

AMISH-MENNONITE QUILT SERIES

*The Work of Her Hands*  
*Basket Quilt*



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## The Work of Her Hands Basket Quilt

Sharing stories is an important aspect of women's work. Hearing stories from the past and passing them on to another generation helps us understand who we are, where we've come from, and provides meaning and a sense of continuity and community for the next generation. As we work on our basket blocks, I look forward to sharing stories of women from ancient times until the present, with a focus on the history of Amish and Mennonite women and the work of their hands. We will also be sharing our own stories as we work, finding the commonality and the differences between the women of our past and ourselves.

### About the Quilt: Techniques

This quilt includes a variety of blocks which employ different construction techniques. At each step along the way, the quilter will select the block to make and which fabrics/colors to use, thus creating a unique work of art as the project is completed. Techniques taught during this class include traditional machine piecing, machine sewing triangles, Y-seams, English paper piecing, crazy-patch sewing, appliqué, and hand quilting. We will focus on cutting and piecing accuracy with small but easy to make 4.5" blocks, which will be inserted in each larger 11" basket block.

### About the Quilt: Fabric Choices and Quantity

Buy good quality 100% cotton quilt fabric. Current prices for cotton quilt fabrics range in price from \$6 to \$11 a yard and more. Solids cost less, batiks and some well-known designer fabrics cost more. If you don't have quilt fabric shops in your area, there are many great online quilt fabric and supply sites, one I like is *Hancocks of Paducah* (this is different than the Hancock Fabrics retail stores), you can find them online at [www.hancocks-paducah.com](http://www.hancocks-paducah.com).

To select fabrics for this quilt, I started with a fabric that I fell in love with, one that could be used as an interesting background for each of my basket blocks. With that fabric in hand, I shopped for brighter fabrics to use in the small accent blocks in each basket, and for several different, but similarly colored pieces for the basket itself. I bought mostly 1/3 yard pieces (12"x40") or Fat Quarters (18"x22" precut pieces). For the basket make sure you have fabric that is at least 12" wide, to accommodate the size of the largest pattern piece. I also checked my own fabric stash for fabrics that went with the collection and found additional pieces. I focused on the basket blocks as I selected fabric, knowing that the borders and final layout would become evident as I finished the baskets.

Here's my fabric collection:



My first fabric purchase was the light background leaf and berry print (center column) which I chose for the basket block background. From this fabric I added the rest of the fabrics for this project. If a fabric didn't look good with my first piece of fabric, I did not add it to the collection.

I collected two more greens from my stash, similar to the two greens (center) and used these four green prints for the baskets. My 4.5" pieced blocks were made with the brighter pinks, browns and reds. The solid light green (center top) is used for the setting blocks and triangles of the quilt, and the rest of the pink, brown and red fabrics will go into making a pieced border .

### Three suggested fabric color options:

- 1) Traditional Amish-style colors using solid fabrics with a black background and a variety of colors.

Many colors used in Amish clothing are more muted, and have a gray-cast. Typical colors in this quilt style include greens, blues, purples, browns and yellows or golds. (Modern option: use batik or hand-dyed fabrics instead of solids.)



1) Traditional Amish colors with black background

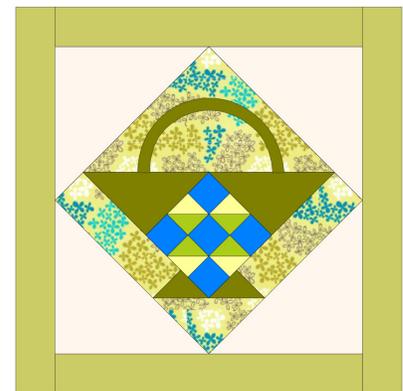
- 2) Basket blocks are a very traditional block style. Traditional looking fabrics work well. Select a soft print or texture design for the block background, and traditional colors for the baskets. Use brighter fabric in the insert blocks. Surround each block with solid or solid-like setting blocks and triangles.

Pick up all the colors you are using in the border fabric, or consider a simple pieced border which incorporates the basket and insert colors. (Modern option: use similar colors in batik fabrics)



2) Traditional colors with light background

- 3) Go a little wild in the basket block background fabric and use those colors as the basis for selecting all other fabrics. (Modern option: use similar colors in batik fabrics)



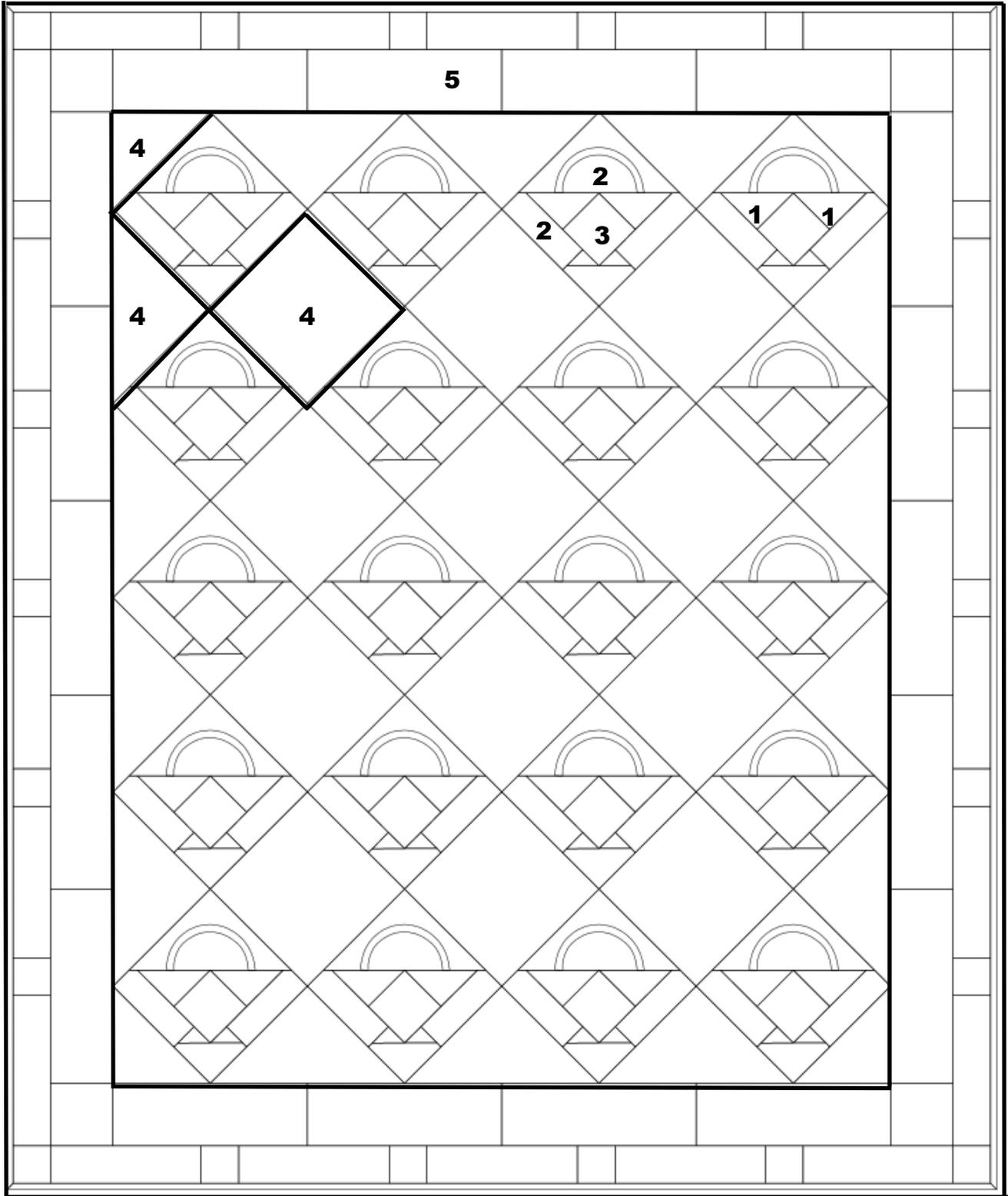
3) Busy background, brighter baskets, lighter setting blocks colors with white or light background



Here is my first basket block. The outside borders on the quilt will bring the pinks, browns and reds back into the over-all quilt design. I've used four different prints for the baskets, but the colors from basket to basket are very similar. Each small inserted block uses different combinations of the brighter colors. Each inserted block is a different design.

# The Work of Her Hands Basket Quilt

Overall size: 80" x 95"



## Fabric Needs

The yardage information here is for a 80"x95" quilt as shown in the diagram on the preceding page, please contact me if you wish to make a different size quilt, and I will provide information for your size.

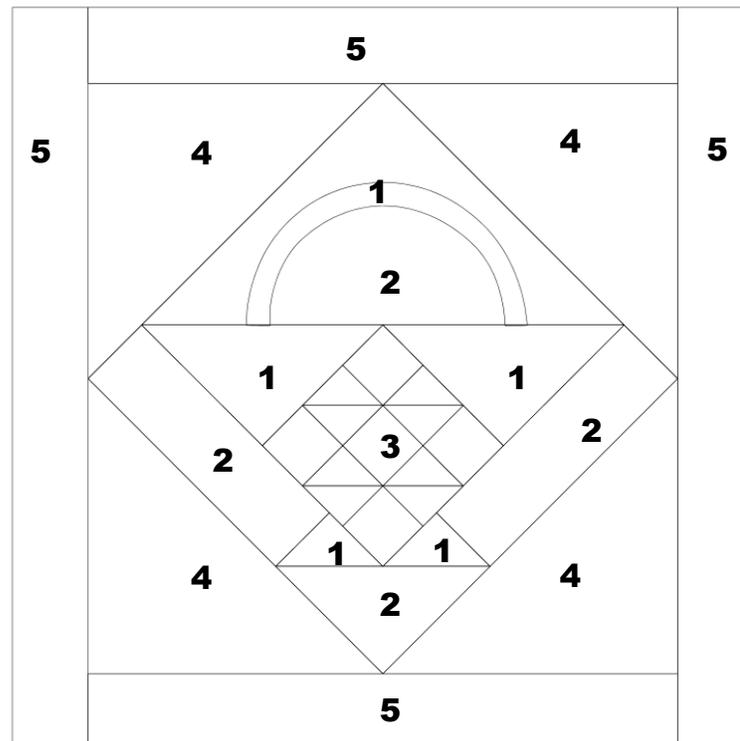
### Fabric for:

### Yardage Needed

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Baskets  | 1.5 yards of one solid or print, if you are using only one fabric for all the baskets<br>-OR-<br>6 or more Fat Quarters (18"x22") of similar color and value. If buying yardage from the bolt instead of FQ's, I recommend that you buy 1/3 yard.   |
| 2. Basket Block Background  | 3 yards   |
| 3. Small Pieced Blocks inserted in Baskets                          | 6 or more Bright FQ's or 1/4 yard pieces<br>6 or more Softer FQ's or 1/4 yard pieces<br><i>Select a variety of prints in similar colors, for example: larger and smaller florals, textures, dots and subtle stripes. These fabrics should all go with each other, and look nice with, but be in contrast to, the basket fabric and the block background fabric.</i> |
| 4. Setting Triangles and the Solid Blocks set between Basket Blocks | 2.75 yards  |
| 5. Borders  | 3 yards—This is the total yardage needed for about 6"-7" of border.   |

This diagram represents all elements of the entire quilt:

1. Basket
2. Block background
3. Small inserted pieced block
4. Setting blocks and triangles
5. Borders



## To Prewash Fabric or not?

I personally prefer to prewash my fabrics before starting a project. I wash lights with lights, darks with darks in cold water. Dry for a few minutes in the dryer, and then iron the fabrics while they are very slightly damp. That is in a perfect world. Sometimes it doesn't work out that way, and I end up using fabric that hasn't been washed. Oh well, I'm an optimist. Some quilters prefer not to prewash at all. This issue is a matter of personal preference.

If you have any concerns about your fabric, you can do a simple dye test with a damp white washcloth, rubbing a corner of the questionable fabric. Do you see any color on the washcloth after rubbing the fabric? If so, I recommend that you prewash it. If you have fabric from a foreign country, like African or Indian fabric—especially hand-dyed fabrics, I highly recommend prewashing it.

## Tools and Notions

You will need a sewing machine, clean with new needle and in good working order.

Basic sewing tools:

- Seam ripper
- Scissors: one scissors used only for cutting fabric and a craft scissors for cutting paper and templates
- Bring a thimble if you have one. We will be trying our hand at quilting and other hand-work.
- Pins: 1-1/2" glass head quilting pins are good for pinning seams and flat (flower head) pins are good for appliqué, foundation piecing and other kinds of small piecing
- Rotary cutter with at least 1 new blade. I prefer Olfa brand for blades and cutters, and for general cutting, I prefer the 45 mm size cutter
- Rotary cutting mat, 18" x 24" is a good versatile size
- Ruler(s) to use with rotary cutter, I like Omnigrd or Creativegrid rulers. These sizes are especially helpful for the project we will be working on:
  - 12.5" x 12.5" (for squaring finished blocks)
  - 3" x 18" (for cutting strips, sashing, binding and borders)
  - 5" x 5" (for squaring small blocks)
- Thread: Cotton thread for machine sewing, bring at least one large spool of your background fabric color and additional colors in neutral colors like grays, beige, off-white, are helpful to have. Gutermann, Mettler, Aurifil and Precensia are brand names I like for sewing machine thread.

Note: Cotton "**quilting**" thread or "hand quilting" thread is not used in the sewing machine. It is only for hand quilting and hand work.

Our work area will include several ironing stations and a rotary cutting station. You will also have space at your personal work station for a 12"x18" or a 18"x24" cutting mat plus your sewing machine.

On Monday of our week together we will visit two large quilt fabric shops in Shipshewana, IN, which offer most things you might need. You can add to your fabric supply at these stories. We have access to a washer and dryer near our sewing area if you wish to wash fabric purchases.

If you have questions about fabric or supplies, optional quilt sizes, please feel free to contact me:

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