



Sewing the Fabric of Care and Compassion

By Bruce Pokarney

More than 20 years ago, Dee Sanderson found a new way to spend her Tuesday mornings that ultimately helps people in need who she will never know. Just a couple of years later, Carol Nelson did the same. With needle and thread, the two friends and longtime Bethlehem members have been faithful participants of the Piecemakers Quilters, a small but dedicated group that meets inside the walls of the church building but does ministry that extends across the globe.



“There is a satisfaction knowing that we are helping other people around the world,” says Carol. “And we never know individually who that is, but it doesn’t matter.”

Simply put, the women of the Piecemakers Quilters take donated cloth material and make quilts and kits that find their way to families and individuals in need of emergency assistance. Projects from the group are donated to Lutheran World Relief and often to local organizations. Each Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon, as many as a dozen or more women show up in a designated room at Bethlehem ready to cut, sew, and assemble a finished product that can help someone stay warm or replace something that has been lost due to a natural disaster. Quilts aren’t the only product of the group’s efforts.

“We also put together personal care kits — towels, combs, toothbrushes, soap — things that help people in a tragic situation like a flood or a hurricane,” says Dee. “We also assemble school kits for kids all over the world, which includes notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, and rulers. And then we also produce dress kits, which includes three yards of fabric and thread for someone to make their own dress.”

And those bible bags provided to Bethlehem youth? They are locally made—right down the hall from the sanctuary — by the Piecemakers Quilters.



“All of the material we use is donated, primarily from members of the congregation,” says Dee. “Then somebody in our group cuts the squares for the quilts, somebody sews them, and most of the sewing for the quilt tops is done at home, brought here, and then sandwiched with the batting and the backing.”

That team approach concludes when Carolyn Gallup, at least for the past couple of years, offers her specialty skill of sewing the binding around the quilt. **It does take a team to do the work, but for these women, the work and being a part of that team is a joy.**

“We are all friends here,” says Dee. “We have fun, give each other support, set aside time for coffee and devotions, and pray for each other.”

It takes money to ship the quilts and kits to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Lutheran World Relief ultimately sends the finished product — along with projects from other Lutheran churches in the region — to areas of need, whether it’s elsewhere in the U.S. or around the world. That’s why some of the quilts made by the Piecemakers women stay in Aberdeen and are sold locally each fall to help pay for shipping costs of the quilts and kits. This year’s sale took place just this past week.

Even though the families that receive the fruits of the Piecemakers’ labors are not individually known, there have been specific catastrophes in which these quilts and kits were a godsend.

“They’ve gone to people affected by the floods in Texas, and a couple of years ago, there was a tornado near Blair, Nebraska,” says Carol. “We sent everything directly to [one of the] local Lutheran churches there and know that it was distributed to families that had lost their homes.”

There is an open invitation for new volunteers — and you don’t have to be a gifted seamstress or quilter. **Consistent with Bethlehem’s theme of “All are Welcome”, this group would love to have more members.** To an outsider, it may look like work, but it doesn’t feel that way to those who take part.

“We have a lot of fun and a lot of camaraderie,” says Dee. “And you don’t even have to be female, we would welcome men.”

Jesus said “Blessed are the Peacemakers”. In this case, blessed are the Piecemakers, for their gift to others through quilting has truly been a Christ-inspired response to people in need.



Sewing the Fabric of Care and Compassion

By Bruce Pokarney

More than 20 years ago, Dee Sanderson found a new way to spend her Tuesday mornings that ultimately helps people in need who she will never know. Just a couple of years later, Carol Nelson did the same. With needle and thread, the two friends and longtime Bethlehem members have been faithful participants of the Piecemakers Quilters, a small but dedicated group that meets inside the walls of the church building but does ministry that extends across the globe.



“There is a satisfaction knowing that we are helping other people around the world,” says Carol. “And we never know individually who that is, but it doesn’t matter.”

Simply put, the women of the Piecemakers Quilters take donated cloth material and make quilts and kits that find their way to families and individuals in need of emergency assistance. Projects from the group are donated to Lutheran World Relief and often to local organizations. Each Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon, as many as a dozen or more women show up in a designated room at Bethlehem ready to cut, sew, and assemble a finished product that can help someone stay warm or replace something that has been lost due to a natural disaster. Quilts aren’t the only product of the group’s efforts.

“We also put together personal care kits — towels, combs, toothbrushes, soap — things that help people in a tragic situation like a flood or a hurricane,” says Dee. “We also assemble school kits for kids all over the world, which includes notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, and rulers. And then we also produce dress kits, which includes three yards of fabric and thread for someone to make their own dress.”

And those bible bags provided to Bethlehem youth? They are locally made—right down the hall from the sanctuary — by the Piecemakers Quilters.



“All of the material we use is donated, primarily from members of the congregation,” says Dee. “Then somebody in our group cuts the squares for the quilts, somebody sews them, and most of the sewing for the quilt tops is done at home, brought here, and then sandwiched with the batting and the backing.”

That team approach concludes when Carolyn Gallup, at least for the past couple of years, offers her specialty skill of sewing the binding around the quilt. **It does take a team to do the work, but for these women, the work and being a part of that team is a joy.**

“We are all friends here,” says Dee. “We have fun, give each other support, set aside time for coffee and devotions, and pray for each other.”

It takes money to ship the quilts and kits to St. Paul, Minnesota, where Lutheran World Relief ultimately sends the finished product — along with projects from other Lutheran churches in the region — to areas of need, whether it’s elsewhere in the U.S. or around the world. That’s why some of the quilts made by the Piecemakers women stay in Aberdeen and are sold locally each fall to help pay for shipping costs of the quilts and kits. This year’s sale took place just this past week.

Even though the families that receive the fruits of the Piecemakers’ labors are not individually known, there have been specific catastrophes in which these quilts and kits were a godsend.

“They’ve gone to people affected by the floods in Texas, and a couple of years ago, there was a tornado near Blair, Nebraska,” says Carol. “We sent everything directly to [one of the] local Lutheran churches there and know that it was distributed to families that had lost their homes.”

There is an open invitation for new volunteers — and you don’t have to be a gifted seamstress or quilter. **Consistent with Bethlehem’s theme of “All are Welcome”, this group would love to have more members.** To an outsider, it may look like work, but it doesn’t feel that way to those who take part.

“We have a lot of fun and a lot of camaraderie,” says Dee. “And you don’t even have to be female, we would welcome men.”

Jesus said “Blessed are the Peacemakers”. In this case, blessed are the Piecemakers, for their gift to others through quilting has truly been a Christ-inspired response to people in need.