

COMFORTER MINISTRY

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.
2 Corinthians 1:3-5

A mission of comfort and compassion, reaching out to women with cancer with God's Word and the love of the Comforter through journals and comforters.

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

Wrapped in the Love of the Comforter

A letter from Su

This joyful Eastertide Away with sin and sorrow! My love, the Crucified, Has sprung to life this morrow.

Currently I'm sitting at the dining room table of my older daughter, Rachel, writing this issue of the Comforter Ministry Newsletter. It's close to Valentine's Day. I look around their lovely home and notice all the "hearts on display." There are hearts on the windows, frig, bedroom doors, fireplace mantel, wall, even a pillow with the words *Be My Valentine* stitched on the front. Memories flood my mind, remembering the Valentine traditions of the past when this would have been *my* household and the heart decorations similarly placed throughout *my* home. I even had paper hearts on the underside of the toilet seat so when the *men* of the family needed to use the toilet there was *love* to greet them. (I know! I know!) My family put up with a lot during any and all holidays. I love all the holidays and seasons of the year, as well as the church year, so our home was in a regular state of change as I decorated accordingly ☺

This time of the year we focus on *love* and display ways of showing love. I've come bearing gifts of love for my grandchildren and plan to purchase or make cards of love to share with those whom I love. *Love* – memories, emotions, plans and decorations – does not mean much without the *display* of love in our lives. If we truly love someone or something we will display that love in words and deeds. This thought is what brings me to the theme of this Spring Issue of CMN.

Along with springtime comes the celebration of Easter; the ultimate *display of love* by God, Himself. God's plan was to save sinners by sending His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world. He used His Word to reveal His plan and His love. Jesus' love showed itself in His obedience to the Father. The Word revealed who He was and what He did to provide the forgiveness of sins necessary for there to be true *peace* between a holy God and humankind. Easter celebrates memory, emotion and God's plan of love, but more importantly Easter celebrates God's love *displayed* for the entire world to see as Jesus suffers by the hands of sinners, sinners He came to save from sin; dies on the cross, a tool of torture devised by sinners He came to save from sin; and rises from the dead, defeating death and winning the victory over sin for sinners who have done nothing to help. **Now that there is peace between God and me, I will *display* my love for God. I will love Him. I will love my neighbor in words and deeds just as He has commanded (Mark 12:30, 31).**

This issue of CMN is filled with displays of love in words and deeds. Whether love expressed as a simple, heartfelt prayer or a loving comforter/journal request or a handmade quilt donated, all are displays of love.

Happy Spring Celebrations!

Su

With a Thankful Heart . . .

I thank my God every time I remember you. Philippians 1:3-5

As of February 15, 2011, 63 Quilters/Quilt Groups from 18 states and one Canadian province have made 190 comforters that have comforted over 284* women with cancer from 29 states (USA), one Canadian province, Australia, the Caribbean, and Japan. As I share the following information with you, my heart overflows with thankfulness to God for each of you.

Quilters.....		Recipients.....			
Alaska	2	Alaska	3	Tennessee	1
Alaska (QG)	1			Texas	21
California	1	Arizona	2	Virginia	2
Colorado	2	California	8	Washington	2
Florida	1	Colorado	4	West Virginia	1
Illinois (QG)	1	Connecticut	2	Wisconsin	142
Iowa	1	Florida	8	Wyoming	1
Kansas	1	Georgia	1		
Michigan	2	Illinois	11	Australia	1
Minnesota	3	Indiana	2	Caribbean	1
Nebraska	3	Iowa	5	Japan	1
Nevada	1	Kansas	3	Ontario, Canada	2
North Carolina	1	Kentucky	1		
North Dakota	2	Michigan	18		
Ohio	1	Minnesota	21		
South Dakota (QG)	1	Montana	1		
Texas	3	Nebraska	7		
Texas (QG)	2	Nevada	1		
Wisconsin	19	New York	3		
Wisconsin (QG)	13	North Carolina	3		
Wisconsin (LGP)	1	Ohio	2		
Wyoming	1	Oklahoma	2		
Ontario, Canada (QG)	1	South Dakota	5		

*Several comforters have been given on behalf of the Comforter Ministry, but I have not been given further information as to names of recipients, addresses, etc.

QG=Quilt Group

LGP=Lutheran Girl Pioneers

Prayers . . .

The prayers of a righteous man are powerful and effective. James 5:16

- ♥ Prayer warriors who pray regularly for the Comforter Ministry and all who are served through CM
 - ♥ Quilters who pray for the recipients of their comforters as they work over their labors of love, in most cases never knowing where they are sent or who receives them
 - ♥ Participants in Comforter Ministry Prayer Gatherings
- Thank you! Please continue. Your prayers mean so much for so many.

Had Christ, who once was slain, Not burst his three-day prison, Our faith had been in vain: But now is Christ arisen, arisen, arisen; But now is Christ arisen. (CW#160 Vs 1)

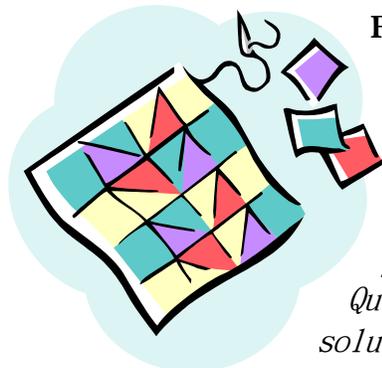
Gifts Received . . .

And whatever you do; whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

- ♥ **Sally**, Lac du Flambeau, WI – Printed CMN labels and updated CM Mailing and E-Mail Lists for Spring Issue 2011. **Thanks, Sally (and husband, John)!**
- ♥ **Everyone willing to receive CMN electronically – Huge Thanks!!**
- ♥ **Lynnette**, Manassas, VA – Book of Forever Stamps – **Thank you, dear friend!**
- ♥ **Gifts of Money** received since December 1, 2011 – **Rita**, Woodruff, WI; **Helping Hands-St. Paul Lutheran**, Alexandria, MN; **Carol**, Greenfield, WI; **Susan**, Manitowoc, WI; **Cliff and Becky**, Wisconsin Rapids, WI; **Gayle**, Wausau, WI in honor of **Donna**, Wausau, WI; **Debra**, Nepean, Canada; **Rhonda**, Stevens Point, WI; **Bev**, Arbor Vitae, WI; **Kathy**, Cary, NC; **Divine Word**, Plover, WI; **Debra**, Isabel, SD. **Thank You, ALL!**

Thank you—great newsletter! I will share with our ladies aide at St. Pauls, Algoma. Our daughter's mother-in-law was a recipient of a Comforter quilt. It was very much appreciated. May you have a blessed Christmas and New Year. Dot W-Algoma, WI

*****This is exactly what I pray others are doing with their Comforter Ministry Newsletter – passing the newsletters along to others*** Thank you, Dot!**



From Christine H, Milwaukee, WI ~ I can give you an update on the quilt that the Ladies Guild is sponsoring for the Comforter Ministry. We anticipate it will be completed by mid-December. We had a challenging moment when we were squaring and sewing the blocks together. We had 4 blocks that we could not get square and were about a ½ inch smaller than the rest, and no fabric to make new blocks. Forgetting who the Master Quilter was, we worried about it and tried to find a solution. After some wasted time the only solution found was to put it in His hands and just sewed the blocks together. By His Grace!!! It worked!!! They went together!!! We must have needed that reminder. We are a group of 4 of various skill levels and have been blessed with this opportunity to work together.

Cleaning for a Reason

If you know any woman currently undergoing chemotherapy, please pass the word to her that there is a cleaning service that provides FREE housecleaning – once per month for 4 months while she is in treatment. All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. Cleaning for a Reason will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners to help these women. It's our job to pass the word and let them know that there are people out there that care. Be a blessing to someone and pass this information along.

<http://www.cleaningforareason.org>

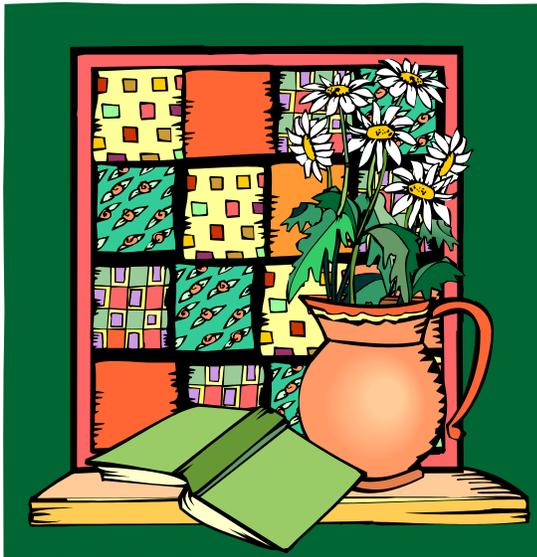
Several of you sent the above info to me, so thought I'd share with other CMN readers – **Thank you!**

Thoughts to Share . . .

REMINDER for QUILTERS

CRITERIA FOR MAKING AND DONATING A COMFORTER

- Size of the comforter should approximately measure 57"x70" (often called a *nap quilt*).
- Seam allowances should be one-half inch so comforters will hold up better but they can be one-fourth inch if necessary/easier.
- May hand quilt, machine quilt, or tie the comforter.
- Include at least one (1) heart on the front side of the comforter.
- Fabrics and batting need to be washable/easy care. Fabrics that are 100% cottons are encouraged due to skin sensitivity of many cancer patients while in treatment and after.
- Quilter's name, city, state, and date comforter is completed should be written on the back of the comforter, using some permanent method.
- Fill out the Comforter Ministry journal page entitled "Greetings from the Quilter" with words of encouragement, Bible verses, a little about yourself, a prayer, or whatever you wish to pass along to the recipients of your comforter.
- Provide three (3) colored pictures of the completed comforter, preferably all the same. Put one inside the vellum envelope opposite the "Greeting from the Quilter" page in the Comforter Ministry journal. Send the other two (2) pictures along with the completed comforter and journal; one for a Comforter Ministry album of all the comforters made for the ministry and the other for the file of the recipient of that particular comforter and journal which I maintain. Send the completed comforter, journal, and pictures to Comforter Ministry, Inc., Susanne Hanson, 12326 Fitzgerald Lane, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545-9104
- *Please be active in prayer as you make this special gift of love and comfort.*



Divine Word Women's Retreat

On Saturday, January 15, 2011 the first (and, Lord willing, annual) women's retreat at Divine Word, Plover, WI was held. I was honored to be asked to serve as their first women's retreat speaker, presenting the Comforter Ministry in the morning and leading a Comforter Ministry Prayer Gathering in the afternoon. Old friendships were renewed and new friendships made - Wonderful blessings! A wintery, snowy day helped set the scene and comfort foods served for lunch added to the

warmth of the event. Quilts were scattered throughout the gathering room, keeping the focus on "comfort" and specifically, the Comforter Ministry. Prayer served as the focus for the afternoon, starting with a Bible study followed up by prayer time. The warmth and comfort of prayer - more blessings, to be sure!

A Note From Lael H, Alaska – *I just wanted to drop you a quick note with an update on a quilt you sent my mother-in-law in Wyoming...Through all of this, she has held tight to the beautiful quilt she received. Thank you to...all the quilters who have so generously given of their material, time and Christian love!*

Sharing What I Know . . .

Because the Comforter Ministry's mission is to reach out to women with cancer, each Comforter Ministry Newsletter will include information about a specific cancer or a related subject. By being better informed about cancer, my hope is that readers will be aided in detecting cancer in regard to themselves and others and, if necessary, know where to go for further information and qualified assistance.

KIDNEY CANCER – Part 1

Each year, more than 54,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with kidney cancer. This type of cancer accounts for about two or three percent of adult cancers. No one knows what causes this cancer, but it usually occurs for no obvious reason and is rarely inherited. Kidney cancer...affects people between the ages of 50 and 70.

Kidney cancer tends to be "silent," causing no symptoms until it has spread beyond the kidneys. In fact, about 25 percent to 30 percent of kidney cancers have already spread to other parts of the body by the time they are diagnosed.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF KIDNEY CANCER

People with kidney cancer may experience:

- Blood in the urine
- Pain or pressure in the side or back
- A lump in the side or back
- Ankle and leg swelling
- High blood pressure
- Anemia (low levels of red blood cells)
- Weakness and fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Frequent fevers

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Surgery – Surgery is the main treatment for kidney cancer that has not yet spread. One technique that surgeons are using more often is *laparoscopy*. For this technique, the surgeon makes several small incisions in the abdomen to insert a tiny light, a camera, and instruments used to view and remove the tumor. This type of surgery has been shown to be just as effective as traditional surgery and easier to recover from.

If cancer has spread beyond the kidneys, it is usually treated with surgery. A number of large studies of *metastatic* kidney cancer have shown that people whose tumors are removed live longer than those whose tumors are not removed.

Immunotherapy – In another type of treatment, called *immunotherapy*, medications are used to increase the body's natural ability to fight cancer. Two such drugs – interleukin-2 (Proleukin) and interferon alfa (Intron A, Roferon-A) – can cause some kidney tumors to shrink by more than half. However, immunotherapy works in only 10 percent to 15 percent of patients. Still, in about 5 percent to 10 percent of people with kidney cancer, interleukin-2 can lead to a long-term *remission* of metastatic cancer. In some cases the tumors even disappear, and people have lived more than 20 years after their kidney cancer diagnosis. Researchers are trying to find ways to identify those patients most likely to benefit from immunotherapy. Immunotherapy is often combined with newer medications called targeted treatments.

(CANCERcare 1-800-813-HOPE (4673)www.cancer.org)

Next CMN Issue – KIDNEY CANCER Part 2

Our Featured Quilter - KAREN

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands. Psalm 90:17

Quilters are sent a questionnaire, asking several questions in regard to their life as a quilter. This is what Karen, from Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, had to share.

How did you first become interested quilting? My paternal grandmother was a dedicated church group quilter. She quilted right up to the time she had to give up her house and move to a senior home. I recall that one summer my mom suggested that the three of us work on a quilt together. I was in my teens at the time. My mom and I pieced the quilt, and when we were ready, Grandma came and helped us set it up onto a frame for quilting. The seed had been planted.

How long have you been a quilter? Although I dabbled a bit now and then, I did not start to quilt on a regular basis until 1995. My husband had gone back to school to study for the ministry and we had to move to New Ulm. I knew no one. One day, while my mom was visiting, we stopped in a local quilt shop. There were ladies in the back of the store working on a quilt together so of course we stopped to look. As we were leaving, one of the ladies followed us to the door. "Are you new to New Ulm?" I always wondered how she knew! "I'd like to invite you to our quilt guild meeting." She gave me all the details and then said she would pick me up. They were a wonderful group of salt-of-the earth women who got me through those lonely years. The seed that was planted so many years before by my mother and grandmother blossomed. I was addicted!

What is your favorite quilt pattern? Oh boy. Really? Just one? There are so many beautiful patterns and possibilities with each pattern. I think that is why we quilters never tire of the work. But I guess if I had to choose, I have always liked the effects of the Lady of the Lake block.

Just for fun – Which quilt pattern best describes your personality and why?

Off the top of my head? Crazy quilts. But not for the reason you are probably thinking! LOL Crazy quilts are made up of beautiful, richly colored scraps of this and that. Velvets, silks, stunning damasks. Scraps that depict home, people in the lives of the maker, social and political experiences, and faith. It is much like us. We are all shaped by many experiences, some filled with sorrow, many joyful. Our personalities are stitched together over time with layers and layers of these experiences. As Christian women there is one perfect thread that holds all those layers together and that is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is through Him that God the Father looks at us, not with all those disparate layers but beautifully and richly robed.

How did you learn about the Comforter Ministry? What moved you to make a comforter for the ministry? I learned about it from you, Su! The ministry was just in the beginning, planning stages when you talked about (*it*) with me at an LWMS annual convention. There are only so many quilts you can make for yourself and your family. What a great way to continue to quilt AND meet with other Christian women for fellowship. In my personal life, I no longer do a lot of quilting (my creative path has taken a new twist). The Comforter Ministry is an opportunity for me to continue to sew and through those careful stitches share the comfort and peace I have in Christ.

Please share your favorite Bible verse(s). Is there enough room? I really don't know that I can pick just one or even a couple! There are just so many, especially the ones that speak about that incredibly big five letter word, GRACE. It is heart-stopping. So for this reason I will share 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 as we glimpse at the ultimate, perfect life we already have through that grace bestowed on us by God... *The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. **And so we will be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage each other with these words.* May you be encouraged, dear Christian sisters.

A Personal Note from Su: As Karen mentioned we've known each other for some time. As you can probably guess by reading the above answers she is an especially solid, Christian lady. I treasure her friendship dearly. Karen mentioned that her "creative path" has taken a new twist. Please check out her Web site at www.karengoetzinger.com and you'll be AMAZED! **Thank You, Dear Sister in Christ!**

Words of Comfort . . .

This meditation is the fourth in a series based on the supporting scriptural references of the Comforter Ministry Mission Statement and found in the Comforter Ministry journal.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

What Shall We Do?

"Peter replied..." Replied to what? Replied to whom? What was the question? Why was it asked?

In the previous verses, Acts 2:22-36, the apostle Peter had been reviewing some past events involving those listening to him and specifically "fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem," pointing out their part in the killing of Jesus, the Son of God. Once these hearers understood and accepted the truth of what Peter said, once they realized their sin and felt deep and compelling sorrow over their sin against God, each hearer was then personally *convicted* of his sin and *convinced* he needed soul-healing through God's holy and complete forgiveness, but how? "What shall we do?" (Verses 37, 38) was their desperate and anxious question.

Peter is quick with a response in answer to their helpless plight. He tells them to *repent*, truly and sincerely admit your guilt before God (Proverbs 28:13). *Be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ*. Because of Jesus' work – His complete obedience to God the Father, obedience which included living a holy and perfect life; suffering and dying for the sins of the entire world for all time; rising from the dead to show His victory over death and the devil – the gift of baptism gives the forgiveness of sins (Titus 3:5-7).

Through the waters of baptism, through the power of the Word that is in and with the water, forgiveness of sins, as earned by Jesus Christ, is transmitted to the believer. "Baptism effects forgiveness. The Greek preposition indicates *purpose* for the forgiveness of sins. The Holy Spirit works through baptism, a means of grace, which produces faith in the believer (Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8), who receives forgiveness as a gift. Baptism (by God's Word connected with the water), forgiveness and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated in this sacrament" (Concordia Self-Study Bible Notes, page 1659, Concordia Self-Study Bible, NIV). Jesus, Himself, considered the importance of baptism and included it in His instructions to his disciples who would continue to spread Jesus' message of forgiveness and salvation (Matthew 28:18, 19). Later we read that 3,000 believed the Word (the message of Peter), repented and were baptized (Acts 2:41).

So, what does this mean for you, dear reader? How does Acts 2:38 relate to me, you may be asking yourself? Well, nothing has really changed since the days when Peter and the other disciples of Jesus lived on this same planet 2,000 years ago and obeyed the words and instructions of Jesus to *teach* and *baptize* (Matthew 28:18, 19) *in his name*. The world is still filled with sinners who sin and are in need of forgiveness. When sinners ask, "What shall we do?" Christians still reply *repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*. Baptism still gives forgiveness of sins and produces faith. Through Word and sacrament the Holy Spirit convicts, convinces and converts. He works saving faith in the hearts of those called to repentance and continues to enable believers to bring forth fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). His counsel and comfort are confirmed as absolute truths, complete in every way.

Dear Reader, "What shall we do?" Recognize the answer will never be found within ourselves but always and only in Jesus and the forgiveness of sins He has already earned for us.

Comforter Ministry, Inc.
Susanne Hanson
12326 Fitzgerald Lane
Manitowish Waters, WI 54545-9104
715-543-8483
comforterministry@yahoo.com