

Quilts for Justice

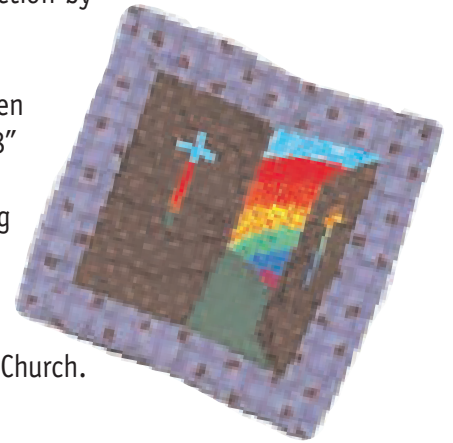


Here are intriguing stories of how quilts were used to help the slaves escape through the Underground Railroad. A Log Cabin quilt hanging in a window with a black center for the chimney hole was said to indicate a safe house. Underground Railroad quilts, a variation of Jacob's Ladder, were said to give cues as to the safe path to freedom. Jacqueline Tobin's book "*Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*" tells how quilt patterns like the wagon wheel, log cabin, and shoofly signaled slaves how and when to prepare for their journey. Stitching and knots created maps, showing slaves the way to safety.

As the abolitionist movement grew in the north, quilts were sold to raise money for the abolitionist cause. Women inscribed their needlecases with the phrase "May the work of our needles prick the conscience of the slaveholder". Harriet Powers, while a slave, made one of the most treasured quilts in the American quilt tradition, The Harriet Powers Bible Quilt, and it is in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.

Today our struggles for justice involve a different group of people every bit as much in need of freedom: *United Methodist Clergy who face the loss of appointments due to their sexual orientation*. These individuals often grew up in our churches, have answered the call to ministry, and have proven they have the gifts and graces valued by their congregations, but because of an orientation *ordained at birth*, now face rejection by the *very church that nurtured them as children*.

We invite you to join us in our prayers for a fully inclusive church by using the open door quilt pattern in your community. We are making these patterns available, as 8" quilt blocks for inclusion in quilts or banners that can be displayed in our congregations across the country. Or, if you have no quilting groups, consider using the graphic in other craft items you may display. Download the patterns at <http://www.pnw-rmn.org/resources/quilt/Quiltptn.pdf> or write to the address below.



Maybe, the work of OUR needles will prick the conscience of the United Methodist Church.

For more information go to <http://www.pnw-rmn.org/resources/quilt.html>

For more information on quilts and their use in the struggle for freedom:

- ▼ http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/abolitionist.htm
- ▼ <http://www.quiltersbee.com/qbqhisto.htm#slave>
- ▼ "*Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*" by Jacqueline L. Tobin Raymond G. Dobard, and Cuesta Ray Benberry (1999, Doubleday) available online at http://www.hallbook.com/home_garden/103.shtml



Patterns and buttons may be ordered by email at:

quilts@pnw-rmn.org OR mail at: PNW-RMN, P.O. Box 51, Freeland, WA 98249.

The PNW-Reconciling Ministries Network, an affiliate of the national Reconciling Ministries Network, is an unofficial network of United Methodists in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference (<http://www.pnw-rmn.org>)