

“Tree of Life”

Cindy McNutt-Kaestner

www.FibersOfFaith.com



My husband was without a job for 10 months, and of course it was a time of great stress in our home. During that time, we began to reevaluate our goals, values, hopes, and dreams. Many times I paused to reflect and meditate in the chapel on the 5th floor of Providence Portland Medical Center where I was a chaplain. I found great comfort basking in the ever-changing light of the multi-colored stained glass windows in the chapel. Soon, I began to sense a need to make a quilt with those brightly colored stained glass pieces in it. I found myself buying various brightly colored solid materials and sewing them together. I had no idea what I was making – I just let the quilt tell me what to do. I soon found myself making an abstract tree and realized the leaves reminded me of the chapel's stained glass windows.

I was elated when my husband finally accepted a job and slowed our roller coaster ride of emotions. I found it difficult to fully verbalize all of my feelings, but my quilt seemed to say it all. Then I noticed an article in Wellsprings Magazine, which stated “In the Lakota religion the Tree of Life is a symbol of rebirth and new life. Where the good red road crosses the black road of hardship and suffering, there the Tree of Life springs forth.” In a similar message, II Cor. 5:17 says, “The old has passed away, behold the new has come... now we have been given the ministry of reconciliation.” In an instant, I realized my quilt's name was “Tree of Life”. I felt that my husband's new job had given us hope and direction.... Then it began to dawn on me that the struggle itself was like a “Tree of Life”. Sometimes it takes a crisis in one's life to burn away

that which is stagnant, so that the seed of hope and new life can spring forth....

Sometime in 2000, our daughter Heather (who was 3 at the time) decided to add her own art work in ink pen to my quilt. I was not pleased with her choice of material to draw on. At the same time, I chose to leave the ink and not remove it. As her mother, I find her art work is just too precious to remove....