

✝ HOLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HILL OVERLOOKING ROBESONIA ✝

QUILTERS & QUILT KNOTTERS – THE STITCH SQUAD & THE KNOT A LOTS

(Those aren't the real names of these groups, but it sounds good, doesn't it?!)

A quilt is both a work of art and a work of purpose. While quilts have long served the practical purpose of providing warmth and protection, they have also become recognized as an important folk art, reflecting the skill, creativity, and cultural heritage of their makers through sometimes intricate designs, patterns, and color choices. Here in Berks County, the tradition of quilting is closely woven into the Pennsylvania German culture that shaped many of our communities – including, of course, St. Daniel's.

It is likely that groups of St. Daniel's members met to quilt before any records of the activity were kept. Documentation shows that St. Daniel's Women's Guild was quilting in 1932 and continued through 1935. Records of the Women's Missionary Society note the same activity from 1946 through 1952. And from 1958 through 1962, the United Lutheran Church Women continued the tradition through an organized quilting group. Quilting was revived at St. Daniel's in April 1975 and a group of quilters continued meeting once a week until 2017!

The quilters were steadfast in their work and faithful in their stewardship. They also shared the joy of fellowship and a common goal of helping the work of the church. Some of the quilters were St. Daniel's members, some not. Some were longtime members, some new. They had varying degrees of skill and represented multiple generations. The ladies began sewing at 7 AM (later at 8 AM – what slackers!!!) every Tuesday and stayed until 3 PM. They packed their own lunches. Their fingers were busy as they worked on several framed quilts at once, changing jobs and positions as the work required. Once a month or so they would go out for lunch, and occasionally they would go on shopping trips for supplies.

Joan McGuigan was a member of the group for the last eight years that the quilters met and she graciously shared some quilting memories. Our "Catholic Quilter," Joan is a member of St. Francis R.C. Church, Robesonia. She met Corinne Eckert and Rachel Stump at a Community Lenten Service and became interested when the two ladies from St. Daniel's talked about their church quilting group. "But I explained to them that I didn't know how to quilt," said Joan. They urged her to come anyway and they would teach her. And they did! Corinne was the chairperson, and later when she retired, Dottie Ravert took over, and when she retired, Patsy Bright became the chair. Joan said Dottie kept coming to the quilt group until her hands would no longer hold the needle.

The quilters took in completed embroidered or applique or patchwork quilt tops and also designed and made their own. By 2004, 657 quilts had been completed, including 14 from start to finish. That amounted to more than \$41,000 worth of donations to St. Daniel's! Keep in mind this group continued for another 13 years, so those numbers are low! With the funds generated by quilting, the group purchased dishes, silverware, and stoves, and helped to buy fuel oil, altar rails, a book collection, and even shingles for the church roof. They purchased an oak tree and contributed to a memorial for Pastor Ronald Weir. The quilters contributed to almost every existing church fund, including the Organ, Building, General, Memorial, and Maintenance funds.

Through the years, several quilts were donated to the annual St. Daniel's Fall Fest as highly desired prizes, raising revenue for the event. The first Fall Fest quilt was the Lancaster Rose quilt made in 1991. Quilts were also made for bazaars during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Quilters at St. Daniel's included Helen Bashore, BEULAH BENNETHUM, NORA BOYER, BEULAH BRICKER, Marline Bricker*, Julia Bright*, Patsy Bright*, AGNES BROWN, ANNA BROWN, Corinne Eckert*, IDA ECKERT, Margaret Edelman, MRS. PAUL ENGLE, Shirley Gashi*, Sue Griesemer*, KATHRYN YOH HAMM, Lillie Henne, Ann Hottenstein, BERTHA KALBACH, Louise Kintzer, MRS. CALVIN KLINE, Katie Knapp, Ella Koch, Kathryn Koch, Virginia Koch, Irene Lutz, Laura Lutz, Joan McGuigan*, ANNIE MILLER, Kathryn Muthard, Mary Noecker, CATHERINE RAVERT, Dottie Ravert*, Ardell Sheeler, Mary Sheetz, Gail Shoner, VIELLA SNYDER, Mary Steffey, Marie Stoudt, Rachel Stump*, MRS. CHARLES STUMP, Mamie Sweigart, Dorothy Wartluft, Mabel Wartzenluft, CLARA WEALAND, Annie Wolfskill, Florence Wolfskill, and Evelyn Yoh.

Note: Those names that are CAPITALIZED represent the ladies in the Women's Missionary Society in 1946-1952. Those names with an asterisk * represent the ladies in the last quilting group that ended in 2017.

Quilting for Lutheran World Relief (LWR) started at St. Daniel's in 2012 through efforts initiated by Linda Preston. Corinne Eckert completed 3 quilts from start to finish for the Active Social Ministry Committee to send to the LWR worldwide project. These are not the same type of quilts described above; these are made according to specific LWR requirements related to sizing and fabric patterns. After that initial start, Rita Henning and Linda Rentschler took fabric and directions to cut patches for more quilts. Rita and then Nancy Wolfskill, along with Deanie Yoh, Barbara Davis and others began to work more diligently. Rita and Nancy completed the lion's share of the work, sewing and knotting many from start to finish. Elsie Shartle began sewing the tops and bottoms together with the quilt

batting. A “sewing room” group was formed to do more of that work, with Marie Peiffer as the leader, and helped by Pat Bechtel, Kathleen Dissinger, Bonnie Duffin, Sheila Stewart, and Nancy Wolfskill.

Using donated or scrap fabric, the sewers create a quilt top and bottom with batting in the middle. Once sewn, knots are strategically placed to ensure the fabric is secure. Made throughout the year, the finished quilts are then displayed in the Sanctuary on the altar rails and pews during St. Daniel’s Harvest Home Sunday. The quilts are then delivered to a dropoff site and from there they are distributed by LWR to locations both nationally and abroad. In their time of greatest need, the quilts are provided to victims of both natural disasters and war; they might serve as warm bedding, simple tents, or floor coverings. As noted on the LWR website, each quilt reflects God’s loving presence in a world rife with suffering. Additionally, quilts not used for LWR are donated to local organizations and agencies, where they continue to provide warmth, comfort, and care.

Volunteers for this effort have included: Beatrice Achey, Lora Achey, Betsy Althouse, Pat Bechtel, Julia Bright, Barbara Davis, Kathleen Dissinger, Bonnie Duffin, Corinne Eckert, Sue Ellefson, Carolyn Feeg, Holly Gaul, Joyce Hassler, Kim Henning, Rita Henning, Barbara Hill, Ann Hummel, Janice Jones, Lori Pauley, Marie Peiffer, Linda Preston, Lois Ranck, Linda Rentschler, Carole Schmehl, Elsie Shartle, Sheila Stewart, Bonnie Thomas, Susan Williams, Nancy Wolfskill, Deanie Yoh, LaVerne Zimmerman, Norma Zimmerman. Pastor Rebecca Knox made the first delivery to a LWR site in Maryland, with Jane Coombs & Huey Evangelista later taking on that task. For a number of years, Linda & Bob Preston also transported quilts to the annual LWR Ingathering at Bergstrasse Lutheran Church in Ephrata (and Bob was a needle threader for knotters, too!).

A mission started by LWR in 1945 post-World War II, today an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year. As of the end of 2025, St. Daniel’s has made a total of 1,218 of those quilts! Starting with 3 in 2012, the total was 69 the following year, with a high of 175 in 2017. In 2025, the total was 131. There’s a growing pile for this year’s count! To this day, our awesome crew continues to burn up the bobbins and make knots by the lots!

Officially part of the St. Daniel’s Active Social Ministry, we welcome anyone interested in sewing and/or knotting to join us! Note that knotting does not require any special skill and ANYONE (including men!) can join us for these periodic events. Announcements are made in church, the Friday email, the bimonthly Newsletter, and on the St. Daniel’s Facebook page and website. We also welcome donations of new or lightly used fabric, with the exception of microfiber as it doesn’t work well in the quilting process.

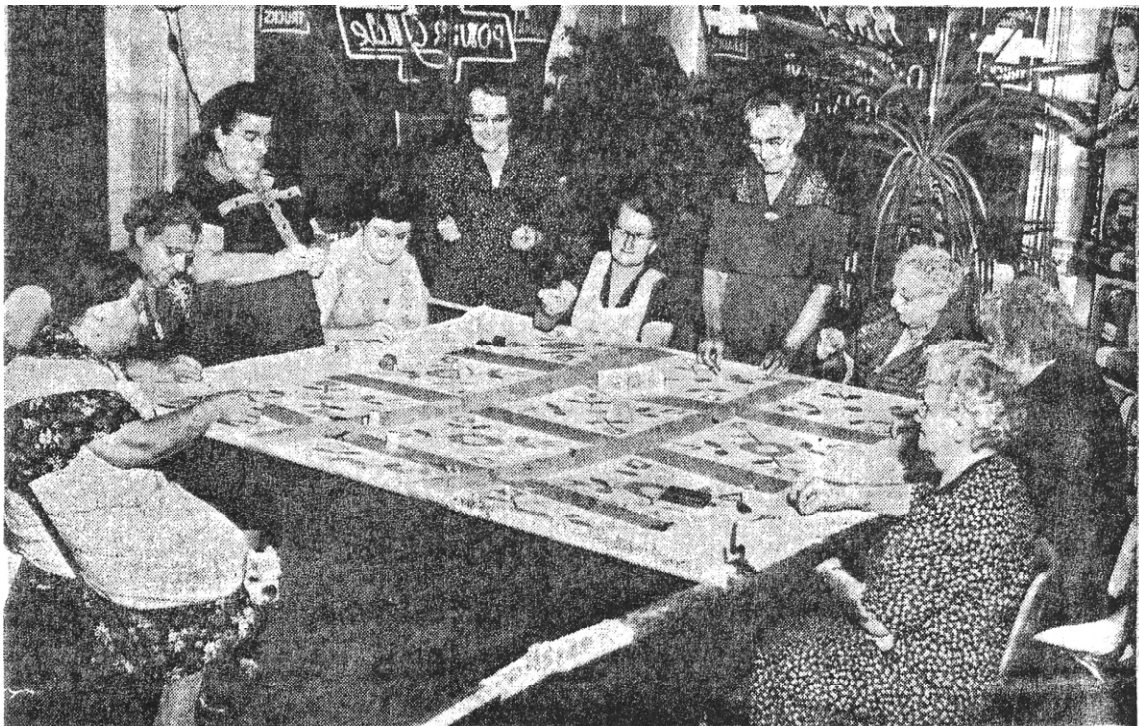
Woven together by faith and united in service, our quilting groups continue to be part of the enduring fabric of the St. Daniel's congregation. We offer deep gratitude to ALL who have so faithfully participated in both of these activities, and sincere apologies to anyone whose name we may have missed!

What an amazing and enduring history we share!

Follow this space throughout the year for snippets of St. Daniel's history from 1751 to 2026.

Historical details taken from the 'St. Daniel's Evangelical Lutheran Church "Eck Kirche" 1751-2001' church history book written by the St. Daniel's History Committee in celebration of the 250th anniversary. More details regarding Quilting are found in Chapter 6 – Christian Fellowship – St. Daniel's Quilters. Additional details from Parish Records, Church Records, and Annual Reports from the applicable years. Additional specifics gathered from interviews with Christine Griesemer, Rita Henning, Joan McGuigan, Linda Preston, and Nancy Wolfskill. Photos from St. Daniel's archives or as noted.

#StDaniels #StDanielsLutheranChurch #EckKirche #CornerChurch #OnTheHillOverlookingRobesonia #RobesoniaPA #1751StDaniels2026 #275thAnniversary #HolyHighlights #History #OurHistory #Quilters #Quilting #QuiltKnotting #LutheranWorldRelief #ALotHappensIn275Years



Quilting parties . . . the old-fashioned type . . . are a popular diversion, and a useful one, in rural districts. Women of rural Berks have been especially active in this pastime winter after winter. Shown above is a group of women from St. Daniel's Lutheran Church, Robesonia, participating in an "all-week" quilting party in a room at the Brown Motor Company building,

Robesonia. From left to right they are Mrs. Harry F. Brown, Mrs. Raymond Miller, Mrs. Nora Boyer, Mrs. Irvin J. Bricker, Mrs. Calvin E. Brown, Mrs. John Bennethum, Mrs. Charles Stump, Mrs. Paul Engel, Mrs. Anna Brown and Mrs. Calvin Kline. The Rev. Elmer L. Lelsey is pastor of the congregation.

(Eagle Staff Photo)



Taylor Goetz/Reading Eagle

Mary Noecker of Robesonia was busy at Gring's Mill Sunday.

Club women quilt up a storm

By Holly Herman
Reading Eagle

The threat of thunderstorms Sunday didn't stop seven quilters from participating in Pennsylvania German Day at Gring's Mill in Spring Township.

"We're brave," said Kathryn M. Koch while quilting under a tent with the others from St. Daniel's Lutheran Church, near Robesonia.

Nevertheless, the quilters packed up about 4 p.m. when a heavy downpour forced the Berks County Park and Recreation Department to cancel the rest of the event.

"It's just one of those things," said Cindy Dunlap, department superintendent.

Dunlap estimated the turnout at 600; she said she was expecting about 7,000 if the weather had been sunny.

"We had people contact us from all over the state," Dunlap said.

Only a handful of the 26 crafters who signed up displayed their crafts on the park grounds, and most of the food vendors did not show up.

Just before the rain, one of the quilters, Ida V. Eckert of 31 N. Wayne St., Robesonia, said

she hoped young women would join the quilters club.

"We're enjoying it," she said, as Johnny Schmoker's Strolling Band played "Aunt Ella's Polka."

Frank E. Pegg, band leader, said the strollers have been playing since 1948.

"The guys in the band aren't all German, but they have a German heritage," he said.

The band members were dressed in authentic German attire, consisting of a green felt hat, leder hosen (German for leather shorts), and warenstrumpf (woolen calf warmers).

Pegg explained the leather shorts were worn because in Germany band members needed something tough to cover their legs when marching in the mountains.

As the band played, Polly A. Madeira of Lincoln Park described the event as "wonderful."

"I'm Pennsylvania Dutch," she said. "I came here for the lecture."

The lecture program in the park barn included a Pennsylvania German sing-along led by William E. Maier, and the video show, "Pennsylvania German Heritage."

Undated *Reading Eagle* article

1980





1980 - L to R:
Annie Miller, Kathryn Koch, Helen
Bashore, Dorothy Wartluft,
Evelyn Yoh, Kathryn Yoh Hamm

1980 - L to R:
Annie Wolfskill, Ardell Sheeler,
Irene Lutz, Bertha Kalbach



1981 - Seated L to R: Ardell Sheeler, Katie Knapp, Annie Wolfskill, Dorothy Wartluft, Bertha Kalbach,
Mary Sheetz, Kathryn Hamm, Irene Lutz. Standing: Annie Miller, Kathryn Muthard, Corinne Eckert,
Evelyn Yoh, Ella Koch, Ida Eckert, Kathryn Koch, Mabel Wartzenluft, Ann Hottenstein, Mary Noecker



Quilters 1997 – L to R: Marie Stoudt, Mary Sheetz, Helen Bashore, Louise Kintzer, Kathryn Koch, Patsy Bright, Virginia Koch (seated), Dorothy Ravert, Ann Hottenstein, Ida Eckert, Rachel Stump



A partial view of the completed quilt that the ladies were working on in the above photo. It was auctioned at Fall Fest 1997 and won by Rita & John Henning.



Undated photos;
Estimated early 2000s /
Pre-2005 based on the
room they are working in



Quilt Knotting August 15, 2025 – photo by Kim Henning
Lori Pauley, Rita Henning, Carolyn Feeg, Holly Gaul, Nancy Wolfskill



September 17, 2025
 Foreground table: Betsy Althouse, Marie Peiffer;
 Background table: Carolyn Feeg, Joyce Hassler, Linda Preston



September 17, 2025
 Bonnie Thomas, Nancy Wolfskill



September 17, 2025
 Foreground table: Joyce Hassler, Linda Preston, Carolyn Feeg; Background table: Barbara Davis, Holly Gaul, Linda Rentschler, Lori Pauley; Right table: Marie Peiffer and friend, Betsy Althouse



March 2, 2026
 Joyce Hassler, Carolyn Feeg, Pat Bechtel



September 21, 2025 – Harvest Home display of quilts on the altar rail and pews
 Photos by Kim Henning