



Eleanor working on an Advent quilt.

Stitching an Advent treat in St Cedma's

A group of nimble-fingered ladies in Larne are piecing together a fantastic Christmas exhibition of quilts.

The Parish Piecemakers of St Cedma's meet every Tuesday and for many months they have been sewing busily to create a unique and different exhibition.

The results will be on display during Advent - quilts depicting the Christmas story as revealed in the nine lessons of the traditional carol service.

Group organiser Anne Marcus said: "The Parish Piecemakers have been going for about 10 years but no-one can be quite sure as we have sewed and talked so much we can't remember!

"Many of us have faced testing times over the years but we all know that anyone can come in, be welcomed and included."

All of the ladies had sewn at school but

none had ever done patchwork. Anne said they began with simple patterns, making Irish Chain quilts out of squares, and progressed to triangles, appliqué etc, and as each person sewed they began to find their favourite elements.

The ladies then moved on to individual projects. "Over the years the work produced has been tremendous - every stitch is by hand - yes every stitch! No machines. It takes time but it gives purpose and pleasure," said Anne.

Their work has often been exhibited at coffee evenings held in the Parochial Hall, but now the parish is planning to build a new hall adjacent to St Cedma's.

"This requires a lot of money and so to

play our part in the fundraising efforts we decided to go one step further on our exhibitions," Anne said. "Last January we came up with the idea of holding a quilt exhibition in the church depicting the Christmas story.

"It has been fabulous - it started as an idea and from there we have designed and made a set of wall-hangings in patchwork sewn and quilted nearly entirely by hand. There was no great plan, rather the thing has grown organically as we talked, looked at ideas and sewed very hard!"

Each member gets sections for their 'homework.' "The enthusiasm has been unbelievable and to look at the results you could never guess that perhaps 14 different people sewed it!" Anne said.

Margaret Sittington has been a member for four years. She made her first quilt as a gift for her baby granddaughter. "It's great, it gets me out and stops me from eating," she joked. "When you have sewing in your hands you can't reach for a biscuit."

Eleanor Ellison has been with the group since it started. "I could sew but I was never a sewer," she said. "I enjoy it and I find I surprise myself. I have made bed quilts and have a table cloth on my table that I sewed in 2010."



Nimble fingers hard at work!

Eleanor McSeveney, aged 75, said: "I enjoy the company. Good friendships have been made here over the years. I find it relaxing and very therapeutic. If I am stressed this calms me down."

The rector of St Cedma's, Archdeacon Stephen Forde, said: "This is a unique event. It has been a huge combined effort by a really talented group of people. It will be an interesting and unusual take on a traditional Carol Service and I hope lots of people will come."

Quilts for Advent will open in St Cedma's Church on Saturday November 26 at 2pm and from then will be open each Saturday and Sunday from 2-4pm for three weeks, ending on December 11. Teas will be served in the adjoining hall.

More information from Anne Marcus on 028 2827 4304 or Parish Administrator Ann Shaw on 028 2827 4633.



The Parish Piecemakers with group organiser and tutor Anne Marcus, seated left.