

Lenten Cowl

By Carina Hilbert

This cowl pattern is meant to be worked on during Great Lent with each section taking 4-5 days so that it's done in time for Easter. For many of us, Easter is still chilly, and a cowl is a nice accessory to have at a cold midnight service.

The color scheme is based upon the Episcopalian colors of the church year, but many churches use the same colors. The first section is green for Common Time, the period after Pentecost and before Advent. The blue and purple sections are for Advent since some churches use blue and others purple. The white and gold section is for Christmas itself since feasts in the Church are white and gold. Green comes back for the Common Time after Epiphany. Purple is next for Lent. Red is for Holy Week with black following for Holy Friday and Holy Saturday. The last section is white and gold for Easter and Pentecost. If your church uses different colors, feel free to change the colors.

The finished cowl/scarf is around 45" long and just under 6" wide, depending on your exact gauge. If you wish it to be longer, you can do each section twice, or you can make the center or border patterns repeat. If you wish to make it wider, cast on 120 stitches, and do each chart three times around. If you choose to use bigger yarn, please use the appropriate needles for the yarn size, and know you will need different amounts of yarn.

Materials:

Yarn--fingering weight for the sizes given in the pattern (larger yarns will make for wider, longer cowl) in dark green, royal blue, royal purple, red, black, gold, and white.

I used KnitPicks Palette:

- Aurora (dk. Green 25537), 1 skein
- Jay (royal blue 24581), 1 skein
- Eggplant (royal purple 24255), 1 skein
- Pimento (red, 24246) 1 skein
- Black (23729), 1 skein
- Cornmeal (gold, 24252), 2 skeins
- White (23728), 2 skeins

Needles--Use appropriate size to get gauge. This pattern is in the round. I used size 2.5 16" circular needles, but my yarn was okay with being pulled around. If yours isn't, use Magic Loop or dpns.

Notions--Waste yarn in a light color for provisional cast on, stitch markers as needed.

Gauge:

Approximately 7 stitches to the inch, 8 rows to the inch in a fingering yarn

Making gauge is not critical for this particular project. Just be sure to test a gauge swatch to see if your yarn makes a nice fair isle fabric with the needles you use. For my gauge swatch, I did the first half of the first section and put the live stitches on scrap

yarn, washed and blocked it, and then picked up the stitches so I could keep knitting after getting the fabric I wanted.

Pattern:

Cast on 80 with the dark green using preferred provisional cast on method. I used a crochet chain with 85 chains to start, then picked up the 80 stitches and joined in the round. Start Chart 1. All charts are of 40 stitches, so make sure to double the chart for the full 80 stitches.

Chart 1 (Common Time):

Common Time is the longest part of the Church year, and for most of the Christian world, the one in the summer encompasses the time of growing and harvest. This is why I chose the symbols of wheat and plants. Wheat is also a symbol of the Christ, first through the bread symbolizing the Body of Christ but also through the symbolism of planting a seed in the ground, watching it grow, harvesting, grinding the seed to dust, and then the seed rising as flour and bread.

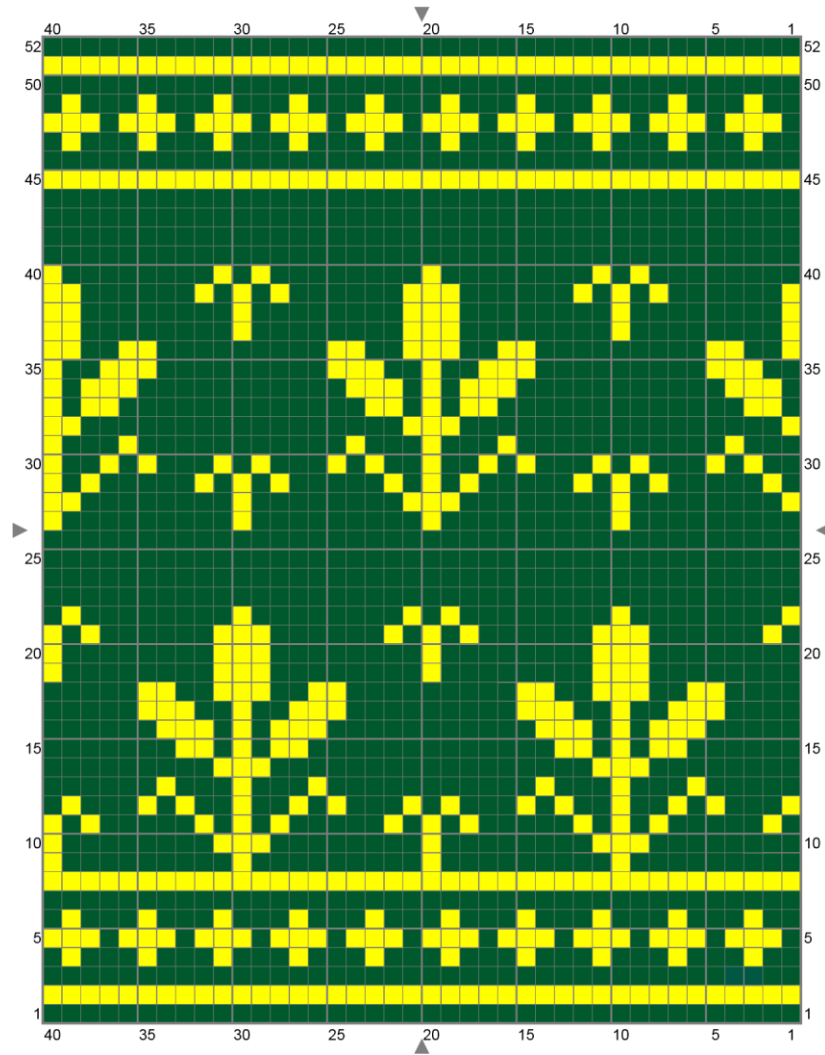


Chart 2 (Advent):

Advent is a time in which we remember Mary's faith as well as prepare for remembering the birth of Christ, so I chose a Norwegian Christmas rose pattern in the Selbu tradition with some modifications so as to remember and honor Mary's example and many sacrifices for her Son, Jesus.

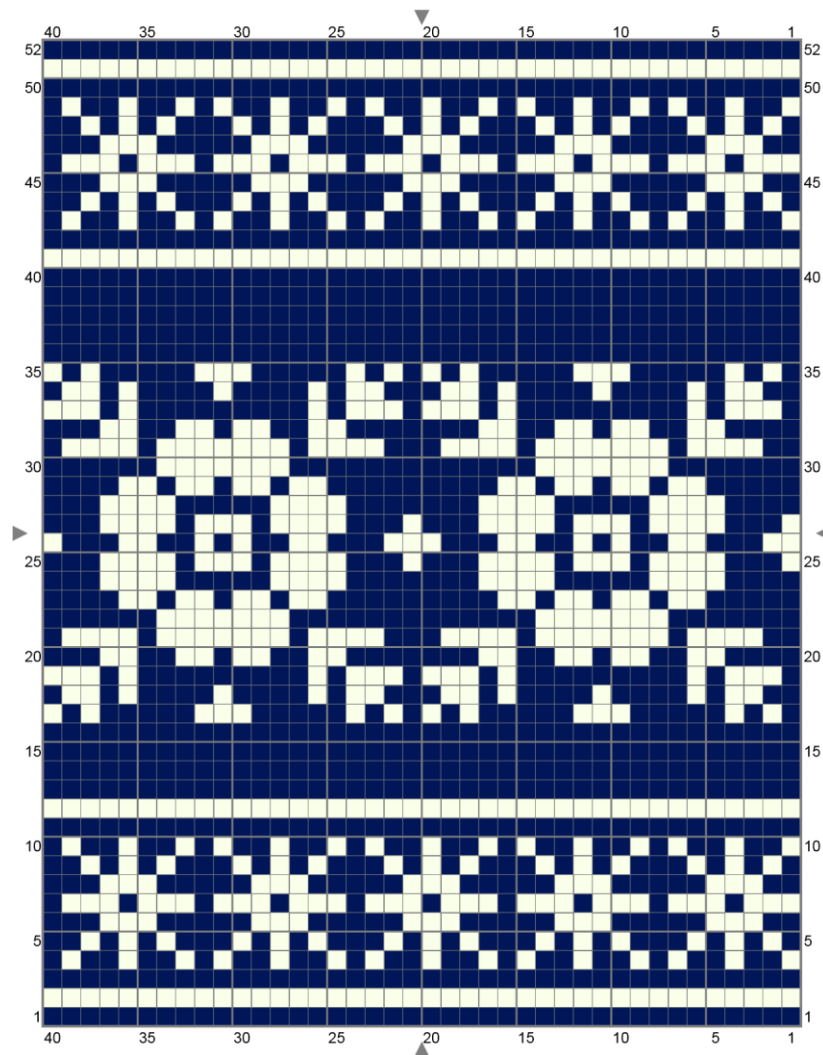


Chart 3 (Christmastide):

Since many churches use purple instead of blue, I decided to have a second section for Advent as well. This way, I could create a stylized version of the Holy Family.

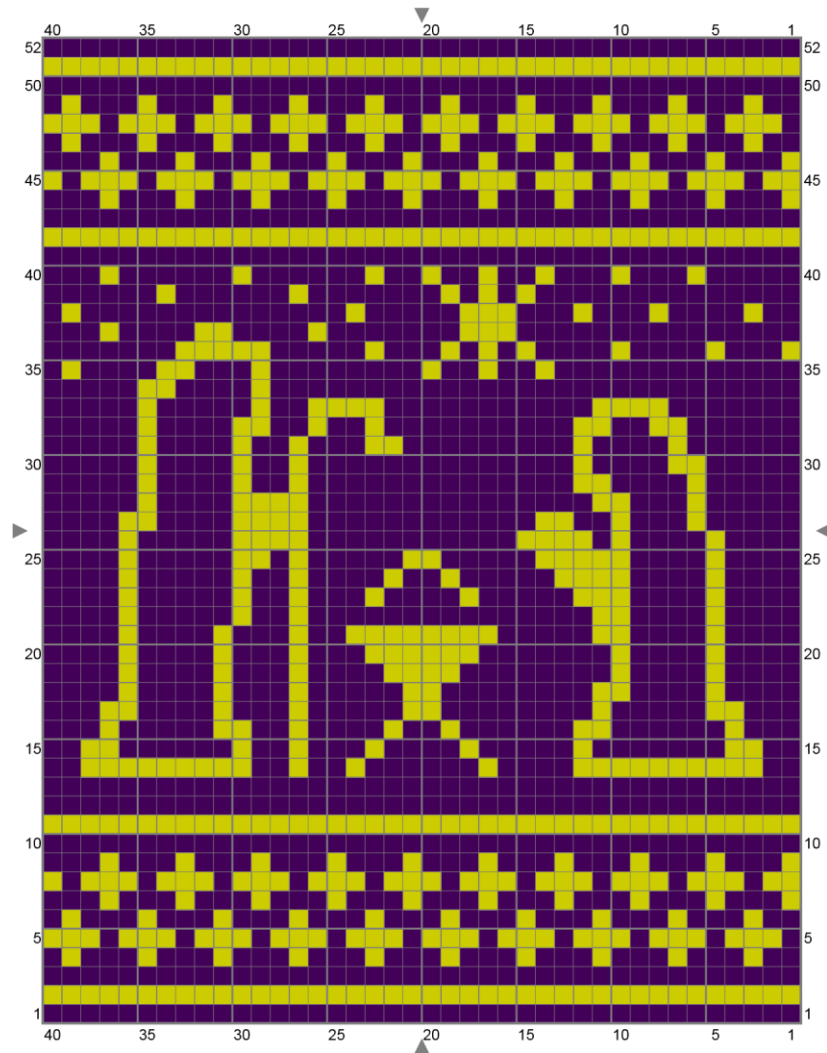


Chart 4 (Christmas):

For Christmas, I wanted a chart that mimicked snowflakes and stars as well as the cross. Christmas is the time for remembering the ultimate sacrifice the little baby Jesus will make as an adult.

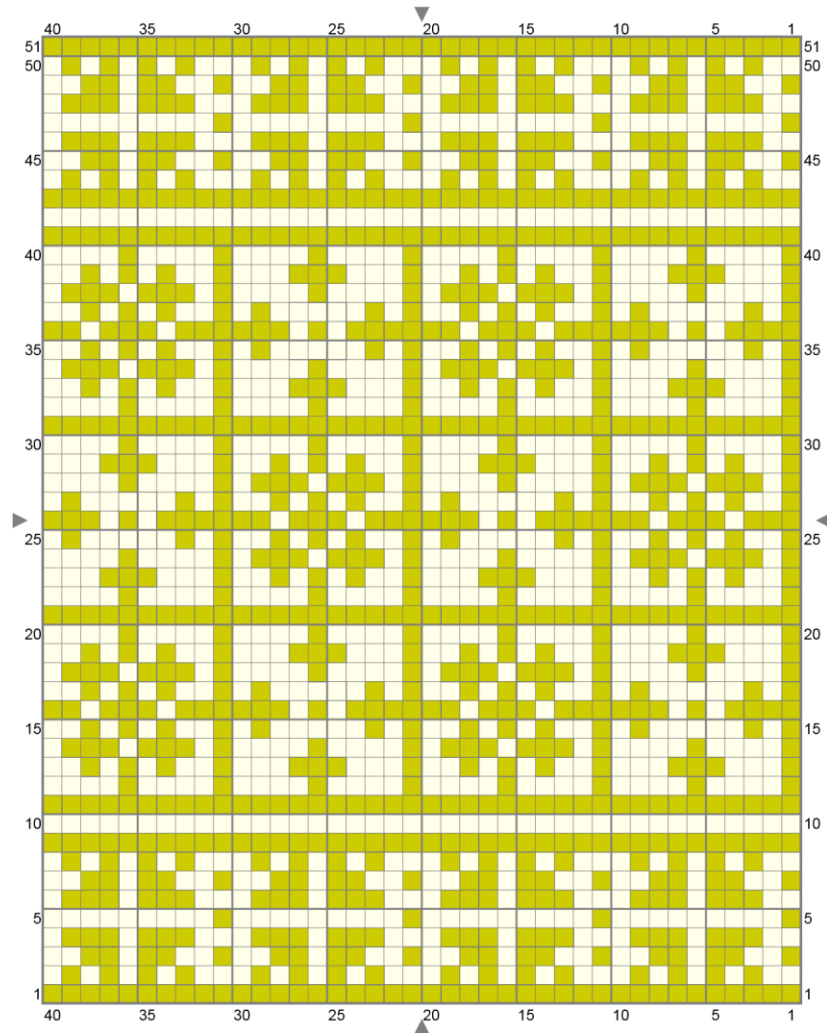


Chart 5 (Epiphany and Common Time before Lent):

Epiphany is a remembrance of when Jesus was baptized and the moment the Trinity existed together on Earth in one moment when Jesus emerged from the water, the dove as the Spirit came down from Heaven, and the voice of the Father was heard. The shamrock has long been used in Celtic and European Christianity to explain the Triune God, so the Latvian shamrock pattern was a clear choice. If you wish to flip the colors, it would work well that way, too.

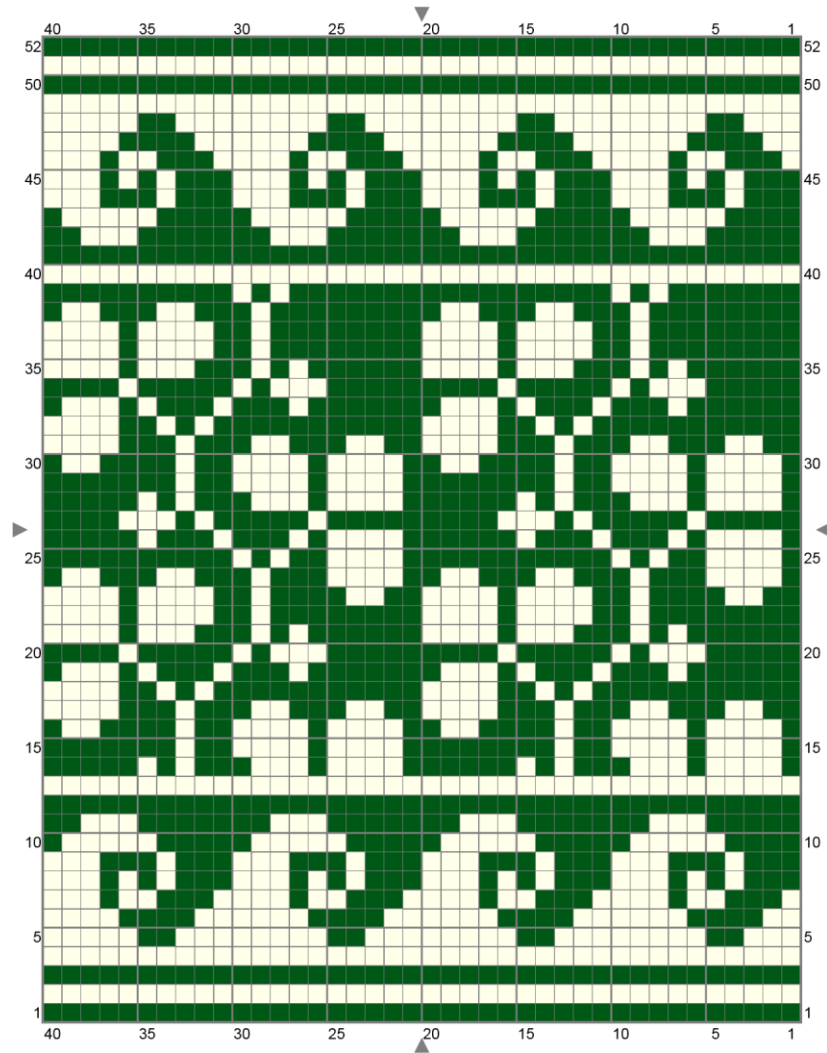


Chart 6 (Great Lent):

Given that we are knitting this for Lent, it only has the one section. I wanted to put the emphasis on the Cross, that true focus of all prayer and soul work during Lent. The sheep are reminders of the separation of the sheep and the goats and how Christ compared us to sheep. The three central crosses are reminders of the thieves on Christ's left and right and how we are called to have the faith of the one on the right, even in the worst of times.

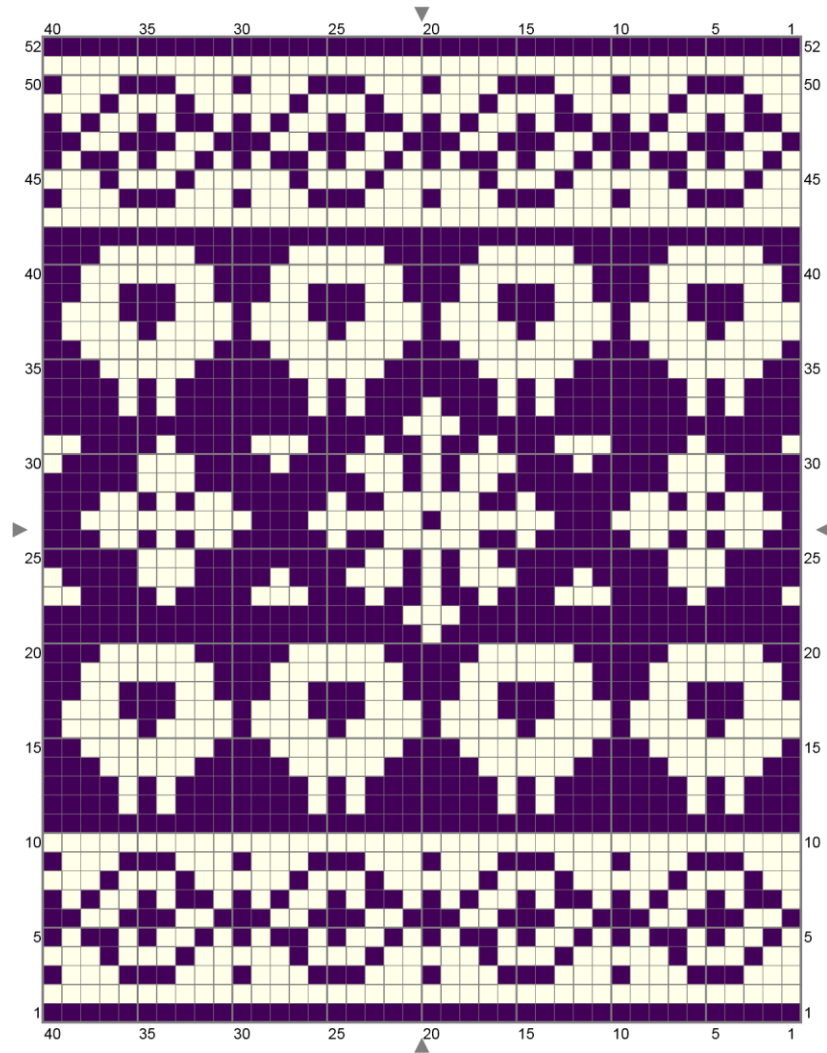


Chart 7 (Holy Week):

This chart is different in that it doesn't have a border. Instead, each set of peeries is a symbol for the events of Holy Week. The section starts with palms from Palm Sunday, moving to a whip of three cords and money for when Jesus chased the money changers from His Temple. Then, we have the Last Supper with the bread and the wine. The section ends with the thorny vine, a reminder of the crown of thorns pushed onto Jesus's head when he was mocked and tortured.

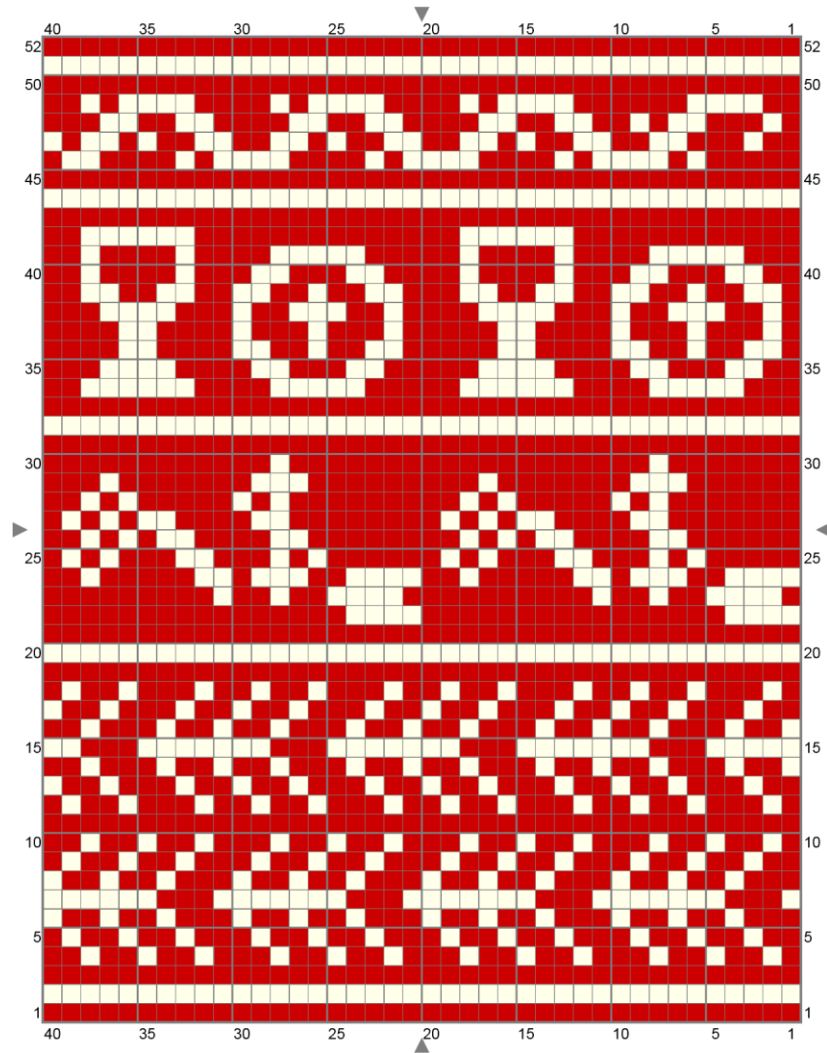


Chart 8 (Holy Friday and Holy Saturday):

The cross is the center of this section, as it is our true focus during Holy Friday and Holy Saturday. I borrowed from the Selbu tradition again and used a chart for lilies, a tradition funeral flower used in many churches for the end of Holy Week and Easter. The border reminds me of leaves and of paving stones like the ones on the roads Christ trod in carrying the cross to Golgotha.

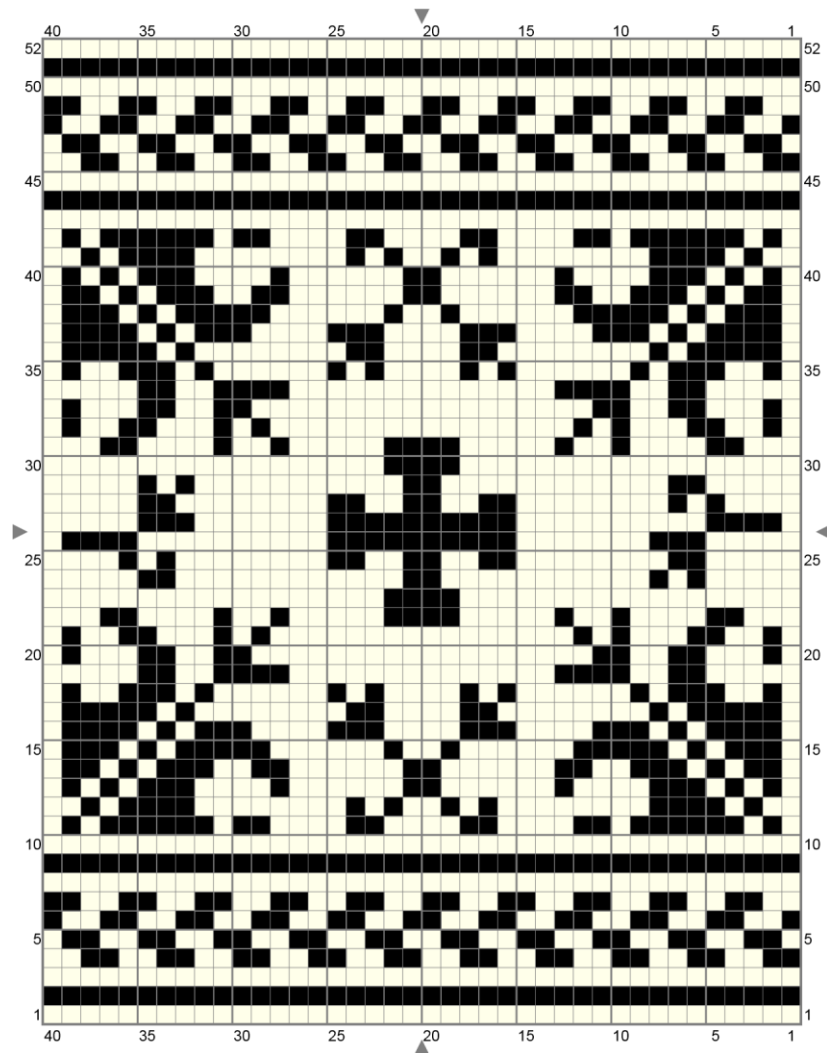
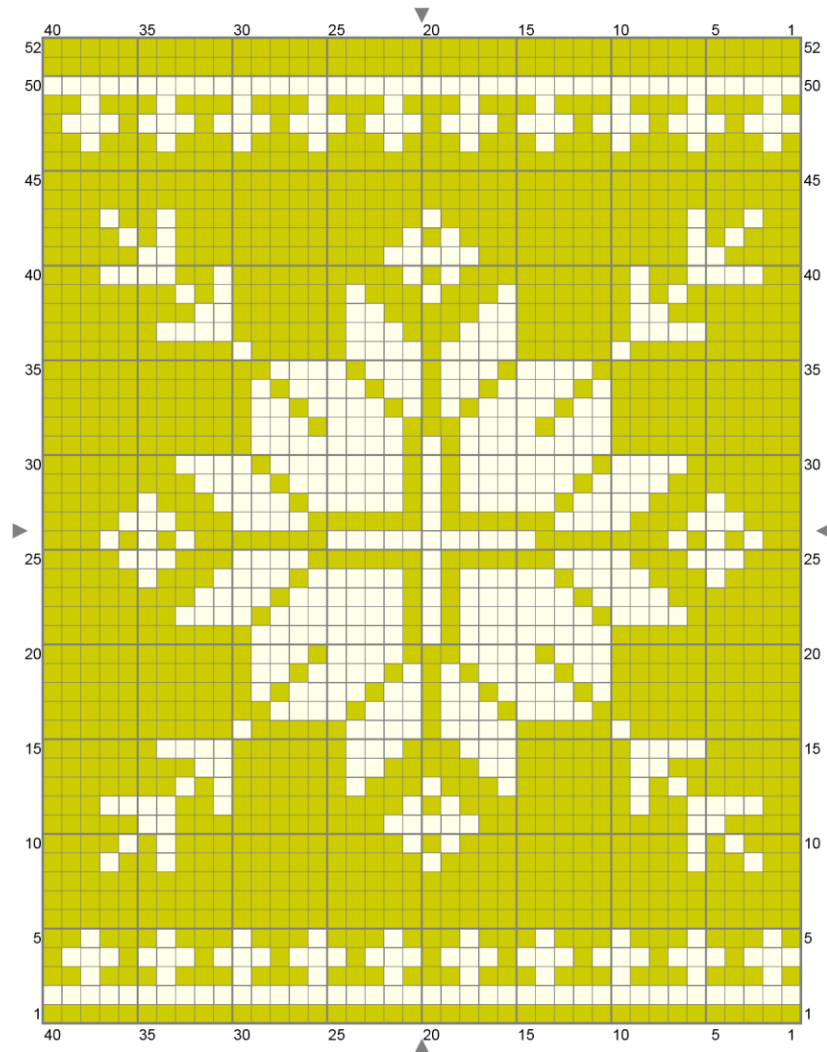


Chart 9 (Holy Pascha and Pentecost):

This chart is also based on a Selbu pattern of the cross in the center of flowers. The cross is empty, and truly He is risen!

For this chart, complete all but the last row. The last row is for finishing. See below.



Finishing:

Weave all ends in if you haven't already.

Once done with all but the last row of Chart 9, you have a choice to make. If you wish to make it a cowl, then pick out the provisional cast on from the beginning, and put those now live stitches on a needle. Use kitchener stitch to weave the two ends together.

If you wish to make a scarf, then pick out the provisional cast on from the beginning, and kitchener the stitches together; do the same with the other end. If you wish, add fringe using leftover yarn in all the colors.

Wash and block gently to get all stitches to lie flat. Follow care instructions on yarn label.

I would like to thank the knitting designers and researchers whose work influenced this design:

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Montford, Debra. Ed. *The Harmony Guide to Aran and Fair Isle Knitting: Patterns, Techniques, and Stitches*. London: Lyric Books, 1991.

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Weatherston, Tricia. *Stranded Advent Scarf 2013*. Boston: Ravelry, 2013. Available from <http://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/>