

Ministry Minute

Westwood Prayer Shawl Ministry

“We Say a Little Prayer for You - knit, purl, pray”



A Westwood team has a talent for turning a few stitches into a lot of comfort. The Prayer Shawl Ministry, approximately a dozen members, work diligently from their homes throughout the year to knit or crochet soft, cozy shawls. The shawls are gifted in various ways to people facing a difficult diagnosis, grief, upheaval, or uneasy changes in their lives. Some stitchers also produce the soft, white shawls given to the newly baptized at Westwood. Baptized children (and adults) are wrapped in the shawls during the ceremony.

Sara Moran, Westwood’s Director of Congregational Care, maintains the supply and often suggests a prayer shawl to those who want to show their love for someone struggling. A Westwood group might gift one to a church member with new challenges, and pastors might also gift one during a visit. “They are not only for Westwood members but for whoever can benefit,” Sara said.

A tag attached to each one reads, “Made with Love by a Member of the Westwood Prayer Shawl Team. God Loves You.”

Julie Arnott has been part of the prayer shawl ministry for at least eight years. The church provides the yarn and the patterns, but most of the work is done individually. The team is not limited to Westwood members.

Julie and Sara work together each year to choose the yarns the group will need. Funds are part of Westwood’s Caring Ministry budget.



Several recipients of prayer shawls.



Julie Arnott

“The idea is that while you are knitting or crocheting, you are praying for the person who will receive the shawl,” Julie said. “We don’t know who the shawls will go to while we’re making them.”

“When knitting the prayer shawls (which are in colors), we ask God to provide healing of the body, mind, and spirit to the person, and we pray for the love of Jesus to surround and support the person,” she said. “When knitting baptism shawls (white yarn), we ask that the person receiving it be filled with the Holy Spirit and [overall] for their lives as a new member of the body of Christ.”

Distribution of the healing shawls isn’t limited to members. “If someone says, ‘I have a friend who could really use one,’ we give them one,” Julie said.

Margo Chesley has been part of the group for at least 15 years and remembers when it met regularly at the church.

“I often imagine the person I’m knitting for and the comfort it may bring someone who is in a really tough spot right now,” Margo said. “I think it’s the sort of ministry that one can do by themselves, and you may think you’re stuck in your home and feel isolated, but if you’re creating something like this that is going to provide comfort for another [person], it’s a way to get outside of yourself.”



Margo Chesley

Margo recalls a friend of a different faith who was flabbergasted by Westwood’s generosity in giving her a shawl as she faced a difficult time and the comfort it brought her for many years.

“As I too have gotten older, I’ve become aware of how comforting the shawls are around your shoulder,” Margo said. Julie’s perspective is similar.

“I think for many people who like to knit or crochet, it feels like a wonderful thing to use a skill that you have to help someone get through a difficult time or celebrate an event,” Julie said. “We get good feedback from people, and people are really thankful for them.”

Recipients, their relatives, or friends often send notes of thanks and pictures to the group. Sara shares them when the team members meet quarterly during the year to connect with each other, share a cup of coffee, and stitch a while together.

The prayer shawl team represents a wide age group and is always looking for more people to join the group!