  **MARINER SANDS SHAWL MINISTRY**

What is our mission?

The Shawl Ministry of Mariner Sands Chapel strives to bring God’s love to those in need of comfort.

How did we begin?

A circle of women began to gather in people’s homes to knit and crochet prayer shawls for friends who were ill. In January of 2008, the group became a mission of the Mariner Sands Chapel with the support of pastor Dr. Bill Weimer. Over the past 12 years Shawl Ministry has met each week throughout the year.

Who are we?

The group consistently includes over 40 participants each year, and a total of 132 women have been involved to date. Those who attend meetings develop friendships and enjoy a special fellowship. Members who are unable to join us work at home and give us completed items to donate. Our group even includes some of our friends and relatives from afar who regularly mail us handmade items to share. Women who are not knitters continue to support us by making prayer cards, donating supplies, and mailing cartons.

What do we do?

Shawl Ministry works on a variety of projects. Shawls are made for people who are sick, hospitalized, or undergoing medical treatments. We make lap robes for those who are confined to wheelchairs and chemo caps for individuals undergoing chemotherapy. Red-white-blue afghans are made for our veterans, and we have made wool hats and scarves for active duty servicemen and women. Baby blankets, hats and booties are completed for needy newborns, and children’s’ blankets have been given to a variety of organizations. Each year, we send hats, scarves and mittens to Native Americans and to children in Appalachia. We take on specific special projects such as supporting a classroom, military unit, or program, as needs arise. Our group has also participated in the “Little Hats, Big Hearts” project of the American Red Cross

When each piece is completed, the group prays for the recipients, and a card with the following prayer is attached to each item:

 *“May God’s grace be upon this shawl, warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing.*

 *May this shawl be a safe haven…a sacred place of security and well-being.*

 *May you be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace and wrapped in love. Blessed Be!”*

(Janet Bristow, Knitting into the Mystery, 2003)

Each year, over 500 handmade items are donated by the Shawl Ministry. To date, we have given to: Active Duty Military Units; Allegro Senior Living; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation; Christ Child Society; Gertrude Walden Child Care Center; He Sapa New Life Church, Rapid City, SD; Hibiscus Children’s Center; Hospice of the Treasure Coast; Hope Rural School; Jupiter Medical Center; Kane Center; Native American Heritage Association, Blackhawk, SD; Operation Gratitude; Piarist School,Martin, KY, Safe Space, Samaritan Center for Young Boys, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Sterling House, Stuart Nursing Home, Stuart VA Clinic, Manors Extended Care Facility, and the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center.

What’s happening now?

At the start of the pandemic, we responded to the immediate need for face masks both within Mariner Sands and outside of our community. The KinDoo Family Center in Indiantown donated a large amount of fabric to Shawl Ministry. We recruited 12 members and friends with sewing machines, and produced over 300 handmade face masks. These were distributed at the chapel to anyone who needed them. Some masks were also donated to the Hibiscus Children’s Center and to the Martin County School District.

How can you participate?

Shawl Ministry now meets remotely every Wednesday at 1:00 pm on Zoom. Please contact Jane Ditmars at janeditmars@gmail.com to receive our updates and Zoom invitations. New members are always welcome to join us!

If you are working at home, you may call Jane at 610-657-5600 when you need supplies or when you have completed items to donate. Special thanks for all you do!

Submitted by Jane Ditmars

September 7, 2020