



Gold LEAF Running Classes in Concert with Local Hospital

As part of its spring term, Gold LEAF Senior College Class is offering some classes that bring energy and resources to the local hospital [Franklin Memorial Hospital](#). The first of these offerings is called "Comfort Shawls to Make and Give" and the second series is entitled "End of Life Care: Family and Physician Conversations." Both of these listings have had excellent response from members, and the hospital conference that starts out the second class has filled over 100 seats at this point.

The "comfort shawls" class was taught by long-time GLI Board member Myrna Vallette and another member Rev. Doug Dunlap. The workshop provided information about the history of "comfort" or "prayer" shawls, how they have been used locally, and where shawls might be donated. It is hoped that participants will continue creating the shawls and then donate them to Franklin Memorial or other facilities in the region. The shawls, throws and lap robes are free. The individuals who make them donate the yarn and their time.

In their description, Doug and Myrna stated that *"the gift of hand-knitted or crocheted shawls, throws and lap robes can be a source of comfort to people for a variety of reasons, such as for those struggling with health issues, coping with a loss, living alone, or becoming new parents."*

A good part of the initiation of this project came from ['Old South' First Congregational Church in Farmington](#) which began its prayer shawl ministry in 2004, and has given over 350 shawls, throws and lap robes. Individuals, churches and other organizations make and give shawls, perhaps for a specific reason (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, hospice, cancer treatment, military), or make them available to anyone in need of comfort or to celebrate a major life event.

For more information via the web, visit the [Prayer Shawl Ministry](#), co-founded by Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo in 1998.

As to the second program mentioned above, an April 8 state-wide educational event will be held at the hospital focusing on End of Life Care. Doug Dunlap is again the presenter, this time along with Natasha Lekes from [University of Maine Farmington](#). It will be followed by a group discussion being held specifically for Gold LEAF members one week later.

Gold LEAF values this type of class with its "learning and service" combination, with benefits for our members and beyond.

Submitted by - Eileen Kreutz, MSCN Liaison, [Gold LEAF Institute](#)

Picture credit: Gold LEAF member Eileen, working on a prayer shawl. (Photo by Myrna Vallette)