

History of the Prayer Shawl Ministry at FUMC Newton

The Prayer Shawl Ministry of First United Methodist Church, Newton was begun on February 2, 2006. After a member of our church had experienced the grace and comfort of receiving a prayer shawl from a neighboring church, she began to think of ways to begin this type of ministry within our own congregation. Within a few months, the Prayer Shawl Ministry had begun.

Prayer shawls are begun, worked on, and finished with prayer and love. They may be given for any sort of occasion in a person's life, including healing and recovery, protection, mourning, or celebration. To date, we have given shawls to those recovering from surgery, to those who are mourning, to those who are homebound or in nursing homes, to our recent graduates, to new brides, and to new babies. Shawls are distributed to church members and to members of the community alike.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every Thursday afternoon in the Gomedela Room, except in the summer. This group gathers for several hours to work on the shawls, to fellowship, and to pray over the shawls and those who will receive them. Once a group of shawls is finished, we have a short service of blessing wherein a passage of Scripture is read and every shawl is passed around the circle so that each member may touch it and pray for the person to whom that shawl is going. When the shawls are distributed, we also provide washing instructions, a handwritten note or card explaining a special pattern or the chosen colors, a short note of our good wishes and the prayer of blessing. Finally, we record who made the shawl and to whom it is going so that we may know who has received a shawl. Also, one member of the group is keeping a scrapbook for this ministry.

If you know of someone in our church family or in the community who could use our prayers and a symbol of our care, or if you might like to become part of this ministry, please contact Rev. Amy Freeze at 828-464-8422.

The Meanings of Colors

Prayer shawls may be given for all sorts of occasions, and for this reason, from the beginning of this ministry, certain colors have held certain meanings. What follows is a list of traditional meanings for several colors, but if you choose, you may use a variegated shade of yarn that encompasses all the meanings you wish to convey in the making of a shawl.

Red	Energy, strength, power, love, courage
Pink	Joy, friendship, femininity
Brown	Stability, masculinity
Orange	Happiness, success, encouragement, endurance
Gold	Illumination, wisdom
Yellow	Cheerfulness, energy, joy, confidence
Green	Healing, harmony, safety, hope, protection, peace
Blue	Stability, trust, loyalty, faith, truth, tranquility
Purple	Wisdom, dignity, independence, creativity
White	Goodness, purity, innocence, faith, safety, light

Types and Sizes

Two of the most asked questions when beginning a prayer shawl are how much yarn will I need and how large should it be. First, the amount of yarn depends on many factors including whether you are knitting or crocheting, the size of the needle, your personal tension when working, and the size you intend to make. *But generally, each shawl uses approximately three skeins of yarn.*

As for the second question regarding the size of each shawl, please refer to the following chart:

*Please note that all of these sizes are only minimums. Feel free to make a larger shawl if you so desire, but each shawl should be at least as large as these measurements.

Men and Women: 26" x 48"

Babies: 28" x 34"

Again, you may make adjustments to these measurements; such as, you may decide to knit or crochet more of a square shape in order to serve as a lap robe for a man or a woman. Or, you may decide to make a shawl longer for a particular woman to wear.

On the following pages are the crochet and knit patterns for a basic prayer shawl and several various sample patterns. If you find other patterns that you would like to use, please do so while still meeting these minimum size requirements. Also, if you find other patterns that you would like to share, please bring them to the meeting with you so that others may try them as well.

Basic Patterns (These patterns are found on the website
www.shawlministry.com/instructions.html)

KNIT: Needle size 11 or 13

Cast on stitches in multiples of three - 54, 57, or 60. For example, if you use size 11 needles and cast on 54 stitches, 3 skeins of yarn is enough. Some yarns vary in elasticity which will affect your outcome, as will your knitting tension. If the yarn you have chosen has a multicolored stripe, be careful when tying on a new skein. Make sure the color sequence is correct. Also, tie on the new skein in the body of the shawl, instead of an edge, as the ends tend to show.

* **First Row:** k3, p3, to end * **Second Row:** Always start the next row with the opposite stitch of what you see. For instance, if the first stitch on the needle is a knit, then start with a purl. **KNIT THE PURLS AND PURL THE KNITS!!!** It should NOT look like ribbing. Note: If you cast on 57 stitches you will always start with K3

CROCHET: Size 'M', 'N' or 'P' crochet hook

Chain 54 stitches or desired width of shawl. Chain 1, turn, single crochet in each of the stitches to end. Chain 3 and turn. Double crochet in top of each single crochet. Repeat this row 2 more times. Chain 1 and do 1 row of single crochet to end. Chain 3 and turn. Do 3 rows of double crochet. Repeat pattern to end (1 row single, 3 rows double) End with 1 row of single. Finish with fringe.

Developed by Rita Glod

Note: that crocheting typically uses more yarn than knitting, so you might have to adjust the width and size of hook or use another 1/2 skein. It has been suggested that 7 skeins of the same dye lot be purchased and crochet two shawls each using 3 1/2 skeins.

*Both of these patterns, the knit and the crochet, alternate 1, 3, 1, 3, etc... This is to remind those making the shawl and those receiving it of God's triune nature—that is, three in one. This may be a comforting reminder to those in need.

Various Sample Patterns

*These free, sample patterns come from www.lionbrand.com and www.bernat.com. For more, please visit these websites.

Crochet Throw

NOTES:

Throw is worked with three strands of yarn held together.

THROW:

Starting at bottom edge of the throw, with three strands of yarn held together, loosely ch 67.

Row 1: Dc in 5th ch from hook, ch 1, dc in same st, * skip 2 ch, (dc, ch 1, dc) in next ch; repeat from * to last 2 ch, sk 1 ch, dc in last ch. Ch 3, turn.

Row 2: *(Dc, ch 1, dc) in next ch-1 sp-one V-stitch made; repeat from * across, ending with dc in top of turning-ch. Ch 3, turn. Repeat Row 2 until 40 rows have been completed. Fasten off.

EDGING:

With the right side facing you, work 1 row of sc along each side edge of the throw.

FRINGE:

Wind a single strand of yarn around an 11" piece of cardboard. Cut at one end, making 22"-long strands. Attach 9 strands per fringe. Fold strands of yarn in half to form a loop; insert the crochet hook through back of work in first stitch along bottom edge of throw; pull loop through. Bring the ends through loop and tighten. Continue to attach fringe in every other space along the bottom edge. Repeat for the top edge. Trim fringe evenly.

Easy Triangle Shawl, Crochet

NOTES:

Chain 3 at beg of each row counts as hdc and ch 1.

SHAWL

Chain 4, slip stitch in 1st chain to form circle, ch 3.

Row 1 Work 3 hdc into circle, ch 1, 1 hdc into circle, ch 3, turn - (5 hdc, 2 ch-1 space).

Row 2 Skip ch-1 space, 2 hdc into next hdc, 1 hdc into hdc, 2 hdc into next hdc, ch 1, hdc into ch-3 space, ch 3, turn - (7 hdc, 2 ch-1 space).

Row 3 Skip ch-1 space, 2 hdc into next hdc, 1 hdc into each of next 3 hdc, 2 hdc into next hdc, ch 1, hdc into ch-3 space, ch 3, turn - (9 hdc, 2 ch-1 space).

Row 4 Skip ch-1 space, 2 hdc into next hdc, 1 hdc into each of next 5 hdc, 2 hdc into next hdc, ch 1, hdc into ch-3 space, ch 3, turn - (11 hdc, 2 ch-1 space).

Cont in pattern, increasing 1 hdc at beg and end of each row (2 hdc per row) until shawl measures 35" inches from lower edge.

FINISHING

Cut yarn for fringe 16 inches long. Add fringe in spaces along side edges of shawl.

Crochet Plaid Baby Blanket

NOTES: Afghan is worked in one piece with horizontal stripes; vertical stripes are worked later over ch1-spaces.

BLANKET

With MC, ch 88.

Row 1 (RS) Dc in 4th and 5th ch from hook, (ch 1, skip next ch, dc in next 3 ch, ch 1, skip next ch, dc in next 10 ch) 5 times, (ch 1, skip next ch, dc in next 3 ch) twice.

Row 2 Ch 3, turn -- *counts as first dc*, skip first dc, dc in next 2 dc, (ch 1, dc in next 3 dc, ch 1, dc in next 10 dc) 5 times, (ch 1, dc in next 3 dc) twice.

Drop MC, change to A.

Rep Row 2 in following color sequence: (4 rows A, 2 rows MC, 4 rows B, 2 rows MC) 4 times, then work 4 rows A, 2 rows MC. DO NOT FASTEN OFF MC.

EDGING

Ch 1, turn; work 3 sc in first dc, sc across top of Blanket, 3 sc in last dc; rotate Blanket to side and work sc evenly along side edge; rotate to bottom and work 3 sc in first ch of foundation ch, sc across beg ch edge, 3 sc in last ch; rotate and work sc evenly along rem edge of Blanket; join with slip st in top of first sc. Fasten off.

FINISHING

With RS facing, join A in far right ch1-space at bottom edge with slip st; working vertically, slip st LOOSELY in each ch1-space to top edge, fasten off. Rep with B in next ch1-space. Cont in this manner, alternating A and B, moving from right to left until all ch1-space vertical stripes are worked.

Knit Throw

STITCH GLOSSARY

C6B = slip next 3 sts onto a cable needle and leave at back of work. K3, then K3 from cable needle.

INSTRUCTIONS

Cast on 162 sts. **1st row:** (WS). Purl.

2nd row: *(K2tog) 3 times.(yfwd. K1) 6 times. (K2tog) 3 times. Rep from * to end of row.

3rd row: K15. *P6. K12. Rep from * to last 3 sts. K3.

4th row: K15. *C6B. K12. Rep from * to last 3 sts. K3.

5th to 7th rows: As 1st to 3rd rows.

8th row: Knit.

These 8 rows form pat.

Cont in pat until work from beg measures approx 60 ins [152.5cm] ending with an 8th row ofpat. Cast off.

Fringe: Cut 12 inch [30.5 cm]lengths of yarn. Taking 12 strands, knot into fringe along points on top and bottom edges of Afghan.

Knit Triangular Shawl

Cast on 1 st.

Row 1: Knit into the front AND into the back of st: 2 sts.

Row 2: Increase, K1: 3 sts.

Rows 3-6: Increase, knit across: 7sts.

Row7: K3, YO, knit across: 8 sts. Repeat Row 7 until piece measures approximately 32” from cast on edge, ending with an even number of stitches.

Next Row: K3, YO. *K2 tog, YO; repeat from * across to last 3 sts, K3.

Next 4 Rows: Increase, knit across.

Bind Off Row: K2 tog, *K1, pass second st on right needle over first st; repeat from * across to last 2 sts, K2 tog, pass second st on right needle over first st and finish off.

Knit Baby Blanket

STITCH EXPLANATION:

sk2p Slip 1 as if to knit, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over—2 sts decreased.

NOTES: An easy afghan knit on the diagonal from corner to corner. Four strands of yarn are held together throughout. Due to the nature of the fabric, gauge may vary throughout the knitting

AFGHAN

With one strand of each color held together (4 strands), cast on 3 sts.

Rows 1 and 2 Inc in first st, k to end of row – 5 sts after row 2.

Row 3 (RS) K1, yo, k to last st, yo, k1.

Row 4 K2, p to last 2 sts, k2.

Repeat rows 3-4 until diagonal edge measures about 30”–43 sts.

Row 5 (RS) K1, yo, sk2p, k to last st, yo, k1.

Row 6 K2, p to last 2 sts, k2.

Repeat rows 5-6 until longer diagonal edge measures about 36”.

Row 7 (RS) K1, yo, sk2p, k to last 4 sts, k3tog, yo, k1.

Row 8 K2, p to last 2 sts, k2.

Repeat rows 7-8 until 7 sts remain.

Next row Sk2p, k1, k3tog - 3 sts.

Next row Purl.

Bind off.

FINISHING: Weave in ends.

Tassels (make 4)

Holding all four yarns together, wrap yarn around 6” cardboard 17 times. Cut a 10” length of any of the yarns and thread doubled onto large-eyed blunt needle. Insert needle under all strands at one edge of cardboard. Pull tightly and knot securely near strands. Cut yarn loops at opposite edge of cardboard. Cut an 8” length of yarn and wrap tightly around loops 1 1/2” below top knot to form Tassel neck. Knot securely; thread ends into needle and weave ends to center of Tassel. Trim Tassel ends evenly. Sew one tassel to each corner of afghan.

Distribution

Each shawl is hand delivered to the recipient by a member of the Prayer Shawl Ministry. It is given with the following note and prayer of blessing:

This shawl was handmade especially for you with love and prayer by the Prayer Shawl Ministry at First United Methodist Church, Newton. When this shawl was finished, we gathered to bless this shawl and to pray for you. We asked for God's peace, strength, courage, and love to be upon you. May you feel God's grace and comfort as you wear it and know that our prayers for you continue.

Almighty God, we pray that all of those receiving these shawls may be comforted in their suffering and made whole. When they are afraid, give them courage; when they feel weak, grant them your strength; when they are afflicted, afford them patience; when they are lost, offer them hope; when they are alone, move us to their side; in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

When you finish a shawl, you may drop it off in the box outside of the church offices. There is also a notebook there. Please write a brief description of the shawl you have made, your name, and to whom it will be going. After being blessed, the shawls will be stored in the chapel closet. If you wish to get a shawl to deliver to someone, please sign the notebook kept in the church office including your name, description of the shawl, and to whom it is going. These records will be kept for our scrapbook.

If you have any questions, wish to become a part of this group, or know of a need in our church or in our community, please contact Rev. Amy Freeze at 828-464-8422.

Prayer Shawl Ministry
First United Methodist Church, Newton

Thursdays 1 P.M.

Gomedela Room

Rev. Amy Freeze

828-464-8422