



Blackwork Journey Blog

December 2020



Christmas December 2020



“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh

This is a year we will always remember as one where our lives were turned upside down. No country has been left untouched, no family unaffected in some way or other! Families have been separated, elderly members of the community isolated and stressed, but through this difficult period many friends, neighbours, complete strangers and communities have come together to support, help and encourage others.

Our medical staff and all employees who work to support our health service and communities have risen to the challenge, often well beyond their remits and we now have the hope of several vaccines to combat Covid-19.

Through the Blackwork Journey Facebook groups, I have attempted to support especially the older members of the groups or ones who are having particularly difficult times. I have received many e-mails over the last ten months and am honoured by the confidence that you have shown in me. Whilst I cannot solve specific problems, I am always here to listen and to help if I can because we are part of a much wider society and we need to care for and support its members where we can. To this effect, I asked the Facebook groups to:

**Put your thinking caps on!
Will you help me?**



Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

I said;

“I have been asked if I will do a free project for 2021 that people can download and stitch every month. I am very happy to do this, but I need your help.

I am thinking about doing an embroidery that sums up 2020, but looks forward to the future.

Given this, I asked people to send me via the Facebook groups or e-mail, single words that sum up this year for them (2020), but have a positive slant.

I added, when you send in the word please say why you have chosen it. If you have a quote that you especially like, please add that as well along with the author.

I would like this to be your project and will put all the words together, each one to be stitched in a different font or technique. I will then put it together with your reasons and quotes as to why you have chosen that particular word.

It will take a while to do, but we need something positive to come out of this difficult period. What do you think?”

The response that I had has been very moving and made me realise just how difficult this period has been to so many people. I can only include a few of the comments that I received, but they all give a clear view of what really matters to people.

The bulk of this Blog is devoted to their thoughts, dreams and hopes for the future. Over the next few weeks, I will select the words that people have submitted and put them together in one or more embroideries - a quilt is also a possibility.

Thank you to everyone for your responses, for all you are and do!

Liz

Some of comments received from the Blackwork Journey family:

Sue Wolters Petzer: Trying

Shemi Alhaddad: **Back-to-basics.** We used to spend a lot of our free time on electronic games, binging Netflix, etc. But now that the necessities (work, school, shopping) are all online we spend our free time reading, crafting, and enjoying nature. I'd like to hold on to these basics after the necessities go back to normal.

Sylvie Thibodeau: **Hope...**we all must have hope to endure this difficult time the WORLD is facing.

Birdie Wright: I am torn. I like the idea of this. I can't decide between 2 words. The first word is "**Faith**" because no matter what your religion you had faith that you and those you care about would make it through the year. The 2nd word that I think of is "**Strength**" because, with Faith, even within ourselves, there is Strength to endure through everything each of us went through.

Alice Trivitt: **Creative.** Time to try a new approach to life.

Diana Burns: **Resilience** - we have all worked together to sustain our sanity. We have remained strong, grown in ways we never considered, discovered strength we didn't know we possessed. Learned how important family & friends are.

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

Betty Arbuthnot: Patience. Most people believe that because I stitch intricate charts, I am very patient. OK, but Coronavirus has made me lose it too often. I am a single, older, disabled lady living alone. Usually I like it that way, but from time to time, I have to really talk to myself to remain patient with myself and the way the world is going these days. It will get better, I just have to be PATIENT.

Maureen Hazlewood: ANTIDOTE!!

Michelle Kabelman: Change

Billye Tziporah Roberts: "I am enough" "The nicest ladies stitch and share on FaceBook" those are me. "Everything is figureoutable" author of that is Ash Ambirge

Jennifer Cordray: Family

Laurel Cole: Just stop and be still

Rachel L Carey: Patience - be patient as this too shall pass. Kindness - help those who need it, without question and expectation of reward

Michele Morgan: Kindness!

Berit Eide: Hope - because without it we are lost!

Lyn Macdonald: Walk to the beat of your own drum

Heather Gitlin: Here are two: **Gratitude** - People are being grateful for what they have. **Responsibility** - people are doing what they can to keep their family, friends, neighbors and total strangers safe.

Sandra Kloppers: Nothing is positive about this year, unless it is aimed at ghouls.

Munizeh Zuberi: So close yet so far

Kay Parke: Kindness

Alan Heath: Educate. So we can know the truth.

Wendy Street: Flexibility, because we all had to learn to do things differently

Maureen Waite: Prayer.

Margaret Place: Experience. You have to go through to get what this whole pandemic thing means.

Rita Henriëtta Joubert: Endurance! Never give up because tomorrow the sun will shine again ! ❤️❤️

Pam Gillespie: Home is where the ❤️ is

Karin Janssen-van Rijswick: Liefde. Van mijn man, kinderen en kleinkinderen. Genieten van de natuur, ondanks de lockdown. Vogels in onze tuin, die af en aan vliegen en hun mooie gekwetter. Love. From my husband, children and grandchildren. Enjoying nature, despite the lockdown. Birds in our garden, flying off and off and their pretty hurt.

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

Trudi Lee: Internet, without it I would not have been able to connect with people all over the world, chat face to face with friends and take part in group chats and even workshops, enjoy retail therapy.

Jennifer Jennings Wollesen: Learning

Karen W. Gronau: Humanity: Humanity is the entire human race. Everyone on earth was affected. Humanity also includes all the kind feelings and actions we humans did for each other during the pandemic.

Kay Parke: Kindness

Ki Es: Together

Hannie Westerink: We can beat this by staying and **praying** in our own homes

Sue Wolters Petzer: Endurance

Betty Hill: Perseverance. Reflective. Over the time of lock-down I became quite reflective on what was really important in our lives, what made us happy (stitching of course for one thing), what we could get along without and how we could simplify our lives to create our own joy.

Jill Maria Figueiras: Together

Marie-louise Huylebroeck: BELIEVE, because I believe 2021 to go will be Year of kindness, happiness, and safety. We learned to love everybody, to be attentful to other people.

Saly Mar: "CARPE DIEM" Porque hay que vivir el presente. Nunca sabemos que nos traerá el futuro

Sandy Bell: Family - protect them, sacrifice for them, love them, don't take them for granted

Zoe Brener: It is what it is.

Fiona Penman: On 27 Nov last year, the Green Wattle Creek fire started from a lightning strike. It was close to home, but no danger to my home. On 19 Dec, it came to within 1.5km of my home. I couldn't get home and didn't know what I was going to find. There is only one road out either to the north or south. It was blocked by fire to the south, but thankfully my town was safe. Many in neighbouring towns lost everything. This brought out the community spirit as always happens in Australia in moments of hardship. Being asthmatic, I couldn't leave home because of the smoke so it was like a trial run for COVID. In March, I started working from home and haven't gone back to the office yet. I feel extremely thankful. Many people were not handling being "stuck at home". I much prefer to think of it as "**safe at home**".

Maguy Laure Maire Karaveli: Blackwork, the only addiction that can help you through rough times without side effects.

"the world offers itself to your imagination,

calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -

over and over announcing your place

in the family of things." from "Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

Pat Ohman: HOPE. Hold on pain ends.

Jane Kwiecinski: Appreciation. How can you appreciate the descent if you never have to climb?

Sue Huntleigh-Smith: We have a word at where I work. KAURI. In New Zealand, the Kauri tree stands tall and strong overseeing the forest. For us, KAURI stands for: Kindness Achievement Unity Respect Identity It is what a lot of people have tried to do this year. So my word is KAURI.

Mena Ryan: I'm not sure about focusing on 2020. People are going to move on and not want to look back if there is a vaccine and it eliminates the need for lock downs, etc. There was a similar reaction on a bobbin lace group that I belong to. Someone was giving away a free Covid pattern, but it didn't sound like anyone wanted to put the time and energy into commemorating it. Definitely do something with hope and looking forward to the future but keep it timeless. General stuff like family being together, travel, and stuff like that.

Jo Reid: “Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise” - Les Miserables. Victor Hugo. This quote has helped me this year see that the future will be bright and to try and stay positive.

Barbara Dibden: Patience, we can still enjoy life next year if we stick to the rules and stay safe. 😊 **LOVE LIFE.**

Anna Lowenstein: Zoom. I've been taking part in Zoom meetings all year for the various associations I'm involved with, and we'll certainly be continuing them once the pandemic is over.

Sandra Patenaude: Comfort. Comfort for our loved ones in nursing homes by greeting them from outdoors through their room windows. Balloons and encouraging signs.

Lena Markham Muehlenbein: Family. Missing them and loving them through all that has happened. Keeping them safe.

Ellen Rasmussen Milne: *Hope. In many ways this has been a long miserable year, but as 2020 comes to an end, I am expecting a **Christmas miracle** grand baby. The pregnancy has been a struggle for the first time mom with many health concerns. I hope and pray for both mama and her unborn child. This child is hope that out of all the sadness of this year, new life emerges and with it hope for the future. Thank you everyone! I am actually expecting a grand baby. The expectant first time mom, my daughter-in-law with health issues, has been ill the entire pregnancy. Hoping and praying that baby makes it to his scheduled delivery on December 23rd*

Elizabeth Almond: *Ellen, that is just wonderful. That is the best possible start to a new year. Please post a picture of your little one. Stay safe, with love from all the Blackwork family. **Ellen** Thank you so very much for your personal response and kind words. They mean so very, very much. Stitching ‘Save the Stitches’ has been my mental health therapy this past year. Hopefully, the baby will make it to his scheduled debut on December 23rd.*

Toni Lappo Newell: Crafting, family,

Viviane Halsall: Patience. We need to be patient with everyone even though we may not agree with some decisions being made. No one is perfect.

Carol Verble: Hope for the Best, Cope with the Rest. I have always thought this is a good way to look at life happening. I have no idea who said it first.

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

Els Franci: Home. It is hard to be positive on the word 'home', because for many people the forced 'stay home' has not been easy, and has led to struggles, financially or psychologically. But home is where 2020 has been happening, and for the SAL we can all just be positive when stitching 'home'.

"Stay home. Stay safe." It couldn't be said often enough during 2020.

"Mask. Distance. Hygiene." It became a way of life.

Sports. Many people took to running and exercising outside.

School. It has been so difficult for both the children and their parents when schools did not reopen for weeks or months on end.

Toni Lappo Newell: Crafting, family,

Mary Ann Julg: Grandchildren. They were 6 and 7 and each one has had a birthday during this time and no complaints about not celebrating with friends. We Facetime and I've done virtual school for 8 weeks with them. They were so happy to see their friends. So how could we not stay positive?

Viviane Halsall: Patience. We need to be patient with everyone even though we may not agree with some decisions being made. No one is perfect.

Roberta Borg: Unite. I live on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, Malta. I truly felt it is a small world as we are all going through this pandemic at the same.

Victoria Becker: How about a motif of the coronavirus and a motif a mask and a vaccine?

Christa Heinrichs: Time. We spent a lot of time together this year. No one was immune. Our children spent more time with us because schools were closed, and time marched on. During this year my son graduated from high school and has finished his first semester of university. The future awaits, whether it's a "new normal" or not.

Lee Nesbitt: Now - or present - because that is all we have that is guaranteed - pandemic or not

Judy Claunch: Pandemic - explains the vastness of the effects, a word no one has really used to describe life since the Spanish flu. A word that years from now will speak of the huge impact 2020 had on so many.

Janice Irene Loake: Time, because in this busy world we do not all ways have time to do the things we want to do. The lockdowns gave us that time.

Donna Morgan: The **pandemic**...it is what it is! - we all need to respect & protect others. **Life is Good.** - this was a comment from a caregiver of an Alzheimer's patient after she listed all the things that went bad in her day.

Susan G. Sørensen: Loneliness.... We elderly and chronic ill have been alone in 2020 🤔

Theresa Darrough: I cannot find a citation for this quote, but the females in my childhood used to say it all the time. They meant it in a positive way, not one of drudgery. Life is so daily.... Then, there is its corollary: Any day above ground is a good day

Maria Casirati:

"intimty and family", sorry my English vocabulary isn't so rich, I hope intimacy is the right word. We are having the opportunity to spend time with our family and take care each other for so many time we haven't in normality. Time to "Speak and Listen". May be another word is 'slow life' in opposite too much speed modern life. and .. 'Brother Web' , I mean technology that helps us to be able to see and speak each other even if far. Sorry.. too much words and bad English, but your idea is so nice!

[Anne Thomson Vogel](#) to [Maria Casirati](#)

I love that you are expanding your skills and learning English. New languages can be intimidating. I think the word you are seeking is perhaps 'intimacy'. Intimacy and family. And, I agree with you, so many have seen this year as a bad thing rather than looking for the gifts it has brought us.

Johanna Newman: Kia Kaha ...means Stay strong in Maori, from New Zealand and stranded in the UK

Generosity, we started the year with the fires in Australia and everyone pulled together to send help over across the water. Then Covid struck and people were generous with their time and talents, whether it be creating masks or wonderful embroidery patterns for everyone to focus on and enjoy.

Rhonda Stagg: Imagination

Wendy Wood: Connection. Chosen because COVID and its implications has seen people come together in their communities across the world to take care of one another in difficult circumstances.

Joyce Petrie: Stolen from someone's post, but I think it sums up the year x

At the end of the day, what
really matters is that
your loved ones are well,
you've tried your best,
and that you're thankful
for all that you have.

Jo Flanagan: Community, Caring, Carers, Stitching, Compassion, Selflessness

Darlene Merilees: Friends. I have four really close friends who get together to do crafts and have a fun time. I would be in a mental hospital without them to lift my spirits and make me laugh. We had a messenger facetime this morning and it made me so happy. Thanks, Elizabeth, for all you do!

Barb Looney: "The fog comes on little cat feet" "Carl Sanderson This quote calms me. Fog comes so quietly. I love fog and can imagine the little cat feet.

Lynnette Jean Flowers: Reflection - a time to see/appreciate what we have. For most, there was a time to draw breath and not be consumed by the frenetic world of juggling work and home.

Laurel Cole: Just stop and be still

Rachel L Carey: Patience - be patient as this too shall pass/ **Kindness** - help those who need it, without question and expectation of reward

Maria Hazel: Adaptable, we have all had to find different ways of doing things

Blackwork Journey Blog, December 2020

Kasey Egelus: Perseverance. Even though we have had to change our lives, we have been able to support each other in the new normal.

Sunday Lambert: Faith that we all needed to get through this year. I had my first great grandchild to arrive and what a blessing.

Victoria Goodfellow Nicholls: Brilliant idea! My word is "**growth**". I've learned so much about myself during this extraordinary time. It's been incredibly challenging but I'm taking away from it greater self-knowledge, and that's always a good thing.

Lesley Kennes: Silver Linings I know it is two words but it sums up so many more. More time to think more time to spend on the important stuff. Family Friends. A chance to slow down & breathe. A hope for a better tomorrow and a chance to change for the better. An awakening to injustice in its many forms and an acceptance that an apology is a start but old habits must be changed. Maybe your typography will be like the word clouds that are generated and it too will have a silver lining.

Helen O'Malley: fabulous idea! **Be kind- always.** Because you don't know the rest of the story ♥️☐

Diana Burns: Resilience - we have all worked together to sustain our sanity. We have remained strong, grown in ways we never considered, discovered strength we didn't know we possessed. Learned how important family & friends are.

Betty Arbuthnot: Patience. Most people believe that because I stitch intricate charts, I am very patient. OK but Coronavirus has made me lose it too often. I am a single, older, disabled lady living alone. Usually I like it that way but from time to time, I have to really talk to myself to remain patient with myself and the way the world is going these days. It will get better, I just have to be PATIENT.

Doris Dieners: Diet. I'm having a hard time deciphering the fine lines between boredom, stress, anxiety, fear and hunger. I'll start my diet after the pandemic is over.

The Facebooks groups have grown to over 9,000 people worldwide and it never fails to amaze me just how many people look at them every day and respond to the embroideries posted and support and encourage other members. I do feel we have become a very caring family and I hope this continues in 2021.

One of the Facebook members **Catherine Sunnye Taylor** wrote this with the intention of charting it to stitch:

"The year the world stood still, we learned to cherish life.

The year the world stood silent, we learned to value time.

The year the world sat shattered, we learned to make amends.

The year that life was altered, we learned to adapt."

Xx

I think is so appropriate! Thank you Catherine for your beautiful and thoughtful words.

Hope is a powerful thing. It inspires us to do the impossible and helps us carry on during difficult times. Hope can come in many different shapes and forms. It may be through our favourite music, or a good book, or even by listening to our favourite thought leaders. From the different hope quotes below to find the right words that speak to you.

When the world says, "Give up, Stay positive and happy. Work hard and don't give up hope. Be open to criticism and keep learning. Surround yourself with happy, warm and genuine people." – Tena Desae

Hope whispers, "Try it one more time." ~Author Unknown

Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. ~Anne Lamott

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.” – Albert Einstein

What's new For December?



There is just time to make some last minute gifts for Christmas and three charts have been added this month.

CH0406 Hope 2020

These three double sided designs can be used for cards or decorations or simply as a reminder. By adding an initial or name to the centre it can be personalised.

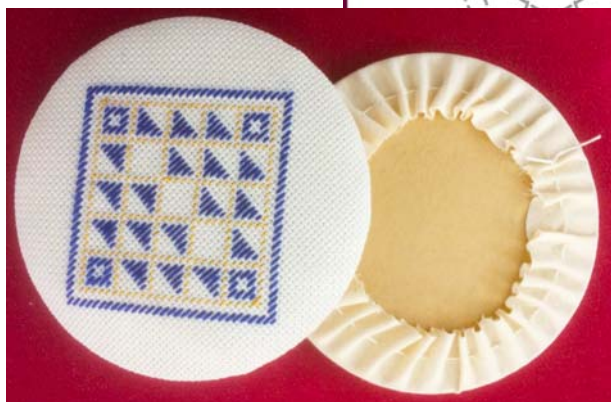
If Christmas material is used as backing you could make six different decorations.

There are a number of alphabets in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website.

CH0406 Hope 2020 - These designs can be worked on evenweave or Aida fabric

CH0407 Shiawase

This means 'good fortune' in Japanese and there are three double sided ornaments stitches in sashiko on calico and Kogin stitched on Zweigart 16 count Aida. Again if a different fabric is used for the backing six different ornaments could be made.



The designs are made up over 4inch card circles.

PR0065 'Easy Stitch' table centre

This was designed for Zweigart 18 count Davosa evenweave fabric as an introduction to evenweave, or for people with eyesight problems who have difficult working on 28 count evenweave.

It is a thicker, heavier than usual fabric 52% cotton /48% modal blended evenweave. It handles well and the holes are clear. Various thicknesses of threads have been used to create different weights of stitching. The whole design can be worked in four strands of floss to give a heavier appearance.



PR0065 Easy Stitch Any evenweave fabric could be used but the dimensions would differ slightly.

Design area: 13.75 x 13.75 inches

Fabric: Zweigart 18 count Davosa evenweave, 18 x 18 inches.

It is ideal for kogin and other counted embroidery techniques. It can be stitched with DMC, soft cotton or sashiko and kogin threads.

Note: If Zweigart 20 count Bellana is used the design area will be slightly smaller.

The table centre can be backed with a piece of plain fabric - 18 x 18 inches



Extract from embroidery showing how the stitching works on 18 count Davosa.

This is the first in a series of embroideries using fabric that is easier to work with. Eyesight may become a problem with age, but there are ways round most difficulties if you use the right equipment and fabrics.

The two main patterns are based on two traditional Japanese designs.

The border is called Kawari Komezashi, or rice stitch variation where the diagonal stitches are worked between the crosses. The body of the pattern is Kusari Jujizashi (chain cross stitch).



I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and hope that 2021 will all that we wish it to be.

Stay safe and happy stitching,

Liz

Card ([href="https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/silver"](https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/silver)>Silver Vectors by Vecteezy