

100 Quilts



**Made by the Quilters of
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Evanston, Illinois**

2011

Immanuel, Lutheran World Relief, and Quilts

For years the women of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Evanston have joined other congregations throughout North America in making quilts for Lutheran World Relief. LWR began immediately after World War II, which left an estimated one-fifth of the world's Lutherans homeless. At first, parishes collected blankets and other supplies for German, Baltic, and Scandinavian fellow believers. Then they began collecting blankets and other supplies for the 800,000 Palestinians who were forced from their homes by the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. From the early 1950s in Hong Kong, Korea, and Bangladesh, Asia was a continent of considerable strife. During the 1960s, 70s, and '80s, civil wars and drought made Africa the new concern. And so the needs have spread to various countries and continents, and LWR has responded to homelessness created by political turmoil and natural disasters. At some point blankets were supplemented with homemade quilts, and now the making of quilts has become a hallmark of Lutheran World Relief ministry. It's the kind of hands-on ministry that Lutherans are good at. We were taught by Martin Luther that God has taken care of our salvation, so we are free to take care of our neighbor in need.

Immanuel women doubled their efforts in 2011 to achieve a goal of 100 quilts. In this pictorial record you see them at work and with their finished products. Meeting several times a month during the day and in the evening, nearly 30 women ranging in age from 12 to 92 worked steadily all year to accomplish this amazing feat. Arrayed throughout our building, the quilts were also items of beauty and comfort adorning our worship space and fellowship hall. We admired the work that was done, but the quilts were made for others and we had to let them go to wherever in the world they will end up. Now our intrepid women are ready to begin working on next year's goal. The rest of us thank God for their time, talent, and dedication.

Frank C. Senn, Pastor







So Much More Than a Blanket

“There is, indeed, a transforming moment when a Quilt passes from our hands into another’s, and they embrace it.” – Kirk Betts, Former Chairman of the LWR Board of Directors, upon distributing LWR Quilts in Niger

When you make and send a Quilt, you are not only comforting someone you have never met, but providing an object that is useful in ways you probably never imagined. In addition to being a cozy, clean new bed cover, it can be:

- a baby carrier, tied around a mother’s back;
- a market display, spread on the ground and piled with vegetables;
- a sack for transporting those goods to market;
- a sunshade;
- a shawl; and most importantly
- a constant reminder that someone, far away, cares a lot.

Esther Thomas in Liberia received a quilt in 1995. She cut it up and used it to make a dress for job interviews. Esther says, “I want to tell the people who’ve made quilts for our community what kind of an impact they had. I want to thank them very deeply. For many years, the quilts have served us very well and they are well put together with really good quality cloth. People ask me where my dress came from and I say that I got it from my friends in America!”

Emily Sollie was a LWR staff person who responded to the earthquake in Haiti. She recalled, “When my colleague Trevor Knoblich traveled to Haiti a couple of months ago, he met people living in transitional shelters whose only bedding was a quilt they had received from LWR. From the hands of someone piecing together fabric in a church basement, a gift of love in which a person who lost everything can wrap herself every night and know that someone cares. That stirs my soul.”

In 2010, 319,610 quilts were shipped from LWR. Some of the destinations were: 62,250 to Thailand. 33,600 to India. 42,380 to Sierra Leone. Sixteen different countries in four continents received quilts.

— From the website for Lutheran World Relief “Mission Quilts”



Boxing up the quilts for shipping



Mountains of quilts!



Dedicating the quilts in worship, October 2, 2011



The One Hundred Quilts of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Evanston

What's so special about 100 quilts?

In the Bible, the number 100 is used to indicate fullness or completeness. In Luke 15, Jesus says, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (KJV)

100 quilts represent an enormous increase over the outstanding production of previous years. 50 quilts — a good production in any previous year — is the fruit of extraordinary loyalty, dedication, and effort. And to think — 100!


Part of the beauty of the 100 quilts is that the effort is not at all self-serving, but in the service of others. That is not to say that quilters don't appreciate it when Verlaine brings a pie to quilting. In our church life we do share snacks and fellowship with each other, but quilts bring warmth and comfort to needy people all around the world.

100 quilts represent a combination of talents and efforts involving a significant number of our membership and friends, applied steadily to a challenging task over twelve months of time. There's no "I'll do it when I feel like it." There is commitment.

It's not that easy for Rose to come, or Myrtle. But Verlaine and Mid and Elaine are always glad to provide rides. Liz hops on a train in Wheaton to get to quilting, and some days Myrtle will just say "No, thanks" to Verlaine and make her own way across Raymond Park from her home. As in other parts of church life, the good things start to happen when people show up.

Where does one begin to tell the story?

Each quilt, even the simplest, involves quite a process. Pat may begin by cutting fabric in squares. Elizabeth may take those squares home and put together the right colors and patterns to piece together a top. Chris finds and trims fabric for the back of the quilt. Carol assembles the sandwich of top, batting, and back. The quilt is edged and sewn together. Myrtle ties the quilt together through each square. There's a lot of work that goes into each quilt.



The materials used for our quilts give new meaning to the word “recycling.” Bill Pullin’s brother, Mike, who works in theatre, donated several boxes of fabric left over from costumes and scenery. Joan took strips of fabric and used them for sashing between quilt squares. Ellen pieced together strips to make a fun pattern that looks like the spines of colorful books on shelves in a library. There is no piece of fabric too wild or oddly-shaped for Bert or Ellen to use in one of their “crazy” quilts. It all gets put to use.

The Daytime and Evening Quilters groups each have their own personality, their own dynamic. The evening quilting group works with the hum of efficiency, with folks who work during the day coming in after supper to move the project along. Mid is a leader for daytime quilting, not only coordinating the work and making sure that people have the help or tools or materials that they need to keep busy, but also making sure that everyone is having a good time. Put the two groups together, and what do you get? You get 100 quilts.

One challenge this year has been how to keep track of production, of the goal. Chris made paper labels, numbered from 1 to 100, and the quilters tagged each quilt as it was completed, working from 100 down to 1. At any given time, the label next to be used proclaimed how many quilts were yet to go in order to meet the goal.

So, what can one say about 100 quilts?

We should say, as Jesus does in concluding his story, something like “And when he hath found it (the one hundredth sheep), he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.” God be praised! We were blessed to be able to send 100 quilts to Lutheran World Relief! Let us rejoice.





**Those who made
the 100 quilts:**

Ellen Abrahamson
Melanie Anderson
Linn Balder
Betty Bergendorff
Mid Carlson
Alice Carmichael
Lynn Carson
Chris Djuric
Bill Elias
Pat Elias
Joan Geuss
Gretchen Gurujal
Liz Hanson
Yolanda Imhoff
Rose Ingeson
Jean Kantner
Carol Krizman
Eliza McDaniel
Bert Mount
Jaya Nambiar
Elaine Nelson
Verlaine Riek
Kathryn Skelton
Elizabeth Stegner
Laurie Stivers
Doris Strom
Diane Trenbeth
Anita Victorn
Myrtle Wangerin

