

ALDERSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PRAYER SHAWL GUIDELINES

I. PURPOSE

A. Over the centuries shawls have come to symbolize shelter, peace, and spiritual sustenance. Since the inception of the Prayer Shawl Ministry in 1998, the members of this ecumenical organization have lovingly donated their time and talents by creating hand-knitted and crocheted shawls for those in need. What started as a grass-roots movement has quickly grown into an international cause, with countless numbers of shawls being given to grateful recipients around the globe. The ministry's message of caring is simple, universal, and enduring.

B. The Aldersgate Prayer Shawl Ministry was founded in 2005 for the purpose of furthering the prayer shawl message of love and spiritual sustenance.

C. The information contained herein provides the necessary guidelines for the AUMC Prayer Shawl Ministry membership in order that the members pursue the prayer shawl message of love and spiritual sustenance in a meaningful Christian manner.

D. Shawls shall be knitted, crocheted, or quilted (throw) with prayers for the recipient and constructed with a prayerful attitude and loving thoughts. In addition to providing comfort or support to recipients, some believe that the process of creating the shawls has a healing effect on the maker.

E. The ministry shall be under the guidance of Co-Coordinator(s) (See below.) These Co-Coordinator(s) shall be individuals who volunteer their time and service for the Glory of our Lord and Savior.

F. The Prayer Shawl Ministry does not charge dues for membership. The membership is open to anyone who desires to make shawls for the AUMC ministry.

G. Prayer Shawls are given free of charge; the shawl is a gift of love. However, donations are accepted. Any donation shall be made out to AUMC Prayer Shawl Ministry. The AUMC Financial Officer maintains the budget line for the ministry.

H. Prayer shawls made by ministry members who are not members of AUMC shall fall under the guidelines of this document.

I. The Guidelines contained in this document shall not be changed/revised without a majority vote of the ministry membership. The Coordinator shall convene a meeting for purposes of revising this document. The proposed change/revision shall be submitted to the membership for review and questions. With a nomination for vote from the floor, the change/revision shall be accepted by majority vote of the ministry.

II. GUIDELINES

A. Prayer shawls made by members of the ministry will be made for AUMC members, church constituents, and their immediate family, friends or co-workers. Immediate family includes, children, parents, grandparents, and brothers and sisters. However, a member that makes a prayer shawl may designate any recipient for that prayer shawl, if the member so wishes.

B. Prayer shawls made by the AUMC ministry are intended for those in serious circumstances. Individuals experiencing long-term medical treatments, difficult pregnancy, prolonged hospitalization, long recovery periods from illness or accidents, major surgery, serious illnesses, debilitating grief and/or extended personal hardship are excellent candidates for prayer shawls.

C. For special circumstances that fall outside the guidelines contained in Paragraph II, A and B above, a Coordinator will be notified and the appropriate action taken (see Paragraph IV., Special Circumstances, below.)

D. It is suggested that “crocheted” shawls should be made using 3 double crochets and 1 single crochet, representing the Trinity. It is suggested that “knitted” shawls should be made using 3 knits and 3 pearls, representing the Trinity. The following prayer shawl dimensions are suggested:

1. Prayer shawls for ladies should be approximately 22 - 35 inches wide and 52 - 72 inches long (length does not include fringe).

2. Prayer shawls for gentlemen should be approximately 30 - 40 inches wide and 64 – 72 inches long (length does not include fringe).

3. Prayer shawls for children should be approximately 36 inches long and 15 – 20 inches wide for children 2-5 years, and proportionally larger for older children

4. Prayer shawls for infants, younger than 2 years, should be made as a blanket, approximately 36 inches square.

E. The prayer shawl may be “dressed” (fringe, beads, charms, etc.) by the individual that made it, or the shawl may be given to the Coordinator for “dressing.” Infant shawls do not include beads or charms.

F. When completed, the prayer shawl will be given to one of the Coordinators. When the prayer shawl is given to the coordinator, it becomes the property of the prayer shawl ministry, to be gifted in love in accordance with the guidelines herein

G. Prayer Shawl members may be reimbursed for money spent on yarns, etc., by obtaining a Receipt Form from the Aldersgate Financial Officer and submitting the completed form and the receipt to same.

III. CO-COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The co-coordinators may divide ministry responsibilities as they desire

B. A Coordinator shall have final decision relative to the acceptance or nonacceptance of any prayer shawl made for the ministry.

C. A Coordinator will attach the Aldersgate label, cross, add fringe if required, make a digital picture for the scrap books, get it properly packaged, and place in the prayer shawl cabinet located within AUMC building proper.

D. The Coordinator shall coordinate the shawl blessing with an AUMC pastor, and the time and location of a prayer shawl blessing. The Prayer Shawl Ministry members shall be notified by email of the time and location of the impending blessing. In addition, family and friends of the recipient shall be notified by email (or telephone) of the time and location of the impending blessing.

E. The Coordinator shall ensure that the shawl is delivered to the recipient.

F. Following the blessing, the Coordinator shall forward a picture of the blessed shawl to the individual that maintains the ministry scrap book – identifying the recipient, date of blessing, pastor, maker of the shawl and cross.

G. The Coordinator shall ensure that shawl supplies are adequately maintained in the prayer shawl cabinet that is located in the church proper. Supplies required are white gift boxes, white tissue paper, gold sealing labels, prayer shawl gift card with white envelope, and mailing boxes.

H. The Coordinator may delegate a responsibility listed above. However, it is the responsibility of the coordinator to ensure that the delegation is accomplished in a timely manner.

I. The Coordinator shall ensure that the prayer shawl ministry information and guidelines are submitted and maintained on the AUMC web site.

J. The Coordinator shall convene Prayer Shawl Meetings as deemed necessary; notifying all prayer shawl members (by email or telephone) of the meeting location and time.

IV. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry realizes that there may be an occasion/instance when the proposed presentation of a prayer shawl will fall outside the above guidelines listed in Paragraphs II., A and B above. In these cases the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. The individual that wishes to gift a prayer shawl outside the guidelines shall contact a coordinator. The coordinator shall review the request, and if necessary convene a committee of three as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

2. The committee shall consist of three ministry members plus the coordinator, who shall act as head of the committee; however, will not vote. The individual that is proposing to gift a

shawl that falls outside the ministry guidelines shall be in attendance to fully explain the issue and answer any questions put forth by the ministry; however, this individual shall not be eligible to vote.

3. Following discussion the committee shall have a secret ballot vote. The Coordinator shall count the votes and present the majority vote to the group.

4. The majority vote of the committee shall prevail. Members of the ministry shall accept the vote of the majority.

Prayer Shawl Ministry
17 April 2011