

Lent knitalong 2023 - introductory information

Welcome to our Lent 2023 Mystery Knitalong! This document should tell you everything you need to know about the project and what you'll need to get started.

This year we will be knitting a scarf as we journey through Lent together.

The format of the knitalong will be similar to last year: knitters will receive weekly emails containing daily knitting clues with accompanying reflections which have very kindly been written by seven different Ministers, local preachers and worship leaders for this knitalong.

RELEASE DATES

The first email will be sent out on Monday 20th February, and we'll cast on together on Wednesday 22nd February. Thereafter, knitters will receive emails on Fridays with the clues/reflections for the following week.

If you are printing off/posting copies for other knitters, or are distributing to a large group, you can request to receive the emails a few days earlier (email Lyn on ljcomposition@googlemail.com)

FACEBOOK

Users of Facebook are also welcome to join the dedicated group [‘Victoria Methodist Bristol Knitalongs’](#) where the patterns and reflections will also be shared, and knitters can share progress, ask technical knitty questions and discuss thoughts on the reflections.

What you’ll need to take part:

YARN/NEEDLES

This pattern is written for DK weight yarn - a solid, lighter colour will work best to show the pattern off well. Choose the knitting needle size you’d usually use when working with DK yarn - probably 3.75 mm or 4 mm if you’re an average tension knitter (or go a size larger if you knit very tightly, or go smaller if you’re a loose knitter!)

The scarf, as written, will require approximately 120 - 170 grams of DK weight yarn (or approximately 300 - 420 metres). This should be enough to make the initial swatch too (see below) but if in doubt, do err on the side of caution and get slightly more so you don’t run the risk of running out of yarn before you finish!

WIDER SCARF OPTION

There is an option to make your scarf wider if you’d like (this will obviously mean more knitting and more yarn needed!): the ‘regular’ scarf will be worked at a width of 31 st; there are two alternative

wider versions you could do, listed below with very approximate weights needed:

- 55 stitch scarf will need approximately 200 - 300 grams/520 - 700 metres of DK.
- 79 stitch scarf (this will be more of a wrap/stole) will need approximately 300 - 440 grams/750 - 980 metres of DK.

Instructions on how to convert the pattern to a wider version will be included in a separate document (this will go out with week one's pattern) and while most of it is pretty straightforward, there are some sections where knitters will need to jump from one pattern to another so these wider alternatives might best suit more advanced knitters, or those with a fair bit of experience of reading knitting patterns.

YARN/NEEDLE KITS

The lovely Meg at No Frills Knitting (a fabulous independent yarn shop in Bristol, stocking beautiful, ethically sourced yarns for all budgets—I'm not sponsored, just love her stuff!) has very kindly offered to make up kits for anyone interested (they can be purchased at the shop if you're in the Bristol area, or Meg can post them out). There are three different DK yarn suggestions at different price points (each of which have been used in test-knits for this scarf and work beautifully!) in a variety of colours.

The kits have been designed especially for everyone taking part in the knitalong and are really good value. They are available at the

links below (each of the yarns has five different colours to choose from; there are a limited number of kits in each colourway so order early to avoid disappointment!):

- Stylecraft Recreate DK - a lovely blend of wool, acrylic and polyester (all recycled)
<https://www.nofrillsknitting.co.uk/products/lent-knit-along-2023-starter-pack-stylecraft-recreate-dk>
- Warth Mill Saddleworth DK - a slightly more rustic yarn made from 100% British Wool
<https://www.nofrillsknitting.co.uk/products/lent-knit-along-2023-starter-kit-warth-mill-saddleworth-dk>
- World of Wool Marble DK - a beautifully soft blend of merino wool and silk
<https://www.nofrillsknitting.co.uk/products/lent-knit-along-starter-kit-2023-world-of-wool-marble>

THE ACTUAL KNITTING!

The scarf pattern has been designed to be accessible to knitters of all abilities. You'll need to be able to cast on and off, and work the basic knit and purl stitches (if you need refreshing on any of those there are plenty of excellent YouTube videos to help). All other stitches will be explained as we go (each week will include a section on 'Special Stitches' where knitters are walked through any

techniques which might be new to them, with videos for those who'd like the extra support).

Additionally, there will be instructions each week for an 'Easier Version' detailing how the trickier stitches can be substituted if preferred.

Knitters can, of course, work at their own pace, but the pattern will be laid out in daily chunks, along with a reflection each day; if knitters complete the knitting allocated to each day they will finish the scarf on Good Friday so it can be blocked in time to wear on Easter day. The amount of knitting each day will vary from 8 to 14 rows (mainly depending on difficulty/time needed to work those rows). The first few days have slightly more knitting than most weeks so don't panic if they look daunting(!); the pace will calm down in week two!!

SWATCH

Included at the bottom of this document is a [pattern](#) for a square swatch, which will give knitters a chance to practise some of the different stitches which are included in the scarf pattern.

Knitters who would like extra practice at these and other stitches which will appear later on in the scarf pattern are welcome to knit the Advent Squares if they haven't already done so. These were released as a mystery knitalong in December 2022 and can be found here: bit.ly/knitalong-advent2022

Please note that if you knit these you might need extra yarn, as these haven't been factored into the suggested yardage needed for this project.

GAUGE

There is no 'correct' gauge for this scarf (as a rough guide your swatch will end up approximately 15 cm square); more important is that you like the tension/appearance of the finished (and blocked!) fabric. The [swatch](#) below will enable you to practise some of the newer stitches, and see if you are using the best needle size. Once you have blocked the swatch ([see below](#)), if the fabric seems quite stiff you could try knitting it again with a larger needle size; if the fabric feels loose/too drapey or holey, you could try sizing down.

BLOCKING

It is highly recommended that you block your scarf when it is finished (the actual knitting will finish on Good Friday, giving you two days to block and dry the scarf to have it ready for Easter day). This will encourage the knitting to sit properly (and flat!) and hold its shape, and to neaten out the stitches.

If you haven't done this before, you can find videos on YouTube or follow the instructions below and try it with your finished swatch:

Let the swatch soak in warm water (you can add a little wool wash if you like) for half an hour or more. When the swatch is completely saturated, gently press the excess water out and lay it somewhere to dry (on a blocking mat/piece of foam/towel/whatever you've got to

hand...) Pull the knitting into a square shape and secure with blocking pins if you've got any.

When the swatch is completely dry, unpin and sew in the ends.

SWATCH PATTERN

Abbreviations

K = knit

P = purl

st = stitch/stitches

RN = right needle

LN = left needle

K2tog = knit two together (see below)

SSK = slip 1 stitch knit-wise, slip a second stitch knit-wise, then knit them together through the back loop (see below)

YO = yarn over (see below)

YFsl1 = yarn forward, slip 1 stitch purl-wise (see below)

wrap 3 (etc) = see instructions below on 'wrapped stitches'

SPECIAL STITCHES:

Less experienced knitters might not have seen some of the stitches in this swatch before. They can be worked as follows:

K2tog, SSK and YO are the most basic stitches used in knitting lace.

In this pattern you'll only work these stitches on the front (knit) side, i.e., on odd numbered rows.

- To work a YO ('yarn over') bring the yarn from the back of the right needle (RN) to the front and then work the next stitch. This will form an extra stitch on the RN as you continue (it might look a bit slanted, compared to your other stitches) and will turn into a little lace hole once you work the next row.

In working a YO, you are effectively creating an additional stitch, so to keep the stitch count the same, each YO is usually preceded or followed by a K2tog or SSK; each of which decrease one stitch.

- To work a K2tog ('knit two together'), you need to knit the next 2 stitches together by inserting the RN knit-wise into the next 2 stitches on the left needle (LN), i.e., by putting the RN into the second stitch along on the LN from the left, catching both stitches and knitting them together.
- To work an SSK (slip, slip, knit through back loop), you need to slip the first stitch on the LN knit-wise (i.e., insert RN from the front left and slip it over to the RN) without working it, and repeat this with the next stitch. You then need to knit these through the back loop, by inserting the LN into these 2 slipped stitches from the left (the working yarn will be at the back of the RN) and knitting them together.
- To work the YFsl1 stitch, bring the yarn to the front of your work and slip the next stitch purl-wise, i.e., put the right needle into the first stitch on the left needle from right to left, as if you're about to purl it, then slip that stitch over to the right needle without

knitting/purling it. (You'll then need to take the yarn to the back of the work, ready for the next Knit stitch.)

Wrapped Stitches:

All wrapped stitches in this pattern are worked on the knit (right) side and involve moving a number of stitches from one needle to the other a couple of times while moving the working yarn backwards and forwards to create horizontal strands of yarn across the work.

For example, to 'wrap 3', you first bring the yarn forward to the front of the work on the RN and then you slip 3 stitches purlwise from the LN to the RN. Once these stitches are on the RN, move the working yarn to the back of the RN without pulling too tightly.

Next, slip those same 3 stitches back to the LN. You'll now see a horizontal strand of yarn lying across the front of your work.

Bring your yarn forward again to the front and slip those 3 stitches back to the RN again (for the final time!)

Move the yarn to the back of the knitting (creating a second horizontal strand across the front of the work) and carry on with your next stitch.

It's important that you don't pull the working yarn tight at any point while working the wrapped stitches, as you don't want the finished fabric to be puckered/tight in that place.

Elsewhere in the pattern there are variations on this stitch - you'll need, at various points, to 'wrap 4' or 'wrap 6' etc. This just means

that the number of stitches you're slipping backwards and forwards changes.

(Apologies to left-handed knitters - you'll need to reverse all these directional instructions!)

Tutorial

A video demonstrating how to work these stitches can be found at:

bit.ly/swatch-tutorial

EASIER VERSION:

If you prefer not to work the SSKs you can easily substitute a K2tog every time you come to one. They are very similar stitches, in that they both reduce two stitches to one (which is compensated on the same row by its corresponding Yarn Over) but if you look closely the direction that the new stitch 'leans' is slightly different (K2tog leans to the left; SSK leans to the right). This won't make too much difference to the finished pattern if you don't get on with the SSKs and prefer to substitute K2togs throughout!

If you are struggling with the YFsl1 stitches, you can substitute them in this swatch with a single purl stitch.

And the wrapped stitches can be swapped for a similar number of purl stitches if desired; i.e., if instructed to 'wrap 3' you can P3 instead.

PATTERN

Cast on 31 stitches.

1. Knit all stitches.

2. K all st.

3. K all st.

4. K all st.

5. K all st.

6. K3, P25, K3.

7. K all st.

8. K3, P25, K3

9. K all st.

10. K3, P25, K3

11. K all st.

12. K3, P25, K3.

13. K13, YO, SSK, K1, K2tog,
YO, K13.

14. K3, P25, K3.

15. K11, YO, SSK, K1, SSK,
YO, K2, K2tog, YO, K11.

16. K3, P25, K3.

17. K10, YO, SSK, K1, YO,
SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, K1,
K2tog, YO, K10.

18. K3, P25, K3.

19. K9, YO, SSK, K1, YO, SSK,
SSK, YO, K1, K2tog, YO,
K1, K2tog, YO, K9.

20. K3, P25, K3.

21. K8, (YO, SSK) x 2, K1, YO,
SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, K1,
(K2tog, YO) x 2, K8.

22. K3, P25, K3.

23. K9, YO, SSK, K1, YO, SSK,
SSK, YO, K1, K2tog, YO,
K1, K2tog, YO, K9.

24. K3, P25, K3.

25. K10, YO, SSK, K1, YO,
SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, K1,
K2tog, YO, K10.

26. K3, P25, K3.

27. K14, P1, K1, P1, K14.

28. K3, P11, K1, YFsl1, K1,
P11, K3.

29. K14, P1, K1, P1, K14.

30. K3, P11, K1, YFsl1, K1,
P11, K3.

31. K14, P1, K1, P1, K14.

32. K3, P11, K1, YFsl1, K1,
P11, K3.
33. K14, P1, K1, P1, K14.
34. K3, P11, K1, YFsl1, K1,
P11, K3.
35. K9, wrap 3, K10, wrap 4,
K5.
36. K3, P25, K3.
37. K5, wrap 6, K4, wrap 5,
K11.

38. K3, P25, K3.
39. K8, wrap 5, K5, wrap 6, K7.
40. K3, P25, K3.
41. K all st.
42. K all st.
43. K all st.
44. K all st.
45. K all st.
Cast off and block as described
above.

The width of this swatch is the same as your scarf will be (31 stitches) - if you'd like a wider scarf, you might like to think about knitting one of the wider sizes...

Closing Prayer

Loving God, be with us as we enter this season of Lent.

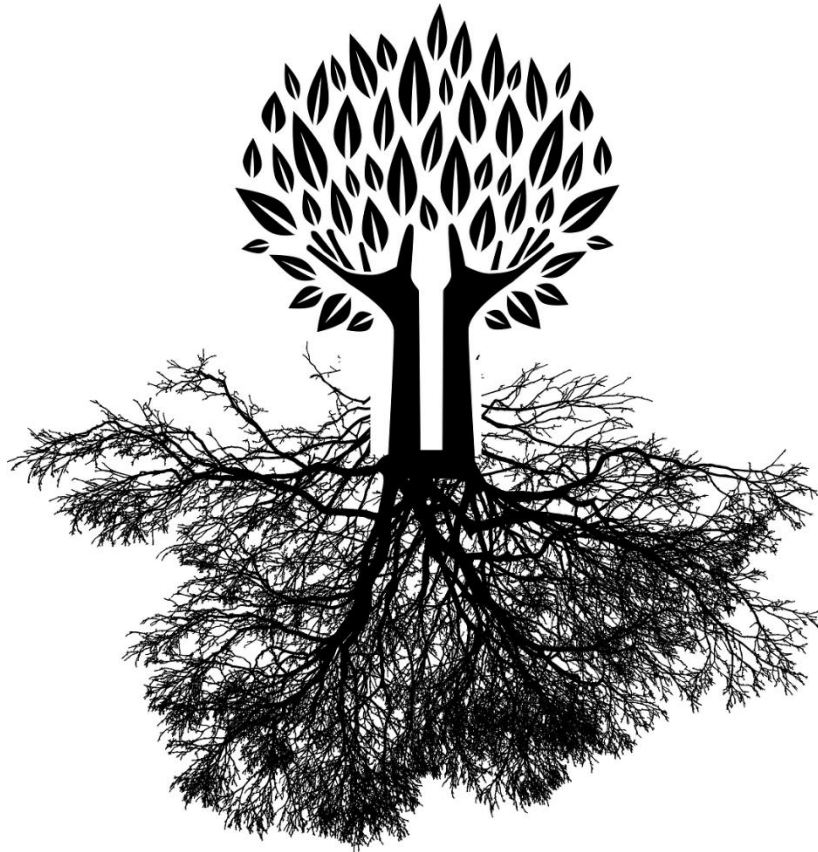
As the solid trunk of an ancient tree gives support to all it holds, give us strength to do your will.

As branches envelop and protect the wildlife within, may your all-encompassing love surround us and give comfort.

As leaves at the end of those branches reach out, may we reach out and share your love with others.

And as roots dig into the earth beneath providing a solid foundation, may our faith ever deepen as we listen to your word and gain a closer relationship with you.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



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Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay