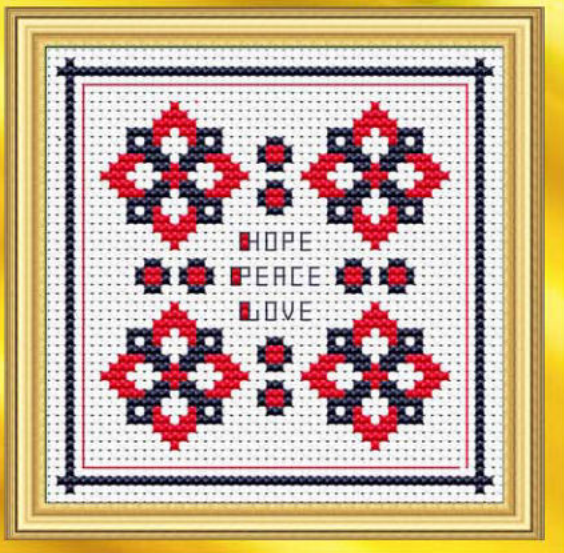
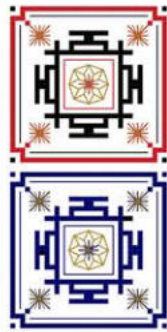




Blackwork Journey Blog

April 2022



Blackwork Journey Blog, April 2022

2022 should have been a year of hope and progress as we recover from the Covid19 pandemic, but instead humanity, democracy, free speech, peace and security across the world have once again been challenged!

In support of the Ukrainian people I am adding two small designs called 'Solidarity' as a reminder that embroiderers can be found in every country and that we share a common bond.

To our many Ukrainian members of the Blackwork Journey family, we are thinking about you, your families and your safety.

Liz

This poem by Kamand Kojouji expresses so many powerful emotions and is applicable to many areas where conflict reigns unchallenged.

*"They want us to be afraid.
They want us to be afraid of leaving our homes.
They want us to barricade our doors and hide our children.
Their aim is to make us fear life itself!
They want us to hate.
They want us to hate 'the other'.
They want us to practice aggression and perfect antagonism.
Their aim is to divide us all!
They want us to be inhuman.
They want us to throw out our kindness.
They want us to bury our love and burn our hope.
Their aim is to take all our light!
They think their bricked walls will separate us.
They think their damned bombs will defeat us.
They are so ignorant they don't understand that my soul and your soul are old friends.
They are so ignorant they don't understand that when they cut you I bleed.
They are so ignorant they don't understand that we will never be afraid,
we will never hate
and we will never be silent
for life is ours!"*

— Kamand Kojouji

Kamand Kojouji was born in Tehran, raised in Dubai and Toronto and resides in England. She completed a creative writing PhD at Swansea University and currently teaches creative writing workshops.



'Solidarity'



Over the years I have received many moving e-mails from women who live and work in conflict zones and who try to live 'normal' lives for their families. Embroidery is an important aspect in their lives helping them to cope with stress and to link with others who recognise their dilemmas and the need for support via the internet.

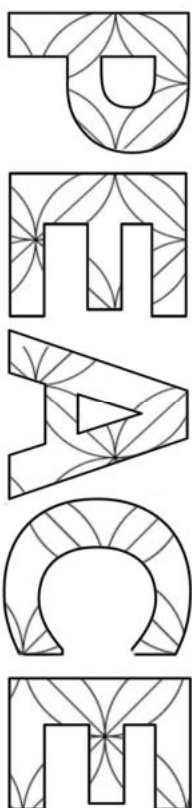
Through the internet it has been possible to help and support members as part of the worldwide Blackwork Journey family and I hope this continues in the future.



April is always a special month in England. It marks the end of the wet winter months, the lighter evenings and sunnier days. I look eagerly for the first shoots on the trees and the Spring flowers, daffodils and crocuses and later the bluebells blooming in the woods. The first lambs can be seen, bees are buzzing around the early flowers and ladybirds are emerging from the nooks and crannies where they have spent the winter.

Bluebells

New ideas for April



Embroider a simple message for a troubled world

Trace the design on to cotton or calico using a water-soluble pen or an HB pencil.

Fabric: 12 x 8 inches

Threads: DMC stranded floss or Cotton Perle No. 8

Outline: Double knot stitch - 3 strands or back stitch, whipped - 2 strands

Filler patterns: Back stitch whipped - 2 strands



1. Work the outline first following by the filler stitches.
2. Work each letter in turn. Metallic thread can be used to whip the letters.
3. Place the embroidery face down on a soft towel and press.
4. Mount the embroidery over a rectangle of card or frame.
5. Add a cordier hanger.

Stay safe and stitch!
Liz

It is time to think of holidays and stitching outdoors and with this in mind, I have created some small embroidery designs which can be slipped into a handbag or an overnight case.

'Solidarity' can be found at the back of this month's Blog.

FR0191 Perfect Peace has been added to 'Freebies' on the website and uses a block outline with filler patterns added.

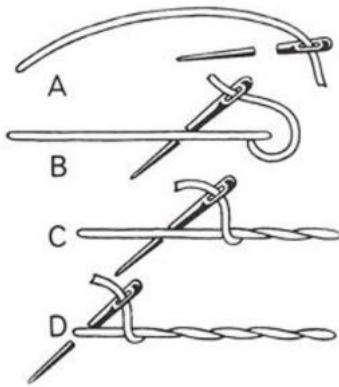
Working with alphabets is easy and satisfying to do. There are many different fonts on the computer and many of them can be enlarged to make initials or monograms. Once the outline has been drawn onto the background fabric using a water-soluble pen or an HP pencil, consider using a different stitch such as:

Couching

Lay a thread along the line of the design and, with another thread, tie it down at even intervals with a small stitch into the fabric. The tying stitch can be of contrasting colour to laid thread if desired.

Simple couching





Roumanian Couching

This form of couching is useful for filling in large spaces where a flat indefinite background is required.

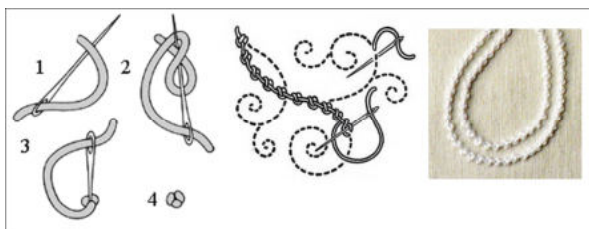
Bring the thread through on the left. Take the thread across the space to be filled and take a small stitch on the right with the thread above the needle (A). Take small stitches along the line at intervals as in B and C to the end of the laid thread, emerging in position for the next stitch (D) in position for the next stitch.

Collect together different threads and cords and try couching them down to see what effect they create. The outline for the letter 'E' was couched in a gold metallic thread tied down with red floss.

Couching is most effective if the design is curved such as a dome or circle and the outline needs to be accurate and smooth. DMC stranded floss couches well and can vary in thickness from 4 – 6 strands couched down with a single strand of floss.

The other common outlining stitches are:

1. Back stitch
2. Back stitch whipped, Back stitch threaded
3. Running stitch, Running stitch whipped
4. Chain stitch, Chain stitch whipped
5. Split stitch
6. Stem stitch, Stem stitch whipped
7. Double knot stitch



Double knot stitch should be worked in a thick thread carefully spaced to look like 'beads'

The blue back stitches 'A' would look very different whipped with a gold metallic thread



Couching, Embroidery
and lettering!



CH0426 Oriental Magic

3 different patterns are included.

In traditional Chinese art and culture, black, red, qing (a mixture of green and blue), white and yellow are viewed as the standard colours. These colours correspond to the five elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

Yellow of a golden hue, corresponding with earth, is considered the most beautiful and prestigious colour.

Black, corresponding to water, is a neutral colour.

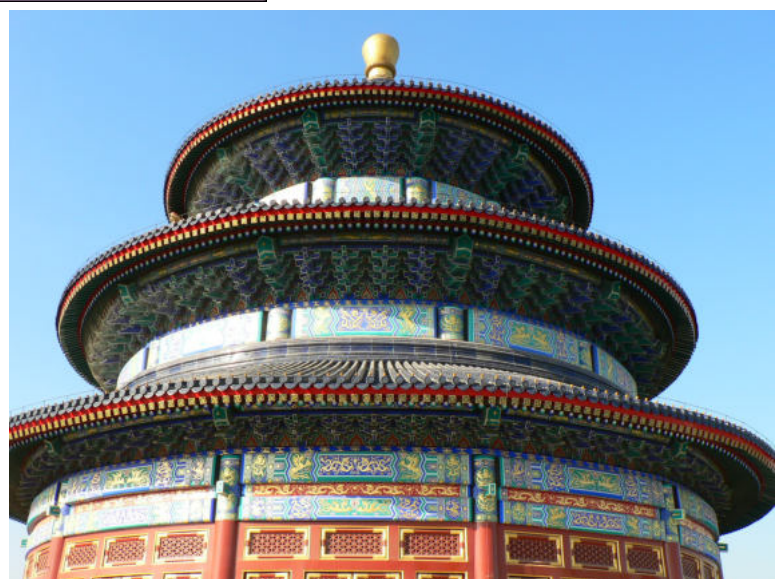
Red corresponding with fire, symbolises good fortune and joy and is traditionally the symbolic colour of happiness.

Blue or azure and green is associated with health, prosperity, and harmony.

These designs were based on The Temple of Heaven, Beijing where the colours and patterns are symbolic.



Good luck symbol



Blackwork filler patterns, cross stitch, eyelet stitches and metallic thread and gold beads add a touch of colour to any room. Stitch the designs in blue and gold for a different effect. The central motif can be used to create a set of coasters or the insert for a card.

Oriental Magic:

Material Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 10 x 10 inches

Design Area: 6.14 x 6.14 inches Stitches: 86 x 86

Oriental Magic Plus

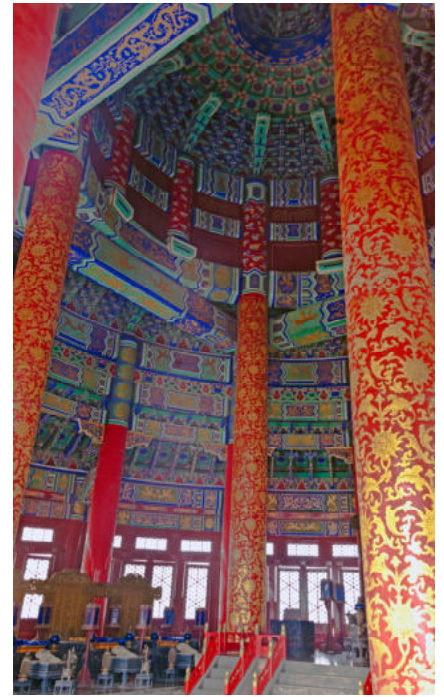
Design Area: 7.57 x 7.57 inches Stitches: 106 x 106

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 12 x 12 inches

Coaster:

Design Area: 2.29 x 2.29 inches Stitches: 32 x 32

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 6 x 6 inches
DMC stranded floss – colour of choice (See coaster chart)



CH0427 Cornflowers

Using the techniques of cross stitch, blackwork and window stitch, work two pretty samplers to celebrate Spring and Summer. Cornflowers are easy to grow wild flowers with delicate blue flowers in the summer.

Two colour schemes are included:

Cornflower Blue and **Cornflower Green**

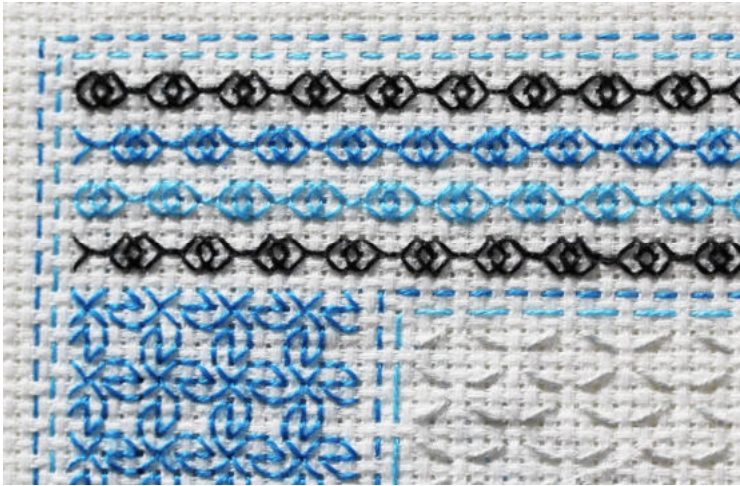
Cornflower Blue

Cornflower blue is a shade of medium-to-light blue containing relatively little green compared to blue. This hue was one of the favourites of the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer.

Design Area: 5.71 x 7.43 inches, 80 x 104 stitches

Fabric: 28 count evenweave, or 14 count Aida, 10 x 12 inches

Pulled thread work - no threads are removed but the threads are pulled together to create the stitches. The threads need to be strong enough to withstand the 'pull'. The stitches are worked in DMC pearl grey.



Four different border patterns have been included. One pulled work pattern has been added to surround the cornflower. If the design is worked on Aida, the window filling stitch is treated as an embroidery stitch and it is not 'pulled'.

On evenweave fabric the stitches would be pulled medium tight to create an openwork area.



Cornflowers

flowers and poppies – a wonderful colour combination of blues and reds

Workshops, talks and teaching 2022 - 2023

March has been a very busy month catching up on classes that have been postponed for over two years. The last four of my workshops have been based on the Japanese techniques of Kogin, Sashiko and Boro and it has been great fun introducing new techniques and ideas.

I always take a large display with me so that members can examine work in detail and handle the different materials. I have added many new pieces over the last two years and it is not until they are displayed that the variety of ways in which the ideas can be presented becomes apparent, from quilts to cushions and pictures, bags to table linen and clothing.



It can be hard to visualise a chart but to see a design actually worked makes a different impression!



Kogin, Sashiko & Boro

Simple designs can be just as effective as complicated ones!

Blackwork Journey Blog, April 2022

My next series of workshops in 2022 and 2023 will also include different aspects of blackwork embroidery.

As you know, Blackwork embroidery is my real passion and I always look forward to unpacking the boxes in my studio sorting out the charts and packing the kits. It also gives me a nudge to finish all the outstanding projects that have been waiting for mounting, making up and displaying as well as creating and stitching new designs.

Whilst I teach all over the UK, embroidery has taken me to some unusual countries where I have met and worked with different nationalities and experienced places that I would not normally have visited, but meeting so many people who have a shared interest in embroidery has been really special. Language is not a barrier if you can show someone how to stitch and the pleasure when something goes according to plan is really encouraging.



Sunrise in the Masai Mara, Kenya which I visited in 2018

Over the next few weeks I intend to spend some time with my family especially my son and his family in San Francisco that I haven't seen for nearly three years and then with my family in the Yorkshire Dales.

I also need time to think through what I am doing with Blackwork Journey and decide what I want to do in the future to keep my website and designs fresh and interesting.

It is very easy to get stuck in a rut and when there are so many different techniques to explore and delicious threads and fabrics to work with, I need some time to work out what I want to do for my own personal development.

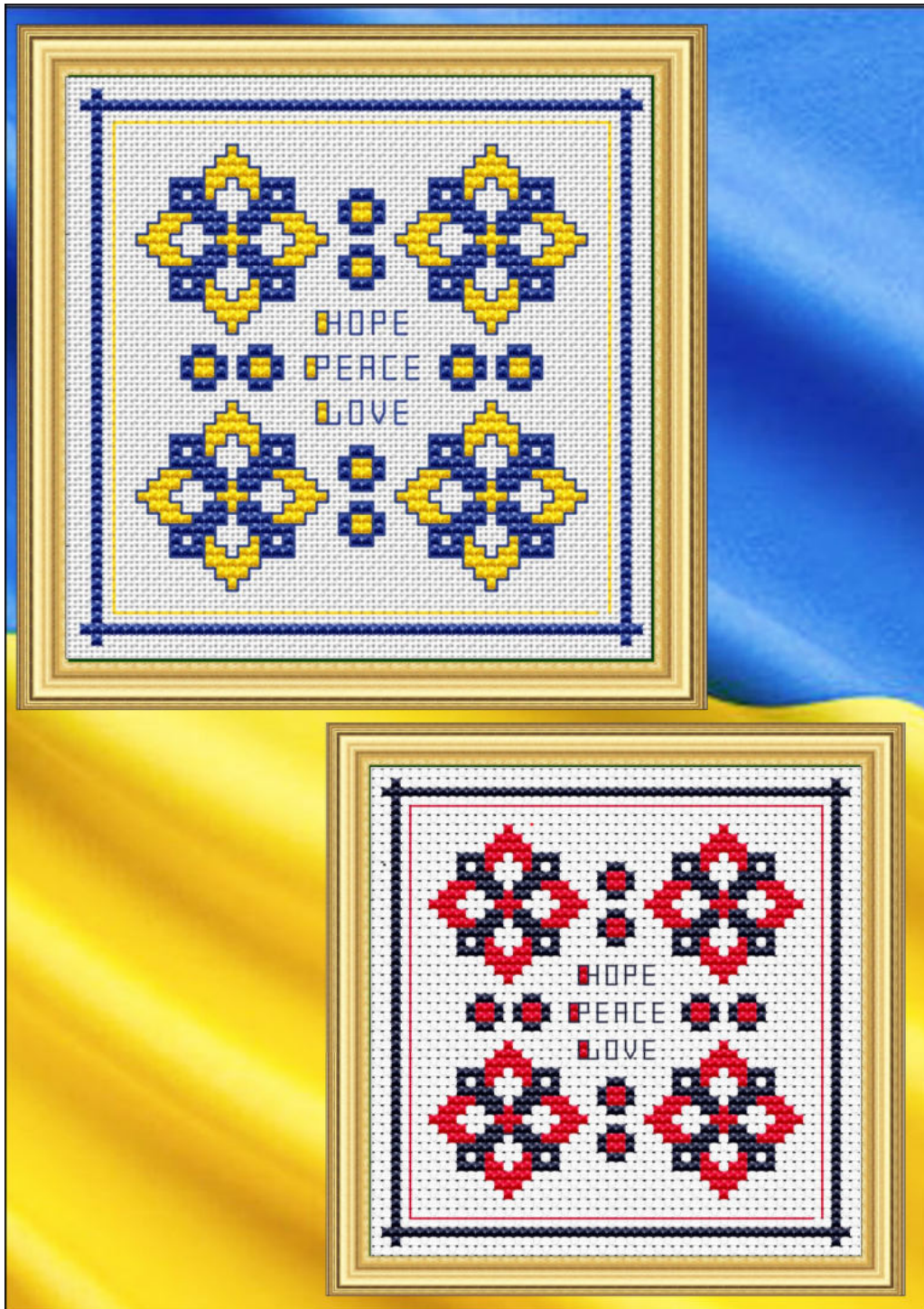
However, I hope you have enjoyed reading this month's Blog.

Stay safe and happy stitching!

Liz

SOLIDARITY

Blackwork Journey – Designs by Elizabeth Almond

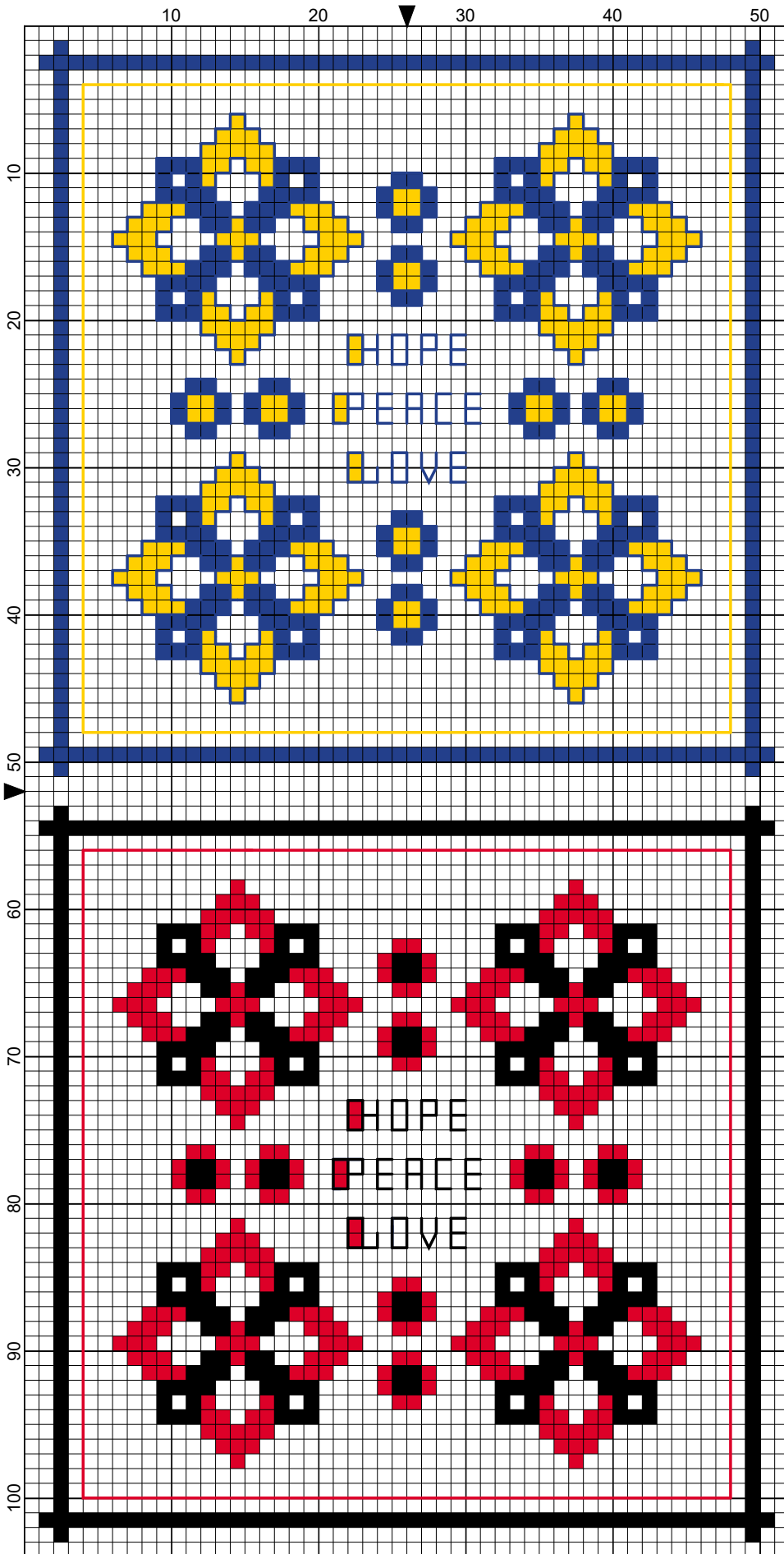


World peace is a global smile.

~Terri Guillemets

www.blackworkjourney.co.uk

Solidarity



Legend:

- DMC-310
- DMC-444
- DMC-666
- DMC-797

Backstitches:

- DMC-310
- DMC-444
- DMC-666
- DMC-797

Elizabeth Almond

Solidarity

Author: Elizabeth Almond
Copyright: Elizabeth Almond
Grid Size: 52W x 104H
Design Area: 3.57" x 7.29" (50 x 102 stitches)

Legend:

■ [2] DMC-310 ANC-403 DLE- black	■ [2] DMC-666 ANC-46 DLE- christmas red - br
■ [2] DMC-444 ANC-297 DLE- lemon - dk	■ [2] DMC-797 ANC-139 DLE- royal blue

Backstitch Lines:

— DMC-310 black	— DMC-666 christmas red - br
— DMC-444 lemon - dk	— DMC-797 royal blue

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Liz

Design Area each chart: 3.57 x 3.57 inches, 50 x 50 stitches

Fabric: Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida, 6 x 6 inches

Threads: DMC stranded floss, one skein of each colour.

Tapestry needle No 24

Small embroidery ring

Stitches used:

Back stitch, one strand

Cross stitch, two strands

Method:

1. Cut two pieces of fabric for each design. Fold into quarters to find the centre point.
2. Start from the centre and work the three words. Complete each word in turn.
3. Add the motifs around the words counting carefully. Work the back stitch after the motif has been completed.
4. Work a line of back stitch round the motifs and the final row of cross stitch.
5. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

If you have any queries please contact:

lizalmond@blackworkjourney.co.uk