

**Prayer of Dedication for Our Shawl Ministry**  
**September 24, 2006**  
By Rev. Ruth Shaver

Holy God, whose arms are wrapped around us every moment of our lives, we give these shawls and lap robes to you. May all who receive these tangible prayers know your everlasting comfort and love even in moments of sorrow and sickness, through joys and celebrations, and in all the moments in between. Bless the needles and hooks, the yarn, the hands, and most of all the hearts that have made this ministry possible in this place. We ask these things in Christ's name, amen.

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**Nine Blessings** © 2006 All rights reserved  
By: Cathleen O'Meara Murtha, DW  
from [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com)

I call nine blessings from above

In the name of God: the creator, the giver of life, the holder of time

In the name of Jesus: the savior, the healer, the lifter of pain.

In the name of the Spirit: the comforter, the consoler, the sustainer of life.

I knit a mantle of caring  
I knit a mantle of protection  
I knit a mantle of wholeness

I knit a mantle of strength  
I knit a mantle of healing  
I knit a mantle of patience

I knit a mantle to enfold you  
I knit a mantle to encircle you  
I knit a mantle to empower you.

*"Shawls ... made for centuries universal and embracing,  
symbolic of an inclusive, unconditionally loving, God.  
They wrap, enfold, comfort, cover, give solace, mother, hug, shelter and beautify.  
Those who have received these shawls have been  
uplifted and affirmed, as if given wings to fly above their troubles..."*

*Written in 1998 by: Janet Bristow © 2006*



**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

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**The Prayer Shawl Ministry**  
of  
**The United Church of Schellsburg, UCC**  
**Schellsburg, Pennsylvania**

The United Church of Schellsburg United Church of Christ is a unique congregation of servants of Christ who are dedicated to helping others find a welcoming place to call their spiritual home.



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Born in 1964 from the merger of four separate congregations – Evangelical and Reformed (UCC), Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran – the United Church of Schellsburg has become an open and welcoming place for people of all walks of life. We celebrate the vision of the United Church of Christ, "That they all may be one", by living out this vision as a congregation every day.



**"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."**

# Prayer Shawl Ministry

*Maybe it isn't a prayer of a conventional sort, but I believe prayer seeps through our fingers, into the yarn, and around our needles each time we pick up a shawl to knit on it.*

*Knitting into the Mystery: A Guide to the Shawl-Knitting Ministry*, by Susan S. Jorgensen and Susan S. Izard, ©2003 by Morehead Publishing.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry started in 1998 as a response to the 1997 Women's Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo combined their love of knitting with intentional prayer and concern to create a ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort, solace, and blessing. Shawls, whether knit, crocheted, woven, or quilted, are started with prayers of intentionality and worked by their crafters so that every stitch is a prayer. Shawls may be made for general use or for specific needs or people, depending on the leading of the Spirit as the crafter works.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry at the United Church of Schellsburg started in the summer of 2006 under the guidance of Rev. Ruth Shaver. Approximately 15 crafters of all ages have prepared shawls thus far, including some who have taken the opportunity to learn to knit or crochet so that they may participate. The group meets weekly on Tuesday mornings at 10 and enjoys a covered dish lunch together each week.

When each shawl is completed, a label is sewn on and the shawl is then placed in the sanctuary to be given by members of the congregation those in need. We ask only that the recipient and/or the purpose of the shawl be noted in our Shawl Ministry book when one is taken.

If you would like to help make, give, or be the recipient of a prayer shawl, simply contact the church office to speak to the pastor, Rev. Ruth Shaver, or e-mail her at [revruthucc@SchellsburgChurch.org](mailto:revruthucc@SchellsburgChurch.org).

## The Basic Knit Prayer Shawl Pattern

From [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com): 1998 - Written & Developed By Victoria Galo and Janet Bristow © 2006 All rights reserved. *Added by Rev. Ruth Shaver*

- Knitting Needle size 11 or 13
- Amount of yarn needed: 555 yards in the yarn of your choice.
- Cast on stitches in multiples of three - 54, 57, or 60. 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.
- If you cast on 57 stitches you will always start with K3.
- *Cut fringe (2x number of stitches cast on) of desired length before tying on final skein.*
- *Cast off in pattern; finish with fringe.*

## Basketweave Pattern

- Begin as for the basic pattern, casting on an even multiple of 3 for width.
- Rows 1-3: k3, p3 to end.
- Rows 4-6: p3, k3 to end.
- Alternate rows 1-3 and 4-6 until shawl is of desired length and finish as above, ending with row 3 or row 6.

## The Basic Crochet Prayer Shawl/Lap Robe Pattern

Pattern developed by Rita Glod, [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com)

- Crochet hook size M, N, or P, depending on your tension
- Amount of yarn needed: 760 yards (*approximately 4 6 oz. skeins of a soft worsted weight yarn such as Lion Brand Homespun*)
- For shawls: Cut yarn for fringe; you will need 2 10-12 in. strands for each stitch you cast on (120 for 60 stitches wide, for example.)
- Chain 54, 57, or 60 stitches or desired width of shawl or lap robe (*lap robes should cover the cushion of an armchair width-wise*).
- 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.
- Chain 1 and do 1 row of single crochet. Repeat pattern to desired length.
- End with 1 row of single.
- Shawls: Finish with fringe. Lap robes: finish with an alternate edging

## The Symbolism of the Shawl Pattern

The basic pattern of Knit 3-Purl 3 came to Victoria Galo as she prayed over a shawl as she worked. Three is representative of the Christian Trinity (Father-Son-Holy Spirit, Creator-Redeemer-Sustainer) and is also an important number in many other faiths, including Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism; and in many cultures, including Chinese and Egyptian.

More resources, including crochet patterns and additional knit patterns, tips for starting and completing shawls, prayers, and ideas for creating and sustaining a prayer shawl ministry are available on the Shawl Ministry homepage at [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com).

