

ADVENT KNITALONG 2023

VICTORIA METHODIST CHURCH WILL BE HOSTING ANOTHER
ADVENT KNITALONG THIS YEAR!

Over the course of Advent, we will be knitting a large table mat which you can use on your Christmas dinner table.

This is a mystery knitalong, which means knitters won't know the design in advance; this will be revealed as we go!

The document will be released on Monday 27th November (ready for the knitting to begin on 1st December) and will contain the full pattern for the table mat, split into 24 daily sections, along with accompanying Advent reflections.



The table mat has been designed to be knitted in two different coloured yarns but will work just as well in a single colour yarn. Knitters will only be working with one colour at any one time (there is no stranded colourwork/fairisle...!) and instructions will be given how/when to change yarn colours.

You can knit the table mat in any colours you like, but I'd suggest a light colour (cream or white?) for yarn A, and a nicely contrasting festive colour for yarn B (a Christmassy red or green?)

When it is finished, the table mat will need to be blocked (instructions below) to bring out the textured patterns well, and knitters might like to bear this in mind when choosing their yarn: animal and plant fibres tend to block more effectively than acrylic based yarns (- wool or wool blend yarns, or cotton are all ideal) but the main thing is finding a yarn which knitters will enjoy working with, and which will look fabulous at Christmas lunch!

The pattern will show up more effectively if knitted in solid colours, rather than variegated yarns.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Knitters have the option to work the table mat in either DK or 4ply (fingering) weight yarn, depending on the size they'd like their finished table mat to be. (The pattern is the same, regardless of yarn weight chosen).

DK YARN

If knitters choose to use DK yarn, their finished table mat will measure approximately 49 cm wide by 34 cm tall.

If using two colours you will need approximately:

Yarn A (lighter colour): 80 - 110 grams of DK

and

Yarn B (darker colour): 15 - 20 grams of DK.

If working with a single colour you will need approximately 90 - 130 grams of DK yarn.

If working with DK, the table mat is knitted using 3.75 mm or 4 mm needles, or whichever size you'd normally use when working with DK yarn. You'll be working with 95 stitches, so a needle length of 25 cm – 30 cm would be perfect, or you can use a circular needle if you prefer (but the table mat is knitted flat, so no knitting in the round!)

4PLY YARN

If knitters choose to use 4ply yarn (or fingering weight), their finished table mat will measure approximately 37 cm wide by 25 cm tall.

If using two colours you will need approximately:

Yarn A (lighter colour): 35 - 50 grams of 4ply/fingering

and

Yarn B (darker colour): 8 - 12 grams of 4ply/fingering.

If working with a single colour you will need approximately 40 - 60 grams of 4ply/fingering yarn.

If working with 4ply/fingering, the table mat is knitted using 2.75 mm or 3.00 mm needles, or whichever size you'd normally use when working with 4ply yarn. You'll be working with 95 stitches, so a needle length of 25 cm – 30 cm would be perfect, or you can use a circular needle if you prefer (but the table mat is knitted flat, so no knitting in the round!)

Additionally, four stitch markers will be useful to help keep track of where you are in the pattern. These needn't be anything fancy - loom bands, tiny hair bands or scraps of spare yarn tied into loops will work just as well as stitch markers.

GAUGE / SWATCHING

A swatch pattern is provided below so knitters can check that they like their colour combinations, and to give them a chance to check their gauge. Use the needle size suggested above (depending on whether you are working with DK or 4ply/fingering weight yarn).

When you have finished knitting your swatch, block it as described below and, when dry, see if you like the fabric produced at that gauge.

Please note that the yarn needed to knit the swatch is not factored into the yarn amounts needed for the table mat, so please ensure you've got some spare, or keep the swatch safe so you can unravel it and use the yarn if you're running short near Christmas!!

Please note that when working with different coloured yarns, occasionally knitters can find that the darker colour can run/bleed into the lighter knitted fabric when washed, so this is another good reason to test your yarn choices together in the swatch! If you think there is a chance that the yarn dye might run, you could use a colour catcher when soaking the finished swatch. If you do have problems with the dyes running then you could re-knit the swatch with a different combination of yarns.

HOW TO JOIN IN!

The Advent Knitalong document will be emailed to everyone on the mailing list and uploaded in the Facebook group on Monday 27th November.

If you are not already on the mailing list to receive Lent and Advent Knitalong emails, please contact Helen at learning@vic-methodist-bristol.org.uk and she will add you.

And if you use Facebook and aren't already in our dedicated Facebook Knitalong group, please do join us - it's a lovely and supportive community of knitters from many backgrounds all over the world and you would be very welcome.

Search for 'Victoria Methodist Bristol Knitalongs' and click to join.

With love and best wishes from Lyn, Helen and all of us at Vic xxx

SWATCH PATTERN:

Stitch Key

K = knit

P = purl

st = stitch (or stitches)

pm = place stitch marker on right needle before continuing

sm = slip stitch marker from left needle to right needle before continuing

NB Yarn A will be used for the majority of the swatch, with a few rows of yarn B thrown in as accents! If you would rather work the swatch in just one colour, ignore the instructions about changing yarns.

When instructed to change yarn, the easiest technique is to cut the yarn you've finished with, leaving a tail of about 15 centimetres, and tie in the new yarn firmly. The ends will be woven in at the end.

More experienced knitters might like to carry the unused yarn up the side of the swatch during rows 5 - 10 and rows 41 - 46.

Two stitch markers are placed on row 15 - these are optional but might make it easier to keep track of where you are in the pattern.

PATTERN

Cast on 33 stitches with yarn B.
(The stitch count stays the same throughout the swatch; odd numbered rows are the front/right side of the swatch and even numbered rows are the back/wrong side.)

Set up row: (Yarn B) Knit all stitches.

Row 1. Knit all stitches.

Row 2. Knit all stitches.

Row 3. Knit all stitches.

Row 4. Knit all stitches.

Before row 5, change to yarn A.

Row 5. (Yarn A) Knit all stitches.

Row 6. K4, P25, K4.

Row 7. Knit all stitches.

Row 8. K4, P25, K4.

Before row 9, change to yarn B.

Row 9. (Yarn B) Knit all stitches.

Row 10. Knit all stitches.

Before row 11, change to yarn A.

Row 11. (Yarn A) Knit all stitches.

Row 12. K4, P25, K4.

Row 13. Knit all stitches.

Row 14. K4, P25, K4.

NB *two stitch markers are placed on row 15.*

Row 15. K10, pm, K6, P1, K6, pm, K10.

Row 16. K4, P6, sm, P13, sm, P6, K4.

Row 17. K10, sm, K5, P1, K1, P1, K5, sm, K10.

Row 18. K4, P6, sm, P6, K1, P6, sm, P6, K4.

Row 19. K10, sm, K4, P1, K3, P1, K4, sm, K10.

Row 20. K4, P6, sm, P5, K1, P1, K1, P5, sm, P6, K4.

Row 21. K10, sm, K3, P1, (K2, P1) x 2, K3, sm, K10.

Row 22. K4, P6, sm, P4, K1, P3, K1, P4, sm, P6, K4.

Row 23. K10, sm, K5, P1, K1, P1, K5, sm, K10.

Row 24. K4, P6, sm, P3, (K1, P2) x 2, K1, P3, sm, P6, K4.

Row 25. K10, sm, K4, P1, K3, P1, K4, sm, K10.

Row 26. K4, P6, sm, (P2, K1) x 2, P1, (K1, P2) x 2, sm, P6, K4.

Row 27. K10, sm, K3, P1, (K2, P1) x 2, K3, sm, K10.

Row 28. K4, P6, sm, P4, K1, P3, K1, P4, sm, P6, K4.

Row 29. K10, sm, (K2, P1) x 2, K1, (P1, K2) x 2, sm, K10.

Row 30. K4, P6, sm, P3, (K1, P2) x 2, K1, P3, sm, P6, K4.

Row 31. K10, sm, K1, P1, K2, P1, K3, P1, K2, P1, K1, sm, K10.

Row 32. K4, P6, sm, (P2, K1) x 2, P1, (K1, P2) x 2, sm, P6, K4.

Row 33. K10, sm, K3, P1, (K2, P1) x 2, K3, sm, K10.

Row 34. K4, P6, sm, P4, K1, P3, K1, P4, sm, P6, K4.

Row 35. K10, sm, K5, P1, K1, P1, K5, sm, K10.

Row 36. K4, P6, sm, P6, K1, P6, sm, P6, K4.

Row 37. Knit all stitches (slipping markers as you come to them).

Row 38. K4, P6, sm, P6, K1, P6, sm, P6, K4.

NB stitch markers are removed on row 39.

Row 39. Knit all stitches, removing markers as you come to them.

Row 40. K4, P25, K4.

Before row 41, change to yarn B.

Row 41. (Yarn B) Knit all stitches.

Row 42. Knit all stitches.

Before row 43, change to yarn A.

Row 43. (Yarn A) Knit all stitches.

Row 44. K4, P25, K4.

Row 45. Knit all stitches.

Row 46. K4, P25, K4.

Before row 47, change to yarn B.

Row 47. (Yarn B) Knit all stitches.

Row 48. Knit all stitches.

Row 49. Knit all stitches.

Row 50. Knit all stitches.

Row 51. Knit all stitches.

Row 52. Knit all stitches.

FINISHING / BLOCKING

Cast off all stitches loosely and block the swatch as follows: soak it for a few minutes in warm water (you can add a little wool wash if you like) and then gently squeeze out the excess water and lay the swatch on a towel or blocking mat to dry, securing with blocking pins if you've got any. When fully dry, remove pins and sew in any loose ends.

When dried, the swatch should measure, very approximately, 14.5 - 16.5 cm² if worked in DK yarn and 11 - 12.5 cm² if worked in 4ply/fingering weight yarn, but more important is the feel/appearance of the knitted fabric and how well you can see the pattern!

If the swatch feels a bit stiff you could rework it with a needle one size bigger; if it is a little too drapery/open, and the motif is unclear you could try again on a smaller needle.