



Prayers & Squares International



The Prayer Quilt Ministry – September, 2009

President's Message:

Welcome to our **newest chapters** in North Carolina, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, Texas and Washington. We are excited to have you with us!

We just returned from driving our daughter to start college in Lakewood, CO. (Denver Area) at Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design. (I am hoping Chapter 758 at Lakewood UMC is still active!) These are exciting times and now we are empty nest-ers! I bet that brings back memories for some of you!



I also want to take a minute for a gentle reminder about this organization and where the focus should be.

When all of you were moved to start a chapter, you understood the **"3 Commandments"** of this organization and accepted them. Remember? The focus of your group is on prayer, the recipient must agree to accept the quilt and we cannot be paid for that quilt. Very simple. And we are always saying, **"It's not about the quilt, it's all about the prayers"**. These quilts are a wonderful, tangible form of prayer that cover the recipient with God's healing love and our prayers.

The reason I am bringing this up is that we are getting reports (I am trying not to say complaints) that some of our chapter members are more focused on the look of the quilt, the points that match, the cross on the back being done just so. We all want to make the most beautiful quilts possible because we are doing God's work but we certainly want them surrounded by God's grace and not judgment during our "show-and-tell" times. Find a caring way to offer some tips to a new quilter. Only God is perfect. I think he smiles when each quilt is laid on a loved one and is sad when He watches us squabble over rules or voting for officers or the "business" of the ministry.

How do we deal with this situation when we are asked to intervene? (And we are...) We try to talk to both sides, we try to get them to talk to each other and we get the pastor involved. If there does not appear to be a resolution, we make the chapter inactive until there is. This is not my favorite part of this job, believe me.

So please, step back and remember **who** you are and **whose** you are and what we are all about. – Kathy



We love the stories!

Here is an update from Sunni Winkler, Chapter 787, Wesley UMC, Vienna, VA:

As you may know we formed in May 2008 and gave our first quilt in July 2008. As of August 9, 2009, we will have distributed 94 quilts, including one to England. Unfortunately at least 14 of our recipients have gone to eternal life (there are some recipients on whom we have not received feedback).

I just read the Aug newsletter and was struck still when I saw the name "Aunt Mimi". You see, one of the recipients this next Sunday is a 13-yr-old girl who was struck by one car while biking, thrown into another car, with the rear view mirrors breaking her jaws. She also has a compound fracture of her left arm in the triceps area, collar bone damage, right leg in a cast due to cracked bones above the knee, and many painful bruises and strains. She related how her "Aunt Mimi" told her to lie still while she went to call an ambulance. Aunt Mimi died in May of this year and this young lady was at her funeral. Some people have said "oh, it is just stress trauma." But we who make these quilts know that it was her guardian angel in a form she recognized! Wow!

The mother of another recipient who just succumbed to her cancer told me last Sunday she has had trouble sleeping since her daughter passed away. She was pacing the house the other night and walked into the room where the daughter's prayer quilt lay. She picked it up, folded it, lay down on the couch holding it tightly against her body, fell asleep and slept better than she has since the daughter died. She plans to keep "clutching that quilt."

The stories we hear back from recipients and recipients' families are so heartwarming. And the ESP that occurs when I choose a quilt for someone I don't know and am later told "you couldn't have chosen a better color combination--these were her/his favorites" never ceases to amaze me.

I still have about 20-25 quilts in inventory, but soon my two faithful quilt makers and I will start making quilts again--we've taken a hiatus over the summer--because I know the requests will pick up

again. We had three quilts last Sunday and will have four this Sunday--I still remember the three weeks in a row last year in the late fall when we had seven quilts each Sunday! – Sunni



Texas Conference News

In August, our chapter attended the **2nd Dallas-Ft. Worth Regional Conference**. It was hosted by chapter #723 in Arlington, TX. There were 30 people in attendance and 5 chapters were represented. There was also a group there that was considering becoming a chapter.

The purpose of the conference was to meet some of our sister chapters to discuss issues, offer support, share ideas and stories that would lead to strengthening the bond between our chapters. We knew there were some chapters that were struggling due to lack of support from their church, few members, or lack of funds. Boxes of fabric were brought to share with those in need.

The chapter leader, **Celia Hirschenhofer**, did an excellent job in planning the conference and our only complaint was that it ended too soon! **Susan Ziegler** gave an excellent introduction about how the ministry began and gave a very motivational speech. **Eileen Urbanek** entertained us once again with her humor and wonderful "show and tell". She was the person that demonstrated how to pre-cut a quilt top, place it in a baggie with the instructions, and give out as many as you can. I can vouch that this is a great idea and you really get results.

All of the chapters had ample time to give a presentation and answer questions. We discussed the process we each had for obtaining a quilt, how it was presented, when and how the prayer knots were tied, fund raisers, pastoral support or lack of, and church involvement.

The following are **some of the conclusions we came to**:

It is vital to have pastoral support and very helpful to work with other ministries within the church. Avoid being too judgmental if the reason the quilt is requested does not seem to be appropriate to you. If the person who is receiving it perceives that the quilt will help him on whatever journey he is experiencing, and he understands and accepts the prayers that are attached, then it should be given because the recipient alone knows what comfort this can bring to him. It is very important to encourage the talents of all members and to provide a cohesive and friendly chapter. No two chapters function alike, you must find out what works best for your members and always try to be flexible.

I would encourage each of you to contact at least 1-2 chapters in your area (chapters are listed by states) and arrange to meet on an informal basis at least once a year. This is an outreach ministry and we need to reach out to each other also for guidance and strength.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Celia or myself and we would love to correspond with more chapters. - **Nancy LaVerdure**
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Plano, TX
e-mail : nancyquilts@verizon

And now a note from the conference chair, Celia Hirschenhofer:

The conference was better than I hoped it could be. The people who attended have a true passion for the ministry. Everyone participated and shared and grace filled the room.

One of the things I learned was the importance of pastoral support. At St. Peter & St. Paul, our Rector, Fr. Tom Hightower has been very supportive from the beginning. As some of the other chapters shared their stories I realized that his support is a gift. Because he encourages the ministry the rest of the congregation can participate with confidence.

Our chapter, 723, has been active since December of 2007. We have 10-12 active members and they worked together with joy and love to make the conference happen. We all knew the Holy Spirit was at work because the conference came together quickly and with no hiccups. We had no problems or struggles at all. We planned it in one of our regular monthly meetings and executed it on the day of the conference. Originally, I had planned to have 2 speakers talk about the impact their prayer quilts had on them, but one of them cancelled at the last minute. If I planned another

conference I would definitely plan to have 2-3 speakers so that the attendees heard different voices.

When the info about the conference first appeared on the P&S website I received calls from as far away as Lubbock and Houston from people who wanted to attend. However, I like the idea of smaller more intimate meetings like the one on 08/15/09 as an annual event. Perhaps chapters could do these smaller meetings annually and then hold bigger events every other year. One of the greatest benefits of the meeting held last Saturday was that we felt like we really got to bond with each other.

Celia Hirschenhofer
Parish Administrator
St. Peter & St. Paul



Let us know if you would like info on how to set-up this style of conference or a sit-and-sew. We have a great handout to send to you! And thanks for these reports, gals!
- Kathy

Workshop Announcement

There is a Sit-and-Sew on Saturday, Sept 12 to pray, iron, stitch, pin, and share God's hope and healing with folks in need. Everyone is invited! Contact Nikki Butler, Chapter 854:
Memorial Presbyterian Church
2130 Bell Road (Bell Road down from the Y)
Montgomery, AL Times: 8:30 to noon
Brunch provided. Ph: 334-274-1018



News from "Down Under"

Julie Robinson, Chapter 808, from Ashburton Baptist Church, Ashburton, Victoria sent us this cute note about how C.B. Hooper, who transferred there from Chapter 1 is faring with the differences in the countries:

Our group has just celebrated our 1st anniversary. We have had a good learning year and have bonded together as a group of six, of which three are the machine sewers. We have made 59 quilts.

C.B., our American chapter president bought an American cake from CostCo, which has just opened in our city. She brought it to church for morning tea on Sunday.

C.B. is so delighted to have CostCo, and feels right at home when she shops there. – Julie

It is amazing what feels like “home” when you are out of the country! - Kathy

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And here is another very fun idea Sunni Winkler sent:

“I forgot to tell you about the personal prayer squares I created. Very simple to make: two pieces of fabric, pinked edges, stitched with straight stitching or a decorative zig-zag stitch. Put a tie cord in the middle. Tell people to take two (or more)--one for a friend or family member and give it to the friend, member telling them the meaning -- tie a knot and say a prayer for the friend or family member. One is for you--ask the friend or family member to say a prayer for you and tie a knot. Now you have a personal prayer square to keep in your pocket to remind you that someone loves you, is praying for you, and wishes you well.

These have gone over beautifully. I've been asked "can I have more than one?" and of course my answer always is "take as many as you want or need".

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Have a blessed, grace-filled September!