

## *History of Grace Prayer Shawls*

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In October 2004, a group from Grace began to meet weekly to share knitting skills and fellowship. They knitted newborn caps for midwife kits, and bandages for Global Health Ministries.

In 2005, they began knitting and crocheting prayer shawls. Though they no longer gather regularly at church, these women still contribute to the making of shawls, and invite anyone in our community of faith to join in this prayer ministry.

Completed shawls are brought to the church office to be distributed by the Parish Nurses to those in need of comfort and solace.

Our newest project will be to knit smaller prayer pieces (no larger than 6"x6"). These prayer squares can be used: 1) when a prayer shawl is too cumbersome, 2) to hold in your hand as you pray, letting the tactile experience focus your time with God, 3) carried in your pocket as a reminder of prayer and God's presence with you at all times.

## *Prayer*

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Dear Lord, please bless these needles of mine. That I may make a shawl of strength, faith, health and love. Give this shawl the ability to comfort, the ability to heal, the ability to give strength where it is needed and of your will it to be. May the recipient be able to know that you are with them and that they are not alone. That they are cared for and loved and prayed for. That your loving arms are around them, to protect them for whatever reason they should need. Lord, thank you for the blessings that this shawl is given. Amen.



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## Prayer Shawl Ministry



For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

Psalm 139:13-14

## *History of Prayer Shawls*

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Modern prayer shawls find their roots in the biblical period. The ancient Jewish tallit was originally a large white rectangular garment with tassels in the corners and was used as a garment, bed sheet, and burial shroud. Over time it has evolved as a prayer shawl worn over outer clothes during morning prayers and during all prayers on Yom Kippur

In 1998, two women from Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut began a ministry combining their love of knitting and crocheting with prayer. Shawl makers begin with prayers, asking for blessings for the recipient, and continues doing that throughout the creation of the shawl. Upon completion, a final blessing is offered before it is given to the recipient. Both the giver and the receiver can then feel the unconditional embrace of a sheltering, loving God.



## *Instructions for Making Prayer Shawls*

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When purchasing yarn, all skeins should be from the same dye lot.

### Knitting materials:

- Needles size 11 or 13
- 555 yards of slightly bulky yarn (Most shawls take three skeins of yarn—six ounces and 185 yards.)

Cast on 63 stitches on size 11 needles, creating a finished size of approximately 26"x60".

Cast on 57 stitches on size 13 needles, creating an approximate finished size of 30"x64".

Knit each row (garter stitch) until you achieve the desired length. Some yarns vary in elasticity which will affect your outcome, as will your knitting tension. Tie on new skeins in the body of the shawl, instead of at the edge.

Many knitters use two different yarns to knit a shawl: 1) a variegated and a solid, 2) monochromatic colors, 3) complementary colors.

### Crocheting materials:

- Size M crochet hook
- 740 yards (slightly bulky) for longer shawls and 60+ stitches.

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 of yarn.

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