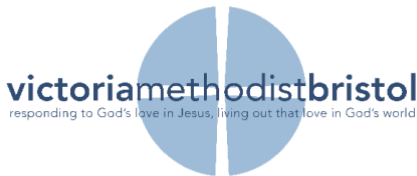

LENT KNIT-ALONG 2025

WEEK 6



Pattern by Lyn Lloyd-Jones
Reflections by Ruth Shepherd Yorke

Introduction

Our grateful thanks go this week to Ruth Shepherd Yorke, for writing the accompanying reflections for week six of the Lent Knitalong.

Ruth is passionate about justice, creating safe inclusive community, and loves the sea (somewhat sparse in Central London!). In the last year she has begun to crochet, so still can't knitalong, but may randomly crochet as she follows along!

Ruth explores the history and significance of the beautiful Kildalton Cross, an eighth century Celtic Cross on the Scottish Island of Islay, on which this knitalong design is based.

The Kildalton Cross has two different sides: one is very ornate, with depictions of Old and New Testament scenes interspersed with Celtic patterns; the second (shown below) is simpler, with bolder shapes and lines. This is the side we are knitting and those who have included bobbles in their knitting will recognise the corresponding 'bobbles' on the Cross!

Sunday, 06 April

Why a cross?

Christians can be considered rather strange. We put up crosses in our worship areas and important sites, and even wear them around our necks.

Crosses were a means of painful torturous death by crucifixion.

I've seen various depictions over the years of Jesus visiting a Christian Church and walking out as soon as he saw the huge cross on the wall. Would we walk around wearing gallows or noose if he'd been murdered another way?



So why the cross?

Some Christians have on display or wear, a crucifix. This is a depiction of Jesus suffering on the cross. Which for many reminds them of the pains and love of Jesus.

This Kildalton Cross you are knitting, is an empty cross – it has designs on it, but is ‘empty’ in that it is not a crucifix. ‘Empty’ crosses are usually a symbol of the Resurrection of Jesus, which does bring to mind Jesus’ suffering, but also, and overwhelmingly, is a symbol of love which is victorious and eternal over all things; of forgiveness, freedom and hope.

In this, the cross is a helpful symbol when in difficult times – or even when watching the news. A reminder that God’s love is victorious and eternal is good to have. Sometimes things may seem hopeless and dark. The empty cross reminds us that there is always hope.

Reflect

When you see a cross, what does it mean to you?

How can the message of Jesus’ resurrection bring you hope?

Listen

Christ Is Alive, Let Christians Sing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEtJvinD8_s

Monday, 07 April

A Monument

The Kildalton Cross has stood so far for around 1200 years. It is 2.65 m high with a width of 1.32 m. It is thought that such an impressive, detailed (and expensive) cross indicates that there must have been a notable monastic community there.

It has weathered storms, but being carved from a strong and expensive stone, it is still upright and the carvings are still visible.

Reflect

What is your favourite monument at a place that is important to you?

If you could make a monument to explain something about God to other people, what would you choose and why?

Listen

Lord Make Me A Mountain

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN_OYOHbafs



Tuesday, 08 April

A preaching cross



The Kildalton Cross is understood to be a 'preaching cross'. The depictions of biblical stories and events on it – Cain killing Abel, David killing a lion, Mary and baby Jesus – would have been used by people wanting to share the story of God and of God's people with others. Or it may have been used by Christians to remind them of some of the stories of our heritage and faith.

I am wondering how we can have a 'preaching life' – one that maybe others can look at and see something of God's story told in our life?

There's a famous quote (attributed to all sorts of people!): 'preach the gospel, use words if necessary'.

Reflect

What would people know about your faith from looking at you?

What would people understand about priorities from seeing how you live?

How can we have a 'preaching life' even if, like the cross itself, we do not use words?

Listen

There's A Spirit In The Air <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsvUXGnPck4>

Wednesday, 09 April

Celtic cross orb or circle



The Ordination cross of the Methodist Diaconal Order in Britain is a Celtic cross. The orb around the cross has 'Methodist Diaconal Order' written in the circle, which often makes people lean in to read it (not always comfortable for the wearer!).

I have often been asked by children what my cross 'means' with the circle-y bit on it. I generally reply to this: 'well the cross (pointing up and down) means God loves everyone – love that reaches up and down

and side to side – high and deep and wide – and the circle means it's love that never ends and it's really for everyone'.

I did an online search as to why Celtic crosses, such as the Kildalton Cross, have the orb on them. Suggested reasons are numerous and include: to combine the cross with a symbol of the sun and make it easier to reach Pagan people with the gospel; to combine the cross with a symbol of the Druids to make it appeal to people who were Druid; to represent the unending love of God; to represent eternity; or because it makes the structure of a cross more solid in stone/wood and less liable to break.

Reflect

Which explanation do you like and why?

If you were adding a shape or symbol to a plain cross, what would you add and why?

Listen

Wide, Wide As The Ocean <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QURo0UrQLy0>

Thursday, 10 April

Holy spaces?

Outside of the boundary of the Kildalton churchyard there is a simple late-medieval cross, also a Celtic cross. This is the Kildalton Small Cross. However, because this cross stands in non-consecrated ground, the story has evolved that it is the grave of a criminal and has been nicknamed 'The Thief's Cross'. If so, they would need to have been a wealthy thief (very good at their trade in that case?).



It was erected in the 1300s or 1400s and is within a square of railings and some visitors say it seems to be 'guarding' the larger cross.

Because of the existence of this 'small' cross, what I've been calling 'the Kildalton Cross' is also known as 'Kildalton High Cross' or 'Kildalton Great Cross'.

I like that there's a cross on the unconsecrated ground nearby this important Christian monument. It perhaps reminds us that the love of God is everywhere, not just in the places we proclaim to be Holy.

Reflect

Some places are 'officially holy' spaces, and others become so because of what they mean to us. Where are your holy spaces: in your home? When/if you go out or see out? In your memories?

Holy Spaces are often thought to be the best places to pray, but any place can be a Holy space, so any place can be prayed in. It's a shift of awareness to being aware of God's presence that makes it a holy space – we can do that anywhere, anytime (e.g. whilst knitting!).

Listen

Take Time To Be Holy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMJHVoKzP14>

What A Friend We Have In Jesus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2skxuowcaY>

Friday, 11 April

The cost of creation



The Kildalton Cross was carved in grey-green chlorite schist, a particularly hard local **stone**. It would have been very difficult to work. It is also probably why the detailed art-work in it is still visible.

You as a knitter will understand that the more time one takes in creating something, hopefully the longer it will last. Especially if some of that time is spent in good starting and ending of a piece, making it carefully and with skill, and sorting out the loose ends before we proclaim it finished.

Your work, like the work of the carvers who made the Kildalton Cross, says something about you. Those carvers may have been commissioned to carve the cross, as you have done this knitting without choosing the finished design, but the work is an example of the care and attention taken in the making.

God as the great creator is the ultimate example of how the love and attention you put into your creations, shines through.

Reflect

As you look at the knit you are creating, thank God for the skills you have learnt to enable you in this, and the time you have given in making this. This isn't just a knit: how it is made is an expression of something about who you are.

Stone carving a specific item is a very unforgiving work – you cannot just change the design if a bit chips off! – for example, when carving a stone cross. Knitting is more of an example of forgiveness – if it goes really wrong, you can re-work it, and when finished there's no sign of any previous mistakes. We can't take this analogy too far! But spend some time thanking God that God's forgiveness and work with our lives is more like knitting than stone-carving!

Listen

Indescribable <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lIVfkY5q54>

Saturday, 12 April

Tough and connected

The Kildalton Cross is something special, but it's related to other special crosses. Whilst being special and unique, it is not alone. The Kildalton Small Cross means it's not literally alone! But it's also not 'alone' in that it's related to other Celtic Crosses. The internet tells me about:

- **St. Martin's Cross:** Located at Iona Abbey, this cross has a similar Virgin and Child iconography to the Kildalton Cross.
- **St. Oran's Cross:** Located at Iona Abbey, this cross has a similar Virgin and Child iconography to the Kildalton Cross.
- **St. John's Cross:** Located at Iona Abbey, this cross is similar to the Kildalton Cross.
- **Campbeltown Cross:** A notable high cross with a Celtic shape in Scotland.
- **Inchbraoch Cross:** A notable high cross with a Celtic shape in Scotland.



I like the idea that this huge, hard-stone cross, standing for over 1200 years, has cousins doing the exact same thing. Like they are somehow all standing sentry for us all.

Proclaiming God's love, freedom, forgiveness for all these years in their own ways. Someone thought of them, created them, erected them, and here they stand.

Reflect

Who are the people who understand your purpose and metaphorically or literally 'stand with you' or are in solidarity with you? Thank God for them today, or ask God to help you find them if you haven't yet.

Who has been a lasting reminder in your life of God's love? Thank God for them, and if they are still on earth, consider sending a message or note to thank them for being this person for you.

Listen

Let Love Be Real <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfRN5dDkymS>

Paul McCartney, The Frog Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVfaf43W9cM>

References:

<https://www.islayinfo.com/about-islay/key-places/kildalton-cross>
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/kildalton-cross/history/>
<https://islay.scot/kildalton-cross-and-chapel/>
<https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/islay/kildalton/index.html>

Photos by Lynne on [Echoes of the Past](#)

Compiled by Vicky Davies