

Prayer Shawl Ministry



Are you looking for a ministry of prayer and care for others? You might consider a unique way to serve as “the hands ... of Christ, reaching out as He did.” Prayer is a conversation with God, sometimes participating publicly with others (as we do in liturgies and prayer services) and sometimes privately. Prayer can effect change in our lives, assure us that we are not alone, and deepen our relationship with God.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a special way to reach out with love and care to others who are hurting, to comfort those in need of healing, to console those who are grieving, to bring hope to those in despair or in transition, to thank someone in a special way, to celebrate a significant milestone, or to provide for someone in need of a special blessing. Not to be confused with *tallits*, the traditional prayer shawls worn in synagogues, the shawls created within a prayer ministry are made as handcrafted gifts for other people. Sometimes the crafter has a specific person in mind as a garment is created; at other times, the recipient is known only to God as the crafter works and prays. Most often, these gifts of care are shawls or lap blankets; however, some groups opt to make other items such as helmet liners for soldiers; baby blankets for *Project Linus*; preemie caps, hats for cancer patients; or caps, blankets & booties for the *Save Abandoned Babies* project. In this ministry, those who wear the garments are not the only ones upon whom blessings are petitioned: we also pray for those who create, transport, sell and transform the yarn as well as for those who tend to the material and spiritual needs of others.

While working with yarn may be *the* handicraft du jour, the repetitive action of knitting or crocheting helps us to slow down our racing minds and the frantic pace of our day. It provides opportunity for contemplation and a sense of stillness in our often-chaotic lives. Once the pattern's directions become a part of us, time seems to shift and distractions drift away. Into the stillness God can enter in and begin to help us connect our woven fibers to the various people we know who are ill, grieving, or about to celebrate a milestone event ... and we begin to create for them. As we add row upon row, we can pray specifically for the garment's recipient, naming him or her before God, and asking God to wrap the recipient in unconditional, compassionate love. Even if the recipient is not known to the crafter, as the garment is finished it is filled with prayer for that individual. While praying for someone we don't know is a different experience than intercessory prayers offered for a specific individual, praying for a stranger helps us to learn to trust the truth that God works through us when we care for friends and strangers alike.

St. Patrick's Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 1:30 PM in the Narthex of the New Church. Whether you are handy with knitting needles or crochet hooks (or would like to learn), whether you're at a beginning level or are more advanced in following a yarn pattern, you're welcome to join us. If you cannot attend the informal sessions of crafting, friendship and prayer, you are welcome to use the instructions on the next page in order to participate from home. If you would like to provide financial support for this ministry, please direct your check to the rectory: make your check payable to St. Patrick Church and write 'shawl ministry' in the memo section. Your donation helps us purchase sufficient quantities of yarn necessary for our work when donations of skeins are low. If you have any questions, please contact one of the members below (all area codes = 847)



Burian Persak 623-1016
Diane Oster 501-0523
Evelyn Prochaska 599-8363
Linda Czarnecki 336-0959

Marcie Carnick 623-4145
Margaret Bock 244-0417
Marie Bruno 244-1581
Mary Ann Gilray 662-5083

Mary Krell 336-8941
Mary Ziegele
Pat Hovey 244-8060
Pat Poirier 244-5038

Prayer Shawl Ministry FAQ

What are the measurements of a finished shawl? The easy answer is “let the yarn tell you.” As a default guideline, however, ladies’ shawls can be made approximately 20 to 30” wide by 60 to 70” long; lap robes for gentlemen a little longer and wider. Gifts for infants or children can be adjusted accordingly. If you have a known recipient in mind, estimate the measurement from nape of the neck to waistline for the width measurement; to judge the length, estimate the inches from wrist to wrist with arms outstretched, or fingertip to fingertip. Fringe is optional.

How much yarn do I need? On average, knitted ladies shawls take approximately 550 - 600 yards of bulky yarn, 800 – 900 yards of worsted weight, and over 900 for lace weight yarns. Crocheted garments generally need more yarn than knitted.

What size knitting needles or crochet hook do I need? Again, your selection is based upon the yarn. Bulky yarns usually require size 11 or 13 knitting needles, or a size ‘M’ or larger hook; worsted weight yarns generally require size 8 needles or an ‘H’ hook; lace weight may require size 3-7 needles. Check the skein label for the manufacturer’s recommendation, and make a sample swatch to assess the gauge you want before beginning the pattern.

What color should I choose? If the recipient is known, you may choose the person’s favorite color. You may also choose from lists of colors and the basic attributes associated with them. Click on ‘symbolism’ and then ‘color’ on the shawl ministry website listed below, or use a yarn that appeals to you and will feel comfortable in your hands as you work with it. This website also includes a listing of colors commonly used in the sale of pins and bracelets to promote awareness for specific causes (i.e. pink for breast cancer awareness, blue for child protection issues, etc).

Is there a specific pattern I need to follow? No. You may use any pattern you like appropriate for the intended use, but not too difficult that its intricacies keep you from incorporating prayer into the creation process. Remember that the process is meant to provide the crafter with opportunities to converse with God, especially as regards the needs of the shawl recipient (whether known to the crafter or not) and to incorporate those prayers into the created work.

What if I don’t have a shawl pattern? The Shawl Ministry website recommends a pattern of three knit and three purl (for knitters) or a combination of double & single crochet rows (for those who crochet). These easy patterns provide for prayer when it is time to pray, and can also be put on ‘automatic pilot’ for those who want to knit or crochet while watching television, waiting at the doctor’s office or in line to pick up children at dismissal time, or listening to music. Many online yarn companies have patterns that can be downloaded for little or no cost. Craft retail stores often offer free patterns in their yarn sections. Afghan and scarf patterns can be adapted.

To whom do I turn in my completed garment? Completed shawls, lap blankets and garments can be given to one of the members of the shawl ministry, to one of our deacons or priests, or to one of our Ministers of Care. We also welcome donations of hand-crafted helmet liners, preemie caps, hats for cancer patients, and sets of hats, booties & blankets for the ‘Save Abandoned Babies’ program. Some shawl ministry groups also create ‘prayer scarves’ for high school and college students as a reminder of God’s unconditional love for them, no matter where they are in their faith journey. Our crafted garments will receive a final blessing during an upcoming liturgy, and then be passed on to someone in need.

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we are the hands and feet of Christ,
reaching out as he did.*



This flyer was created with the guidance of information available at www.shawlministry.com , www.friendshipshawl.org , www.TKGA.com , www.operationhomefront.org , and www.projectlinus.org