

# Sew Precious In His Sight

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**This month, our 'guest writer' is Debbie Fowler, a nurse and member of the Threads of Love Board of Directors. Debbie can be reached at [Deborah.fowler@womans.org](mailto:Deborah.fowler@womans.org)**

I never fail to be amazed at how God can bring people and places together for the good of His children. This is my story of how I came to be a part of Threads of Love and how God's plan always works.

In the fall 1986, I graduated from LPN school and started working in labor and delivery in a small hospital. It was at this time that God's plan for me to work with families whose babies died really kicked into gear (although I had no clue at the time). Back then, parents were routinely denied any contact with their baby that had died. Being young and not knowing any better, I felt that just wasn't right and I had to make it right. In our small hospital, we had a tiny morgue where the baby's bodies were held until the funeral home came for them. I worked nights and I made it my mission to let parents who wanted to see their babies have access to them. I never doubted that was the right thing to do.

I now believe that God brought me there to teach me skills that I would build on later use to help His children that were in so much pain from the loss of their babies. It was in this small hospital that I learned to bathe and dress babies. I learned how to make them look their best for their parents and then carried babies to their mothers' rooms so they could hold them. Eventually, nurses on the day shift would leave me notes letting me know which parents had wanted to see their baby and were denied. It became sort of an underground network of nurses working to help families that had a double loss -- the loss of their child and the loss of the memories of their child.

It's strange how God works. I can look back and see so many things that God put in my path that lead me where I am today. One such occasion happened when I was 15 years old and was working as a nurse aide, again in a tiny hospital. One of the nurses there took me under her wing and taught me so much. She knew I was interested in labor and delivery and even though that was an area that was strictly off limits to aides, she let me see and do as much as she could. One day she took me aside and told me that a woman had a miscarriage. The baby was still in the delivery room if I wanted to see it. She warned me that if I got caught, I was on my own.

I had never been in the delivery area of the hospital. There were two delivery rooms. Both were clean, cold and sterile looking. I did not see a baby anywhere. Then, I went to the scrub sink and saw a small package wrapped in white paper. I took the package to a stainless steel table and unwrapped it. I had never seen pictures of a fetus, so I had no idea what to expect. I imagined a bloody, lump of tissue. But as I folded back the paper, I saw a tiny human face -- a face that was so detailed, there were even eyebrow ridges. Based on what I know now, that baby was probably about 22 weeks gestation. She was a perfect little person. I was amazed at her toes and fingers, complete with fingernails and toenails. Then I saw a tiny fluctuation on her chest that I thought was a heartbeat. The baby then moved her hand. It was just barely a movement, but a movement just the same. I realized that the tiny fetus was still barely alive. Even by today's standards this baby was pre-viable. If she had been born today there would be nothing anyone could do to save her. This was 1968 and at that time babies born at 32 weeks gestation were seldom saved. There was nothing that could be done for her. All I could do was wrap her in the white paper and put her back where I found her. I quickly left the room. I felt strongly that this baby should be with her family, but there was nothing I could do.

In 1989, I moved to Baton Rouge and took a job at Woman's Hospital. Woman's has always been progressive in its patient care. This gave God the opportunity to again use me as a tool to help grieving parents. Of

course, I still didn't know that it was God who was giving me the drive to help these families.

When I finally realized that God's mission for me was to do this work for Him, I was having a really hard time handling the grief that I saw all too frequently. Basically, I told Him, "Thanks, but no thanks." I appreciated the fact that He thought I was worthy and capable, but I was sure I was neither. God was patient and just kept putting His Will into my path and now I realize it was a "done deal" from day one. God knew that; I just had to come to the realization.

In the fall of 1993 Earl K. Long Pediatrician, Dr. Rachel Hausmann, contacted First Presbyterian Church seeking volunteers to make burial gowns for babies born at that hospital. Anna Miller and Sissy Davis both answered the call for volunteers. A special gift from Mrs. Katherine Dunham of \$100 made it possible to buy the first bolt of fabric and lace. *Threads of Love* was the result of this call. They started out making a few gowns for one hospital. As the years passed, *Threads of Love* became nationally known and chapters were opened in cities all across the US.

Sissy and I met in about 1996 and I was invited to join the *Threads of Love* Board of Directors. Sissy and I have worked together since, trying to reach out to families in pain. With God's help, we will be able to continue this work.

By 1999 there were 34 chapters. Today, *Threads of Love* has 123 chapters throughout the US and 5 in Canada. *Threads of Love* has donated tens of thousands of items to hospitals to minister to families grieving the loss of their beloved babies. With the help of *Threads of Love* donations, families are able to start to grieve through parenting their children by being able to dress them. They are able to say hello and goodbye and in between make enough memories to last a lifetime.

-Debbie Fowler

## Lovie Doll Story

*Sissy:*

*..... Have also been supplying another hospital with internment sets, but they are not in need of NICU items except Lovie Dolls! Seems I can't get enough Lovie Dolls!*

*About these dolls, the head nurse at the Medical Center in Bowling Green said she hoped I didn't mind, but they had an "incident" in which she gave a Lovie Doll to an adult. Seems the grandfather only had a few weeks to live but he was in the NICU because his only grandchild had been born prematurely. He was so "agitated" that his wife couldn't calm him down, in fact, she couldn't even go to the bathroom without him becoming very upset. She thought of the Lovie Dolls and how they calm the little babies, so she gave one to him and told him that as long as he had the doll with him, his wife would always be with him. It worked! A few weeks later the wife returned to the hospital and told the nurse that he NEVER let the doll out of his hands (or pocket). When he died, he had left a note asking that the Lovie Doll be given to his new grandson to remember him by.*

*I'm making enough Lovie Dolls for my hospitals to use them in their lactation classes as well as the NICU.*

*Yes, God does supply. I have no source of funding (except my husband), but it seems that God does supply the needs. Pray with me that I can find donors AND seamstresses so that I can help another hospital.*

*Many, many thanks for the beautiful booties and caps. Give my appreciation to the ladies that made them!*

*God bless,  
Barbara Cash*

# welcome to our new chapters!

Boyne Area Threads of Love  
Contact: Sue Austin  
Boyne Falls, MI  
[kathrin@centurytel.net](mailto:kathrin@centurytel.net)

Sewn with Love – Threads of Love  
Contact: Sue Draves  
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Helen-Louise Threads of Love  
c/o Trinity Episcopal Church  
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Threads of Love  
c/o Castlegar Penecostal New Life Assembly  
Castlegar, British Columbia, Canada  
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North Shuswap Threads of Love  
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Sew Jolly Threads of Love  
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Sew Caring Threads of Love  
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Rae of Hope Threads of Love  
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[Lbk\\_angel\\_tol@yahoo.com](mailto:Lbk_angel_tol@yahoo.com)

Bonnyville Threads of Love  
Bonnyville, Alberta, Canada  
Contact: Betty Hannas  
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In His Hands Threads of Love  
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Contact: Bonnie Mansion  
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Threads of Love  
Torrington, Alberta, Canada  
Contact: Carissa Vervloet (no email)

Salem Baptist Church—Threads of Love  
Keiskel, TN  
Contact: Karol Griffin  
[kemerald@aol.com](mailto:kemerald@aol.com)

I was on the internet this afternoon looking up information, preparing for my new baby who will be born in early June. In the process, I found your website and was comforted all over again. I had a miscarriage in August 2004 and received one of your care packages while in the hospital. It was a great comfort to me and I am so grateful for the way that you ministered to me. I don't know who made that little blanket, but I thank them. Your group surely is acting as the hands and feet of Jesus. Thank you.

Syralfja

I just wanted to say that what you are doing is one of the nice's thing I have known about in a long time. I have been a foster and adopted mother of special need children for 17 years. I have all type of children. and I wish I had known about this before now.

There is such a need where I live to help mothers cope with thing it is nice to know your group is there. we don't have any thing likes your group here.

I adopted my son he was given 2 days to live he will be 6 in May a true gift from God to me.

Thank your again

Sandra

Dear Courtney and Sissy,

*I'm going to complete and send in the updated information on my chapter but I had to tell you ladies about a close moment with God that I've had today.*

*I was about ready to quit being a Threads of Love chapter due to a lot of reasons. My husband's health has not been good lately - the doctors think he may have Parkinson's Disease on top of his diabetes and heart condition (triple by-pass) - and I've had to take on a lot more of his daily care in addition to working outside the home. My spirits have been pretty low and I felt that I had to start letting some outside commitments go, including Threads of Love. To tell the truth, I hadn't really been working on keeping Threads of Love very active. I hadn't been attending my Ladies'*

*Auxiliary meetings at church so, therefore, no one was donating little hats and blankets. I had run out of labels and thought, well I just won't order anymore and will just quit.*

*I guess God has other plans. This past Sunday, our local paper ran an article about our charity hospital here in Nashville and how desperately they need anything/everything! I thought about donating the hats and blankets there but put the paper in the recycle bag without keeping the article. Later I realized what I had done so I dug through all of the recycling to get the article so that I could call to see if they would like to receive articles from Threads of Love. I called today and spoke with the coordinator of their volunteer services and she was so excited that we would have things to donate that she filled me with excitement about the program all over again! (The nurses in the NICU were using stockingette material and rubber bands for hats for the babies!!) But when I asked for her name, I realized that this is what God wants me to do - her name is Jennifer - just like my sister for whom I named our chapter! I felt so filled with the spirit of our Father that I just had to write to let you ladies know!*

*I also told her about the Lovie dolls - she loves the idea of them! She said that they would take anything we wanted to donate - shampoo, lotion, wash cloths, double-washed clothing, etc. I mentioned about the prayers that are supposed to accompany the articles and that I also had prayers in Spanish (which I had just downloaded from the Threads of Love website today!) and she said that they would be happy to have those as well. While they can't force the prayers on anyone, the nurses would have a good idea of those families that would appreciate having the prayers and those families that would not. She said that they have a heavy Hispanic patient load so the prayers in Spanish would really be appreciated.*

*Well, that's all. I just had to let you ladies know. I'll send in my renewal information and order more labels to happily sew on the things that I have and am now renewed to try to get more interest in Threads of Love going in my church. I think making the Lovie dolls and Bean Bag supports would be great service projects for our youth groups! I still can't find the pattern for the Bean Bag supports however. Is it just a tube of material filled with the poly pellets?*

*Thank you so much for "listening" to my rambling! I'm just so excited!!*

*Take care, Chris (For Love of Jenny Threads of Love, Nashville, TN)*

# THE LORD'S WEEK

## **Monday—Wash Day**

Lord, help me wash away all my selfishness and vanity, so I may serve you with perfect humility through the week ahead.

## **Tuesday -Ironing Day**

Dear Lord, help me iron out all the wrinkles of prejudice I have collected through the years so that I may see the beauty in others.

## **Wednesday—Mending Day**

○ God, help me mend my ways so I will not set a bad example for others.

## **Thursday—Cleaning Day**

Lord Jesus, help me to dust out all the many faults I have been hiding in the secret corners of my heart.

## **Friday—Shopping Day**

○ God, give me the grace to shop wisely so I may purchase eternal happiness for myself and all others in need of love.

## **Saturday—Cooking Day**

Help me, my Savior, to brew a big kettle of brotherly love and serve it with clean, sweet bread of human kindness.

## **Sunday—The Lord's Day**

○ God, I have prepared my house for you. Please come into my heart so I may spend the day, and the rest of my life, in your presence

Threads of Love  
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Baton Rouge, LA 70821

ADDRESS LABEL GOES HERE

## Mission Statement

Threads of Love is a sewing ministry meeting the needs of tiny premature infants. The ministry is about healing and binding hearts together – the hearts of parents at a time of uncertainty about their baby’s health or when they lose an infant. Our mission is to show parents the love of Christ at a time when their personal pain is hard to endure and let them know that God is faithful. Through acts of obedience and donation, His work can and will continue. Pray that this ministry will have an impact far beyond our expectations.

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**There are three  
things that re-  
main: faith,  
hope and love;  
and the greatest  
of these is love.  
- 1 Corinthians  
13:13**