

Alabama Basom Quilting Ministry Makes Big Impact

On a mild day in mid-December, Matt Wiltrout, a member of the Niagara Frontier District Leadership Team, sat down to coffee and cookies with the women who make up the Prayer Quilt Ministry at the Alabama Basom United Methodist Church. Under the commotion of the small crowd that gathered for the church's Christmas fellowship party, they share the history and successes of their small ministry that has touched people around the globe.

The ministry began in October 2004 when a member of "The Prayer Angels," based out of Batavia UMC, visited Alabama UMC to teach the women how to make prayer quilts. The small church located in Alabama, NY took to the activity immediately and began crafting quilts for individuals undergoing surgery or who had lost a loved one. Nearly 12 years later, the group has donated 384 prayer quilts locally, across the United States and even to Europe. The multiple photo albums on the table in front of us holding hundreds of thank you cards and pictures of quilts bear witness to this achievement.



Quilts are given by request or are gifted to members of the community that are in the midst of a known struggle: Jim Kelly, former quarterback of the Buffalo Bills and Robin Roberts, anchor of ABC's *Good Morning America* are both recipients of Alabama Basom Prayer Quilts. "It's so rewarding to help people in need, who need our prayers," shares Kay who has been with the quilting club for the last few years.

The group meets once a month at the church to begin assembly of the 40"x60" quilts. They open each session with a prayer before cutting the fabric into squares and laying out the patterns. Kay smiles as she offers, "One of my favorite parts is putting the colors together." Each quilt takes a full day to sew. "You don't do much else...you turn off the phone and lock the door!" jokes Alice, one of the seamstresses who learned quilting as a child from her mother and older sisters. The completed quilts are brought back to the church where the congregation prays over them before tying a knot in each of the 24 squares.



When asked what motivates the group to continue this ministry, the members replied, “Even though our numbers are small, we still keep going. There’s always a need. Just as soon as you think you’re caught up, you’re not.” In the worship service immediately preceding the fellowship party, a prayer concern was offered for a child about to have a bone marrow transplant. “That means we get busy and make for that child,” added Alice who had just finished another prayer quilt for a dear friend at 11PM the night before. Despite the never ending need, the group approaches their ministry with an evident enthusiasm and joy, serving as an excellent example of how we are to be cheerful givers (2 Corinthians 9:7).

The group is small, only seven women, yet look at what God has done through their efforts. Paul teaches us in 1 Thessalonians to, “encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” (5:11 NLT). Please share this inspiring story with your congregations and encourage them to support a ministry in whatever capacity they are able. “If you can just make an inch of headway, a little dent, it helps. Everyone has to work together,” offers Kay, speaking of their own efforts. As a church, we ought to strive to reinforce each other’s efforts to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Moving forward, the District Leadership Team hopes to offer the churches in the Niagara Frontier District opportunities to do just that.

Individuals interested in becoming involved with the existing quilting ministry at Alabama Basom are encouraged to contact Gladys Phillips at 585-948-9960 who would joyfully accept donations of material, funds or a quilter willing to join their ranks.



Pictured above: Alice, Janice, Kay