

FAITH IN *action*



QUILTING IS A **FAMILY AFFAIR**

MAKING LIGHT WORK WITH
BITE-SIZE COMMITMENTS

**NATIONAL QUILTING
DAY: MARCH 19**

Women and children receive quilts and kits in Zimbabwe after cyclone Idai.



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

DEAR FRIENDS,

As a young girl when I visited my grandmother, we would sit side-by-side on her sofa crocheting. Those were special times that will always be precious memories for me. Time with family putting our hands to work to create something beautiful.

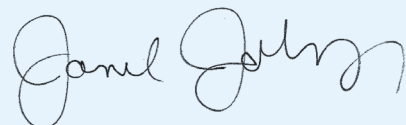
In this issue of Faith in Action, we meet three generations who are making quilting a family tradition, and we invite you to also consider how your family can get involved, too.

We also celebrate all the places your beautiful quilts and kits have traveled the past year, carrying God's love stitched into each quilt hem, rolled up in each Personal Care Kit, cinched inside each School Kit, bundled into each Baby Care Kit, and tucked inside each Fabric Kit.

As your eyes gaze upon the world map in this issue that highlights all the destinations of LWR quilts and kits last year, will you pause a moment to share a word of praise and thanksgiving that God's love has reached so far and so wide?

As we embark on this new year, I will continue to pray for you, your families, and your congregations.

With Gratitude,



JANEL JOHNSON-MOMANYI
Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager

CONNECT YOUR COMMUNITY

Your quilt and kit ministry is too important not to invite others to join! In this new series, we'll share ideas for involving others in your quilting and kit-making.



ABOVE: The Baby Care Mission Team at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL, provides an opportunity for the whole family to serve their neighbors in need of baby kits.



TIP # 2: MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR!

Quilting and kit-making doesn't have to be confined to the church basement or fellowship hall. They can also be brought home as a family activity. Are you planning a family get-together for Easter, or maybe a family reunion this summer? Why not designate a bit of time to **put your hearts and hands together as a family** in tying a few quilts or assembling kits? It's a great way to set an example of Christian service for younger family members, and a rare chance in our busy lives to work side-by-side on something special.

Did you miss Tip #1? You can find it in the Fall 2021 issue of Faith in Action. Call 1.800.597.5972 to request a copy by mail or download the PDF at lwr.org/downloads. ■

CALIFORNIA QUILTER MAKES QUILTING A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY BRENDA MEIER KIMARO

RIGHT: Aspen helps her mom Michelle tie a quilt at Clairemont Lutheran Church in San Diego, CA. Aspen's grandmother, Harriet Morris, is an active member of the quilting group and when Aspen's family visits her from Colorado she enjoys going with her grandmother to help with quilting.

Harriet Morris is passionate about quilting for Lutheran World Relief, and she wants others to feel the same way. She's quick to invite newcomers to her quilting group at Clairemont Lutheran Church in San Diego, CA.

"I'll say, 'just stop by and see what we're doing. The coffee pot is always on — you know how Lutherans are. Have a cup of coffee or have lunch with us,'" Harriet says.

"People tell me they don't know how to quilt so I ask them, 'Can you count to three? Then you can come and quilt,'" she says, explaining that the group uses triple knots when tying the quilt layers together.

Harriet's welcoming persistence has paid off, too. One woman stopped by to see what the quilting group was doing and was impressed by their work. An experienced sewist, she went home, looked up the quilt-making instructions on LWR's website and started sewing quilt tops for the group to tie.

Now in their tenth year, up to six quilters meet weekly to work on their LWR Mission Quilts. They're lucky to have a designated area in the church building for quilting so the quilters also stop by other times during the week to work when they can. Last year they made 187 quilts — 30 more than the year before.

Harriet's recruitment efforts don't stop with just members of her congregation, though. Quilting has become a family affair as she's also brought in her daughter, Michelle, and her 8-year-old granddaughter Aspen.

Michelle and Aspen actually live in Colorado Springs, CO, but pitching in with the quilting when they visit Harriet once or twice a year has become a regular activity.

"I'll say to them, 'It's quilting day today so that's what we're doing.' It's almost not an option," Harriet laughs.



As Harriet recalls, Aspen was probably about five or so when she made her first visit to the quilting group. "She was old enough to tie a knot," Michelle says. "The quilters asked Aspen if she knew how to tie a knot and she did so they got her started on that." Aspen also helps with trimming the excess strings after the knots are tied. Michelle helps out with the tying, too, and also folding the finished quilts.

Aspen aspires to take on other duties in the quilt assembly process as well. She'd love to learn to sew, says Michelle. They picked up a bag of fabric scraps from an estate sale and Aspen uses the scraps to practice her hand sewing. Michelle bought a sewing machine but hasn't set it up for Aspen to try machine sewing yet. "Maybe I can teach her when I come out to visit next summer," offers Harriet.

A highlight of attending the quilting sessions for Aspen is the time spent with her grandmother. "I like spending time with Nana," she says. Michelle also points out that the quilting has inspired Aspen to serve in other ways, too. She's always eager to join her two older brothers in activities at church, and she's an active Girl Scout as well, participating in several service projects.

Back home in Colorado, Michelle and Aspen help with the quilting efforts at Harriet's church by donating bedsheets for quilt filler. When they moved houses recently, they took their moving boxes to California for Harriet's group to pack their quilts in.

Harriet, Michelle and Aspen all look forward to future visits when they can continue to quilt together. **"It's become a passion of mine to do this and I get excited to share it. It's fun and it gives us something that we can do together,"** Harriet says. ■

SAVE THE DATE:

MARCH

19

NATIONAL
QUILTING DAY
2022

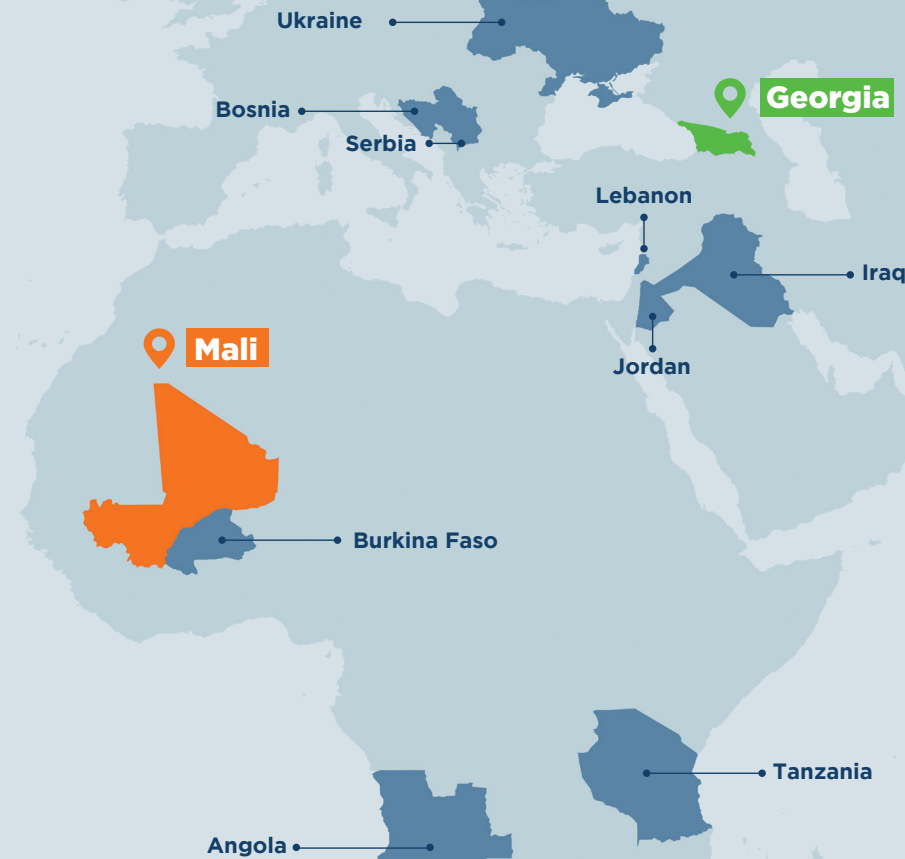
National Quilting Day 2022 is fast-approaching. We hope you'll celebrate with us! Log on to lwr.org/nqd for ideas to celebrate in your congregation and community. National Quilting Day is the perfect opportunity to celebrate your mission quilting and invite others to join you. Make plans today to celebrate on March 19!

RIGHT: Norma Freedom works on a quilt at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lake Charles, LA. "I enjoy the fellowship with other quilters," Norma says, "and the satisfaction of knowing something I enjoy doing can also help others."



In 2021, Your Love Reached Neighbors Around the World

Your love reached...



361,225
NEIGHBORS IN NEED
IN **19** COUNTRIES



122,400
QUILTS



3,230
BLANKETS



60,030
PERSONAL CARE KITS



103,880
SCHOOL KITS



38,850
BABY CARE KITS



915
FABRIC KITS



31,920
FACE MASKS



Dominican Republic

In Dominican Republic, the economic strain on parents in poor communities to provide necessary school supplies for their children is often insurmountable. Parents are sometimes forced to sell a cow or goat to cover the costs of their children's educations. A distribution of **85,000 School Kits** — tangible symbols of God's love for struggling families — by LWR partner Food for the Hungry meant parents didn't need to make extreme sacrifices to keep their kids in school.

LEFT: *Fernanda Vicioso's grandmother struggled to get the supplies she and her brother needed for school. Being involved in the Food for the Hungry project, and receiving School Kits from LWR, Sra. Vicioso notes "I see the desire [in the children] to get ahead and succeed, plus they have learned that God is in everything we do."*



Georgia

In the Republic of Georgia, the country's most vulnerable populations — people with disabilities, orphans, and those experiencing homelessness — were hardest hit when lockdowns were initiated to stem the spread of COVID-19. LWR's partner, Union of Investments and Humanitarian Projects, worked with local social service agencies and government officials to identify **50,000 people** in the greatest need to receive Quilts, Personal Care Kits, School Kits and Baby Care Kits and feel God's love through your gifts.

LEFT: *A woman smiles in delight upon receiving Quilts for her family. In the frigid cold of a Georgian winter, these gifts provide life-saving warmth and a reminder of love and care.*



Mali

LWR's longtime partner, the National Solidarity Fund, has far reaching access throughout Mali, enabling the love of Christ to be cast far and wide through distributions of your LWR quilts and kits. Some **150,000 people** in women's organizations, farmer and artisan cooperatives, schools, health centers, support groups

for people with disabilities and social service organizations in some of Mali's most remote areas received your Quilts, Personal Care Kits, School Kits, Baby Care Kits and Fabric Kits.

ABOVE: *Two women with their new Quilts and School Kits for their families, distributed during a celebration of International Women's Day hosted by the Association for Communal Development in the District of Bamako on March 8, 2021. The day was set aside as an opportunity to celebrate women as an essential link in the family and in national systems.*

The 2021 quilt and kit numbers were impacted by delayed and rescheduled gatherings, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thankfully more churches have been able to open and volunteers have graciously increased their generosity.

RIGHT:

Mount Cross Lutheran Church in Camarillo, CA, makes quilts, school kits and personal care kits for LWR. They also serve as a collection site for the southern California ingathering.



MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK WITH BITE-SIZE COMMITMENTS

by Brenda Meier Kimaro

Melissa Henry has never been an LWR Quilter. “That’s not my gift,” she says. Instead, Melissa has the gift of inspiring others — in big and small ways — to get involved with making LWR School Kits and LWR Personal Care Kits.

Melissa was first invited into the LWR Quilt & Kit Ministry by one of the congregation’s quilters, Bibs. Bibs and Melissa shared the attitude that useful things shouldn’t go to waste. So, when the quilting group received a donation of fabric not suitable for making quilts, Bibs came to Melissa and told her

the fabric would be good for making School Kit bags.

“I said to Bibs, ‘But I don’t sew,’” explains Melissa. “And Bibs said, ‘but you know people who do and you have a heart for service so try it and see how it works out.’”

And so began the LWR School Kit project at Mount Cross Lutheran Church in Camarillo, CA.

Melissa cut the donated fabric into pieces and bagged them into sets for making five LWR School Kit bags. Then she spread the word to the congregation that the kits were available to

take home and sew into bags. Melissa makes an effort to invite volunteers outside of the congregation’s quilting group because they are already busy making quilts.

Melissa estimates that, after a little experience, someone can sew five bags in only about 30 minutes and then they return the completed bags to the church. She says a short-term commitment like that works well for a lot of members of Mount Cross who are active retirees that travel a lot. “They like that this is a short commitment,” she says. “It’s not overwhelming and they don’t have to do it forever.”

Offering people short-term commitment opportunities is the secret to Melissa’s success in getting so much participation from the congregation. “That flexibility allows more people to participate,” explains Melissa.

To add the drawstrings to the bags, Melissa sets up tables on the church patio on Sunday mornings. After the service, people can stop by to help a little or a lot, depending on the time they have. One table is marked with the length of rope needed for the drawstrings so someone can stop by briefly to cut a few lengths of rope. On another table, they can sit down and thread the ropes into backpacks while they drink a cup of coffee.

Melissa cleverly created oversized “needles” out of wire hangers to make it easier to thread the ropes through the casings on the bags. Still, one gentleman was having trouble getting the second rope threaded. Melissa encouraged him just to do the first rope and then set the bags aside for someone else to carry on from there. Soon, a woman came along to thread the second rope, and another person tied the knots at the end of the ropes.

Melissa uses the same approach for collecting donations of the school supplies to put in the kits. “A lot of our congregation are seniors on a fixed income,” she explains. “To ask them to put \$50 into something is too much, but to ask them to buy a few boxes of crayons that are on sale for 50 cents, they love to do that.”

These “micro-commitments” mean that many hands make light work and also that, by the time the School Kits reach their final recipients, the fingerprints of many Mount Cross members will be on them. “I love to see people getting involved,” says Melissa. “I think of all those people that touched the kit and wanted a child to have an education. Kids are getting to go

to school because somebody bought crayons, and somebody else put a rope in a backpack. It’s just beautiful.”

With Melissa’s infectious enthusiasm for making kits and offering people easy ways to get involved, the congregation has expanded into making LWR Personal Care Kits as well. “And just give me another year and Baby Care Kits are gonna happen, too,” she laughs. “I got the bug that Bibs wanted me to get.”

The congregation’s youth take the lead on assembling the kits. Younger children — ages 4 to 9 — assemble the Personal Care Kits. Confirmation students put together the School Kits. Melissa sees the kids taking real ownership in the project, and even teaching the adults how to do the assembling. “I’m hoping seeds are being planted and we’re watering well so those kids are going to grow up to be compassionate and thoughtful and generous,” she says.

One middle-school girl has even taken up sewing the School Kit bags. “She maybe sews ten backpacks a year,” Melissa explains, “but if someone starts at 12 years old sewing ten backpacks every year for her whole life it adds up. And then it influences others.”

When that same middle schooler recognized one of the backpacks she made during the kit assembly, she stood with tears welling up and said, “I made this. And now it’s going to help someone.”

***“I MADE THIS. AND NOW IT’S
GOING TO HELP SOMEONE.”***

As passionate as Melissa is about making School Kits and Personal Care Kits, she’s conscious that eventually others will need to take over the leadership of the project. She and her husband are preparing for fulltime RV living for a couple of years and will be on the road.

“Even though I’m passionate about it, I think I’ve done a good enough job to water the seeds that the congregation is prepared to do this without me,” she says. “When you lose the one person who did it all, the program can fall apart. I’ve tried to make it easy enough that it can continue without me.” ■

ESPECIALLY FOR YOU: THE LWR QUILT & KIT AFFINITY PIN



This beautiful pin — created especially for LWR quilters and kit-makers — symbolizes God's love through the work of your hearts and hands in making LWR quilts and kits. It's a

small token of appreciation for your faithful service. Go to lwr.org/qkpin to request yours.

TO ORDER YOUR **FREE** PIN, GO TO **LWR.ORG/QKPIN**

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

LWR HEADQUARTERS:

Lutheran World Relief
700 Light Street | Baltimore, MD 21230 USA
Phone: 800.597.5972 | Email: lwr@lwr.org

LWR BROCHURES AND VIDEOS:

800.597.5972 | lwr.org/resources

QUILT & KIT MINISTRY GUIDELINES:

lwr.org/getinvolved

Warehouses are OPEN! Call for hours.

LWR WAREHOUSES:

398 East Richmond Street
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Phone: 651.457.9009

601 Main Street
PO Box 188
New Windsor, MD 21776
Phone: 410.635.8795



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INGATHERINGS MADE EASY WITH MICRO-COMMITMENTS

by Brenda Meier Kimaro

Mount Cross Lutheran Church in Camarillo, CA, serves as one of several collection sites for the Southern California Ingathering that takes place annually in October.

Melissa Henry applies the same approach she uses with kit-making at the church — **asking people to make small, short-term commitments** — to recruit volunteers to help on the collection day.

**“WE TRY TO MAKE IT A FUN DAY.
WE TRY TO MAKE IT EASY.”**

Not everyone is able to help with lifting boxes into the collection truck, so Melissa offers other ways to help out, too. “I’ll say, ‘Do you want to come help greet people who are like-minded and generous? Do you want to come greet them on behalf of Mount Cross?’” she explains.

Melissa and the congregation’s other volunteers aim to make it fun and easy for other churches to drop off their donations at Mount Cross. “We have snacks and put out chairs and invite them to sit down for a while. People come a long way to do this. We offer recommendations on good restaurants in the area so they can wait until the traffic lightens up before they drive back home,” Melissa says. “We try to make it a fun day. We try to make it easy.” ■

