



# Quilters Warm Hearts And Cheer Souls By Their Sewing



Our Savior's Lutheran Quilters display some of their quilts in the church sanctuary. Just before shipping out their quilts each May and October, the group drapes the quilts over the church pews so the congregation can view the fruits of their labor. The quilters donate about 200 quilts each year. Quilters are, left to right, front row - Marlene Schell, Eileen Plath, Mabel Sacrison, Darlene Bowden; back row - Charlene Messer, Betty Bodine, Bonnie Swenson, Sharon Ellefson and Phyllis Smilonich.

**By: Karen Carpenter**

The skill of quilting has been passed from generation to generation for countless years.

Women in the Barnesville community have preserved the heritage of quilting in many and varied ways. The art of quilting will live long into the future.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church (OSL) quilters take the sewing skill they each possess and turn it into a gift of love for those less fortunate. Anywhere from nine to 15 women gather in the church basement each Thursday morning.

This industrious group sews and ties about 200 quilts a year. The majority are given to Lutheran World Relief. Some are donated to the Rape and Abuse Center in Fargo. The quilters also have some on hand to give to local people who have experienced a house fire or some other disaster.

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is an international non-governmental organization. One of their focuses is disaster relief and recovery. The organization was founded in 1945 to collect and send aid to people living in post-World War II Europe.

The OSQ Quilters have been getting together not only to share their quilting acumen but also for fun, fellowship and food.

The group celebrated 40 years of existence in 2018. The quilters first began meeting in 1978. Roberta Christopherson and Ada Drache were the instigators of this long running group.

These women have shared so much over the past 40 years. The

faces may have changed but the goal has stayed the same, to give a gift of love and comfort to people they don't know and will never meet.

Some of their group have passed away, still others moved out of the area. New quilters have come to join them over the years. The spirit of the group continues.

"The quilters have been like a therapy group," commented Mabel Sacrison. She served as church secretary for 26 years. Now that she is retired and living back in Barnesville she has the opportunity to share in the work.

Many of the quilters agreed that the members of the quilt group got them through very rough times. The women usually stop for coffee sometime during the morning quilting session. A lot of conversation, laughter and therapy happens around the table.

When the quilters first organized, they didn't meet during the summer months, now they meet all year round.

"In the beginning, the church wasn't heated during the week in the winter so we met in homes," said Phyllis Smilonich. "We started by ripping up old items of clothing to use to sew the quilts."

Later, material by the yard or even bed sheets were donated for the quilters to use. Kathie Burud, who enjoys auctions, has purchased and donated large amounts of fabric to the cause.

Often members have brought fabric or yarn that they found at yard sales or thrift stores. The quilters' fabric supply now spans two storage

closets in the church.

Used blankets were used for the batting, or middle of the quilts, at one time. The women now purchase batting for use on the quilts. They have money budgeted through WELCA, their church women's organization.

Cathy Mackner had a friend in Connecticut who worked in a thread factory and had a big supply which she donated to the quilters.

Over the years the OSQ quilters have had children and grandchildren come to their group. One summer they had quilting with granny.

"The children that came had fun," commented Smilonich.

The women don't just quilt. They have gone on trips together to such places as Granny's Attic in Osakis, Chanhassen Dinner Theatre in Chanhassen, MN, and dinner theatre in Clitherall, to name a few.

"People know that if they want something done in the church, this is the group to come to," said Smilonich.

The women have served coffee for Lenten services, provided programs for different events, cleaned and helped with the newsletter.

One of their former pastors commented, "The quilters are like a family. They don't always agree but they always love each other."

The quilt tops are generally made by sewing squares together. Any size square works. The quilts do need to end up being 60-inches wide by 80-inches long. This is

a requirement of Lutheran World Relief. It is a postal requirement by foreign countries that they all be the same size. If size requirements are not followed and a quilt is the wrong size, the whole lot can be rejected.

Most of the tops are sewn at home by the quilters. After the top is finished it is brought to the church. A larger piece of fabric is chosen and sometimes pieces added to make it the size needed.

The back is laid out on two long church tables placed side-by-side. The tables are set on special risers so that the women can easily stand around the table to work.

The backing fabric is anchored down with masking tape. The batting material is laid on top and then the quilt top is placed on top last. All three pieces of fabric are tied together with yarn.

The quilters space themselves around the tables. With a large needle threaded with yarn, stitches are taken at about six inch intervals and then the yarn is tied and cut.

The quilters have a large stash of yarn in their storage closet as well. The yarn color is chosen to coordinate with the quilt top fabric.

Three to four quilts can be tied in a morning, depending on how much chatter and laughter is going on.

An iron and ironing board are set up and one woman may be pressing fabric for the back or the finished quilt top.

In another corner there are a couple of sewing machines set up. To finish off the quilts, fabric from the back is brought to the front and turned under. Then a sewing machine is used to sew around the edges of the quilt to finish. This is called self binding.

Jo Kluck, one of the original members, now deceased, was the one that sat at the sewing machine to sew the binding.

When she wasn't able to do as much, Diane Hagen, Elaine Austin, Bonnie Swenson and others took over the machine stitching. Often members take the quilts home to finish.

The quilts are shipped to a LWR warehouse twice a year in May and October. The quilts are distributed to other countries from those locations. The group tries to complete 100 quilts for each of these distributions.

Before they are shipped, the OSQ quilters drape the pews on a Sunday morning with the quilts. That gives the congregation an opportunity to view and pray over the quilts before shipping.

Over the years, the quilt group has also donated baby care kits, school kits and personal care kits to Lutheran World Relief.

In 2018, Lutheran World Relief

distributed 323,910 quilts in 25 countries. Totals for 2019 are not in as yet.

In America, quilts are used for beds or to wrap in while watching TV. More often they are displayed in homes as a piece of art, which indeed they are.

In the countries where the OSQ quilts will go, they are used very differently. Individuals may carry all of their belongs in a quilt. It may be used as a tent or covering from the heat of the sun. A homeless person may wrap in one to endure the night out in the open.

A quilt may be a room divider, or spread on the ground to sit on while eating. Quilts are very important and much used items in third world countries.

The contribution that the OSQ quilters, and other groups like them,

make is invaluable to people living in unimaginable poverty.

A Lutheran World Relief brochure states, "Knowing every quilt is handmade by caring people thousands of miles away in the United States makes the gift even more meaningful."

The OSQ quilters have had many people who have given generously of their time and talent.

"I think right now we have the largest group of women dedicated to quilting that we have ever had," stated Smilonich.

Many lives have been touched by Our Savior's Lutheran quilters. The women will never meet the people a world away who receive and cherish the attractive and serviceable quilts. They do know that they are making life a little easier for someone and reaching out in Christian love.

## In Loving Memory

### Deaths in 2019...

There were 80 deaths recorded in the Record-Review in the year 2019. The deceased names and dates of death are:

Charles (Chuck) E. Aase July 14, 1937-September 11, 2019  
Nancy L. Ackerson July 22, 1940-April 22, 2019  
Shirley A. Anderson June 20, 1932-February 10, 2019  
Donald W. Anderson May 23, 1934-Not Available  
David G. Askegard December 11, 1945-November 3, 2019

Barbara A. Barry March 3, 1953-January 30, 2019  
Joann M. Barry October 22, 1930-March 11, 2019  
Daniel L. Bartelson September 25, 1970-February 8, 2019  
Roger H. Berg March 8, 1940-Not Available  
Glen E. Berg January 29, 1933-December 25, 2019  
Jeri-Dawn Bernu March 17, 1956-August 7, 2019  
Gene A. Bolgreen July 22, 1925-December 30, 2019  
Gene E. Borud August 29, 1941-March 4, 2019  
Diane K. Braton November 13, 1936-April 16, 2019  
Inez B. Braton November 2, 1923-December 25, 2019  
Arland D. Brusven April 8, 1932-March 24, 2019  
Diane K. Buchholz March 19, 1942-September 2, 2019  
Richard A. Bye October 1, 1941-September 10, 2019

Robert (Junior) G. Cranston December 15, 1932-April 2, 2019

David K. Danielson October 21, 1954-October 5, 2019  
Mary M. Doughtie Not Available-April 23, 2019

Roy V. Ellefson February 22, 1920-August 2, 2019

Kathleen G. Farrell May 31, 1942-July 8, 2019  
Allie M. Fjesta February 15, 2019-February 15, 2019  
Cherry I. Forsythe April 6, 1946-May 21, 2019

Jeanette E. Carr-Griffin July 27, 1929-February 21, 2019  
Oliver O. Gilbertson Not Available-July 4, 2019

Eileen G. Halverson January 28, 1930-January 26, 2019  
Delayne R. Halverson August 9, 1938-February 20, 2019  
Brian K. Halverson February 8, 1940-March 30, 2019  
Lloyd Hanson June 20, 1955-July 16, 2019  
Marjorie F. Hanson December 15, 1932-November 20, 2019  
Elaine M. Harding November 7, 1946-September 30, 2019  
Annette M. Heimark August 17, 1947-December 8, 2019  
Charlotte M. Henry July 19, 1921-July 30, 2019  
Betsey C. Herrel September 13, 1924-October 11, 2019  
Ernest M. Hovland October 28, 1921-September 8, 2019  
LeRoy L. Huseby November 28, 1940-May 25, 2019

Cecelia E. Johnson August 6, 1933-January 7, 2019  
Glen Johnson Not Available-April 30, 2019  
Steven T. Jordahl January 1, 1961-April 20, 2019

Edward (Duke) J. Kava March 10, 1933-March 14, 2019  
David J. Kava March 9, 1946-June 19, 2019  
Muriel L. Knutson March 30, 1926-August 10, 2019  
Tamrie (Tami) Kohoutek May 23, 1961-January 22, 2019  
Raymond F. Krier April 23, 1923-September 2, 2019

Marjorie J. Lemke August 19, 1936-September 7, 2019

David M. McEvers April 29, 1962-January 12, 2019  
Wayne L. McEvers May 5, 1926-September 6, 2019  
Gary L. McEvers July 14, 1944-November 19, 2019  
Lois M. Motschenbacher May 25, 1925-October 25, 2019  
Ruth (Ruthie) C. Motzko December 9, 1940-December 12, 2019

Leone K. Nelson November 4, 1928-February 27, 2019  
Alice M. Nelson March 19, 1928-December 8, 2019  
Stanley J. Nicklay November 14, 1932-July 8, 2019  
Anna M. Nicklay December 9, 1934-November 17, 2019  
Robert D. Noyes June 9, 1940-June 16, 2019

Doris I. Ostlund December 21, 1931-September 7, 2019  
Ole A. Ostlund April 26, 1926-November 16, 2019

Kathryn A. Panasuk February 18, 1946-May 17, 2019  
Gregory A. Peterson January 7, 1957-April 27, 2019  
James Picard January 2, 1969-Not Available

Dwight S. Rindahl May 7, 1949-December 12, 2019  
Gerald (Jerry) Rodriguez May 23, 1960-January 5, 2019

Arlene M. Scheffler February 21, 1932-July 31, 2019  
Gordon C. Shulstad January 14, 1928-April 5, 2019  
Joyce A. Sillerud September 18, 1935-July 9, 2019  
Matthew (Miller) J. Snyder August 1, 1993-October 7, 2019  
Marvin O. Solum Not Available-May 18, 2019  
Linda J. Spiesz Not Available-December 22, 2019  
Naomi F. Steinmetz July 2, 1941-December 25, 2019  
Joshua Suhr July 4, 1977-March 7, 2019  
Edythe A. Sumstad February 20, 1940-April 11, 2019  
Duane D. Swenson February 25, 1930-November 16, 2019  
Ellen (Ellie) Syvertson Not Available-August 25, 2019  
Kenneth J. Szweduiik June 19, 1926-December 1, 2019

Stan Thurlow August 9, 1946-September 15, 2019

Jeanne M. Walker September 19, 1939-April 30, 2019  
William (Bill) J. Wallace July 23, 1934-April 5, 2019  
Richard (Rich) Wheeler May 5, 1985-November 22, 2019



This is a vintage picture of the OSQ Quilters group working on a quilt. None of the quilters seem to remember the date that this picture was taken but they think it was about 10 years ago. Most of these women still come to quilting on Thursdays when they aren't off on some southern adventure. They are, left to right, Diane Nelson, Jo Kluck, deceased, Joanne Halverson, Cathy Mackner, Betty Bodine, Elaine Austin, Donna Cook, Bonnie Swenson and Phyllis Smilonich.



These members of OSQ quilt group are tying the quilt top, batting the middle fabric that adds warmth, and the back fabric together. The finishing step is to sew binding fabric around the edges of the quilt to prevent raveling. Sharon Ellefson, left, is threading a needle with yarn. Darlene Bowden, middle, and Betty Bodine are tying the quilt together with yarn by taking a small stitch through all layers of fabric and then knotting the yarn on the top. The knots are spaced about six inches apart.

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This is a poem written by Kathleen Wastlund of Vermillion SD. It epitomizes the goals and the reasons why the OSQ quilters take time to meet and work each Thursday morning.

### Thoughts While Quilting

I thread the yarn through my needle  
And take a stitch.  
We're tying quilts at church again today.  
I tie a knot as I watch the busy fingers across the table  
And smile as I recognize a patch of brown.  
So many heads bowed in a holy communion of endeavor  
Some quiet, most talking and laughing,  
Sharing the fellowship of working at a common task  
As the sewing machine whirs in the corner.  
Stitch. Tie. Where will this quilt go?  
What purpose will it serve?  
Will it cover a family in a common bed?  
Or wrap a bony sufferer sleeping in the street?  
Will it divide a room, or protect a sleeping baby from the flies?  
Will it say, "God cares, and so do we?"  
We cannot take them in our arms  
To warm their hearts and cheer their souls,  
But we can wrap our love in quilts.  
And pray that they will know.