

CARM Embroidery/Quilting/Fabric Arts Retreats – What to bring & expect.

1. The Project

The retreat will have a broad overarching theme that will leave plenty of scope for individual interpretation. We will only have a few days, so if you wish to complete your piece, keep it modest – think size of cushion cover! You can of course finish a more ambitious piece afterwards.

Don't worry if you have no ideas beforehand; there will be plenty of inspiration and guidance once you arrive and it may be more exciting to come without too fixed an idea. It doesn't have to be big, or complicated or technically skilled – just whatever you feel inspired to create that is meaningful to you. Do come prepared, however, with plenty of materials.

2. What to Bring

I am not able to supply materials, and there are no retail sources in the vicinity, so please come prepared. It may be possible to exchange or share materials with fellow retreatants whilst you are there. I have set out some guidelines below:

- (a) Frames or embroidery hoops are not essential, but help to keep fabric and layers firm and in place whilst it is being worked;
- (b) Choose a piece of base fabric which will be the foundation of your piece – a strong, close weave like thick cotton or linen will support embellishment better than more stretchy or delicate fabrics;
- (c) Graph, tracing and plain paper for making and transferring designs; cardboard for making templates for applique or patchwork pieces; chalk, fabric pens (washable or fadeaway or permanent) for marking designs;
- (d) Scissors for paper, fabric and threads;
- (e) Pins and needles – a variety for sewing fabrics, embroidering, applying beads, sequins etc. heavier fabrics and thicker threads will need bigger needles;
- (f) Fabrics – a variety of scraps and small pieces in a range of colours, patterns, textures etc.
- (g) Threads – plain sewing thread for fabrics, and a variety of wool, cotton and other threads in a range of colours, thicknesses and textures. Even loose ends can be useful!
- (h) Embellishments – you may wish to add beads, sequins, buttons, metallic threads, ribbons etc.
- (i) Wadding and backing fabric for quilting projects; stuffing for small padded details;
- (j) There are various fabric glues, bondaweb for sticking rather than stitching etc.
- (k) You might want to bring a plain cushion cover or cotton bag or even a plain teatowel as the basis for your project, and embellish that;
- (l) If you need to use a sewing machine, you will need to bring your own and you might also need to bring an extension lead.

Above all, bring plenty of curiosity and enjoy yourself! It is a time to break away from normal life, and allow God to speak into an open mind in some new creative way.

Romola Parish