



FOCUS

April 2015 | Vol. 38 Issue 4

Worship In April

Theme:

Surprise

Easter Sunday

April 5

9am Worship

10am Easter Egg Hunt

11:15am Worship &

Communion

Mark 16:1-8

The Best Surprises

Rev. Susan

Wednesday

April 8

CONNECT

Sunday

April 12

John 20: 19-31

Doubters Welcome

Rev. Susan

Wednesday

April 15

CONNECT

Sunday

April 19

Luke 24: 36-48

Grief Interrupted

Rev. Heike

Wednesday

April 22

CONNECT

Sunday

April 26

Hym Sing

Rev. Susan

Wednesday

April 29

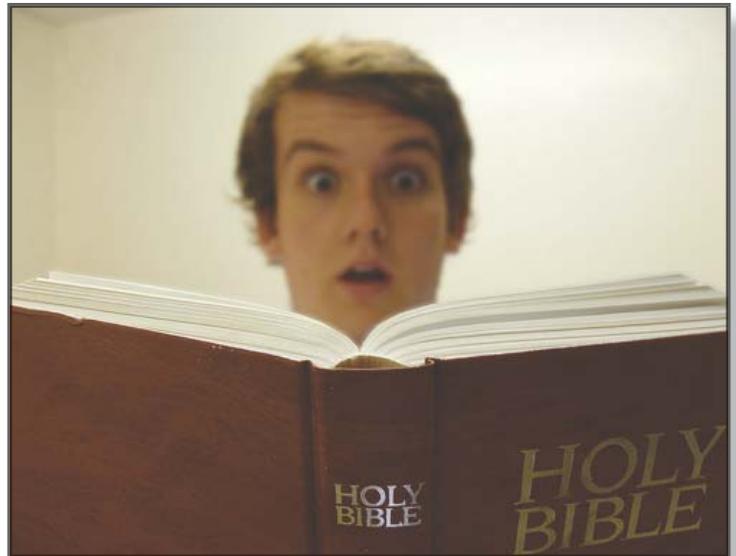
CONNECT

A Message from Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell

SURPRISE!

Most of us don't think of Churches as places where there are surprises. We tend to think of religion as a topic where everything stays the same, the same as it has been for 2000 years or more. We tend to think that churches maintain tradition. Indeed most churches don't change too much from one year to the next.

But the Bible is full of surprises. Moses parts the waters of a sea. The pharaoh releases the slaves who have been building his pyramids. Jonah is swallowed by a whale and yet survives to be a successful prophet. A boy named David slays Goliath. A baby born in a manger turns the world upside down. Roman centurions ask to be baptized by Christ's disciples. When you think about the Bible stories the element of surprise is one of the few constants.



How does that translate to us? Our faith tells us that often God works through the biggest surprises in our lives. March 21st was Down Syndrome Day;

who knew? Probably the biggest surprise in my family growing up happened when my parents had my brother, who has Down Syndrome. For them, at first, in 1959, it was a very uncertain journey. They were advised not to take James home, or grow too attached because his future was thought to be so precarious, and because most folks put children like Jamie in an institution. In an act of courage, my parents decided to ignore all that well-meaning advice and their lives were changed. But like many surprises in life, their decision to embrace the unknown deepened all of us. It had a big impact on my decision to become a minister, I'm sure.

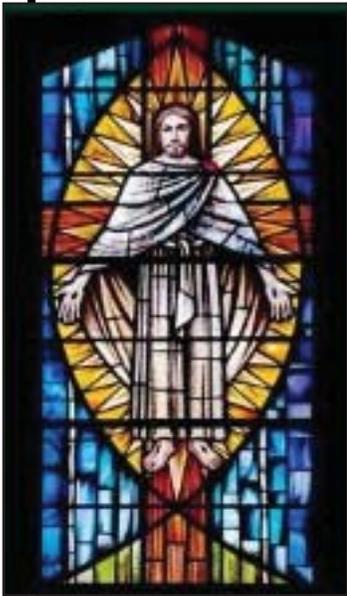
I don't know what your surprises have been, or how deeply you have been challenged by them. But I do know that often God works through our surprises to bring us to our knees. God draws close to us when we don't have a script for our lives. God may be there all the time, but we may not realize how much we need God until we bump up against something that knocks us for a loop.

When the disciples came to the tomb on Easter they were about to get the surprise of their lives. Jesus was missing, and they did not know what to think. In some ways the miracle of the resurrection is still a surprise to us, and we don't know how to take it in.

But this notion that God is close precisely when we feel most stunned is a comfort. I hope that this Easter you find the blessings of the Resurrection in your life.

Susan

Music Ministry News by Dr. Bobby DeRegis, Director of Music



Please join us for our upcoming Holy Week services. Palm Sunday will feature the old favorite **The Palms** by Jean Baptiste Fauré. Erroneously thought to be the same composer of **Requiem** and **Cantique de Jean Racine**, Jean Baptiste Fauré was no relation to Gabriél Fauré. In fact, Jean Baptiste was primarily an opera singer, and only a dabbler in composition. Nonetheless, his anthem **The Palms**, translated from the French, is as associated with Palm Sunday as the palm branches themselves. On Maundy Thursday, we will offer selections from Sir John Stainer's oratorio **The Crucifixion: A Meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer**, composed in 1887. In this oratorio is the beloved anthem **God So Loved the World**. On Easter Sunday, we will offer selections from Ralph Vaughan Williams' **Five Mystical Songs: Easter, The Call, and Antiphon**. **Antiphon** is also known as **Let All the World in Every Corner Sing**. Written between 1906 and 1911, the text is the poetry of George Herbert written in 1633. It is quite the lovely marriage of prose and text, combining the words of an Anglican priest with the music of an agnostic composer.

Our Shepherd's Staff Choir will sing at the 11:15 am service, under the direction of youth music director Valerie Becker. I encourage you to savor the beauty and sacredness of these services on the highest of holy days.

Are you interested in joining a chime choir? Our Friendly Ringers chime choir has a few openings. It is a fun, convivial group dedicated to enhancing our music ministry by ringing chimes. We perform during the worship services on occasion, and rehearse most Sundays after church. Please see Bobby or Joanne Seiden if you would like more information.

CHURCH RENOVATION NEWS

from Keith McClelland



Our new building at 1180 Great Plain Avenue:

- Phase 1 of construction is complete and the staff has moved into their new offices.
- Phase 2, the renovation of tenant space, is expected to be complete before the end of the summer. The budgets and schedule are being finalized.
- The staff and Board's discernment process for how to use the space after the first tenant has

moved out is continuing.

Our main building at 1154 Great Plain Avenue:

- The construction committee is planning summer construction for our main building as well. This construction is expected to include making the parking lot entrance fully accessible with a 3-level elevator and a new entry vestibule and sidewalk.

Our Chapel:

- A beautiful new hardwood floor has been installed and the woodwork has been completed.
- The lighting will be upgraded shortly to 100% dimmable LEDs.
- The painting color scheme has been chosen; many thanks to those who gave thoughtful comments on the candidate schemes. A contractor will be chosen soon.
- A style of worship seats has been chosen and a starter order of 12 has been placed.

FOCUS

Focus is published monthly. Contributions from members and friends of the Church are invited. Please submit materials by e-mail to office@needhamucc.org.

May issue deadline:
Thurs., April 23, 2015.

Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell
Sr. Minister
revsusan@needhamucc.org

Rev. Heike Werder
Assoc. Minister
revheike@needhamucc.org

Danielle Jurdan
Administrator
office@needhamucc.org

Bobby DeRegis
Music Ministries Dir.
drderegis@verizon.net

Cindy Sullivan
Secretary
office2@needhamucc.org

Doris D. Cook,
Volunteer Office Asst.

Rev. Dr. Paul Clayton,
Pastor Emeritus

Surprise! by Rev. Heike Werder, Assoc. Minister

Do you like surprises? I do, but I know many people who don't. A surprise birthday party? No but thank you! A day trip away from my routine? I don't think so. A change of plans? Not now!

Other surprises are easier to deal with. Take spring for example. It is a time for the familiar to be reborn and for the new to arrive. And we are ready for that after this long hard winter! I think we can't wait for buds to return to decorate bare winter branches, for colors to suddenly dot landscapes, for green to take over the gray of lawns and fields. Maybe spring itself is not the surprise. We do expect its arrival. But those signs of new life all over the place are the pleasant surprises that grace our lives.

If we think about it, life is full of surprises. Every moment can be a surprise - a kind gesture or word, a helping hand, kids that are willing to pick up after themselves, a hug just at the right moment, a new insight when we least expect it. Of course, surprises can be both, good or bad, and we have to decide each and every time how to deal with them.

We are about to enter the church season that is full of surprises:

Easter. From the moment the stone is rolled away from the grave to the disciples recognizing the Risen Christ walking right next to them on some dusty road, the story of Easter is full of surprises.

It is God who hands us the Easter surprises that might be hard to digest: that the one who died on the cross lives on today in billions of people; that death has not the last word; that because of his love we can love, even when it is hard; that our lives when lived in faith and courage and love will give hope to a world that always teeters along the edge of despair and destruction.

What will surprise you this spring, this Easter? I hope that we all are open to the surprises God has in store for us.



Moderator's Corner with David Dirks, Moderator, Church Board

The Board has sent out several communications over the past few weeks by email to the congregation regarding the ongoing transition in the Christian Education and Youth Ministries. Let me take this opportunity to discuss our plans from here in a little more detail.

The board met with Christian Education and Youth at our most recent meeting. Everyone is committed to making sure the children continue to have a great experience for the rest of this year. Many people have been pitching in to help with CE, Youth, and The Center, and now the next step is to appoint an interim director for CE and Youth to lead the efforts through June (an interim director has already been appointed for The Center). A search committee was assembled to help interview candidates with support from a number of volunteers that did not hesitate to make time in their schedules to help with the selection process. Helen Johnson, Shawn Rock, Sue Cotton, Barbara Livingston, Ray Suarez, and Rev. Susan interviewed a candidate last week that was unanimously recommended. We are working on an offer to be approved by the board, and hope to have her join soon to lead Bible Village and the youth groups and plan the mission trip, junior high overnight, etc. We will then call for volunteers for a search committee to recruit a permanent director for CE and Youth.

Sue Cotton has organized a farewell party for Rev. Jamie on April 12th, from 4-6 pm. This will be an opportunity for adults and children alike to remember highlights of the past five years with Rev. Jamie and wish her well in all her future endeavors. Please plan to come if you possibly can.

Also this month, the work on our new space has continued unabated. Church administration has moved into the front portion of the building next door and we are moving forward with construction and rental of the remainder of the building as well. We hope to gain town approval for the next phase of the project soon.

Finally, we are planning a Spring fundraiser and church party. I think the arrival of Spring all by itself will deserve a party this year! It will be fun to emerge from our ice-dam damaged homes and reconnect with people we may not have seen in a while. Location and date to be determined.

Good luck to everyone with making it through the remainder of winter, and a heartfelt thank you to everyone that has helped during the recent very busy days.

First Formal Communion & Workshop for Grades 1-2



In our church, we offer a special program for 1st and 2nd graders to learn about communion and then they are invited to participate in their first formal communion. All children are always welcome to participate in communion, but this is a special occasion for 1st and 2nd graders to learn about and celebrate communion. (Also, 3rd-5th graders who have not yet participated in a communion workshop and formal communion celebration are welcome to attend!)

This year, we are offering a communion workshop on **Saturday April 11th from 10-11:30am**. First Formal Communion will be celebrated on **Sunday, May 3** during worship. Please mark your calendar for these special days! Please RSVP by emailing office@needhamucc.org



An Inspired 'Not Your Average Talent Show'

This recent fundraiser was a hugely enjoyed by all who attended. As well as revealing the breadth of musical and artistic gifts of families and individuals in our church community, the event raised nearly \$3,000 in funds for primary and middle-school education in Santa Maria Tzeja. The partnership is deeply grateful to musical director Cici Hunt for her vision and organizational talents, to all the performers and accompanists, and to the many others who worked to make this show and silent auction such a special event.

Guatemala 'Servathon' (April 11): Sponsors/Workers Needed

The Guatemala Partnership asks for your support as Sponsors and/or Volunteers for our annual "Servathon" fundraiser on April 11th, when volunteers are sponsored to do community-service work projects at the church and in the wider community. Please support a volunteer worker with your pledge; or if you can volunteer, contact Nancy Lane at: nrlane6@hotmail.com. Proceeds support education and community development in Santa María Tzejá. Thank you.

February Delegation's "Reportback" on its Trip, April 12, 11:30 am

Please join the travelers from the recent February delegation to Guatemala for their 'Reportback' to our church community, Sunday, April 12th, 11:30 am, in

DO YOU LIKE FLOWERS?

The Flower Committee is looking for new members! We need assistance with making phone calls to confirm altar flower donations for the following months: February, March, May, and July. In most cases, donors are already set up and a call is only needed to confirm the gift of altar flowers for the one month to which you are assigned. The Flower Committee is also responsible for decorating the Church at Easter and Christmas, and as a member, you can volunteer to help in this creative endeavor. The Flower Committee offers a stress-free and practical way for you to serve our Church and meet some very nice people in the process.



If you are interested in joining the Flower Committee, please contact Chris Arren at 781-449-4228 or by emailing c_arren@yahoo.com.

Linden Hall. Adult and youth travelers to our sister community of Santa Maria Tzeja will share their photos and impressions in a lively and informative presentation. Come share the energy and spirit engendered on both sides of the partnership. Light refreshments will be served.

Guatemala Yard Sale (May 16th) -- Save the Date and Your Donations

As you do your spring cleaning, please set aside any items in clean, working condition that you would like to donate to the Guatemala Yard Sale (no clothing). Children's gear, toys, and current sports equipment in good condition are especially desirable. And of course, household items, collectible or vintage items, jewelry, artwork, electronics (no TV's or computers), books, games, bikes, outdoor furniture, or small indoor furniture items are also welcome. The May FOCUS will have more details, but please hold your items until the week before the sale (May 11). For any questions or to volunteer, please contact Brenda Metzler at: bmetzler7@verizon.net.

August 2015 Delegation To Guatemala

The August delegation to visit our sister community of Santa Maria Tzeja is beginning to form. The dates for this trip will be August 5-16, 2015. If you are interested or have questions about this church outreach program, contact: Alan Clayton-Matthews, a.clayton-matthews@neu.edu or Caryl Johnson, caryljohnson@gmail.com. The Guatemala Partnership website is <http://www.guatemalapartners.org/home/>

ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTRIES TEAM NEWS

...EARTH STEWARDSHIP FOR OUR LIVES TODAY...

MAKE THE MONTH OF MAY "WALK TO CHURCH MONTH"



Enjoy the Sights and Scents of the spring flowers! Enjoy the sunshine, the sounds of spring songbirds, the green grass and the sun at your back!

ARRIVE AT CHURCH WITH A BIG SMILE ON YOUR FACE!

Bulbs for Earth Day- April 12

Celebrate Earth Day by donating bulbs (LED's, not tulips!) to our church. In a continuing effort to "Green" our buildings, the EMT will be collecting new LED bulbs to replace outdated and less efficient incandescents and CFL's. We will have a table in Fellowship Hall starting April 12 to allow you to sign up to purchase and donate specific bulbs.

Come by and learn about the new LED's, which ones we need and which would be appropriate for your home applications. A collection box will be set up in the narthex for donations.

Don't you want to stop junk mail service?

Remove your name from mailing lists at <http://www.dmchoice.org>. It works!! ... but can take up to 90 days to stop mailings since many are already in print production.

Don't you want to stop credit card solicitations? Call 1-888-567-8688 (that's 888-5OPT-OUT) or visit <http://www.optoutpres.screen.com>. You can choose either a 5 year opt out or permanent removal

Don't you want to stop unwanted phone books and catalogs? Visit <http://ecocycle.catalogchoice.org/dashboard>.

Once you register, you can opt out of specific catalogs you wish to stop receiving. At registration you will be asked to affiliate with an organization. Simply choose "Eco-Cycle as your "Green Team"

Don't you want to contribute to charities - not mailings? If you contribute once/year to a charitable organization, ask them to send you only one donation request/year. The American Institute on Philanthropy offers several tips on reducing junk mail and phone solicitations from charities - visit <http://www.charitywatch.org/articles/seventips.html>

Don't you want to get off the list of all Direct Marketers? Start saving the labels of all the variations of the names and addresses, which come to your mailbox.... or you can cut and paste actual mailing labels onto a sheet of paper. Add your signature beside each label and send them off to the following 4 addresses below. Indicate the following: "Please remove my name and address from your mailing lists and do not rent, sell or trade my name or address."

1. Valpak
1 Valpak Ave N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
1-727-399-3000
2. <http://www.coxtarget.com/mailssuppression/s/DisplayMailSuppressionForm>
3. Valassis Direct Mail, Inc.
Consumer Assistance
P.O. Box 249
Windsor, CT 06095
1- 800-437-0479 between 8:30AM -5:00PM
4. Epsilon Data Services/ Abacus Cooperative Databases
Abacusoftware@epsilon.com
send an email with "remove" in the subject line with your full name, including middle initial and address in your message.



Friendly Society

Spring is here! Help us welcome in this long awaited season at 1180 Great Plain in Friendly's upcoming **April 9** meeting on **Touring at the MFA**. We'll have a little social time at 1:15 before the program by Joanne Seiden.

May will indeed be merry as Friendly Society members are invited to its annual dinner meeting

on **May 4, 5 pm**. Members will be treated to a free delicious meal at **North Hill** as we enjoy each other's company. Menu details and rsvp information will be forthcoming.

And we invite all church women as we wind up the year with our traditional **Strawberry Festival** on **May 21, 7 pm**. Strawberry shortcakes prepared by Patty Stewart and her helpers will precede Soomi Lee Lowry's magical performance. Soomi will also accompany us in a mini hymn sing.

1154 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, MA 02492-2202

T: 781-444-2510
F: 781-444-3580

office@needhamucc.org

On the web at
needhamucc.org

 Like us on
Facebook

Congregational Church
of Needham UCC

Men's Breakfast, Sunday April 19th Surprise!

On Sunday, 4/19, the Men's Breakfast Fellowship will welcome all church men to breakfast. Our topic will follow the monthly theme of SURPRISE!

The Men's Breakfast brings men of all ages and persuasions together in the Library on the 3rd Sunday of the month before worship in honest and lively discussion touching our faith and our lives in today's complex world. We welcome men of all ages and accommodate those with scheduling challenges. Arrive at 8:15 AM for fellowship and breakfast or by 9:00 AM for the discussion.

Contact: John Baldwin (jsbaldwin@comcast.net) or Rob Dunlavey (rob@robd.com) for more information.

NEW GRIEF GROUP

Grief does not end with a funeral. When you lose someone you love it takes a long time to adjust to the change. Whether the grief you experience is a death or other loss, sometimes it helps to know you are not alone. Living with someone who has memory loss is a grief process. Often it helps to be with others who have some similar experiences. If you would be interested in joining a prayer support group for those who are grieving please speak to Rev. Susan or send her an e-mail - revsusan@needhamucc.org.



address

stamp

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
NEEDHAM
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1154 Great Plain Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts 02492-2202



APRIL 2015

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2 Faith Circle Book Group *Maudy Thursday	3	4
5 Easter	6 Cancer Support Group	7 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	8	9 Faith Circle Book Group *Thursday Lunch	10	11
12 Bible Study *Guatemala Report Back	13 Cancer Support Group	14	15	16 Faith Circle Book Group	17	18
19 Men's Breakfast *Bible Study *The Protestant Revolt	20 Patriots Day Church closed	21	22	23	24	25
26 Bible Study *Martin Luther-Reluctant Revolutionary	27 Cancer Support Group	28	29	30 Faith Circle Book Group		

As many of you know, Rev. Heike is going to take a group of congregants and friends on a trip to Germany in June. They will be walking (well, mostly driving) in the footsteps of Martin Luther, the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. In preparation for the trip, she will be hosting an Adult Education series on this time of our church's history.

STEPPING BACK INTO CHURCH HISTORY

THE PROTESTANT REVOLT
Sunday April 19, 11:30am



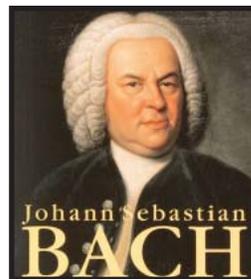
An introduction and overview of Reformation efforts that started long before Martin Luther

**MARTIN LUTHER - RELUCTANT
REVOLUTIONARY**
Sunday April 26, 11:30am

We will be watching a wonderful PBS documentary of how an obscure monk became a leader in reforming the church.

**REFORMATION THEOLOGY - WHAT WERE THEY
FIGHTING FOR?**
Sunday May 3, 11:30am

We are going to explore the 95 Theses that got Luther almost killed and the new theology that was deemed heretical.



**BACH AND THE LUTHERAN
LEGACY**
Sunday May 10, 11:30am

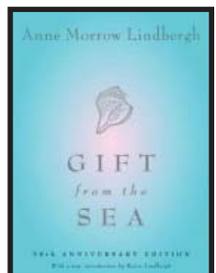
This is a great documentary about how Luther shaped the music of JS Bach

THE REFORMATION CONTINUES
Sunday May 17, 11:30am

How has the Protestant Reformation informed and changed the centuries that followed. We are going to explore how the Reformation is still affecting us today.

WOMEN'S RETREAT
May 8-9 at Craigville Conference Center

The topic for the retreat will be based on the book by Anne Morrow Lindbergh "Gift of the Sea". The book offers wise and elegant meditations on youth and age, love and marriage, solitude, peace, and contentment. How do we reconcile our most personal needs with obligation to family, friends, partners, and work?



MAY 2015

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3 First Formal Communion *Bible Study *Reformation Theology	4 Cancer Support Group	5 Prayer Shawl Knitters Community Dinner	6	7 Faith Circle Book Group Lunch with Heike	8	9 Women's Retreat
10 Bible Study	11 Cancer Support Group	12	13	14 Faith Circle Book Group	15	16
17 Men's Breakfast Bible Study *The Reformation Continues	18 Cancer Support Group	19	20	21 Faith Circle Book Group	22	23
24 Bible Study Adult Ed	25 Cancer Support Group	26	27	28 Faith Circle Book Group	29	30
31 Bible Study Adult Ed						

How do we find ways to separate loneliness from replenishing solitude, and how do we find solace in the simplest of daily tasks? RSVP to Rev. Heike at revheike@needhamucc.org and let her know if you would like her to order you a book!

FELLOWSHIP & SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP Monday at 9:00am

Rev. Susan Cartmell leads this weekly support group on Monday mornings, from 9 to 10:15 a.m.

THURSDAY LUNCH Thursday April 9 & May 7, Noon

Food builds community. We all have to eat, but we don't have to eat alone. Everyone is cordially invited to have a simple lunch at the church on the first Thursday of every month. Soups are vegetarian based (most of them) but always lactose and nut free. Everyone is welcome!

COMMUNITY DINNER - EVERYONE IS WELCOME! Tuesday April 7 & May 5 6 to 7 p.m., Linden Hall

Everybody is welcome to join us for dinner, not just Baby Basics families and volunteers. If you like to help with dinner prep, set up and clean up, please contact Rev. Heike. Otherwise just come! Dinner starts at 6 pm and ends around 7 pm. Help with clean-up is always appreciated!
Sponsored by the Outreach Committee.

BIBLE STUDY

Sunday 11:30am - 12:30pm

Sunday Bible Study: Gospel of John. We will meet in the reception room from 11:30-12:30 after church to continue our study of the book of John. This is a great opportunity to discuss your spiritual questions with other people of faith. Everyone is welcome to drop in and join us. For more information, please e-mail Sunu Yeh at dormouse99@gmail.com.

FAITH CIRCLE BOOK GROUP

Thursdays from 10:30 - noon

Led by Christine Weitzel.

This Winter we are reading "The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World" by Reverend Desmond Tutu. We will read approximately 20-35 pages each week and meet on Thursday's to discuss. We will meet in the Reception Room at the church. For more information and the schedule of chapters and dates contact Christine at cweitzel@verizon.net.

PRAYER SHAWL KNITTERS

Tuesdays April 7 & May 5, 10:00am

Do you like to knit? The Prayer Shawl Knitters meet on the first Tuesday of the month to knit and crochet prayer shawls that the church distributes to people in need. New members welcome!

