Lent knitalong 2026 - introductory information

A very warm welcome to Victoria Methodist Church's Lent 2026 Mystery Knitalong!

This welcome letter contains all the information you'll need to know to get started, including details of yarn requirements, release dates for the weekly documents, etc. and there is a swatch pattern for knitters to check that they are using the best needle size for their chosen yarn (as the gauge is looser than usual for DK yarn!)

THE KNITTING

This year we will be knitting a cosy shoulder wrap in DK weight yarn. The shoulder wrap will be knitted flat as a rectangle initially, then can be partly sewn up along two sides when finished, to form a loose, flowing poncho-shaped garment (or knitters can choose to leave it open as a rectangular wrap).

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

THE REFLECTIONS

As before, a team of writers have kindly written reflections/meditations to accompany the knitting throughout the seven weeks of Lent. We are delighted to welcome a couple of new faces to the team this year—they will be introduced as we go.

RELEASE DATES

The Knitalong will run as in previous years: knitters on the mailing list will receive weekly emails throughout Lent, containing the daily knitting instructions and reflections.

The same weekly documents will also be uploaded in the dedicated Facebook group, on Ravelry and the Church's website (see below).

The schedule for the weekly releases is as follows:

- Week one will be released on Friday 13th February, ready for the Knitalong to start on Ash Wednesday 18th February.
- The following six weeks will be released on Fridays, (from 20th February) ready for the following week's knitting which starts each Sunday.
- The final release will be on Friday 27th March, ready for Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday, 29th March.

The knitting will finish on Good Friday, so knitters can cast off and block their shoulder wraps if they like, ready for Easter Day on 5th April, but the reflections will run right up to Easter Day.

As in previous years, those who are planning to print off copies for others/distribute to large groups can sign up to receive the emails a little early—contact Helen on learning@vic-methodist-bristol.org.uk.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE DOCUMENTS

There are several ways to access the weekly documents for the Lent Knitalong:

To receive the documents by EMAIL please sign up to our mailing list directly on the church website at www.vic-methodist-bristol.org.uk/knitalongs or contact Helen and Vicky on learning@vic-methodist-bristol.org.uk. (There is no need to sign up if you're already on our mailing list!) Please note that the emails can sometimes end up in spam folders - if you don't initially see the emails in your inbox, please check in your spam; any issues, contact Vicky or Helen using the above email address.

The documents will also be uploaded weekly in the dedicated FACEBOOK group (Victoria Methodist Bristol Knitalongs). This is a lovely online community, with knitters from all over the world, and is a place where knitters can share queries, tips and progress photos, and discuss the reflections, as well as access the knitalong documents. You would be very welcome to join us:

Users of RAVELRY can find the documents linked on there: search for 'Lent Knitalong Shoulder Wrap'.

Finally, the Knitalong documents will also be available to download from Victoria Methodist Church's WEBSITE.

DAILY KNITTING: WHAT TO EXPECT

Knitters will be working with between 77 and 113 stitches on their needles throughout the project, (depending on size chosen - see SIZING below) and will generally be working 8 or 9 rows each day (but every other row is a 'rest row' of plain purling once the initial border is completed).

The pattern uses simple lace stitches: K2tog, SSK, YO and CDD (these are explained in the stitch key below). There is quite a lot of counting on some rows—this is made a lot easier with stitch markers!

If using stitch markers is new to you, there is an opportunity to practise using these when knitting the swatch below.

SIZING

The pattern for the shoulder wrap is presented in four size options:

Size 1: Teen/XS, to fit 28 – 35-inch chest

Size 2: S/M, to fit 36 – 42-inch chest

Size 3: L/XL/2XL, to fit 43 – 51-inch chest

Size 4: 3XL/4XL/5XL, to fit 52 – 62-inch chest

For those wanting to knit a smaller size than the options given above, they are advised to follow the pattern for Size 1 using sport weight yarn and 3.75 mm needles; for a more generous size than those given, please use the pattern for Size 4 using worsted weight yarn and 5.5 mm needles.

NB neither of these yarn options have been tested, so please do work the swatch to ensure the needle size works with your chosen yarn, and change needle size as necessary (see Swatch Pattern below).

The shoulder wrap is a very loose fitting garment, and knitters might want to work a larger size if they'd like a longer, cosy wrap; alternatively, if knitters are short on yarn/time, working a smaller size would be fine, and they should end up with more of a generous cowl which drapes over the top of the shoulders (rather than a garment which covers a large part of the arms).

YARN/NEEDLES/STITCH MARKERS

The shoulder wrap is knitted in DK yarn in a **SOLID** colour (or slightly tonal; anything more variegated than that will obscure the design) in the following quantities:

Yarn quantities needed (approximately):

Size 1:
300g/650 metres

Size 2:
350g/750 metres

Size 3:
400g/860 metres

Size 4:
450g/980 metres

Knitters will need straight needles (25 – 30 cm in length, or knitters can use a circular needle if preferred) in 4.5 mm. But they are strongly advised to check that this is the best needle size for their chosen yarn by working and blocking the swatch pattern in this document - see below.

The approximate gauge of the project is 19 stitches/28 rows per 10 cm stocking stitch square, but this is very approximate: if your gauge differs slightly from this but you are happy with the drape and feel of the fabric after blocking then you're all good!

Knitters will also need stitch markers: 4 markers if knitting sizes 1 or 2; or 6 markers if knitting sizes 3 or 4. These needn't be anything fancy; small loops of scrap yarn or tiny loom bands will do just as well as shop-bought stitch markers.

KITS

As in previous years, Meg and the team at No Frills Knitting in Bristol have made kits containing all you need for this year's Lent KAL. This year's offering is spread across three different yarns and there are two listings on their website to buy them:

Lent KAL 2026 Starter Kit - World of Wool Marble & Fluff
Lent KAL 2026 Starter Kit - West Yorkshire Spinners Illustrious

Marble is available in four shades, and has been used in previous Lent KAL Kits; it is a wonderful 80% merino, 20% silk blend. Fluff is 100% merino, available in four colours, and whilst it has never been used before in a KAL Kit, it is a very mid-range option for if you want

good quality wool at a good price. There is also West Yorkshire Spinners Illustrious (70% Falkland Wool, 30% British Alpaca), which is a Lent KAL special, in just the one shade (Claret). This is not normally available in No Frills Knitting, so if you're looking for something really special at a great price, this is a fantastic option for you. All kits come with circular knitting needles, stitch markers and tapestry needles so you're set up and ready to knit, all in one box.

If you are local to their shop in Bedminster, Bristol, please head down and take a look or place a click and collect order online to pick up in person. If you are further afield, you can place an order on their website and they will happily post it out to you. They use Royal Mail Tracked 24 or 48, and are able to post anywhere in the UK. If you have any questions about KAL kits, please do get in touch at contact@nofrillsknitting.co.uk and one of the team will get back to you.

STITCH KEY

K = knit
P = purl
pm = place a stitch marker
sm = slip stitch marker
rm = remove stitch marker
YO = yarn over
K2tog = knit two stitches together

SSK = slip, slip, knit: slip the next two stitches individually knit-wise and then knit them together through the back loop

CDD = central double decrease: slip the next two stitches individually knit-wise, knit the next stitch and then pass the 2 slipped stitches over the knitted stitch and drop them off the end of the right needle

(Left-handed knitters please reverse these instructions as necessary!)

TIPS FROM THE TEST KNITTERS

A big thank you to our lovely team of test knitters (Amanda, Anne, Darby, Grace, Heather, Judith, Katrin, Mary, Mel and Rhian)! As well as picking up many errors on my part(!), they have made the following suggestions which might be helpful:

– if you are fairly new to knitting lace, you might want to consider using lifelines. These are lengths of thread, cotton, or scrap yarn (or even dental floss!) which are temporarily woven through the stitches of a completed row at regular intervals and removed later. They are useful if you make mistakes you can't easily rectify, so you can pull back/frog your knitting to the most recent lifeline and put those stitches back on the needle and restart from that point. (There are many tutorials on this technique on YouTube.)

– after knitting your swatch, keep it safe somewhere, just in case you are running short of yarn at the end of the project and you might need to unravel the swatch to reuse the yarn.

SWATCH PATTERN

NB The stitch count stays at 37 stitches throughout the swatch, and you will need 4 stitch markers. In both the swatch pattern and the shoulder wrap pattern, odd numbered rows are the front/right side of the work, and even numbered rows are the back/wrong side.

Cast on 37 stitches.

Row 1.   (K1, P1) x 18, K1.

Rows 2 – 8.   work as row 1.

NB four stitch markers are placed on the following row.

Row 9.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, pm, K8, pm, K11, pm, K8, pm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 10.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, P to last stitch marker, slipping markers as you go, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 11.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K11, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 12.   Work as row 10.

Row 13.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 14.   Work as row 10.

Row 15.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K2, K2tog, YO, K3, YO, SSK, K2, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 16.   Work as row 10.

Row 17.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 18.   Work as row 10.

Row 19.   (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K4, K2tog, YO, K5, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 20.   Work as row 10.

Row 21. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 22. Work as row 10.

Row 23. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K2, K2tog, YO, K3, YO, SSK, K2, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 24. Work as row 10.

Row 25. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 26. Work as row 10.

Row 27. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K4, K2tog, YO, K5, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 28. Work as row 10.

Row 29. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K5, K2tog, YO, K1, sm, YO, SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, sm, K1, YO, SSK, K5, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 30. Work as row 10.

Row 31. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K4, K2tog, YO, K2, sm, K1, YO, CDD, YO, K3, YO, CDD, YO, K1, sm, K2, YO, SSK, K4, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 32. Work as row 10.

Row 33. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K5, K2tog, YO, K1, sm, YO, SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K1, K2tog, YO, sm, K1, YO, SSK, K5, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 34. Work as row 10.

Row 35. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K4, K2tog, YO, K5, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 36. Work as row 10.

Row 37. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 38. Work as row 10.

Row 39. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K2, K2tog, YO, K3, YO, SSK, K2, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 40. Work as row 10.

Row 41. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K3, K2tog, YO, K1, YO, SSK, K3, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 42. Work as row 10.

Row 43. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, sm, K8, sm, K11, sm, K8, sm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 44. Work as row 10.

NB *all stitch markers are removed on the following row.*

Row 45. (K1, P1) x 2, K1, rm, K8, rm, K11, rm, K8, rm, (K1, P1) x 2, K1.

Row 46. (K1, P1) x 18, K1.

Rows 47 - 53. Work as row 46.

FINISHING/BLOCKING

Cast off all stitches loosely and wet block as follows: soak the swatch for half an hour or so in lukewarm water (a small amount of wool wash can be added if you like) and then gently squeeze out the

excess water. Lay the swatch out to dry on a towel or blocking mat, and pull fairly firmly into a square shape, using blocking pins to secure if you have any.

Leave to dry fully before unpinning; sew/weave in loose ends.

When the swatch is completely dry, see if you like the finished fabric. If knitted at the gauge mentioned previously the swatch should measure about 19 cm square. But more importantly, it should be drapey and the lace design should be clearly visible. If you feel the fabric is a bit stiff, try working the swatch again with a larger needle size; if you feel it is a bit loose, try with a smaller needle size.

PRAYER

God of new beginnings,
Be with us as we start on this new period of Lent and on this new project.
Give us enthusiasm as well as patience for the weeks ahead.

God of our journey,
Be with us as we travel this road towards Easter with each other and with You.
Give us a sense of companionship and community with You and with those knitting alongside us all around the world.

God of intention,
Be with us as we try to find the time and space to sit with You to reflect, create and be challenged this Lent.
Hold us in Your hands and let us feel Your presence in our lives.

Amen