

**Devotions: October 31 - November 6, 2021**

*by Rev. Brenda L. Greenwald*

*Gethsemane Lutheran Church - Wallace, MI*

*St. Stephen's Lutheran Church - Stephenson, MI*

**Behind the Scenes:** *As a rather new Quilter, I've found myself bemused at the many new terms I'm learning along the way, and just how apropos these concepts are when it comes to my life in ministry here in the UP. Cheers to a devotional week of melding these two loves: **faith** and **fabric!***

**FABRIC:** the **Biblical** passage that weaves us together

**DESIGN:** a brief **reflection** of God's amazing design

**BIND:** the offering of **prayer** that binds us to God

**Reformation Sunday, October 31, 2021**

**FABRIC:** *This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: **Reform** your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. **Jeremiah 7:3***

**DESIGN:** A blessed, **Reformation Day** to you all - a day to focus on how WE can re-form the world around us. A chance for us to step back from the daily grind, and examine our behaviors and actions and words, and to re-commit to who and WHOSE we truly are.

As a quilter, the Mighty Steam Iron is the great **re-former** in the sewing room. I've often looked at a wrinkled ole piece of fabric and thought "*There is NO way I'm going to be able to re-shape that thing!*" Thankfully, with the aid of some steam **heat**, a little **muscle**, and a whole lot of **pressure**, that crumpled-up mess of a fabric piece yields to its new, flattened form.

Now, mind you, I'm not suggesting that we need to be pressed into submission and crushed beneath the iron hand of a steamed-up God... but I AM open to the fact that



sometimes, a little extra **heat** during a situation can help us rethink our words. Sometimes, a little **muscle** from one who stands firm in *their* principles helps *us* remember ours. And sometimes, even a little extra **pressure** placed upon us leads us to re-form our thoughts, so that they are aligned with the will of the Spirit.

**BIND:** *God of creation, you shaped us into who we are and who we are to become. Continue to re-form our hearts and minds so that they are committed to doing your will, Amen.*

**Monday, November 1, 2021**

**FABRIC:** ...*The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot **contain** you.*  
*2 Chronicles 6:18*

**DESIGN:** I love **containers**. LOVE containers. I love the ones that hold the teeny, tiny scraps. I love the ones that can hold an entire bulky, flannel project. I love the containers that are skinny enough to stack on my quilting shelves. I LOVE containers! They keep my chaotic and colorful, crafting world in check, and allow me to function in a busy and bustling room. Now, if I KEPT my finished quilts INSIDE said containers, well, where would the joy be then!? They are meant to be **set-free!**



One of my favorite moments to share with my Confirmation students is when we gather at the Communion Altar and talk about its **shape**. We talk about how we gather at the front of the worship space in the general shape of a "C", ready to receive the Holy Meal. The beautiful part is when we take a moment to talk about the saints who **complete** the rest of the "C", forming a holy circle of the saints on earth, and the saints in heaven. The unity - the *communion* - of coming together - reminds us that *we* are not meant to be KEPT inside the containers of our bodies, but that someday, we, too, will be **set-free** to join our Creator.

**BIND:** *On this holy and sacred All Saints Day, we give thanks, Lord, for those who have gone before, who rest in your holy embrace. Keep us in communion with all the saints, until we join you in glory, Amen.*

**Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

**FABRIC:** *...and they asked each other, "Who will **roll** the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" **Mark 16:3***

**DESIGN:** The fact that I have a collection of "jelly rolls" amuses me. **Jelly Rolls.** What a hilarious term for a collection of fabric! Simply explained, a Jelly Roll is about 42 strips of fabric that are 2.5 inches wide and about 43 inches long. Instead of just **STACKING** these skinny little, rectangle-shaped slices of fabric, companies have **wound** them into what looks like a (delicious, fabric-inspired, cinnamon) **roll**. The winding of the fabric allows you to take a **quick peek** at ALL of the beautiful fabrics included in the collection.



A **quick peek:** that's *really* ALL the Disciples wanted upon approaching the tomb that morning: to **KNOW** that Jesus was safely behind that stone. Still smarting from the crucifixion just days before, they just wanted a quick peek at the man they followed, the leader they missed, the friend they loved. No stone, however, could contain our Resurrected Lord! No **rolling** was necessary, as Jesus wasn't to be found inside a *tomb*, but rather, inside our *hearts*!

**BIND:** *Risen Lord, help us roll away the stones in our lives that keep us from remembering your love and your leadership. Send us, as you did those first Disciples, into the world to share your good news. Amen!*

**Wednesday, November 3, 2021**

**FABRIC:** *She selects **wool** and **flax** and works with **eager hands**. **Proverbs 31:13***

**DESIGN:** I have a square-shaped **wool mat** in my quilting room that is a **DREAM** when it comes to ironing. Not only does it make all of my seams über-pressed and flat, but it retains the heat of the iron *so* well, it's like I'm ironing my fabric from both sides! Aside from the fact that it literally smells like a sheep sometimes (*it's not that baaaaad*), it really is one of the more remarkable and time-saving tools in my quilting arsenal.



Mirroring our work after the woman of Proverbs 31, how might *our* hands go to work in an **eager** fashion? Perhaps our hands are meant to hold others in medical settings. Maybe our hands are used to cut and shape the wood that eventually becomes the lumber in our homes. Our hands could be the ones that turn the pages of Scripture, letting the Word of God go from the page into our hearts. As the wool mat presses from **both** sides, let **both** of our hands be used in **eager** work for our Lord.

**BIND:** *Loving God, help our hands and hearts to be eager to do your will each day. Guide them to reach out in loving care to our neighbors, and reassure us that we are held in yours, Amen.*

**Thursday, November 4, 2021**

**FABRIC:** *You make your saving **help** my **shield**; your help has made me great.*

*2 Samuel 22:36*

**DESIGN:** Once the top of a quilt has been assembled, its ready to be **sandwiched**: the top is added to a middle layer of soft batting, with the backing being the final layer of the quilt. Securing these three layers of a quilt **together** can be done in multiple ways, but I've been taught to use safety pins that have these charmingly, colorful covers on top of them - little, protective **shields**, if you will. The safety pins are then closed with a tool called the "Kwik Klip". Unless you have ridiculously strong nails (*or don't mind stabbing yourself a few times*), the Kwik Klip saves you both time AND a fair amount of



bloodstains on your kwilt...er....quilt.

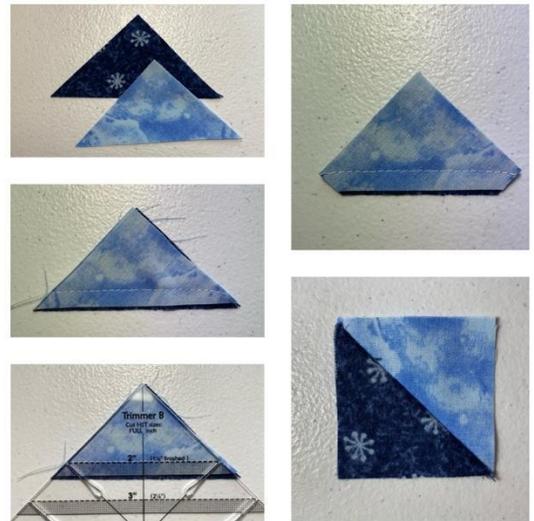
David penned the thankful poem we read in 2 Samuel (*a loong, thankful poem at 51 verses*) after God had delivered the lad from Saul's henchmen. David *knew* it wasn't his OWN power and wits that had saved him, but rather the protection and listening ear of the Lord who came to David's defense. How **wise** might *we* be to put on the **shield** of God's protective love, to put on the proverbial safety-pin **cover** of God's shielding grace as we go about our days, knowing our God comes to us as a Kwik Klip of grace and mercy? We're still stubborn humans, and we'll get poked and stabbed by the sharp points of this life. But what *comfort* we find in knowing we have a God who doesn't let us go it alone.

**BIND:** *Protecting God, **shield** us from our own actions of impulsiveness, and tuck us under the wings of your **protection**, Amen.*

Friday, November 5, 2021

**FABRIC:** *Out in the open, **wisdom** calls aloud; she raises her voice in the public **square**.*  
**Proverbs 1:20**

**DESIGN:** When you sew two triangles together in quilting, press them open, the result is something called a Half-Square Triangle. (*Personally, I think they should be called a half-triangle **SQUARE**, but I digress.*) Before you press these little squares open into their new shape, you'd be **wise** to use a phenomenal **tool** that lets you **trim** the sewn-together triangles to exactly the size you'd like your new, little square to be. AND, this tool lets you trim **off** the excess fabric that occurs when you sew two triangles together. The result is a perfect **square** of exactly the measurement you seek.



Sadly, it seems as though **wisdom** is fading from the forefront of our lives these days.

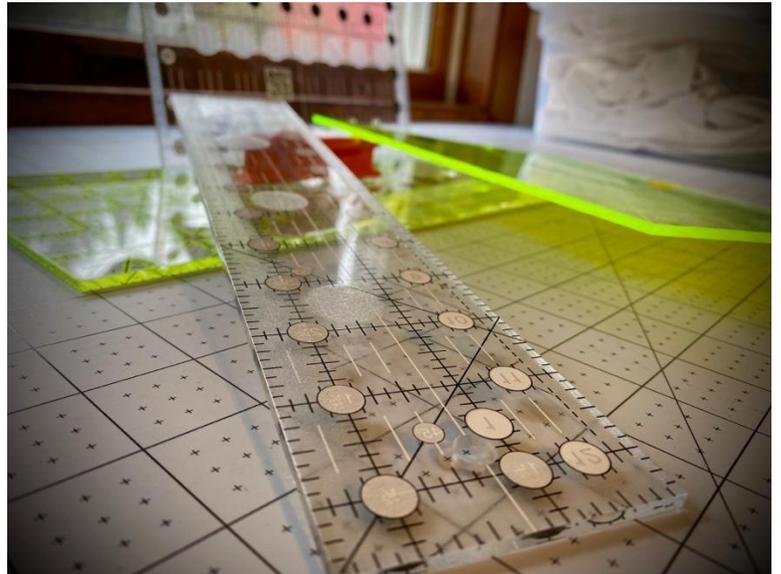
We value *instant* information as a society, we declare *ourselves* to be experts, and we no longer seek the *knowledge* and insight from those who have gone before. I wonder what it would look like if we all did a bit of “**self-trimming**” when it came to all the expertise we proport to have, and did a little more “**squaring-up**” of our personal opinions, giving ourselves a chance to *learn* from one another once again, and bask in the synergy of cooperation.

**BIND**: *God of Wisdom, steer our hearts toward paths yet unknown, leading us forth in the courage to trust you are leading the way, Amen.*

Saturday, November 6, 2021

**FABRIC:** *Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a **measuring line** in his hand.*  
Zechariah 2:1

**DESIGN:** On this, our final day of devotions together, I mention the one tool that I most certainly use **EVERY** time I quilt: the **measuring ruler**. I must have a dozen, differently-sized rulers in my quilting room: wide ones, skinny ones, brightly-colored ones, ones that are extremely long, ones that can fit in my pocket, etc. Yet, they all serve the same purpose: PLEASE, GIVE ME A STRAIGHT LINE!



When the prophet Zechariah encounters the man with a **measuring line** in his hand, he finds a guy about to measure the immeasurable: the city of Jerusalem. Long story short, no city (*Jerusalem, included*) would *ever* be able to contain the power and strength of our Almighty God. **No measurement**, regardless of the beauty of the ruler being used, could capture **THE Ruler**, to whom we owe our praise and glory. If we've learned anything during this Pandemic, it is that we are a church *without* walls - a people meant to share the Gospel and love our neighbors...*without measure!*

**BIND:** *God of infinite love, help us not to number our days, measure our responses, or portion our love, but rather, to **count our blessings**, Amen!*