**EOOR Prayer Shawl Ministry** by Mary Smiley

Recently, there has been a request to explore the establishment of a Prayer Shawl Ministry (PSM) within EOORC. Some of you may have heard about this, many have not. A number of prayer shawls have been offered as this idea was explored to see if there is interest in a prayer shawl Ministry for our Region. It appears that this is being seen as a good idea.

Many Pastoral Charges have existing prayer shawl ministries. A prayer shawl Ministry is the making of a shawl to provide comfort, support, or encouragement in times of joy and sorrow. Prayer Shawls are usually knit or crocheted, although there are many that are woven, sewn or quilted together.

What sets a PSM apart from the creation of an ordinary shawl is the prayer or prayers that are said as the shawl is made. Each stitch is part of a prayer that is said either silently or out loud as each stitch is made. There have been prayers created specifically for prayer shawl ministries. There equally as many that are created especially for the prayer shawl being made should the recipient be known or the circumstance for the shawl - baptism, graduation, marriage, achievement, compassion, sorrow, illness or grief. There is no one correct prayer it is what you feel or need to say. Some use the Lord’s Prayer, some The New Creed, others use a special mantra that is meaningful to them.

Just as there is no correct prayer to use there is no correct pattern to use. Any yarn and any needles may be used. You can use all one colour or multiples colours. It can be rectangular, triangle or square. It can be plain or have a fringe. Each shawl is unique with the yarn, pattern and prayers used. When looking for a shawl pattern to use, many people look at patterns where the stitches are divisible by three to represent the Trinity. This is not required but adds an added dimension to the shawl being a prayer shawl.

In EOOR, our PSM at the Regional level would be to present prayer shawls to our staff as we covenant with them, to honour retirees, to celebrate ordination or commissioning and for a new Chair when installed. At our October Regional meeting we will be blessing the prayer shawls we have received and presenting our staff with some of those prayer shawls. In the future, this will be done at the same time as we covenant with staff.

If you have a PSM and would like to share a prayer shawl with us, please bring it with you to the Regional Meeting in October. We will have a spot set aside to receive prayer shawls. We will regularly gather finished prayer shawls at our Regional Meetings so we may have them on hand for presentation as needed. We thank you in advance for your generous gift to the Regional PSM.

If you want assistance to set up a PSM or to explore the idea, resources will be available at the October meeting. Bring some yarn and needles to the meeting. If you have a pattern bring it as well and knit as you participate in the meeting. If you don’t have a pattern, there will be some easy ones at the meeting for you use and then to take home with you. If you have extra yarn that you wish to share, please bring it, however, if it still there at the end of the meeting then you will need to take it home with you as we do not have storage space for yarn only finished prayer shawls.

A web site is in the planning, however, it is not ready at this time. Watch the newsletter for its launch. In the meantime, visit [Prayer Shawl Ministry](http://www.shawlministry.com/) and find prayers and pattern you may use when making a prayer shawl. If you have any questions, comments or ideas to share please email us at: eoorcshawl@outlook.com