

Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE)
Quilt Table Topper Project
Birmingham, 2023



Quilt by
Lib Caldwell

The Local Committee planning for the Annual Event next January 2023 is inviting all people who sew, knit or crochet to help make small quilt squares for the center of the tables.

We need 70 quilt squares each measuring 17" x 20".

We would like for them to be made in the simple style of Gees Bend Quilters. **The instructions are on the next page.**

Mary Ann Pettway, of the Gees Bend Quilting Collective is glad to hear of our support for their historic work. For more information about this incredible group of quilters, see below. If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact: cathyhoop@gmail.com or Libcaldwell13@gmail.com

<https://www.arts.gov/stories/blog/2015/quilts-gees-bend-slideshow>

The Quilmakers of Gees Bend <https://youtu.be/vQHTLn4mA7s>

The Story of Gees Bend <https://youtu.be/vBGJ-xTvp3U>

Instructions for Quilt Table Toppers:

- Make one or more quilt squares measuring 17” x20”.
- If possible, use fabric or yarn *you have on hand*.
- Gees Bend quilters made up their own patterns, using whatever fabric was available to them. If you could quilt in this style, that would be great. If you like to follow a pattern, then look at some of the photos of the Gees Bend Quilters and let that guide your imagination.
- You can make your square either by hand or sewing machine. If you prefer to make a square by knitting or crocheting, then follow a log cabin style. One resource for making a table topper in this style is MDK (Modern Daily Knitting) and their book, *MDK Field Guide No. 4 Log Cabin*.
- If you sew or quilt by machine or hand, knit or crochet and would like to help out, please let us know how many you would like to make. We need to receive your squares by December 1, 2022.

The squares may be purchased at the conclusion of the conference, with the proceeds being split between the conference’s mission project, the First Light ministry in Birmingham, and the Gees Bend Quilting Collective.

Gees Bend Quilters

When enslaved women from the rural, isolated community of Boykin, Alabama—better known as Gee’s Bend—began quilting in the 19th century, it arose from a physical need for warmth rather than a quest to reinvent an art form. Yet by piecing together scraps of fabric and clothing, they were creating abstract designs that had never before been expressed on quilts.

These patterns and piecing styles were passed down over generations, surviving slavery, the antebellum South, and Jim Crow. During the Civil Rights movement in 1966, the Freedom Quilting Bee was established as a way for African-American women from Gee’s Bend and nearby Rehoboth to gain economic independence. The Bee cooperative began to sell quilts throughout the U.S., gaining recognition for the free-form, seemingly improvisational designs that had long been the hallmark of local quilt design. As awareness grew, so did acclaim, and the quilts entered the lexicon of homegrown American art.

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