

Prayer Shawl Ministry 2023 Annual Report

Submitted by: Paula Gross

Our Members: Vicki Waterbury, Pam Loughman, Jackie Williams, Meg Ouderkirk, Margaret Rohdy, Blossom Gica, Suzanne Cole, Sue Scaff, Josephine Musumeci, Jane Styer Acevedo, Paula Gross

Our ministry continues to provide members of our congregation (and beyond) with gifts of prayer shawls and lap robes as support in times of illness or bereavement, and baby blankets/hats/sweaters in celebration of new little ones. This year 17 gifts were blessed (a record) for members and friends of our congregation. In addition, our ministry sponsored the church's Alternative Gift Program. We knitted and crocheted warm items for donation to Cradles to Crayons, a local organization that supports children in need. The congregation joined us by donating an amazing mass of clothing, books, and personal items! It was a joy to make this a church-wide project and to know that these items will assuredly be delivered in an affirming, dignified, and attractive way to children who need them.

We continue to meet mostly via zoom on the second Monday of each month, but enjoyed a few in-person trips and meetings too! We visited Chanticleer last summer – a good trip, but triggered an asthma attack for Jackie (ugh!). We also had a special birthday lunch for two of our members celebrating significant birthdays – Sue Scaff and Jackie Williams.

A really special event we attended was a gathering of several prayer shawl ministry groups at a meeting in Bethlehem, PA. It was interesting, fun, and inspiring to see how other ministries operate and see their projects. The church hosting the event had, during the pandemic, decorated the outside of their church with crocheted and knitted flowers suspended by fishing wire! The photos were amazing – and the flowers reused after they were taken down! After a thorough washing, the flowers served as table decorations for our gathering. The hosting Episcopal church has quite a stash of yarns and invited everyone to take some – a useful gift!

For 2024 we plan to continue as we started, providing tangible gifts as emblems of God's love. We welcome new members, even those who don't crochet or knit, but enjoy fun fellowship!