

St. Agnes Guild

Trinity Episcopal Church Fort Worth, Texas

What is the St. Agnes Guild?

St. Agnes Guild is a new ministry at Trinity which creates and donates hand-crafted items to those in need:

- Security blankets for needy, grieving, and/or hospitalized children
- Caps, booties, and blankets for hospitalized infants, including preemies, and children
- Prayer shawls for adults and children in need of spiritual comfort
- Chemo caps for the cancer patients
- Winter caps and scarves for the homeless

Guild members pray for the recipients, most of whom are unknown to the Guild members, as we stitch each item and attach a hand-made tag that includes a prayer or blessing. Clergy at Trinity bless each item before it is delivered to the recipient.

St. Agnes Guild will donate to or support many organizations, such as:

- Prayer Shawl Ministry: www.shawlministry.com/
- Project Linus: www.projectlinus.org/
- The Warm Place: (for grieving children and their families) www.thewarmplace.org/
- Angel Flight: (for people in need of free air transportation for medical and humanitarian purposes) www.angelflightsc.org/
- John Peter Smith Hospital Cancer Center
- John Peter Smith Pediatrics Unit
- Pastoral counseling by the Clergy at Trinity
- Other charitable recipients that the knitter may choose.

Anyone who knits, crochets, weaves, or quilts—or wants to—are welcome to join the Guild.

Participants are of all ages and experience levels, creating a multi-generational community that provides a tangible touch of God's grace and comfort to others.

We welcome members of other churches and those looking—or not looking—for a church home.

Why are these hand-created items—and the mission of the Guild—so valuable?

For centuries women (and men) have met in quilting circles and knitting groups to create handmade items blessed with prayers in each stitch. Our communal sharing of stories, patterns, breakfast treats, and prayers—as we stitch—is an important way to minister to one another.

More important, this ministry tangibly communicates God’s nurturing, unconditional love to those in pain or need. Anyone who has received a hand-made quilt or blanket intuitively recognizes the loving patience and care that has blessed each stitch and, thus, the recipient. These items carry a material message of God’s love, solace, comfort, acceptance, warmth, and shelter. For example, a hand-knitted prayer shawl *physically* wraps, enfolds, shelters, covers, and embraces a person going through chemotherapy or grieving the loss of a spouse, to counter the fear, pain, and isolation of the moment.

We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love.
Mother Theresa

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
Psalm 139:13

When does the Guild meet?

St. Agnes Guild meets in the Parish Lounge or other room on the last Saturday of each month, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Our gatherings are delightfully informal, where we pray, share stories and patterns, pass around breakfast treats, and show off our latest projects—all while knitting needles click softly. Between meetings we continue to work on projects.

I can’t knit very well. How can I participate?

Our projects and patterns are simple, so beginners can fit right in. Guild members will tutor those who want to learn to knit or crochet. We’ll tell you what supplies to buy or we can provide basic materials and patterns to get you started.

Where can I get more information?

Contact Kathleen Wells at phone 817-625-0566 or email kathleenwells1@yahoo.com.

Who was St. Agnes?

St. Agnes was a teenage girl in Rome, martyred under the Emperor Diocletian in 304 A.D. because she refused to sacrifice to pagan gods or to marry. She is the patron saint of young girls and purity. Her symbols include the lamb; thus she is the inspiration for the Guild's yarn-based ministry. St. Agnes' feast day is January 21, when two lambs are blessed in the Church of Santa Agnese in Rome and their wool used to make the pallia for archbishops as marks of their authority.

Collect for the Feast of St. Agnes

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost choose the weak things of the world to confound those things that are strong: mercifully grant that we who keep the feast of blessed Agnes thy Virgin and Martyr, may feel the succor of her intercession in thy sight. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory, both now and unto ages of ages. *Amen*

(From the Church of the Ascension and Saint Agnes, Washington, D.C.)

Related Prayers

Prayer of Agnes of Rome

All-powerful and ever-living God, You choose the weak in this world to confound the powerful. When we celebrate the memory of Saint Agnes, may we like her remain constant in our faith. *Amen.*

From Catholic Community Forum, www.catholic-forum.com

Gathering Prayer and Blessing (*for group work*)

As we gather in community to share our prayer, our stories, the work of our hearts and hands, we pray for God's blessing on our endeavors:

A blessing to my mind - to be free to enter this time of contemplative activity...

A blessing to my hands - to be the source of creating something of beauty and love...

A blessing to my soul - to be open to the promptings of loving and caring...

A blessing to my yarn - to be shaped into patterns of loving and caring...

A blessing to my needles - to be the holders of stitches as they become a whole garment...

A blessing to my knitting - to be a work of heart and hands, body and spirit...

A blessing on the one who will receive the fruit of my prayer and my knitting...

May this shawl be welcomed in the spirit in which it was knitted...

May we become one with the One who knitted each of us in our mother's womb...

I join my blessing, my prayer and my knitting with women all over the earth in this common effort to bring healing and wholeness, comfort and celebration.

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A Shawl Maker's Prayer

Dear Lord; Bless my hands as I knit today.

May each twist of the yarn guide me to create a pattern of love and comfort in my work and remind me of Your ultimate protection.

Wrap me in Your spirit so that I will be more caring towards those in need.

Grant me patience as I create this shawl.

And bless my handiwork as it travels to bring comfort and peace to someone in need of Your warming embrace.

Amen.

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Prayer Of Blessing (*blessing for a completed shawl*)

May God's grace be upon this shawl...
warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing.

May this mantle be a safe haven... a sacred place of security and well-being...
sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones.

May the one who receives this shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace,
and wrapped in love.

Blessed Be!

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