



Blackwork Journey Blog

January 2021



Happy new year

Blackwork Journey Blog, January 2021

January 2021- Happy New Year to all my readers!!

Last year was a year like no other, but hopefully, 2021 will bring light at the end of the tunnel with the Covid-19 vaccine being steadily rolled out and by late spring or early summer we will be able to see our way forward and pick up some semblance of normal life. To see our friends and family and to give them a hug is still a dream, but it will happen? To be able to travel freely to the US to see our family is one thing that I am really hoping for in 2021.

2020 was a year we will always remember as one where our lives were turned upside down. No country has been untouched and 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 also risen to the challenge, often above and beyond that normally expected of them.

The internet, Facebook and Zoom networks have taken on a new role in keeping families, groups and communities together and for me, new teaching opportunities have arisen.



FR0187 'New Beginning' This design was added to the Facebook groups in December and can be found in 'Freebies' on the Blackwork Journey website.

Through the Blackwork Journey Facebook groups, I have attempted to support many members of the groups or ones who were experiencing particularly difficult times over the last twelve 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 help if I can, because we are part of a much wider society and we need to care for and support its people whenever we can. To this end, last month I asked the Facebook groups to:

Put your thinking caps on! Will you help me?

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 words that I received, but they all give a clear view of what really matters most.

What happened next?

When I received so many replies I decided to take a slightly different approach to the project. There will be a free “Wordle” embroidery split over several months to reflect your thoughts, dreams and hopes for the future which will be posted in the Blog and on Facebook starting this month and there is a larger design that can be divided into three projects for a more comprehensive overview posted in “Charts” this month.

Several members that I have shown this design to are going to stitch it in memory of loved ones that they have lost, others are going to stitch it for their church or their homes as a reminder of what we strive for and our hopes for the future.

They are all based on a “Wordle”.

What is a wordle?

A **wordle** (also known as word cloud and tag cloud) is a visual representation of words, where the size of each word is proportional to the number of times it appears.

Wordles can be worked in different shapes, colours and alphabets. I have used the ideas you gave me to create some Blackwork Journey Wordles to celebrate the end of 2020 and our hopes for 2021. Different alphabets have been included so that you can create your own Wordle.



This is the art form of a wordle where the words are collected together and placed in a random selection across the shape. It is much easier to place the words horizontally in embroidery, but if you are feeling adventurous the words can be placed at all angles. Look on the internet and you will find a large selection of alphabets to add to your own collection.

Make a list of the words you want to include in a wordle and follow the instructions to create your own. A simple wordle called "Peace" has been included this month to show how the idea can be translated into embroidery.



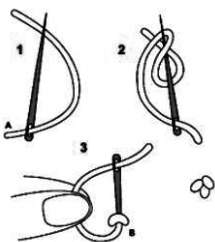
"Peace"

Design area: 4.86 x 4.86 inches
Stitches: 68 x 68

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 8 x 8 inches

Threads: DMC stranded floss DMC 815 garnet, one skein
 Other colours of floss can be used.
 Mill Hill Glass beads MGH 557 gold, one packet
 Tapestry needle No 24
 Small embroidery ring.

Stitches used: Back stitch, one strand. Cross stitch, two strands, French or Colonial knots, two strands.



Colonial knots

Key:

Legend:

■ [2] DMC-815 ANC-44 DLE- garnet - md

Backstitch Lines:

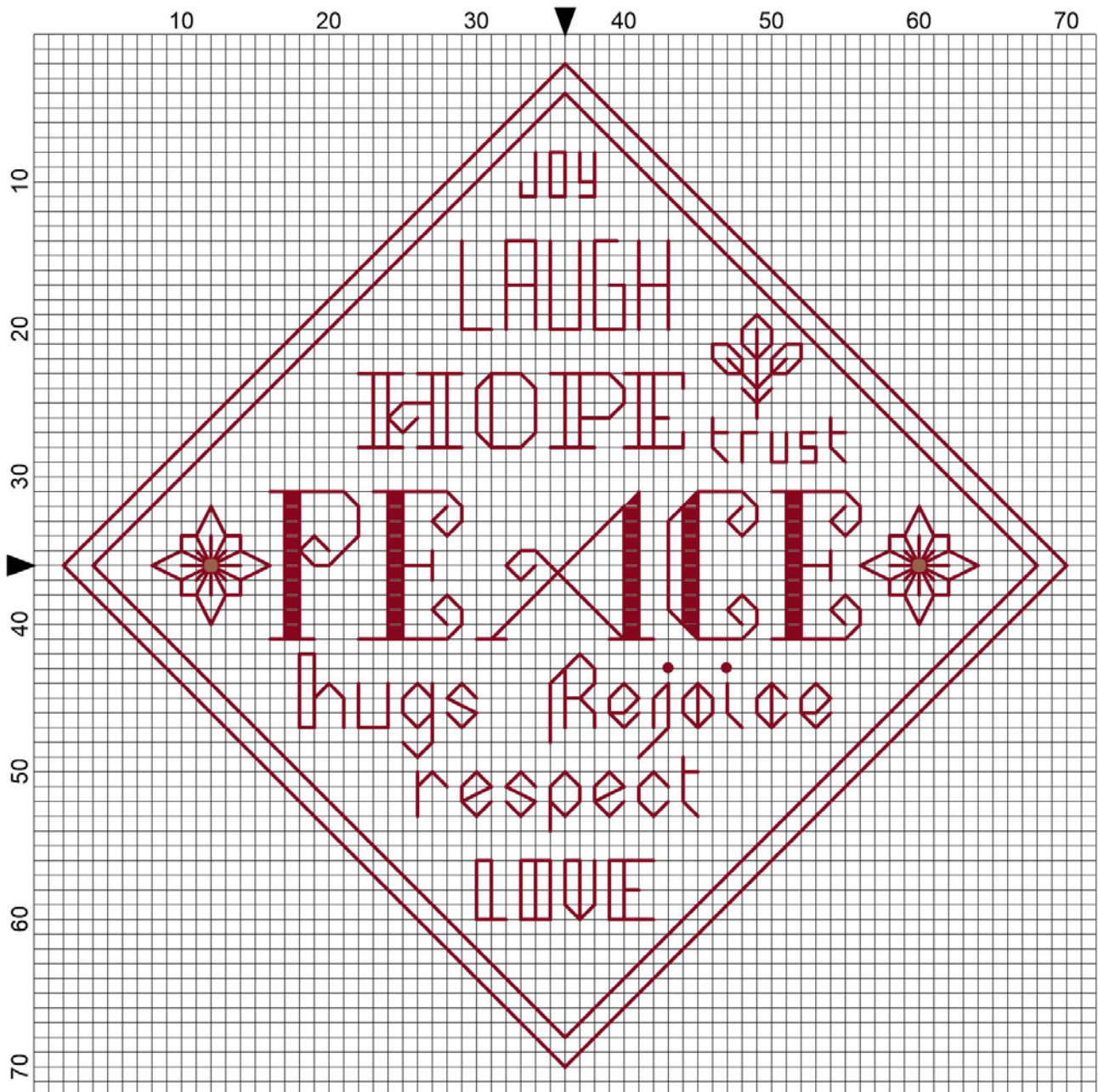
— DMC-815 garnet - md

French Knots:

⊕ DMC-815 garnet - md

Beads:

○ MHG-557 Mill Hill Glass Beads-Gold



Method:

1. Fold the fabric into quarters and find the centre point. Work the word “Peace” first using two strands of floss for the cross stitch and one strand for the back stitch. Trim all ends close to the stitching.
2. Work each work in turn and finish off. If there is cross stitch in a letter work the cross stitch first and then the back stitch to get a neater finish. Do not take threads from word to word. The threads will show when the embroidery is mounted. Colonial knots are more effective than French knots!
3. Back stitch the diamond in one strand of floss. Add the beads after the embroidery has been completed.
4. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

CH0408 “Hopes and Dreams” – three designs included

Large Sampler measures 13.29 x 12.71 inches

186 x 178 stitches

Worked on Zweigart 28 count evenweave.



The large design was worked in DMC stranded cotton and DMC Coloris 4519. This is a variegated thread and is worked on the chart in blue to make it clearer to differentiate between the colours.

Note: The designs have been printed over a larger number of pages to make them easier to see. Join the pages together to make a larger chart. Always work from the centre of the design outwards to ensure it is placed correctly on the fabric.



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Medium Sampler measures 11.86 x 11.21 inches

166 x 157 stitches

Worked in DMC 820 Royal blue and DMC Light Effects DLE-E3852 Dark gold

Alternative colours can be used in place of the blue and green.



Mini Sampler measures 5.36 x 5.14 inches

75 x 72 stitches

Worked in DMC 820 Royal blue and DMC Light Effects DLE-E3852 Dark gold.



There are a number of new metallic threads on the market and Rainbow Gallery Petite Treasure Braid PB01 Gold makes a good alternative thread. It comes on a card rather than in a skein or on a reel.

“Just Cross Stitch” magazine February 2021



Several times in the year designers are approached by magazines to submit designs for the following year. To work on winter designs in summer and Valentine designs in winter is really strange, but it is such fun to see the designs in print. This design is in the February edition of “Just Cross Stitch” magazine. There are many more to come in 2021.

The role that these magazines play in supporting designers and promoting craft shops and new products is vital in a world where the internet has seen the demise of many craft outlets. As craftspeople we need to support our shops and magazines wherever possible, because without our support we will lose them.

Readers Contributions:

Many readers have contributed to the Facebook groups and to the Blog over the past twelve months. Whilst I create the designs, it is obviously down to the readers to interpret them and put their own slant on their embroideries, whether it is rearranging the designs, altering alphabets or adding other personal touches.

We all enjoy seeing your work and it does not matter whether you are a beginner or an experienced embroiderer, we learn from each other. This is just a small selection of the designs that can be found in the closed Facebook groups.

Blackwork Journey - Elizabeth Almond Designs
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/blackworkjourneydesigns/>

Iryna Kononova





Louise

Dagmar

Elizabeth

Julie

Nancy

Thank you to everyone for your support and for all you are and all you do!

Happy New Year!

Liz