BLOCK OF THE MONTH - March 2012

Church Dash is a simple block that looks dramatic in red and white. It’s a traditional block that was used for quilts that indicated safe houses for the Underground Railroad. Another name is Hole in the Barn Door – I like that better because I have never churned butter and don’t know what a churn dash looks like, but a hole in the barn door is something I can visualize.

The directions here are for a 9 inch block

Churn Dash is a popular variation on the Nine-Patch block. Because it works up with such ease, it is often selected for use in first-time quilting projects. Although it is a standard, Churn Dash can be used to create intricate designs and should not be overlooked by seasoned quilters.

Historically, Churn Dash was chosen to make use of scrap fabrics on hand. For this purpose, it is best to separate blocks with white, neutral or light-colored sashing. For best results, choose prints of similar values.

Construction instructions

Like most Nine-Patch designs, Churn Dash pieces very easily. The block features right triangles, rectangles and a square. Its three rows are formed by combining units from these shapes; triangle-pair squares and rectangle-pair squares. This block works up in three steps; cutting, unit assembly and row assembly.

Cutting - Rotary cutting provides quick results for this block. Two fabrics are needed, typically white and a print. Any colored solid may be used in place of white, but it should be a light shade and coordinate with the print used.

- Cut one square from a 3-1/2-inch strip of fabric A.
- Cut four 3-1/2-inch long rectangles from a 2-inch strip of fabric A.
- Cut four 3-1/2-inch long rectangles from a 2-inch strip of fabric B.
- Cut four right triangles from a 3-7/8-inch strip of fabric A.
- Cut four right triangles from a 3-7/8-inch strip of fabric B.
Unit Assembly - Churn Dash uses pairs of triangles and pairs of rectangles to form some squares. In piecing these units, use a quarter-inch seam allowance.

- Gather all right triangles.
- Place a fabric A triangle over a fabric B triangle, right sides together, and stitch.
- Repeat with all remaining triangles to form four triangle-pair squares.
- Press all seams.
- Gather all rectangles.
- Place a fabric A rectangle over a fabric B rectangle, right sides together, and stitch.
- Repeat with all remaining rectangles to form four rectangle-pair squares.
- Press all seams.

Row Assembly - The rows in this block work up easily, but it is important to pay attention to the positioning of the units created in the previous step. Rows 1 and 3 are mirrored opposites of each other, so row positioning should also be checked before sewing. Compare your layout with this pattern to avoid the need to use a seam ripper.

- Gather all triangle-pair squares and two rectangle-pair squares.
- Place one triangle-pair square over a rectangle-pair square and stitch in place.
- Place another triangle-pair square over the same rectangle-pair square and stitch in place on the other side to create row 1.
- Repeat to form a row 3.
- Place one rectangle-pair square over the fabric A square with right sides together and stitch.
- Place the other rectangle-pair square over the fabric A square and stitch to the other side to form row 2.
- Lining up seams, place row 1 over row 2 and stitch in place.
- Lining up seams, place row 3 over row 2 and stitch in place.
- Press all seams

If you have any questions, refer to the Bayberry member handbook to contact June Calender.