

Central District Conference Mennonite Women

Members: Janeen Bertsche Johnson (Eighth Street), Barbra Gant (Columbus), Greta Holt (Cincinnati)



Mennonite Women have been productive in 2019 and 2020! Thank you to Karla Minter (Mennonite Mission Network) for speaking at our Women's Banquet in 2019, and we look forward to Cyneatha Millsaps's speech this year. We are developing a **new database** for our women's groups. Here is a sample:

The Mennonite Women's group of **First Mennonite Bluffton** strives to be a hosting body to which all women feel welcome. The women have comforter knotting events twice a year, and they organize school and health kits. The MW USA devotional guide is used at meetings, where topics and events—such as supporting women in recovery, and invitations for volunteering—are integrated. Sharing of poetry and hobbies, as well as connecting with the church's mission partner families round out service opportunities.

The **Assembly Lunch Bunch, Goshen**, meets to discuss topics of interest, and to fellowship. Some topics covered have been the electoral process and issues facing Goshen, health center services to LGBTQ individuals, and Mennonite history. Coming up are the impact of politics on immigrant women, art and spirituality, and becoming acquainted with the spouse of a new pastor.

Silverwood Mennonite Women, Goshen, meet for sewing projects: comforter knotting, MCC kit bags, and quilting. Recently, they have offered learn-to-piece and learn-to-quilt evenings, where young people are welcome. This year, a comforter for the Michiana relief sale will be completed, along with MCC hygiene and school kits. The group participated in MCC's Great Winter Warm-Up comforter bash in January and invited the Berkey Avenue fellowship to join them.

The two Women's Circle groups at **Shalom Community Church, Ann Arbor**, gather in confidential spaces, where members can share and support each other. When sharing is finished, they consider a question (serious or lighthearted.) For example: 'What was your happiest moment and why?' or 'Which of your parents are/were you closer to and why?'

The **Mennonite Women of Normal** meet for projects, fellowship, devotions, and prayer. MCC was the beneficiary of 16 comforters, 9 sweaters, 48 hygiene kits and 128 school kits. Retiring pastors received quilts, and the women participated in donations for the Mennonite Relief Sale. Members attended the Fall Women's Retreat and Sister Care events.

Columbus Mennonite Women have six groups, in which some men participate: two book groups, a 'Brunch Bunch', and a Breakfast group (which meets in part to include Edith Espinal who is living at the church in sanctuary,) and Sowing Circle (a gardening club). In addition, its Piecemakers group is on track to complete over 225 comforters for MCC this year. Since starting in 2009, this group has donated over 1,500 comforters and raised over \$35,000 at relief sales.

The **Eighth Street Mennonite Women, Goshen**, knotted 12 comforters and, with its congregation's help in filling bags, finished 226 school kits and 63 hygiene kits for MCC. In January, they hosted the Great Winter Warm-up, an event that celebrated 100 years of MCC's work around the world. Social meetings

included Spring-, Summer-, and Winter Celebrations, which featured a speech on walking the U.S./Mexico border and a presentation by AMBS about its sustainability features.

Threads of Grace, Pandora, is a sewing ministry. Small comforters for new babies in the church are joined by comforters and school/hygiene kit bags for MCC and church fund-raising auctions. The women host a Labor of Love, during which families fill school/hygiene bags. Care packages for college students, as well as comforters that the children can knot, make the Labor of Love an event that many look forward to. Quilt and sewing themed outings in Indiana and Ohio, and participation in the Great Winter Warm-up, join comforter designing days. Friends who are not members at Grace are welcome at events.

Submitted by Greta Holt for Janeen Bertsche Johnson and Barb Gant: CDC Women