

# Ministry Minute

## Quilting Ministry

### "Stitched in Love"



They look like quilts, but there's more than warmth wrapped up in the blankets that Westwood's quilting team creates. The 100 to 150 quilts produced and given away each year provide caring, love, and support to those who receive them.

"And, of course, the quilts keep them warm," said Mari-Claire Dart, Programs Director at STEP of St. Louis Park, an organization that receives many of Westwood's quilts for its St. Louis Park clients who arrive in need of food, clothing, housing, and other resources. "They are so well made, it kind of becomes an heirloom for that family," said Mari-Claire. "Because they are handmade, it just makes people feel special. It's a nice addition to someone's home."

Westwood's graduating seniors were the most recent recipients of the quilting group's work. Each senior chooses a quilt from the supply as they move on to the next phase of their lives.

*Westwood 2024  
Graduation Seniors  
Quilt Blessing*



"Others who have been gifted the women's handiwork are nursing homes, a ministry project in Cameroon, a program that works with Hispanic groups, and a family starting over after a fire in their home," said Karen Pitkanen, who has quilted at Westwood since the 1960s. "If someone on the Caring Response Team sees that someone could use a quilt, we gift them one," Karen said.

In years past, the quilts were part of a Lutheran World Relief project, but because so many other churches participate in that program, Westwood has shifted its donations to more local connections and programs, like STEP.

In another example, quilters at Calvary Lutheran in Edina were committed to providing quilts to a nursing home and needed 6-8 additional quilts. Westwood filled the gap. When Calvary closed, Westwood's quilt program received a generous gift from a Calvary endowment.

"How grateful we were to get that gift," Karen said. The group also has received Holiday Fair grants for supplies.

These days, about 14 women participate regularly, while about 20 are on the contact list. Donations of fabric have kept Westwood's supply strong. "We've gotten such a large donation of fabric from mothers, aunts, and grandmothers cleaning out their supplies, that we all kind of laugh," Karen said, noting that many on the quilt team are older and at least three are in their 90s. "We don't think we'll live long enough to use it all!"

Some quilters sew the tops at home after "shopping" in Westwood's closet for fabric or take supplies with them to winter getaways. The group comes together the last Tuesday and Wednesday of each month (except December) to cut new quilt pieces, enjoy conversation, and tie the knots that turn tops, batting, and backing into the highly sought-after and much-beloved blankets.

As much as the quilting team is helping others, its members also help each other. Team members sign cards for those who are ill or have changes in circumstances, and members check up on each other when necessary.

Karen was told by one visitor who observed their camaraderie, "There's a lot more than quilting going on in this room."