

# THE WILMOT QUILTING PROJECT 2011

## THE BEGINNING

The Wilmot Quilters were approached by the Cuba Committee to think about the possibilities for the bags of fabric donated to them by members and friends of Wilmot Church. The fabric and other sewing supplies were originally destined to be carried to workers in Cuba who needed them for their crafts, etc.

We quilters decided to have a look to see what all of those garbage bags held in store for us. It took three of us two days to sort out the usable items and trash the rest—this was probably the most undesirable task in the whole 10-month project that we decided to take on.

And so the thinking and planning began—an opportunity to ply our skills and explore the possibilities of using our quilt making skills to raise needed fund. Somehow I had joyfully become the project co-coordinator, mentor and cheerleader—what fun it has been—I have loved every minute of it.

We added to the store of fabrics from our own home stashes and purchased unknown quantities from local fabric shops and beyond—anything we needed to make each quilt show and feel the very best it could.

The project grew to be a two-fold fund raising effort. Quilters decided that an additional and important goal should be: to use our fabrics

and time and energy to produce quilts that would benefit the whole of Wilmot Church, in general.

And so, the 10-month efforts began.

## THE MIDDLE

I decided that we should take full advantage of the spin-off possibilities related to the project. Why not use this as a teaching opportunity?

The invitation went out to all who wished to

learn to piece quilts, back them, hand quilt or tie, and then bind them. The girls who came enjoyed the process and we all enjoyed the camaraderie. Our quilting morning time increased to an all day session; and, I added a teaching class on Thursday evenings for those who worked during the day, or, wished further instruction that week. The classes lasted for three months. Some new quilters made as many

as three quilts—awesome! The stitches in our quilts, in themselves, tell our stories: beginners, and, experienced quilters.

Members then took projects home, or to their cottages, or hotel rooms while on holiday, south with them on winter vacations—the work continued, the interest did not wane. Our friends and relatives stitched along with us, and, in addition, contributed in many ways to our well being while we worked.

The interest became so strong that we have continued our all-day sessions on Wednesday and have increased our membership considerably. We have enjoyed the social aspect of our



time together, celebrating our accomplishments at tea, pot lucks and a celebration dinner at my house where we displayed and pondered all that we had done. The social interaction throughout the church inspired by our project: precious!

Added to the mix, and taught by a number of members, are wonderful sewing projects, ready for sale at our project conclusion.

We cannot describe our quilts as intricate, complicated, delicate, nor as: exquisite, elegant or refined.

Rather—they would be classified as: traditional, rustic, versatile, homey, comforting, primitive.

The whole of the project was an opportunity for growth, love, laughter and support. Passers by dropped in to the church parlour whenever they passed the door to view our production workshop and classroom. Their input and encouragement and admiration of our work were much appreciated.

An additional positive spin-off of the project was listening to people who came into the parlour to speak to clergy about getting their needs met in terms of guidance and financial aid. They often commented on how touched they were to see quilts being made. These bright warm unfinished quilts on their racks evoked fond memories of better times in their homes where mothers and grand mothers comforted their families with home made quilts.

## **THE END**

The finale and the celebration of all that we have done and all that we have shared are set to take place on Saturday, October 29.

In our Wilmot Gym we will serve a wonderful buffet luncheon from 11:30 to 2:00, for \$7.00;

and have all of our quilts on display for final bids at silent auction. Minimum bids will apply.

The quilts will have been displayed for bids for the month of Sundays in October after church during our coffee and conversation hour. Bids close at 2:00 on October 29.

And so, the goals of our project were met in many ways. The best result is the one that gives forward—an opportunity to see their donated fabrics and quilt tops enhanced, embellished, and hand worked into beautiful completed bed covers.

The funds that result from our combined efforts will be given toward the efforts of the Cuba Committee and for the general health and welfare of Wilmot United as it strives to meet the needs of many.

Those who donated fabrics and quilt tops might recognize the work of their Mom's and other relatives and friends. Some of the remnants were reused materials: curtains, bed linens, tablecloths, etc. that some very frugal quilt makers stitched together, out of need, or, perhaps, lack of resources. Those precious hands and minds started their quilts—why they did not finish them, we could only surmise as we worked away at each creation. The history of the ladies who cared enough to busily ply their hands and imagination and ingenuity will continue to be a secret. We were privileged to finish them for them and offer them to give comfort to whoever decides to win the bids—giving forward.

And, so, in this time of restraint and careful spending, these quilts hold a meaningful and mindful reminder of the importance of reusing, recycling, and careful use of our resources—and the results can be stunning, if not at least, very interesting!

● Anne Stewart