 808 here in Melbourne, Victoria. Since we started in August, 2008, we have become a prayerful and lively team of nine women from the Ashburton Baptist Church. We meet at C.B Hooper's home, in a big room we call the 'Hive'. We have made 25 quilts, and a few have been sent overseas. One to India, and three to the United States. I'll forward a photo of the one we sent to Leena Lavanya, in India, where she has a wide ranging ministry in a distant village area. The photo shows our church member, Margaret, with a group of Pastor's wives. The quilt was used in ministry that day, and blessed the women by enabling them to share their stories with each other. The panels are machine embroidered by one of our group, and tied in the usual way with prayers from all of the congregation. In this month of February, our State has endured the most terrible bush fires, the worst ones just one to two hours drive from the city of Melbourne.

You may have seen reports on your T.V. Two hundred and nine people lost their lives, and thousands of homes, and rural properties have been completely destroyed. At the moment we have fire fighters from the U.S. and New Zealand helping our exhausted crews.

Last Wednesday, we received a call from Liz Williams. She and her husband, Ralph, live in a town in the west of the State which has been under severe threat. The fires were approaching their home. Liz said that as the fire came closer, she gathered up the prayer quilt we had made them in her arms and held on to a tied knot. As she did so, she felt an immediate sense of peace and calm. Others around her were saying ' why aren't you frightened, the fire is coming!'. Liz knew that it would be all right, and just then the wind turned the fire away from their house. What an answer of prayer, and an encouragement to all of us in the Prayers & Squares group. The fire danger is far from over, and we desperately need rain. Please pray.

Blessings to you, from Julie, on behalf of all the 'busy bees' in Ch.808.

Here are the fabulous pictures Julie sent:



Here is the group of Pastor's wives



"Ken, our Pastor, was in this one as well. He was there opening 'The School of Joy', at Leena's Mission, in memory of his wife, Joy, who was the recipient of the first quilt we made."

In closing, here is a prayer from our devotional book " Under A Blanket of Love" written by Monica Ball, Chapter 78:

Dear God, either open that hole or shrink this thread.



Amen.

