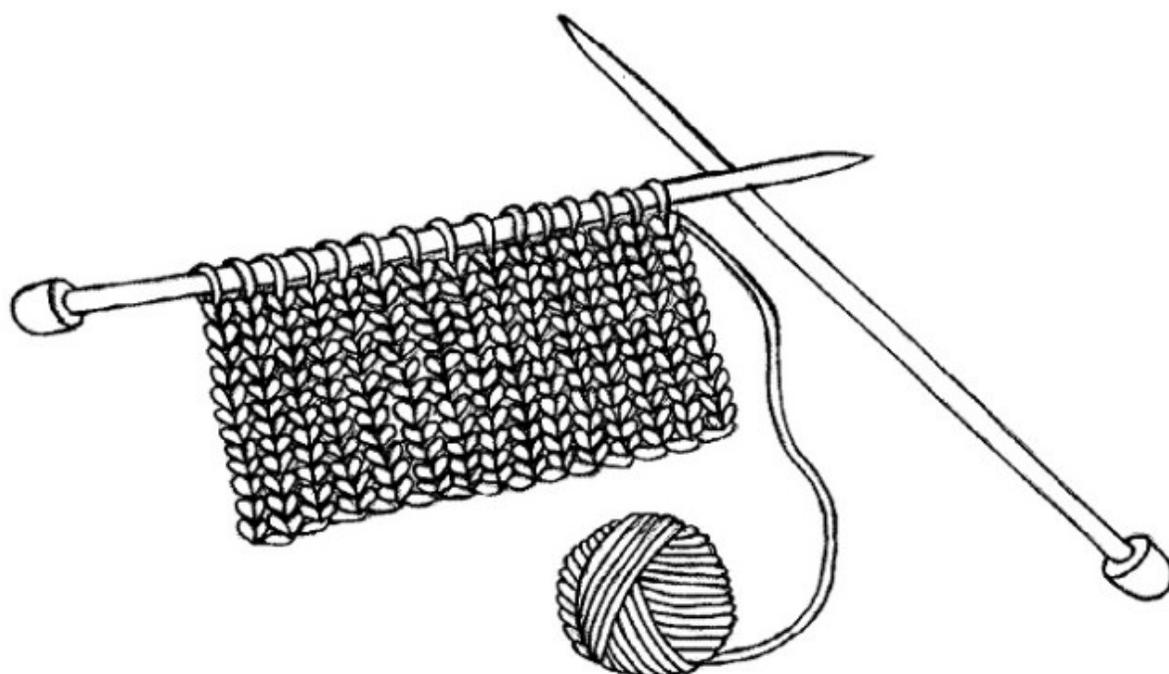




Sean of the South

Tight Knit

Sean Dietrich October 7, 2020



JANE—Thank you for your column about prayer shawls. I also wanted to tell you that I started knitting scarves, blankets, and shawls in 2009 for friends who were battling cancer. I live in Virginia and my first was for a woman at my job who was diagnosed with breast cancer, it took me a week.

I told her that it was made from all my prayers and tears and we became very close and I thought I'd tell you that the prayer shawls do work wonders for people who need that. For anyone who wants to knit them, there are pattern books out there with nice designs. Thanks, Sean.

LAURIE—Hey! I want to knit these shawls for people! How do I get started!?

BARB—Is membership to the knitting club open? Do you have patterns?

GINGER—We Baptists are busy making shawls and hats, too. With the onset of COVID-19 and little to do except knit I have made and donated 85 hats for this winter. Forty went to our Mission

for the homeless, and 45 went to our veterans home. Last year I only made 40 total. This year I had a lot more spare time. Thank you so much.

SANDIE—I was the recipient of a prayer shawl when I contracted an autoimmune disorder that my doctors could not figure out. My shawl was given to me by friends from Saint Michael Catholic Church who told me their whole church group prayed for me.

My autoimmune problem eventually lessened into a non-existent issue and is still considered to my doctors as a mystery.

Please don't mistakenly think this is a miracle blanket, it's so much more than that.

MARTINA—My mom knit me one for when I was at the hospital with my 9-year-old son. He had a brain tumor. We used the shawl to keep him warm because those hospitals get so cold at night in many more ways than one.

I now cover up with it all the time along with one of his old T-shirts as they are our only link to my son.

ANDREW—I live in San Antonio and got a prayer blanket from a woman I don't even know when I was going through prostate stuff. It touched me so incredibly reading this, Sean. I never knew that about my shawl. Thank you.

ANONYMOUS—Where do I begin? I received a prayer mantel from my American mother—I live in New Zealand and was born here before my mother abandoned us and went back to the United States. My mother and I are essentially estranged from one another and I have always had many mixed feelings about her.

I am not religious, but I did begin to wear the shawl. The more often I wore it the more I recalled happier days with the woman I used to call "Mum."

We are now talking again on the phone and via email. I believe these are my first steps to letting go of anger. Don't use my name, I wish to remain anonymous.

SARAH—When my dad died I started knitting shawls with patterns from a book about them. I always give them away in secret.

With each scarf I pray for people's pain to be relieved, is what I do.

BRYAN—I am Church of Christ, but my Methodist wife knits prayer blankets and prayer shawls so I packed one blanket up and sent it to my granddaughter since she was having a hard time after getting rejected from a big university so she knew that Nana and Paw Paw are praying for her.

JESSICA—My grandmother is sick, but I remember she used to make these shawls with her church friends. I think I am going to look into making them, too. I don't even know how to knit.

MARY—I make them with my women's group. Most of us are in our 70s and 80s, Sean! We pray over each one before we send them out into the world and our priest usually offers a blessing over all garments as they sit in a pile. I started knitting them when my husband's brother was in a fatal car accident.

GAIL—I am an old Methodist who crochets blankets for tiny babies struggling past medical hardships that I'd like not to imagine, most of them at John Hopkins All Children's Hospital, St. Petersburg, Fla. I am now working on blanket number 413 that I've created in the past six years.

I'll never see these babies and never know their families but in every stitch I crochet there is a prayer from this old Methodist that these wee ones will have a good chance to grow into childhood, run and play, color pictures, and build things.

But, when I crochet the white blankets for bereavement I know they will lay over a still little body that will never grow up.

When I crochet the purple ones I know they carry a message, placed over a little bed in a hospital room, reminding nurses and staff to refrain from congratulation wishes because a family is grieving over a stillborn child.

White, purple, or a wide range of colors, it doesn't matter. All the blankets carry a message of compassion and deep felt love from this old Methodist.

ANONYMOUS—My daughter would sit in the hospital bed [with her shawl] and sing to the nurses every night, she had an amazing voice for singing all the Disney songs and knew every word. Everyone would love it when she did because they knew, like we all knew, that she would not be here much longer.

I will continue to wear my little angel's shawl every day until I see her again one day.

ME—To everyone who messaged me: God bless you.

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1.



ann gramlich - October 7, 2020 6:43 am

Your column was wonderful. Thank you for sharing. There are so many caring generous people in this world. We mustn't forget !

2. [Reply](#)

[jstephenw](#) - October 7, 2020 7:18 am

Very simple Sean. Thank you for being you and staying positive in this crazy time. Hey to Jamie.

3. [Reply](#)

Melanie - October 7, 2020 10:20 am

I wish every media outlet in the world would share this ❤️

4. [Reply](#)

[TrixC](#) - October 7, 2020 10:30 am

Very inspiring! I used to knit small things, but gave it up years ago. I'd like to mention and thank the women I have met who crochet mats for the homeless. These women, and probably men also, collect plastic bags, cut in strips, connect and then crochet sleeping mats and distribute to shelters and directly to the homeless. One day I will pick up needles or a hook and start again, but for now I still collect bags and send \$\$ to organizations that help others. Many thanks to all the people with the open hearts for giving back! Now...in search of a book with patterns!

5. [Reply](#)

Dianne Keffer - October 7, 2020 10:59 am

Beautiful 💕💕💕

6. Reply



sdkulwicki - October 7, 2020 11:06 am

Look what you're doing Sean. Spreading love and hope and joy and purpose.....one little blog at a time. This is God using the pain and suicide of your father to bring good to you and to others. God bless you.

7. Reply



Sandy - October 7, 2020 11:32 am

... from this outpouring response From your readers. – your previous article was one of the most powerful. Thank you!!

8. Reply



Samantha - October 7, 2020 11:53 am

We all have a story :). Isn't it wonderful?

9. Reply



Margaret E Odell - October 7, 2020 11:58 am

God bless you too!

10. Reply



Cheryl Hatter - October 7, 2020 12:14 pm

How wonderful and touching. I'm going to start back knitting also. The shawls bring blessings with them 💕

11. Reply



Jo Ann - October 7, 2020 12:21 pm

Bless you, & bless all these women & men who are helping others in private ways. Just think, all of them & others who are sending prayers to strangers. How powerful & giving. Love to them all, & to those, too, who aren't knitting & crocheting but are praying anyway.

12. Reply



Terri - October 7, 2020 12:26 pm

Sean, I thought I was blessed by your column on the prayer shawls. But I cannot express how much I love these responses. ❤️❤️❤️ Love you much.

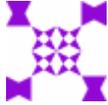
13. Reply



Mark - October 7, 2020 12:44 pm

Sean, as I've thought several times after reading your columns; you indeed have a ministry from God. Yep, a genuine ministry through the written word, that reflects many of the lessons and commands found in The Word.

14. Reply



Jan - October 7, 2020 12:47 pm

A beautiful testimony to the power of prayer shawls, love and to your work, Sean!

15. Reply



Betty F. - October 7, 2020 1:09 pm

Speechless.

16. Reply



Martin Bauguess - October 7, 2020 1:44 pm

The age old question... Are people inherently good or bad? Read this article and you have your answer.

17. [Reply](#)



Christina - October 7, 2020 2:22 pm

Yes, they are more than miracle shawls

18. [Reply](#)



Linda Moon - October 7, 2020 3:18 pm

Some Baptist ladies I know and love knit shawls for people who get cold during church services. I don't fit into either category: cold or Baptist. I do pray, however, for lots of Angels and other people who are battling cancer. I see my oncologist today, so use those shawls and pray for me, too! Thank You All!

19. [Reply](#)



Dianne M Rathje - October 7, 2020 4:00 pm

Not only are these prayer shawls so good for any recipient, they also give the 'maker' a sense of calmness! Lovely way to spend some time while snowflakes fly by our windows. Thanx Sean!

20. [Reply](#)



Jannie Bryant - October 7, 2020 4:22 pm

There are so many good people in our world. God Bless you all.

21. [Reply](#)



Debra - October 7, 2020 4:52 pm

Blessings to all the ladies who knit then bless with love and prayers. And thank you, Sean, for sharing their stories. I've believed for a long time you are one of God's angels sharing His goodness through your stories.

22. [Reply](#)



Gayle Parsons / a fan of yours - October 7, 2020 5:29 pm

Thnx for all u do Sean & I like your Allstate commercials – very professional

23. [Reply](#)



Dianne - October 7, 2020 6:05 pm

And God bless you, too, Sean!!!

24. [Reply](#)



B.E. Blue - October 7, 2020 6:29 pm

Amen.

25. [Reply](#)



Kinda Jo - October 7, 2020 7:17 pm

Well said.

26. [Reply](#)



K. D. Kempf Jones - October 7, 2020 9:44 pm

THESE ARE Wonderful and heartfelt testimonials! THANK YOU FOR SHARING! –
DiAn

27. [Reply](#)



Lisa Sanford - October 7, 2020 10:30 pm

Ohhh, sweet Sean....!!!

28. [Reply](#)



Chasity Davis Ritter - October 8, 2020 2:42 am

When you send your love letters out into the world they are returned back to you to remind each of us that love and compassion still exist. I just finished watching the Vice Presidential debates. I still worry about and pray for our country everyday. I sat down needing some peace and I read your blog for today. Somedays I save it until I need it most. Glad I did today. God bless each of these that wrote to share their love stories too and the many others I'm sure who wrote you that you didn't get to mention. Thank you all for your love and kindness and hope and peace you still send out onto the world too.

29. [Reply](#)



Deborah Gandy - October 8, 2020 11:08 am

To the young girl who said she didn't know how to knit...My granddaughter learned to knit from YouTube and I'm so proud of her for this. So if you have the means, you could try this!!

30. [Reply](#)



Andrea Peebles - October 8, 2020 8:01 pm

Sean, I love this dedication to the prayer shawl ministries. Six years ago I lost my son, daughter in law and two year old grandson. In the worst of my horrific shock and grief the sweetest little Methodist you could ever meet came along side me as a Stephens Ministry counselor and she drove 50 miles a week to come and spend two hours listening to me cry and Pour out my heart to her. It had to have been an emotionally difficult thing for her to even hear and yet she kept coming for over a year and one week she brought me the most beautiful prayer shawl id ever seen that she'd spent hours crocheting and her entire group of ladies prayed over it and then sent it on to me with their prayers. It is one of my most precious possessions. I firmly believe if not for her and many others that chose to be the hands and feet of Jesus I would not have made it this far.

Thank you Sue! And thank you Sean!

[Reply](#)

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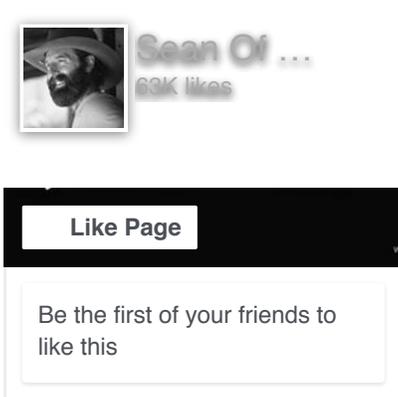
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Sean Dietrich

Sean Dietrich is a columnist, and novelist, known for his commentary on life in the American South. His work has appeared in Southern Living, The Tallahassee Democrat, Good Grit, South Magazine, Alabama Living, the Birmingham News, Thom Magazine, The Mobile Press Register, and he has authored seven books.

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The image shows a Facebook interface element. On the left is a small profile picture of a man with a beard and a hat. To its right, the text "Sean Of ..." is visible, with "69K likes" underneath. Below this is a black button with the white text "Like Page". At the bottom of the block is a white box with the text "Be the first of your friends to like this".