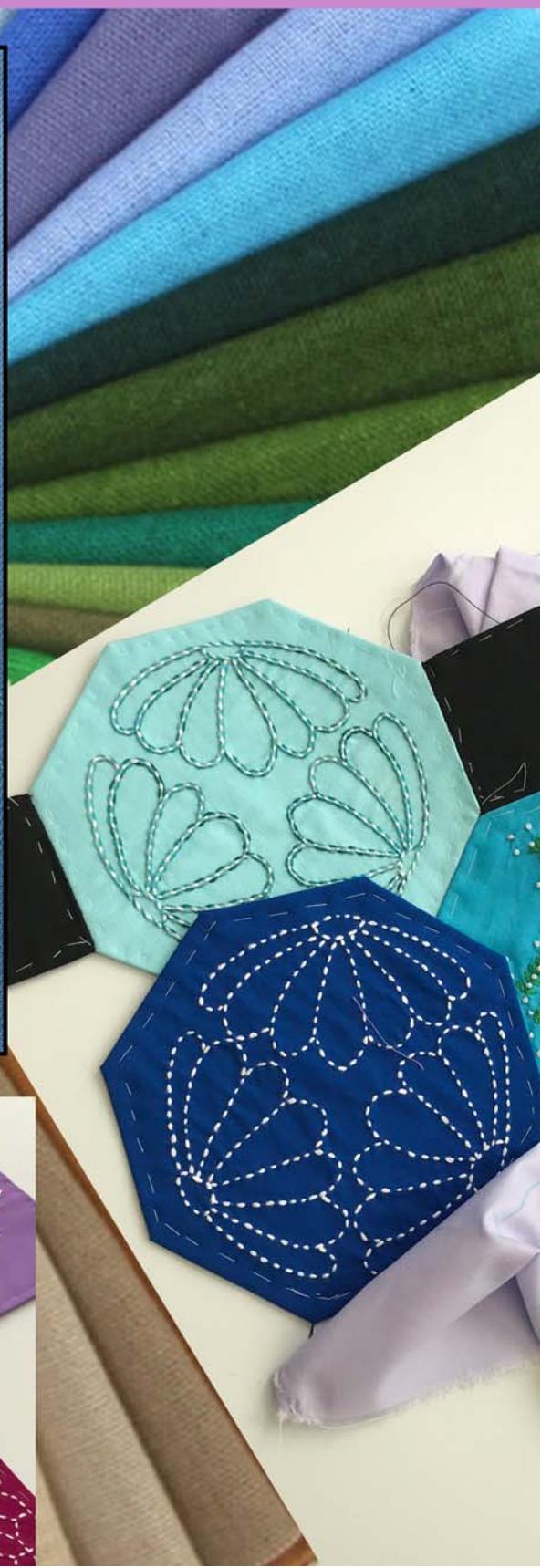




Blackwork *Journey Blog*

November 2019



Blackwork Journey Blog, November 2019

Winter is coming in England and towards the end of every year I take time out to look back and consider whether I have achieved what I set out to do at the beginning of the year. Sometimes I have fulfilled all my intentions, but this year life threw me several curved balls which partly derailed my intentions. My son was taken very ill in America in July and my two cataract operations later in the year slowed progress considerably.

However, we managed holidays in San Francisco, Barcelona, Vietnam and Cambodia and whilst these were for pleasure they were also an opportunity to research new ideas for new projects in 2020. I have also given talks and day schools the length and breadth of the UK and 2020 is going to be even busier.

I have worked with a number of new groups this year and returned to several that I have previously visited. Some seem like old friends now and it is a joy to work with them all. I always enjoy the buzz of enthusiasm which is not only encouraging for me, but for the future of embroidery. I have also been asked if I would consider teaching abroad again and if enough groups could get together I would certainly consider it.

However, I am very mindful of the number of people who work in isolation and often under very difficult circumstances, including war zones and I know that the closed Facebook groups provide support for many of these readers. If I can support them in any way I will always do my best to help. Embroidery is a force for good and a means of coping with the stresses of modern life which leads me to my next point.

“Meditation, Mindfulness and Wellbeing” seem to be the buzzwords of the moment, but they can all have positive benefits. Glennys, a friend of mine has been working on her own stitch meditations and I like the thinking behind it. I asked her if I could share her ideas with you and some of her stitching.

STITCH MEDITATIONS

“Sit quietly

Breathe deeply

Hope steadily

God is working on your behalf this very moment”

“Sewing is increasingly becoming an effective way to combat depression, the absorption demanded by needlework – its flow – calming the mind and reducing stress. The sense of accomplishment can boost mental health and improve our immune system, as relief from multitasking is replaced by focusing on one thing.” **Clare Hunter - Threads of life: a history of the world through the eye of a needle.**

Stitch meditations aren't about producing an end item, but about the process.

There are just a few rules:

1. Take no longer than 5 minutes to choose your fabric and threads.
2. Choose any stitches, but don't undo any, just let the mind relax into the rhythm of creating.
3. Take 15 – 45 minutes to work your piece, you can come back to it at another time.

If you find the process helpful, you may want to develop your meditation technique.

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Assign an emotion to focus on. Call up the emotion, experience it, and try to expand it. When your thoughts intrude, refocus on the emotion. Stitch in quiet, no TV, talk, radio etc. Music is fine.

Emotions to focus on could include PEACE, CALM, JOY, GRATITUDE and LOVE.



Some of Glenny's patches showing how scraps of fabric and random stitching builds up into very attractive pieces capable of being assembled into a larger piece.

Glennys also included a quote from a Facebook stitch meditation member Terri Kahrs which I thought was really positive:

“May I always have the courage of my convictions and the courage to replace fear with strength and hope”

“May I have the courage to go forward with my decisions, leaving behind ‘the old. May I always be blessed with the courage to speak the truth and live my best possible life with joy and gratitude”

Future projects:

Some time ago, I said I was considering the next major project for Blackwork Journey, but something very special to give you a different sort of challenge and encourage you to expand your knowledge of embroidery stitches and techniques and to step outside your comfort zone.

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The project was to be reasonably priced, to use scraps of threads, cotton fabric and to be done in the hand or by machine with each piece using different stitches. Well.....I had some time on my hands so I have been having a play and come up with two ideas which I want to float past you.

I am going to make two lap quilts, one with octagons and squares and the other with squares, with or without sashing. Both can be worked in the hand over paper or medium weight sew in interfacing. Each square or octagon has a different pattern using different colours and stitches. (See below)

The quilts can be as large or as small as you want and different projects will be added along the way. Because there is a lot of work involved I will bring out some smaller pieces for you to try in Freebies and then if you are interested, I will bring out two e-books with the full versions.

I floated the ideas past the Facebooks groups and asked for their reactions and also to a number of groups that I was teaching. I am pleased to say that the reactions, some of which are shown below, were very positive and both quilts are now well under way. It will take time to work them through and to stitch both examples, so I am looking at spring 2020.

Karen Heisner McCarty: I love both of these. It would be so fun to do something a little different and learn something new!!! This would be perfect.

Joanne Dawson: I like them both. Squares might be easier

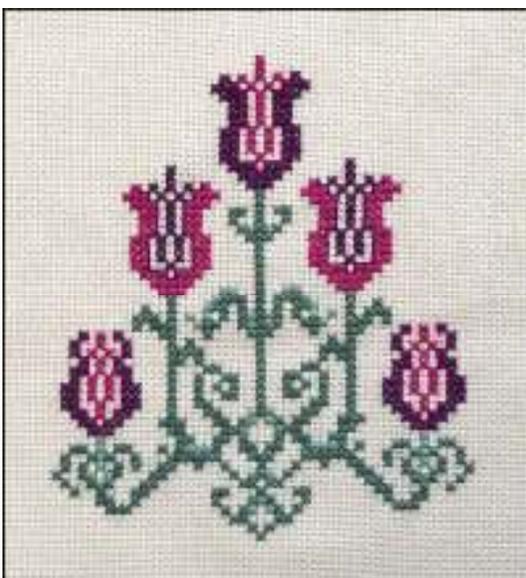
Pamela Baldwin: I love both ideas but most interested in counted stitch

Jill Divers: Absolutely love the idea! Just when I was at a stitching standstill, you have made me excited again! Bring it on Liz!!!!

A number of readers asked me if I would also consider designing a counted thread hanging along the same lines with a different technique for every block.

I rather like the idea: A for Assisi, B for Blackwork, C for Cross stitch etc

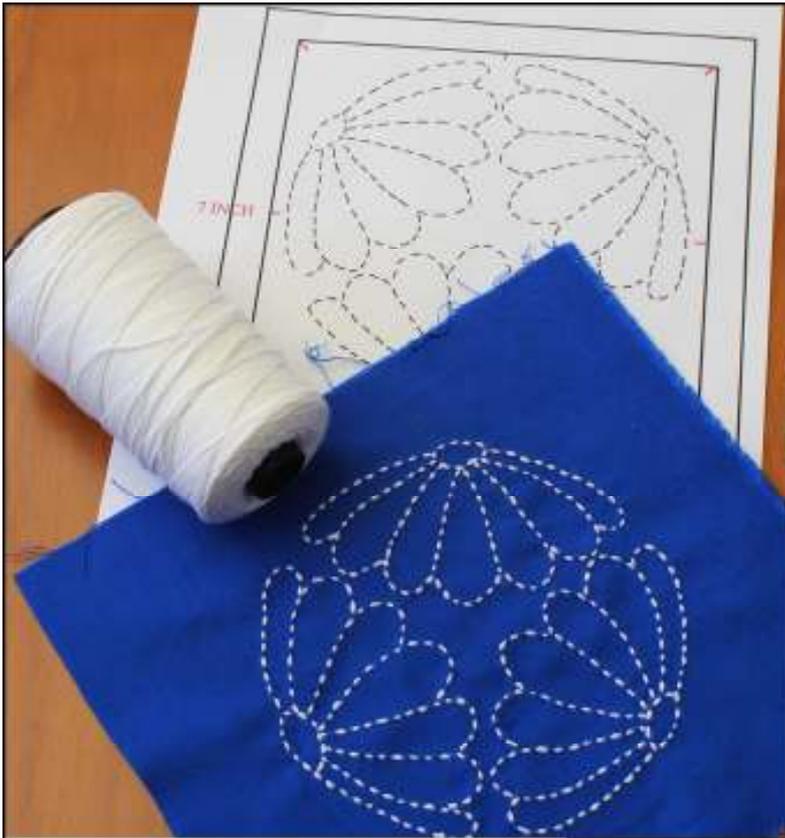
Can anyone think of a counted thread technique for 'Z'??



*C is for Cross
Stitch*



K is for Kogin.







Four fabulous ladies!

A group of ladies at a local church group that I work with are trying out some of the patterns and the stitches. The octagons will be 6 inches finished with a half inch seam allowance and the square will be 6 inches x 6 inches. A slightly larger size makes them easier to handle and allows me to put more detail into the patterns.

New chart for November PR0054 Heart – a taste of pulled thread work



Pulled thread work designs have proved very popular in Blackwork Journey. If this is a new technique a large piece of work can be very daunting, so I have designed a smaller piece with four different pulled thread work stitches for you to try.

Design area: 6 x 6 inches

Material: Zweigart 28 count evenweave, 10 x 10 inches.

I have mounted the design over two circles of card with a simple cord edging. The design can be enlarged using a photocopier. This design is the first one in a new series:

“A taste of ...” designed to introduce the reader to new techniques in small size projects.

Tackling a large piece of work can be very daunting but by trying a smaller piece of work confidence grows and the next stage becomes easier.



‘Noel’ by Sylvie Thibodeau

Last year I designed a Christmas ‘Noel’ as part of the ‘Tiny Treasures’ project. A number of new readers have joined me over the past year and I have been asked if I would include it again for any members who may have missed it, so I have decided to attach it to the end of this Blog so that readers can download and stitch the design.

Whilst I designed the chart in blue and gold Sylvie has stitched it in red and white on an ecru background.



Extract from Sylvie's "Noel"

As many readers will be aware the Blog for November is written at the end of October and this year has been rather a difficult one so in November I am taking some time to recharge my batteries, do some research and continue my stitching. Whilst I will still answer e-mails and keep the Facebook groups on their toes there may be a slight delay in my responses or in sending charts out so please bear with me.

Happy stitching! *Liz*

"Promise Yourself"

To be so strong that nothing
can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness, and prosperity
to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel
that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything
and make your optimism come true.

To think only the best, to work only for the best,
and to expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others
as you are about your own.

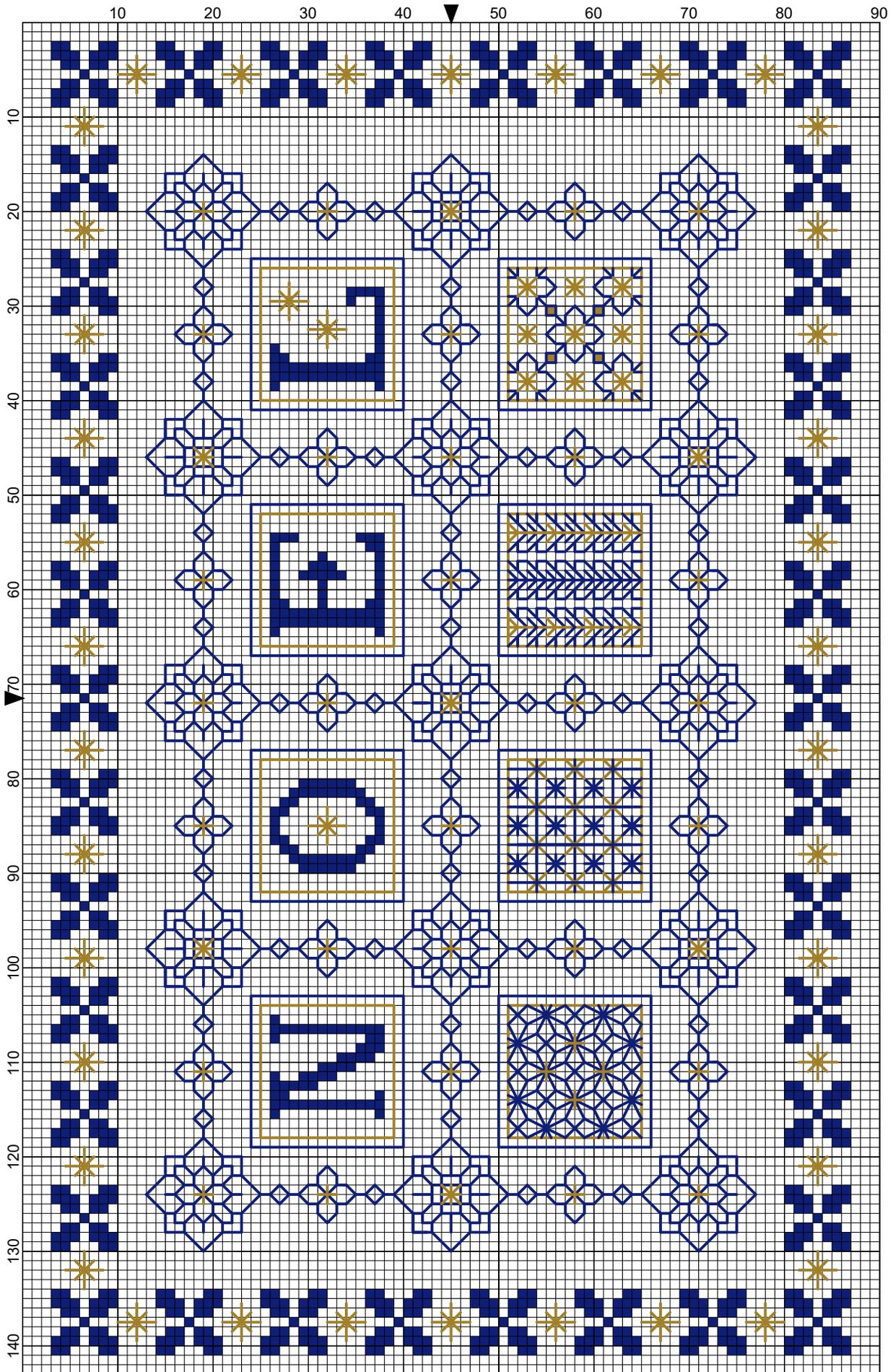
To forget the mistakes of the past
and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times
and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself
that you have no time to criticise others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear,
and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world,
not in loud words but great deeds.
To live in faith that the whole world is on your side
so long as you are true to the best that is in you."

— **Christian D. Larson 1866- 1955**

Blue and Gold Christmas Sampler



Elizabeth Almond

Blue and Gold Christmas Sampler

Author: Elizabeth Almond
Copyright: Elizabeth Almond
Grid Size: 90W x 143H
Design Area: 6.00" x 9.93" (84 x 139 stitches)

Legend:

■ [2] DMC-796 ANC-134 DLE- royal blue - dk

Call Outs:

■ [2] DLE-E3852 Dark Gold DMC Light Effects

Backstitch Lines:

— DMC-796 royal blue - dk — DLE-E3852 Dark Gold

Blue and Gold Christmas Sampler

Extend the Christmas sampler, alter the arrangement and colours to include all the patterns and letters.

Material:

Zweigart 28 count evenweave or 14 count Aida 10 x 13 inches

Tapestry needle No 24

Small embroidery ring

Stitches used:

Back stitch, one strand

Cross stitch, two strands

Eyelet stitch, one strand

Method:

Edge the fabric to prevent fraying. Fold the fabric into four quarters to find the centre point. Mount the embroidery in the ring so that the fabric is 'drum' tight.

1. Work the central motif first.

2. Work the letters or fillers in turn using the colours selected. Work the holly border in two strands of floss.

3. Place the finished embroidery face down on a soft towel and press lightly.

Small cushion:

Place the two pieces back to back with the embroidery inside. Machine stitch around the edge leaving a small opening to insert a small cushion pad. Slip stitch closed. Add cord edging (optional)

I hope you enjoy working this design as much as I have enjoyed creating it.

If you have any queries please contact:

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