



*Crescent Hill Baptist Church*  
*Advent 2017*

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## *Advent Devotionals 2017*

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." Luke 2:6-7

Throughout the ages, newly born babies have been wrapped up soon after their arrival to stay warm. Like other newly born babies, the gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes or some type of blanket soon after his birth.

During the Advent season we wait to celebrate once more the birth of Christ. Throughout the ages, as people have waited, people have swapped stories with one another. This year we have asked members of the CHBC community to share a story of a significant blanket or quilt in their life that tells a story about faith, birth, life, family, memories, change, etc.

Blankets and quilts have long kept us warm on a cold winter night. Every quilt has its own story from the designer and creator to the family member or friend that has benefitted from it beauty, warmth, and love. The story does not end there. For many quilts still live on because family or friend cherish the stories and have kept it safe throughout the years for the next generations.

As you read these stories, perhaps you will be reminded of a warm memory from your own life that you can treasure – or share with family and friends.

O come, O come, Emmanuel!

## The Warmth of Love

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love is everlasting, and his faithfulness continues to all generations. Psalm 100:5

Thirty-three years ago, as we patiently awaited the birth of our second son, we were gifted with a beautifully knitted sky blue baby blanket made in love especially for him. Days after he arrived on a snowy afternoon his big brother, dad and I were able to bring him home swaddled in that blanket. The blanket was ever present in his nursery; easily grabbed to keep him warm while rocking him to sleep, perfectly suited for games of peek-a-boo, tightly clutched by him when upset or sad, and just the right size to completely cover (and pester) the dog.

Time passed, the nursery was dismantled and the blanket was stored for safekeeping until it would be passed down to a child of his own. That was never to be; but the blanket needed a new little person to love. Happily, it has recently found a new home with our son's very first friend as she welcomed her son. Now, new memories of swaddling, cuddling and comforting another beautiful baby boy will be made.

*Thank you Lord for the gift of life and for the generosity of others whose journeys coincide with our own. May your love bundle us like a blanket, bringing us comfort, warmth, and peace. Amen.*

Debra D. Williams

## Christmas Quilt 1910

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 2 Timothy 1:5

This quilt was made with loving hands by my great-grandmother, Sarah Gertie Best White, in 1910, on their farm in Perryville, Kentucky. She was raised in the Deep Creek Community of Mercer County, KY. She married Ed White Jr., and they had one daughter, Beulah Lee White Robertson. She helped to raise me. Beulah told me, as a young lad about this quilt, and how she too loved it at Christmas time because of the colors, red and green.

I grew up in a loving home where Christ was the center. My grandmother would not even think of me doing anything on Sunday unless it was absolutely necessary. Grandmother also loved making quilts, and I loved to watch her sew the pieces together, and then see the beautiful work at the end. Each stitch is sewn with love. Some quilts have a name for the design. Others were solely made to keep us warm on a cold winter night.

Over the years, Brian and I have had this quilt hanging in our home.

May we all be mindful of the love that went into each stitch, and the heritage of the quilt and the story of its creation as they are handed down from generation to generation.

*Dear loving God, we are truly grateful for our dear mothers and grandmothers that help to teach us of your love to us. With all their love to us, including providing us warmth with the creation of quilts to adorn our beds for warmth, we give you thanks. May we always be reminded of your faith to us, and continue to show your love and faith to others. Amen.*

Greg Robertson

## Quilts Show Love

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. John 4:7

Just as each quilt has its own story, each person is an individual with a unique story.

Quilts have been part of my life since my early childhood. Since my sister and I shared a double bed, we were kept warm in winters by a “Dutch Doll” quilt. That quilt later became the pattern for the first quilt that I made. Fabric scraps from dresses my sister and I sewed during our teen-age years became part of my first quilt.

After my Grandmother’s death, we discovered a “Jacob’s Ladder” quilt top and a stack of “Wagon Wheel” pieces on a shelf in her closet. Since Grandmother was not a quilter, assumption was that those items were created by Grandpa’s mother and sister (my great-grandmother and great aunt) who had been the quilters in the family. My Mother recognized some of the squares of material from her childhood dresses. Both of those quilts I treasure since completing them, feeling a special bond to relatives long since gone.

My preference is for hand-quilting rather than piecing the top for the quilt. As a wedding gift, I created a “Double Wedding Ring” quilt for my son and his wife. Included in that quilt were scraps from both of their childhood clothes. To welcome my three grandchildren into our family, each one received a handmade quilt.

To me, quilting is both calming and rewarding. My hope is that quilts will be connections to family members for future generations.

The quilting stitch holds the quilt together – the top, the batting and the backing – to make it stronger and more secure. God’s love is what holds each of us together, making us stronger and more secure.

*Dear God, help each of us to feel Your love and connection to each other. Amen.*

Diane Taylor

## The Mystery Quilter

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. . . .  
Matthew 1:1-12

As families gather for Christmas, take the opportunity to learn more about the stories of the older people and their ancestors. There's a saying that whenever a person dies, a library is closed.

We have an old quilt that has been passed down over the years, but only when going through some of my mother's papers did I learn who made the quilt. Leila's father, E.C. Routh, sent her a letter quoting a note his second wife, Alice, had written about the contents of a cedar chest: "1 patchwork quilt in designs by my mother 1883."

I'd seen a photo of Alice's mother, Louanna Lofley, but didn't know much about her other than Alice was her only child, and her husband (and E.C.'s uncle), Kenzie Lafayette Routh [b.1837] served in Gordon's Georgia brigade throughout the war and was present at Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865. Alice said she was a grown woman before she realized "damn Yankee" was two words.

For this Advent meditation, I decided to do a little more research and learned that Louanna Henrietta Clay Lofley, born Jan 26, 1844, was the youngest of eight children whose parents, William Lofley and Margaret Wilkes, lived in Calhoun, McMinn Co, East Tennessee. The family moved to Macon Co, Georgia possibly after the Civil War, and she married Kenzie L. Routh there in 1866. They lived for several years in Houston Co, GA and then moved back to East Tennessee after Alice was born in 1874, settling in Philadelphia, Loudon Co. TN, where Kenzie worked on the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad [org. 1869.]

The family likely attended the Sweetwater Baptist Church just south of Philadelphia built in 1822 by Kenzie's great uncle, Eli Cleveland, and still standing. Kenzie's mother and father had likely been married in that church before they moved to Deep Springs, GA where Kenzie and nine of his younger siblings were born. Louanna crafted her quilt in 1883 when Alice was nine. Alice graduated from the George Peabody College for Teachers [est. 1875] in Nashville and taught school near Bristol, TN, for several years.

Louanna died in 1899 at 58 yo, and Alice (25 yo) and Kenzie (62 yo) moved to Houston, TX, where she taught at Stephen F. Austin and San Jacinto high schools, and he traded stories with fellow veterans about the War. Alice lived with her father and looked after

him until he died in Feb 1926 at age 88 of “senility.” In July, six months later, Alice married her first cousin, E.C. Routh after his first wife died in 1925 leaving him with six children [including Leila Routh Arnett] to rear. It’s speculated that “Cousin Alice” didn’t know what she was in for, but according to the inscription E.C. placed on her tombstone, “She hath done what she could.” [Mark 14:8] Indeed, she was a great help to E.C. during his tenures as editor of the *Oklahoma Baptist Messenger* and later *The Commission*.

Louanna received hand-me-downs from her seven siblings which she incorporated into the many types of fabric that make up the star patterns of the quilt. She was living in East Tennessee at the time and worked on the quilt when not helping Kenzie with the garden or Alice with her studies. The small 5x6 ft. quilt is finely crafted and shows the work of someone who valued discipline and order. Her daughter, Alice, demonstrated these qualities in her life. The design of the quilt has star burst patchwork squares alternating with white squares containing stitched designs of leaves, sun flowers, baskets, wreaths, grape clusters, etc. There are ten columns and twelve rows, and, interestingly, the stitched designs in the white squares are “randomly” distributed. There may be a mysterious coded message, but the best I can come up with now is that there are five sunflower designs for the five letters in MERRY, nine leaf designs for the nine letters of CHRISTMAS, and seven diamond designs for the seven letters of REJOICE!

*God, thank you for the gift of memory and for the great cloud of witnesses who surround us. Amen.*

John Arnett

## Mother Bee's Blanket

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. Proverbs 31:10

She was knitting just as fast as her nimble fingers would allow. Our first baby was very much on the way – due the middle of October. Mother Bee had been working on the blanket since the announcement was first made. She chose blue yarn as the background color and would anchor the little pink bear in the corner. I loved this blanket already...as I loved her. We were in joyful anticipation, but on April Fool's Day we were forced to deal with an acute sense of loss. Cancer was diagnosed which would take her life just a few months later. Mother Bee had fought the good fight. She was our strength and our delight. She left the unfinished blanket and it was my goal to complete her work in her memory. The stitches may be a bit uneven and the little bear's ear somewhat lopsided, but it serves as a reminder of meeting life and life's interruptions with grace and hope. It is a reminder of my wonderful mother-in-law and her desire to wrap our Melissa in her very own special blanket, and in years to come will offer the same story and some warmth to my great grandchildren and theirs as well.

*Many thanks, dear Lord, for my Mother Bee and for the ways in which she continues to influence my life. Amen.*

Mary Ann Bootes



## Pondering

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.” Luke 2:19 KJV

He could whistle the hymns but was forgetting our names. But that was OK because you could still see the delight of recognition in his eyes when he saw you – at least for a while longer. The slow devouring progress of Alzheimer’s was diminishing my dad. It hit him early in his mid-fifties and before much was known and understood about this terrible disease. As an MD, he recognized his own symptoms and diagnosed himself. I’ve often shuddered to think what that must have felt like.

As his muscle strength waned, he spent more time in his favorite chair. My mom would bring him special items to see, hold, and touch to draw out his remembering. Some of his favorites were pictures of his four grandchildren, ages one to nine years. Inspired by the desire to warm his memory as well as his body, we “three kids” decided to make him a memory lap quilt for Christmas 1987. Squares of muslin crossed the miles from Colorado and Kentucky and were stamped with the handprints of the grandkids. Mom said he would sit with the quilt over his knees and slowly rub his hand over each handprint as if caressing each one. Now that he is gone, I have often hoped that even after his words left him, that his heart pondered and remembered the love stamped and sewn into those prints of precious hands that covered his lap as he stroked them.

*Our Father God, thank you for hearts that ponder and remember the gifts and blessings that warm and fill our lives. Could Mary have fully known the gift of love embodied in your baby son that lay in the manger as she “kept all those things and pondered them in her heart”? May we forever remember and share your gift.*

Alice Adams

## Do You Remember?

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Philippians 1:3

In days gone by, it was a tradition for the members of country churches to stitch a memory quilt for a pastor who was well regarded as he left to take another church or to retire. Our family owns such a quilt given to my late father, Rev. Robert F. Tucker, by the ladies of Holly Grove Baptist Church located in rural Mississippi.

Each family was to create a square for the quilt and then the "quilting ladies" would gather and sew the squares together and then sew this finished piece onto a backing with a cotton batting or filler cloth sandwiched in between. A decorative binding would be sewn around the edges of the quilt after the entire quilt sandwich had been sewn together using various types of stitches, some functional and others decorative.

The word quilt comes from Latin meaning a stuffed sack. The Egyptian pharaoh had quilts and the Crusaders brought back quilts from the Middle East. Patchwork quilting became popular in the English colonies in the 1770s. Quilting bees were popular ways of communal work--doing something useful while enjoying each other's company and perhaps serving refreshments. One of the more popular attractions at state fairs are the displays of quilted handicraft. While some use traditional patterns such as Nine-Patch, Shoo Fly, Churn Dash, and the Prairie Queen, others take the art form to new levels of beauty and color. Because of the work involved, handmade quilts now sell for hundreds or thousands of dollars. They are usually valued and protected by the grateful recipients of these family heirlooms.

When we look at the few quilts we have, we remember who gave them to us and any story behind them. For this church memory quilt, while we no longer remember all the families whose names appear on the quilt, we do recognize the love and work that went into the quilt. We are grateful that those members of one of my father's early churches thought enough of him to create this work of art.

*Father, may we stop and remember the love and appreciation shown to us by those who gift us with their handiwork. Amen.*

Dale Tucker



## The Sick Quilt

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. Psalm 46:1-3

That's the way the sick quilt always made me feel. It was actually a normal quilt, pieced and sewn by my grandmother and great-grandmother in Southern-most Illinois. But it was the quilt that Mom brought to each of her 3 children to cover and comfort us when we were sick. So no matter its other use, we called it the sick quilt. I loved it.

After we all left home, and the wear and tear was showing, Mom used it to cover her deep freeze. I saw it in '88, and begged Mom to bring it from Liberia, for me. She actually did the next year, the year prior to final evacuation. She brought it in her suitcase, and the torn, ratty thing gave Customs agents pause. Later, I asked Lesa Chandler to divide and hem it, leaving a segment of the sick quilt for the 3 kids and Mom.

In Advent, many of us come into this season of light and joy with our own sick-ness. Deep sorrow, illness, separation, and loneliness leave us searching for comfort. Surely the abiding love of God expressed through generations of faithful people and easing experiences can cover us as the sick quilt did the Bellinger children God does cover us with that love, and gives us love to hold on to in our own suffering.

*Healing God, enfold us with that love with which you have covered us since before time began. Amen.*

Ann Hammon

**Nooooo!**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:1-3

My daughter Amy was 2 or 3 years old; she spoke well but her vocabulary was still limited. She had just returned from a visit to her maternal grandmother's house, perhaps at the birth of her younger brother. As I tried to help her get ready for bed, she handed me her newly washed favorite receiving blanket, one she dearly loved and slept with every night. "Do like My (her childish name for her grandmother)!" she commanded. "What did My do?" I innocently asked. She took the blanket back to show me, but simply wriggled the two top ends up and down. I took the blanket back and repeated her motions. "NOOOOO!" she wailed, "No!"

I don't remember how I calmed her down and got her to sleep, and I never thought to ask My about it. I'm sure the blanket warmed her. And she clearly forgave me in later years as I nearly showered her in soft warm robes, knit caps and mittens, and other symbols of a father's love. But I will never forget the "NOOOO" when I didn't do it like My.

*Dear God, let us always listen to the little children and help us keep them warm and dry!  
Amen.*

John Birkimer

## **Quilts: Comfort, Warmth, Love**

She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger.... Luke 2:6-7

A quilt – the Little Dutch Girl pattern – was made by my mother and resided on my bed until I went to college. At that point it was worn and tattered in multiple places and it made me sad. But Mother said it was made to be used and not just to look at. This quilt gave me warmth, comfort and lots of love as I slept underneath it. And like the Velveteen Rabbit, it was and is real as my mother's love. I still have a square of it and a wonderful memory of the quilt and my mother.

*Dear God, thank you for your warmth and comfort and, most of all, your love. Amen.*

Beth Wade

## Grandmother's Quilt

She must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. I Tim.5:10 –

This is more about my grandmother than the quilt. She and my grandfather had eleven children. Three died as infants. My grandfather, a farmer and Baptist Minister, died at an early age and left her with seven children at home, ages one to fourteen.

She was faced with raising seven children on her own so she did any kind of work she could find. She made most of the clothes for the family and used the scrap material to make quilts - some for her own use and some for others. Several years after my grandfather died she moved to Louisville with four children still at home.

She worked full time and usually had boarders. We lived with her while I was in high school and I helped with chores. After she retired, making quilts was her past time. She made "every day" and "good" quilts. Starting with my Mom, the oldest, the children could choose a quilt. After all eight chose one she would start over. Since I was the oldest grandchild by nine years and a granddaughter, she would occasionally give one to me.

I did not choose this quilt. One day while visiting her she asked if I liked it. She said no one wanted it because of the colors so she gave it to me. That was at least fifty years ago and I have used it regularly since. It may not be the most beautiful quilt but to me it is a constant reminder of my grandmother's love and generosity.

*May each of us take the "scraps" that are in our lives and turn them into something beautiful and useful for others to enjoy. Amen.*

Virginia Johnston

## Joy, Warmth, and Comfort

My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love which shows itself in action. John 3:18

This year we said goodbye to my mother-in-law, Elizabeth, in May, and we will soon welcome our granddaughter. Most of the quilts which have special meaning for me are baby quilts given to us when Brian and Phil were born. What memories they give to us, and now they have been washed for use for our granddaughter. Two nights ago, a dear friend brought over a beautiful quilt she had made for the dear little girl who will be a part of our family. As John's mother was nearing the end of her life, we witnessed her receiving a quilt made to honor Veterans. When the Hosparus volunteer presented the quilt to her, we listened with joy and respect as Elizabeth told stories of her time as a WAC in London during World War II. Now John's sisters have the quilt to pass on to the next generation.

The soft feel of blankets brought joy to me as I cuddled and read to our sons when they were little boys. In recent years I have thoroughly enjoyed watching Lui Moo, Paw Say Roe and Ethemoo cuddle under blankets and watch TV. Covering up with a blanket gives pleasure and comfort.

Many people lack the warmth and security of warm blankets. May we remember those children and adults who have no shelter and those who have had to flee their countries due to war and violence. They need the physical comfort of blankets to protect them from the cold and the emotional warmth and love of caring folks around them.

*Dear God, we are grateful for the love and joy we have shared through the gift of quilts and blankets. You wrap us in your loving arms and care for us. Help us to show your love by helping those who need shelter from the cold. Amen.*

Betty McIntee



## **Afghans Keep You Warm**

She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger. Luke 2:7, The Message

When Jesus was an infant he was wrapped in a blanket. When I was a baby, newborn babies were kept warm with heavy blankets, quilts or afghans. My Dad made certain his children were always warm because Dad was frequently cold as a child himself living in a sod, and later wooden, homestead house my grandfather built. Grandad had walked 25 miles from the railroad in Minot, N.D. to build the homestead outside of Lansford, N.D. After he married my Grandma Anna they sometimes had to sleep under a quilt with raw bread dough in the winter so it would raise from the heat of their bodies and be able to be baked in the morning.

Mom developed macular degeneration in her last few years of life, however, in the nine years between Dad's death and her own death, mom made over 20 afghans. Whenever Kmart had a yarn sale, she purchased many skeins of various colored yarns for her crocheting. The afghans were given to her children, grandchildren, friends and even to husbands-to-be of her friends. She loved to surprise people with an afghan for a special occasion. She also enjoyed crocheting toy animals for children. She would sneak up on a child and put an animal on their lap. She probably did 30 or more animals in her later life. I like to think Jesus mother also made blankets to keep her children and others in the village warm.

*God, thank you for warm clothes for children. Remind us that not all children have warm clothes and we need to provide them to these children. Amen.*

Sharleen Birkimer

## Consuming Treasures

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21

When I was a small child, my sister and I slept under the same quilt, one handed down from previous generations. It had big pink flowers and green leaves, tattered at the edges and soft all over, and treasured. Like any well-used household item, it eventually wore out and went away into a basement somewhere. We were too sentimental to throw it away but too disgusted by its appearance to keep it in sight any more.

I lost track of it over the years. It may have eventually been lost altogether, left behind or tossed out in a move. Or it may be sitting in a barrel in my garage with other "treasures" as I write this devotion. My sentimental nature leads me to preserve many things in old cardboard boxes that I will probably never open. They wait to be consumed by moth and rust.

In the end, although I seek to preserve these treasures, many of the things in the garage have already transcended this earth. They have already been preserved in the memory box of the mind, passed on in stories to the next generation, sunk down into the chambers of the mind and heart where treasured things tend to venture.

That's where Christmas seems to have ventured over the years as well. Not just the worn out plastic tree and handmade ornaments of childhood, too mangled to hang on the new tree, but also the feelings and smells and traditions, the tastes and sights and memories. They are stored up deep within, in the treasure box of mind and heart that dwells within us but also dwells beyond us, as if there were some sort of trap door to the kingdom carefully sewn into the lining.

God of Peace, May we find our Christmas treasure this year, not in boxes or storage bins, not in gift bags or wrapped in paper, but in the treasure box of love and memory deep with us. May we find Christmas treasure in each other and in You. Amen.

Brittani Bair



## **The Prized Blanket**

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. *Hebrews 12:11*

My red and white blanket with the big M brings back many memories. "Dale, why don't you come out for football? We will help you lose some of that lard," advised Dave Holloway, coach of the Murfreesboro, Arkansas Rattlers. I took his advice and sure enough, after hours of running wind sprints and along cross country trails and lifting tons of black metal weights I trimmed from a size 40 waist to a size 36.

My lard turned into muscle but there were many other benefits as well. I became part of the team although I was never great at football. Perhaps they just needed another tackling dummy I thought. My senior year I was to be the right tackle of the first team; however "Rootbeer" had other plans. He wanted the spot more than I did and broke my nose in practice to prove it! (hard to do when wearing a helmet and faceguard). I conceded the spot him, believing that he drank more than root beer and was probably one guy who would end up in jail. Interestingly, Tommy cleaned up his act and was elected mayor of the little town!

For many years I have looked back on my high school football days as good times which I somehow survived. I also believe that playing football changed my life. I lost weight, gained confidence and learned how to be part of a team. I could have been a better player if I had spent more time learning the plays and had played more aggressively. Actually I was afraid I would hurt someone but they did not seem to have the same concern for my welfare. My one big play was when I alone stood between the running back and the goal line and was able to tackle him with two fingers hooked in his jersey. He was not expecting me to be there because I was out of place!

While there was little "class consciousness" in Murfreesboro, it was common knowledge that in high school the jocks were on a higher plane than those in the band or in Future Farmers of America! It was a special thing to "letter" or earn a jacket with the big M on it. This meant that you played more because you learned the plays and how to "read" what was happening on the field. You also strengthened your body to withstand the blows and have enough stamina to keep doing your job. Next best thing to a jacket was a red and white wool blanket with a big white M on it--a letter for survival! We worked hard to reach the goal, and as a result we won the district championship both my junior and senior years.

At my 50th high school class reunion, I had a chance to talk with Coach Dave Holloway. I was expecting him to agree with me that I wasn't much of a football player. He contradicted me saying that he could always count on me to enthusiastically rally the team. We all have our roles to play it seems, even if it is being a tackling dummy and an enthusiastic B Team player. Sometimes you are valued for consistently and enthusiastically showing up to do the work.

*Dear Father, help us to understand that you value us so much that you sent your son to Bethlehem to show us a new way of seeing what is valuable and what is not. Thank you for sending people into our lives who mentor and guide at just the right times. Amen.*

Dale Tucker

## **“Mamma Boe’s” Family Quilt:**

We went to the river and began to speak to the women there. One of the women was Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. When she and her household was baptized, she invited us to her home...so come and stay at my house. Acts 16:11-15:

As two young sisters, our Mom designed and made our clothes. Our Dad’s mother, Mama Boe, gathered up the clothing scraps and pieced a Fan quilt top in 1955. Aunt Mary, Dad’s sister, trimmed and completed the quilting in 1956. For decades our family has been wrapped in this treasured memory quilt.

Shirt Sample Quilt: Made of salesman samples, from the estate of Cousin Era DeDoe, 1958.

Star Red, White and Blue Quilt: Designed and quilted by family friend Roberta Henson, 1982.

*I am grateful for these elder women whose legacy lives on in our family quilts. Amen.*

Joyce DeBoe

## Gifts

As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4: 10

As I reflect during this Advent season, I keep coming back to the phrase "Life is Gift." Now what does that have to do with this year's Advent theme of quilts, you may ask. After experiencing an illness during the past year, I have come to learn first-hand what it means to lose the ability to do seemingly simple tasks that each of us take for granted.

Back to the quilt theme, what does it take to make a quilt? It takes many gifts, among them, commitment, time, talent; and when completed there is satisfaction and pride in a job well done. From a practical point of view, the quilt provided a way to use scraps of fabric, put together to keep your family warm during the winter.

Each one of us has unique talents, skills and gifts. May we use these gifts we have been given in a positive way to make a difference in our sphere of influence, be it in our church, neighborhood or person to person.

*God, give each of us the wisdom to use our own gifts for good. Amen.*

Rae Taylor

## **A Patchwork of Joy**

For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. I  
Samuel 1:27

Tears come to my eyes when I think about that tiny hospital wristband and souvenir footprint of my first child. He was so small then – now he's almost six feet tall and twenty-seven years old – yet it seems only yesterday that I was prayerfully awaiting his birth at Norton's Children's Hospital.

While it took some time decided when to have a child, it took even longer to realize the goal. It seemed the natural consequence of a marriage several years old. I was in my thirties, older than many of my friends having a first child, but I was comforted in the fact that Ron and I were ready. We both had stable careers, a nice home, and were financially able to cope with the extra responsibilities that come with a baby.

But just saying you want to have a baby and actually beginning the process are two different things. After two years of unsuccessful trying, I knew it was time to change doctors and see if she could give me some clues to push things along.

My new ob-gyn had a sincere demeanor, and I felt I could trust her judgment. After a couple of months, she found that my prolactin levels were unusually high and ordered a CAT scan to see if there was something awry in my pituitary gland. Sure enough, a tumor was affecting my ovulation. Two choices were explained – cut it out or try to shrink it. A neurosurgeon told me he would get to the tumor through my nose; but since the area was so small and the gland responsible for so many functions, care would have to be taken so as not to do some damage. He recommended no surgery; try a medication and beware of a sign that the tumor was growing and pressing on the optic nerve – black spots in my vision.

All of this to have a baby. I asked God, "Why me?" I felt perfectly healthy, but I knew I had to follow the prescription to even have an attempt at getting pregnant. The first few days of taking the drug made me deathly ill. Food helped cushion its effect. Great – an excuse to eat. Only, I couldn't look at food – only saltine crackers assuaged the gnawing feeling in my stomach.

Six months later, I became pregnant. While the doctors couldn't x-ray to see if the tumor had shrunk or disappeared, obviously it wasn't having the same effect. We were thrilled. I immediately bought the right books, ate the right foods, and looked forward to summer



break beginning. “How perfect,” I thought. About the eleventh week of the pregnancy, I miscarried. We were devastated. All we kept asking my doctor was, “Why?” She didn’t have an answer. My faith was being tested – “Maybe I can’t have a child.”

Genetic screening was ordered on the tissue; the results were perfectly normal, just a stoppage in development. My doctor thought that maybe after I went off the medication that I had a drop in progesterone, a natural hormone that nourishes the fetus. The next pregnancy, she would prescribe a synthetic to do the same thing. She suggested we wait three months and put me back on the nauseating medicine. But this time, I didn’t mind. I was ready for it; I was on a mission, attempting to live life as normally as possible, without thinking, “It’s now or never.”

Several months later, we were pregnant and cautiously optimistic. At the end of my school year, I was almost four months along, past the critical first trimester; the summer provided some much-needed rest and time for preparing for the baby. One sunny Saturday afternoon while attending an antique fair at Locust Grove, we found a lovely antique baby quilt with a rainbow of colors – yellow, green, blue, pink. Since we decided not to find out the sex of the baby ahead of time, we thought the quilt would be the perfect piece with which to start decorating the nursery. We could only imagine how this same quilt provided warmth and comfort for another couple’s infant child many years ago.

With 4:30 AM labor on November 8<sup>th</sup>, the process of having our first child came to fruition. After eighteen hours of ice chips, countless monitor readings, and contractions, we made the decision to have a Caesarean section, because the baby was becoming stressed with each, more intense, contraction, and I was running a fever, my respiration getting shallower. It really wasn’t a difficult decision. After all the worry and time that had passed, I wanted nothing to happen to this little person inside of me. At 1:48 PM, with a loud cry, this little person became my son Cameron.

Two years and seven months later, we were blessed with welcoming a beautiful baby daughter, Millicent, into the world. The nursery, adorned with the same quilt, provided her with the same colorful surroundings. While the nursery is now an upstairs den, the quilt proudly hangs on our hall wall, ever the reminder that God always supplies our needs.

*Dear God, always help us remember that you have a divine plan for our lives. Amen.*

Valorie Horn

## **Blooming**

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

Two years ago I had a girl come to my 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at the DePaul School. She had been really struggling at her former school. Her parents were desperate to “get their daughter back.” She had lost confidence in herself and wasn’t using the abilities she had.

At the end of the year, she and her mom surprised me with a beautiful quilt that they had made for me as a thank you for helping her “bloom again.” That makes it all worthwhile as we nurture and teach and hope to watch precious lives flourish, grow, and bloom and color the earth with their radiance.

*Lord, thank for you the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a struggling student. Amen.*

Alice Adams

## A Grandmother's Love

Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail. 1 Corinthians 13:7

In 1967 when I was three years old, my Grandmother and Grandfather Snider sold their family farm and retired and moved into a newly built small brick home in the town of Bloomfield in Nelson County, Kentucky. Finally free to relax after 40 years of tough farm life, my Grandmother needed a project to deal with her life transition and all of her new free time. With a love for sewing she began to make quilt tops for every one of her 17 grandchildren. Through the years I can remember my mother opening our family cedar chest where all the family treasures were kept and she would pull out all 7 of the quilt tops made for myself and my brothers and sisters. We would lay them out and compare the different patterns and would argue who had the prettiest one. She would also tell us when we grow up it was our job to get the quilt finished or “quilted” by someone. I remember being amazed by the detail and the idea that my grandmother would love me enough to undertake such a job. Time passed and life happened and my quilt top sat unfinished in that chest for nearly 50 years. It seemed so sad that something so beautiful, made with great joy and hope, something intended to provide warmth and comfort sat in a plastic bag, folded and unfinished and hidden from sight. At last, in the fall of 2016 I decided it was well past time to do something with that wonderful gift and began to search in earnest for someone to finish what my Grandmother had started for me so long ago. Luckily, I found the perfect person right within my CHBC family. That person was Ms. Virginia Johnston who is a good friend and grandmother figure to my children, and I soon found out, a talented quilter! Ms. Johnston graciously accepted the job to complete the forgotten quilt and after a few short months the project was finished. It gives me great joy that the quilt has finally been completed as my Grandmother intended. Part of the reason I never had the quilt finished is because I wanted it quilted by hand, the way my Grandmother would have done it. Every little piece of fabric had to be outlined with thread to match the pattern. 50 years after my quilt was started, it was now finally complete, thanks to Ms. Johnston. My quilt is no longer buried in the dark chest but now will be hanging brightly in the church this advent season. A display of faith, hope and patience at last, fully realized, for all to see. The long wait is over!

*God, I give thanks for the love shown to me throughout my life by family and friends and pray that I can find a way sufficient to also share my love with others.*

Spencer Holt

## **A Blanket of Love**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. . . . Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14: 27

My grandmother, Hilda Weigel Leiker, made blankets. Not fancy or decorative quilts but blankets that kept you warm in the upstairs of an old farmhouse with one heater in the family room downstairs. You see back then when a farmer bought a wool suit the pants wore out over time but the jacket worn for church, funerals and weddings just never wore out. So Grandma collected these wool suit coats, cut them in small squares and made warm, cozy blankets. When the Kansas winds came in from the north it was not unusual to layer three or four of these heavy wool blankets on top of you to keep out the cold. It sometimes felt like you were strapped to the bed barely able to turn over for the weight of all those suit coats on top of you. Grandma's blankets would never have won a prize at the fair but Grandma didn't care.

They did exactly what she intended for them - provided warmth and comfort when it was needed. And that is what my grandma did for her twelve children and all her grandchildren.

My image of God is my grandmother rocking one of her many grandchildren wrapped in one of her warm wool blankets.

*May Grandma Leiker's and God's warmth and love be with all those in need in this world. Amen.*

Diane Robl

*(Faded handwritten names on a torn piece of paper)*

John Diehl

Mrs. Elizabeth Smeggs

Mr. George Smeggs

Mrs. Mary Allen

Mr. James Smeggs

Mrs. Freda Smeggs

James Smeggs

Kate Bender

Mr. George Bender

Mrs. Anne Bender

Mrs. Wm. Taylor

Mrs. Clara Taylor

Mrs. Sophia Bender

Christ  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Millsboro, Pa.  
Rev. Russell Shaffer  
Mrs. Josephine Shaffer  
1980

## The Signature Quilt

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you...Exodus 20:12

The Pennsylvania Signature Quilt from 1930 was presented to the pastor and his wife (Reverend and Mrs. Bruce Shaffer) of my parents' church in Pittsburgh, PA. It was done as a fundraiser for the church and, if memory serves, an individual paid 25 cents to have one's name as one of the spokes and 50 cents to have it placed in the center. I don't know if one person did all the embroidery or quilting or any other particulars. I was gifted with this quilt in the early 1970's while in my 20's because the pastor and his wife had no children, they had been good friends of my family for decades and they knew I loved quilts and most anything old.

I began to display it when decorating a room for our grandchildren and decided to fill the room with sentimental items such as the quilt, my mother's apron from her childhood and several pieces she's cross stitched. It hung on the wall until we moved two weeks ago. My plan is to hang it in our guest bedroom in the near future. I love it because most of the names are familiar to me and the cheery yellow color brightens any day for me. I feel so fortunate to have been given it so many years ago!

*Lord, thank you for long-time friends and memories of those we love. Amen.*

Marianne Taylor

## Mother's Dream Quilt

We put our hope in the Lord; He is our protector and strength. ... May your constant love be with us, Lord. We put our hope in you. Psalms 33: 20, 22

For years women have gathered together to make quilts focused on a particular movement or cause. The stories shared, the loving hands and touch, leave timeless marks on their creations.

The Mother's Dream Quilt Project, which came about as a part of the grassroots work of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, has allowed women to voice their stories and dreams about ending gun violence. Creating a special block of fabric for individuals and dreams lost to gun violence has been a way for survivors to express themselves and honor their loved ones.

Last year during Advent the Bluegrass Mothers Dream Quilt was displayed at CHBC to remember the fourth anniversary of the Sandy Hook School Shooting. In the center of the Bluegrass quilt is a picture of Andre Lamont O'Neal, Jr., age 8, who was killed when he was at his babysitter's home.

Recently, I was privileged to participate with other women working on designing blocks for another quilt. Onda, the grandmother of Andre, and I worked on cutting out and making a block which she used to honor and express dreams for Midwest Church of Christ, where we met that afternoon. She told me she is trying to take action to work on gun violence and became a member of Moms for that reason. It was inspiring to sit with other women, young adults, middle age, and seniors; black and white working together on such a special tribute.

During this Advent season I take comfort in the hope we have because of a loving God who embraces us with steadfast love. This hope sustains us in our efforts, and God comforts us when we grieve lives lost to gun violence.

*Lord, we thank you for your steadfast love and the hope and comfort you lovingly give us each day. Amen.*

Betty McIntee. Betty is a member of the Kentucky Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

## **The Quilt That Did Not Get Made**

Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea". And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph In a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt". Matthew 2:2a; 12-13

When my mother was first aware she was pregnant, she decided to make a quilt for her unborn child. She embroidered a picture of Jesus with the little children. She intended to make a quilt and put this picture in the middle of the covering. She did not get the quilt made by the time I was born because she and my Dad got working on their newly rented farm land. Mr. Henning was dismayed with Dad's farming methods because Mr. Henning used oxen and a wooden plow. Dad was the first farmer on that land who used metal tires and small grain drill on the land. Mr. Henning was convinced metal would ruin the land. Mom started decorating the house and helping dad with the farm, but they moved to another 800 acre piece of land purchased from another homesteader, Iver Bjerkan, just before I was born. I lived on that land until I went to college. Finally, Mom gave me the quilt piece after all five of us children were born and in college. I had it framed and hung in my bedroom.

When I read the birth of Jesus in the Bible, I see several instances of plans that did not go as expected. Joseph did not plan to become a father in a stable. The wise men did not plan to have to go home another way; Joseph and Mary did not intend to go to Egypt. We have to learn to rely on prayer and God's grace for the unexpected events in our lives.

*God, thank you for your presence, love and grace when the unexpected occurs in our lives.  
Amen*

Sharleen Birkimer



## Memories

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

In 1939 in Rose Hill, Virginia, my father, a school teacher, applied for a government meat inspection job in Chicago, Illinois.

My father, mother, and we four sisters were preparing and looking forward for this day to venture out in the big windy city of Chicago. We were deciding what we should take of our belonging that would fit in our 1938 four door Chevy. Of course, we were limited on how much we could take. I remember neatly folding our quilts and blankets for three beds and placing them in the back seat of the car. We sisters piled in and sat upon them. A few of mother's pans and skillet, our clothing and a few personal items were placed in back in the small trunk. After eight hours of traveling without any major problems we arrived in Chicago to our five room apartment.

I know it took faith and courage for my mother and dad to venture out into a big city and begin a new life with four girls. I was twelve years old and the youngest. We joined the Parkland Baptist Church the second Sunday after we arrived.

*Lord, thank you for times that you strengthen our faith and trust in you. Amen.*

Mary Cook

## Quilts and Family Heirlooms

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... Hebrews 12:1

Quilts are and always have been an item in no short supply in my house and family. Some were an item made for survival, some were an item of beauty and for gifting to others. Most were made by each of my grandmothers and friends or their mothers and friends.

My maternal grandmother was an educated woman and a social worker type at heart. She taught people how to make straw mattresses after the 1937 flood in their small Oklahoma town wiped out many people's homes and possessions. People were "living" in upper levels of barns and were brought to government centers for every social service available then by row boats and other means. She taught them to bundle and tie handfuls of straw, and how to make a cover to keep this together forming a "mattress" of sorts. Then she taught them how to take any available fabric and make a blanket or a very primitive quilt, which was made by placing layers of fabric or batting on top of the outer fabric, and topping it with an additional layer, all of which was held together by means of yarn ties closely spaced to keep it together. From my earliest memory until I left home I slept under one of these tied blankets every night and loved it. It wasn't fine or beautiful, but it was warm, which mattered to me.

While I had a few of the primitive quilts, I was the recipient of many quilts from my paternal grandmother who was a member of "The Quilters". These were eight women who met in her home once a week for numerous winter weeks, and turned out at least one quilt a winter. The quilt frame was set up in her living room and stayed for the duration of the quilting season (whatever that might be). When they began they knew for whom the quilt was being made. I was the happy recipient of a totally pink quilt on my HS graduation and a second quilt made with a pieced top of tulips in bright colors for my college graduation. While the stitches are not as small or as fine as the quilts of a hundred years earlier, they are even and typically followed a geometric pattern. I can almost hear the old ladies gossiping, laughing and unknowingly passing on warm blessings to younger recipients

Additionally, I have quilts made by the Quilters for other relatives. They were all different in design, including a couple with cross-stitched tops, but still quilted. I learned that the particular quilting design was the result of forethought on the part of the woman to whom the quilt would be given to present to another.

We have slept under quilts for many years at our house, some of cotton, some of wool, but so many made out of necessity and made with love. It is a happy heritage to have quilts on my beds and to know how happy my grandmothers and their forebears would be to know how much we treasure their work.

*God, thank you for the physical and emotional warmth represented by our ancestors who quilted.*

Carolyn Arnett

## Room in the Inn

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:6-7

Wynona, our pit bull terrier, and I packed the car while Kate finished her last exam of her first semester of law school at the University of Michigan. The plan was for us to hit the road as soon as possible after she returned to our run-down, yet filled-up with love, apartment. Not only was it Kate's first semester of law school, it was our first Christmas as a married couple. We were eager to get back home to Kentucky.

In addition to preparing for the trip, I kept an eye on the forecast. The meteorologists on the Weather Channel repeatedly predicted that blizzard like conditions would hit the Ohio River Valley north of the river that day. Dayton, Ohio, they said, would be hardest hit.

As Wynona, Kate, and I scurried into our Volkswagen Jetta, I told Kate about the forecast. I suggested that rather than travel down I-75 through Dayton to my parents' home in Covington, we would be wise to take I-69 to Indianapolis and then take I-74 south from there.

We made it to Indianapolis without seeing a single flake of snow fall.

I remember seeing the first flake fall the moment we merged onto I-74. It fell slowly and alone. I remember thinking it was beautiful. I also remember being overcome by a sense of pride because I had plotted course around the "blizzard." I thought that there was no way such small flakes would be able to stop us.

With every mile we traveled the snow began to fall faster and faster. We saw cars and trucks in ditches. Eventually, our Jetta was the only car on the road. We knew we could go no further.

We made it Batesville, Indiana.

There was a Sleep Inn just off the interstate. As we exited, we prayed that there would be room in the inn for that night. We were relieved to learn that there was a room available.

There was a catch, however. Our traveling party included Wynona – a pit bull terrier. Sleep Inn policy did not allow for pets.

"We are not driving any further tonight. Either you give us all a room or we all sleep in the parking lot through this blizzard," I told the distressed employee.

She nervously replied, "OK. You can have room. But, keep that dog under control."

I have never been so glad to fall into bed under the warm covering of blankets with Kate and Wynona as I was that night.

The next morning we woke up to discover Batesville was covered by more than two feet of snow.

We spent the next 48 hours at the Sleep Inn eating snacks we had packed for the trip. We arrived at my parents' house on Christmas Eve.

I give thanks every year around this time for that Sleep Inn desk clerk who made some room in her inn for us.

*Thank you God for all those who take risks for the sake of making room in the inn for others. May we remember that we may be the ones in need of a warm, safe room. Amen.*

Jason Crosby



## The Used-Up Quilt

But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. Luke 2:19

I found it on the top shelf of Jerry's linen closet shortly after we were married. I immediately loved the small single-bed quilt of stars and bright blue diamonds. When no one in the family recognized or claimed it, it became a "found treasure": my little Blue Quilt. It was old and showing signs of wear, which I felt only added to its charm. From the vintage prints of the fading cotton stars, I guessed it dated from the 1920s or '30s. The uniformity and size of the quilting stitches -- numbering ten to the inch-- told me that the unknown quilter was a master of her craft.

At first I just wanted to place my treasure where we could see it every day. So I folded it over the back of the rocker in the family room, and later at the foot of our bed, or on the sofa as a throw. Then much later, in the weeks of Jerry's final illness when he was spending his days on the family room sofa, I made him a little sofa-pallet, and my Blue Quilt became his coverlet. Some of his visitors noticed and commented on the "pretty quilt". It brightened our last days together.

A few years later, during my six- month convalescence from T.B., I left indelible marks on the Blue Quilt. In those months I did a lot of writing and reading, always with a pen in hand. Sometimes I would doze off--hence the ink stains!

Time, many washings, wear and tear have left my Blue Quilt tattered and frayed. Some of the stars are so threadbare that the cotton batting shows through. It is not exhibit-worthy, nor an heirloom kept safe for future generations. Nevertheless, it is a treasure precisely because it has been used up.

*Father, Thank you for simple gifts that become part of the fabric of our lives. Amen*

Dorothy Spurr

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