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## Free-Motion Quilting with Sue Nickels

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### Chapter 1 - Create Your Own Quilting Design

#### Series Overview

(light music) - I'm Sue Nickels. I'm a quilter, a teacher, and an author. I have always been inspired by Amish quilts because they have clean, simple design, they use solid colors, and open spaces to incorporate beautiful quilting motifs. I am using shot cottons, solid fabrics that have a little more texture to them. In the original Amish quilts, they were all quilted by hand, and it makes it much easier to approach the quilting when you're using a sewing machine. In this work-along, I'm gonna show you how to create custom quilting designs, mark your quilt top, and then base the layers together. And finally, I'm gonna show you how to machine quilt your quilt using beautiful free-motion quilting. Quilters are often nervous about designing and marking their quilt tops. I'm going to take you step by step through the process to make it easy for you to design and create a wonderful quilt. (light music)

#### Materials

- The materials you will need for this class are a finished quilt top, a scaled drawing of your quilt top with sizes to indicate the piecing for designing, we need drawing paper and I like large drawing paper that's heavyweight, a roll of tracing paper and some copy paper, lots of sharpened pencils that have good erasers, black markers that you can darken your pencil lines in with, removable tape, a compass, a nail file that we'll use to smooth our template plastic with, we want paper scissors, we need template plastic, circle templates, and a variety of sizes of rulers.

#### Designing Patterns and Templates

#### Sketching and feather patterns

- We always wanna look at our scale drawing for sizing when we start designing our feather motifs. And it's always good to have the sizes of the pieced areas that we're going to reference. I am going to talk about designing the beautiful triple feathered wreath, and I know that the area that I'm gonna start working with is a 10 inch square area, so I always wanna keep that in mind. But I wanna show you how to draw basic feathers before we get into our beautiful feathered wreaths. I start by looking at my scale drawing to get an idea of the size that I'm gonna be designing. But I also like to actually do some sketching of the designs that I might use. Here shows some of the designs that we're going to use, and this is a way for me to see if I'm going to like what I have chosen, and this has my feathered wreaths and some of the cables and some of the scallops, and I'm kind of liking what's going on here. I'm gonna start with this triple feathered wreath. But that looks a little complicated, and it's really not once you know how to design your basic feathers. And I always start with a simple feather, I call this a practice straight feather. So the feather has a center spine, and then we draw feathers on the top of the spine, and on the bottom of the spine to create this beautiful feather. I like to also use little top and bottom guidelines to do this. What I would have you do is practice some first by tracing mine. So I'm gonna use a piece of tracing paper, lay this on top of my practice feather. I like to draw the center spine and the top and bottom guidelines. You could use a ruler if you wanted those to be perfectly straight. And I'm gonna take my sharp pencil and I'm

just gonna trace over what I have drawn on this practice feather. Draw some on the top and on the bottom of the guideline. I wanna explain a little bit more in detail about the basic feather unit that you're drawing. I have always thought about the inside of that half of a heart, starting at that inside point. And it's important if you think of this space between the center spine and that top guideline, starting about a third of the way down. And then swing this around and have it touch this center spine. That's one important thing. The next thing that we wanna think about is this shape we're making of this full part of that half of a heart needs to be very nice and round, and we wanna think about the width of this being fairly consistent throughout our feathers that we're drawing. And then the last thing and probably one of the most important things is where you start the inside part of this half of a heart and where we come around and touch the center spine. If we were to put a line to connect those, that would be perpendicular with your center spine. And that becomes important especially when we start drawing on a curved line. Once you have practiced drawing or tracing mine a few times, and you feel comfortable making that basic feather unit, it's time to start freehand drawing some of your own. And it's a lot easier than you think, in fact it's almost easier than tracing once you get that basic feather unit done. What I like to always do when I do my freehand drawing of the feathers is to look at a feather when I'm drawing it. So I wanna kind of move my little drawing in front of me, and I'm going to have a piece of paper that has the center spine and top and bottom guidelines, and I'm gonna start drawing freehand feathers. And maybe the first ones aren't gonna be that great, but they'll get better and better. Think of those little rules that I talked about, where we start, where we touch the center spine, try to keep that all really consistent. Do a few on the top and then come around and do a few on the bottom. Always start at that inside point of that half of a heart and swing into the spine. I know sometimes it seems a little awkward, but it's going to help you get more consistency to your feathers. So let's talk about the first of the guidelines that I mentioned, which is starting a third of the way down. What happens when that goes wrong is something like this. And I call this stacked feathers. They just don't look quite right. And if you remember that we're gonna start a third of the way down, we can get that curve so that it looks much more feather-like. That is a very, very common mistake and it's very easy to correct by just coming down that third of the way when you start drawing. The next thing that you wanna be careful of is keeping the area very round and a consistent width of your feathers. So we wanna make sure that that looks very rounded. Sometimes I have students just draw that circle for a while, if that helps you keep that nice and rounded. If you start getting a feather that's about half the size, that is not gonna look that great. So just think of fattening it out a little bit, drawing that circle, coming into that center spine. It's a really good exercise that kinda looks like a number nine when you do that over and over again. The most common mistake that I see when students first start drawing feathers is when we start our center spine about a third of the way down, and we make a little mark there, and then we swing around and we touch the center spine. Again, I'm gonna put a mark right there, that should be perpendicular. If it's not, this is the kinda thing that can happen. And I'm gonna exaggerate it a little bit to make my point. I call this kinda fence post feathers, they just-- there's something wrong with those, they just don't look quite right. If you just remember to swing this around, you're gonna get a much prettier feather. So keep practicing, look at your feather, analyze it compared to the practice straight feather, and go back and correct things. It's time to start designing our quilting motifs for our quilt top, and my quilt top is a beautiful Amish-inspired star. And I have looked through lots of books with beautiful ideas for quilting motifs, and I think that I would like to put a really pretty feathered wreath, multiple feathered wreath in the center of my simple star. And I think it's a good idea to maybe do some sketching in this scale to

see if I like my ideas, to see if these are gonna work. So we might want to actually draw right on top of our scale drawing, which is what I've done here. And I determined that maybe a triple feathered wreath would even be really, really cool in the middle of this. Now that we've practiced drawing feathers on a straight spine, we wanna learn how to draw them on a curve, which is more common in the feathers that we see on actual quilts. I have drawn a nice little curved line for my center spine, and I've drawn those height guidelines, I think it's always good when you're learning to have those height guidelines or else the feathers get kinda short and tall. So I've done that, I just used a little ruler to make that so that they were consistent. So I'm gonna go back to that basic feather unit, and I'm gonna draw these on this curve, and I'm gonna do a few on the top and a few on the bottom, and I'm gonna continue drawing through the curve. And you can see, it's just all about repeating that same shape over and over again. Yours might look a little different than mine, and that's okay, because I think everybody develops their own signature or style, and that's what's so beautiful about feathers, they don't all have to look like mine to be beautiful. And they don't have to be consistent always to be beautiful. That's what makes them, I think, the ideal design to freehand draw yourself. As we are going around the curve, remember how I talked about making that little mark where we start and where we touch the center spine? I'm gonna do that a couple of times on the feathers that I've already drawn, and what happens on a curve is that that changes because we're on a curved line, and if I draw that consistently, you can see you're constantly having to upright that feather, and if you're not paying attention to that, what happens is the feathers kind of fall over and they look really funny. And on the inside curve they do look a little elongated. But if I do those little marks, you can see I'm staying, turning very quickly. And that's just the way they look on an inside curve, they look a little bit more elongated and that's fine. Practice that some more and then we're gonna move onto our feathered wreaths.

### Drawing a feather wreath

- We are now going to design our feathered wreaths. And I need to determine the size of the spine which now is going to be a circle and I want to get those circles to fit in exactly the area that I'm going to use them on the quilt top. So what I've done is I've taken a piece of heavier paper on the large pad and taken a piece of that, using my small drawing that has the correct sizes on it, I've drawn a portion of that quilt. I don't need to draw the whole quilt top out on paper but just a portion of it so that I can make sure everything is accurate from this point on and we just need to determine the size that we're gonna make those center spines and the circles. So I'm gonna look at my drawing again and look at my beautiful feathers that I've sketched on this. And one of the things that I've tried to do in this format in the innovative Amish is to try to break out of the regular pieced areas and what I determined is that I kind of liked the feather going out of that 10 inch square area and kinda breaking out into the pieced star area and I determined that maybe about an inch outside of that would be really pretty and the size of those feathers would look just great. So I've got my drawing on this large paper and I've darkened it in with black markers just so it's easy to see and the next step is to use tracing paper and I'm gonna use that rolled tracing paper that is lightweight, it's inexpensive. So you can do this as many times as you want until you get it just right so I've taken a piece of that large tracing paper, I cut a 14 inch square. That seemed that that would work just about right for what I'm doing, I've drawn a line down the center in both directions so that I can determine the center of the quilt and on my drawing underneath of this, I put a little cross that I always know that I'm gonna come back to center with this cross. And I'm gonna lay my tracing paper on top of that and I'm gonna line it up perfectly with my drawing that's underneath and this is

when I love to use this. Removable tape, the tape comes on and off very easily but if I don't tape this down, it's scooches all over the place and we don't have the accuracy that I'd like. So I'm just gonna put a few pieces of this tape on top of my tracing paper, I'm going to bring in my ruler and my compass and these are the tools that I'm gonna use to make my circles for the center spines. And you might do this a few times until you get it exactly right to the size and the scale that you're interested in working in but for me, on this one, I determined that the small circle, the center spine would be at an inch and a half from the center. And I make a little mark there. I determined I wanted those feathers the height guidelines if we needed to use those, about three quarters of an inch on either side. And I'm gonna take my compass, open it to the size of that center spine so it's an inch and a half. Carefully draw my circle. And I've got my first center spine for my interior feathered wreath and I've also got height guidelines. And you can draw those too if you are comfortable drawing feathers with the height guidelines, you can just go ahead and reduce the size of your compass for that first interior height guideline. You can open this up and you can do the next height guideline, over time, with drawing feathers as much as I draw feathers, I don't need those height guidelines anymore but especially when you're first drawing it, it can be very, very helpful. So I've got those, then I determined that I'd like a little bit of space between my feathers so I thought maybe a quarter of an inch would be about right so I'm gonna make a quarter inch mark. I want my feathers to be the same height throughout all of these wreaths so I'm going to from that point, make my three quarters height guideline and I'm gonna come to the center here and that's gonna be my next center spine and then I'm gonna put my next height guideline on the other side of that. And then I can open my compass up, easy, easy, when you have a compass and then if I wanna draw those height guidelines again, I can reduce and enlarge the compass size for that. Go ahead and draw your height guidelines for the middle wreath and then you can complete it with the third outer wreath and I have already done that and I have my tracing paper ready to go to show you how to draw feathers on your circles as spines, it's the same thing. We're drawing the same basic feather unit and I've already started my center, the small wreath and I'm just kind tracing over these again to kinda remind you of that basic feather unit and I have my drawing always handy so that I can look at that especially on feathered wreaths. Sometimes you get confused about the direction you're going so you've graduated from beginning feathers to intermediate feathers and I say that because as you're seeing, I'm drawing now upside down and sideways and every bit of you is gonna wanna turn your paper but I would suggest just learning how to draw these in any direction you need to. I call that being feather ambidextrous. Now the other thing that makes these intermediate is that I don't wanna end up right here with only space to draw half of a feather. That wouldn't look very good. I am going to start determining how many more feathers I might need to make this work out just perfectly. And I do what I call air draw a few, oh that's gonna work out perfect, do you see what I'm doing? I think I can get three more of those. Oh, that was perfect, I think I've done this a few times. Let's go ahead and do the inside of the feathered wreath and there's fewer feathers on the inside and again, its on an inside curve so they're gonna look a little bit more elongated. So by now you should be very comfortable drawing feathers, getting really, really pretty feathers and enjoying it too. I could draw feathers constantly, I just think it's so much fun, oh my gosh, I got it just about right again. So look at how beautiful that feathered wreath looks. It looks like something out of a book. And you can do that too. Go ahead and complete the other two feathered wreaths. I have got mind completed here, I have darkened mine in with that black Sharpie marker and I could use this for the next step which will be marking our quilt top, I also drew this little center motif because I felt like there might be too much unquilted area in the center here and I just thought that this was a

really pretty way to complete my feathered leaf with this little four petaled piece. How do we get this marked on our quilt top? Well you can lay it on a light box and you can trace these designs directly onto your quilt top. If you really are comfortable free hand drawing the feathers, you could make paper patterns of the center spine and you could draw just the center spines using these paper patterns on the quilt top and then you can free hand draw those feathers directly on the fabric.

Using rulers to create straight lines and angles

- A really great way to create quilting motifs on your quilt top is to use rulers. I called this ruler work. And we use the rulers directly on the fabric to mark our quilting designs, but I like to plan that ahead of time by using again that drawing of the real size portion of the quilt top on the paper and again tracing paper, a tracing paper overlay, to determine if I like the choices that I'm making for the ruler work. I am going to go back to my sketch of some of the designs that I thought might look nice for this piece here. I can use crosshatching, a crosshatch grid. I can also use little rays that look really beautiful in this area, and then just angles that can look like arrows, or just little squares cut in half. And I'm gonna use my diagram here so that I know exactly the size that I'm working within. I want to also kind of break those rules again, that we've talked about, sometimes breaking out of the regular pieced area. So this little pieced area in the corner of our star is five inches, but I decided to break out of that a little bit with a crosshatching. And I'm going to actually draw some of this directly on my tracing paper, so I can make sure I like what I'm doing. On our tracing paper overlay, I am going to set up this corner to see if I like the scale of the crosshatching. And I'm going to break out of the five inch square into this little pieced area here, and what I determined was that I think about an inch and a half is gonna work beautifully. And the really great thing about these rulers is that you can line everything up so it's perfectly even. And I'm going to draw that inch and a half on this side. And then I'm gonna do the same thing on the opposite, and I'm gonna find that inch and a half. And remember, eventually we're gonna do the same thing on the quilt top, but right now what I'm trying to determine is if I like the scale that I'm working in. Perhaps three quarters of an inch might be a really great size for the crosshatching 'cause we're doing a fair amount of quilting on this quilt and we want the quilting to be even throughout the whole project. We don't want to have really, really tight areas and really open areas, and I think three quarters is gonna work out just great. So I'm gonna take my big ruler, look at this five inch square, put my ruler on that diagonal, and I'm gonna draw my first line. And then I'm gonna go every three quarters in from there, in this direction, and I'm gonna come back in the opposite direction, opposite side. And then crosshatching is made by doing lines in the opposite orientation, and so my first line from this side is from corner to corner on the my new line that I made with those inch and a half increments. And again, I'm just gonna draw that line and then three quarters of an inch on this side and three quarters of an inch on this side. And I can see that I like that scale. I think that that's gonna be perfect with my feathers and with the rest of the quilting motifs we're gonna design as we move along. So that's one way you can use rulers is to make grids. Now, we can do all kinds of fun things with the rulers to do other types of designs. When I'm looking at my sort of sketchy drawing that I'm trying to determine if I like some of these ideas, this is a three inch by 20 inch area, so I know three inches is a great size for this direction. And what I want to do is I want to divide the 20 inches to be the closest I can get to the three inch. So it kind of looks like a square, but of course three doesn't divide into 20 evenly. So what I did is I took a second piece of tracing paper, and I cut it three by 20. And I started to play with increments, and I came up with the perfect size is about  $2 \frac{7}{8}$  inches. And I'm going to take

that measurement now, and I'm gonna mark it on my little overlay, my tracing paper overlay. And I've got some drawn already, but I'm gonna actually do this one. And  $2\frac{7}{8}$  is a little tricky to find on your ruler, but I have found it. And I'm gonna just draw that line. I'll move this ruler out of the way. And so I've got the correct size that I've done on the others. Now I want to determine how to draw the rays. And what I decided to do was on a three inch side, I would just take, and this is why it's nice to have lots of different rulers because this is a little easier to bring in here, and I'm gonna just put one inch increments on the left side. And of course, the top side is  $2\frac{7}{8}$ . It's not actually three inches. So I just kind of center that, and I'm gonna do those same marks. So it's really close to three, so it's gonna look just about the same. So there is the center ray. We're always coming from this lower right corner. Some areas on this quilt, I've got some nice angles that end up looking like arrows and then some angles in one inch squares that look like what we call sawtooth kind of a look. And in quilting, a lot of times we do that in the piecing, but we're gonna do this as a quilting motif. So I've determined the size that I want for these arrows because I go back to my diagram and it shows me that it's two inches and this one is 24 inches. 24 is very easy to divide, so we're gonna do one inch increments. And I'm going to do that on tracing paper again, my tracing paper overlay, to sort of line it up with some of my other drawings. Now, this isn't in exactly the same place that it would be on the quilt, but I can get the sizing down to see if I like what I'm doing. I have another ruler that's really easy to manage, and I am going to use the lines on the ruler to do one inch by two inch increments. So I'll do just a few of those. And then what I did is I found the center of that, so I'm just gonna put a little mark in the center, a mark in the center here. Get that just right. And then I'm gonna angle this ruler to make my arrows. And I'm, oops, I'm gonna come from this side. And I can see by just drawing a few of these, I've got six or seven of them, that I like that. I think that's gonna be really nice to have straight lines, angles with feathers and cables. And it's gonna just be a very nice variety going on on my quilt top, and I think that that's really important. The last design using ruler work are these sawtooth designs, which are the easiest to use on your quilt top because basically this is one inch by say a 36 inch long side. And I'm just gonna do one inch increments. And I'm gonna come back to my tracing paper, and I'm gonna set up some of these one inch by one inch squares. And again, we are just doing this so that we can see if we like the scale that we're working in. This will all be done directly on the fabric eventually. I've drawn my one inch squares, and then I'm just going to split those in half on a diagonal. And I think, having done this, I have some really great quilting motifs for my project, and very easy to do with rulers. I really like what I've created using rulers for my quilt top. I think that there's a lot of variety in what I've done with grids and angles and rays. You can use these concepts on any quilt top to create different scales for bigger or smaller quilt tops. Just remember to use an even amount of quilting on your quilt top, and I think that you'll have great results.

### Creating scallops two ways

- Another really nice quilting motif is something called scallops and these are little half-circles that make a great, great surface texture on your quilt and when I look at my little diagram, I've drawn some of these little scallops on here. I want to be able to incorporate those on my quilt project so I'm gonna go back to my overlay drawing and these little scallops are going to fit into this little triangle area right here. And there's two ways that we can draw scallops on our quilt. The first way is using circle templates, and these are great design tools to use. We're going to actually draw the little scallops using a circle template. What I want to do is determine what size my scallops are and what size circle to use, and I'm going to measure this area, and it is 7 inches. Make little tick marks

every inch. Bring my circle template and find the 1 inch circle, and there it is right there. You can see I made a little mark so I didn't have the wrong size. And the circle templates have little marks that are vertical and horizontal halfway marks, and I'm gonna take the horizontal marks, lay that right on my line, draw this whole row of 1 inch half-circles all the way down. Then take the same circle, go to the halfway point, I'm gonna line up the horizontal tick marks, and this is my vertical tick mark, and now I'm gonna draw the next row of scallops. And we just do this over and over, each row until we get the whole area filled in with our scallops. The other way that you can do this is you can use template plastic. I actually like this method a lot better for the actual marking on the quilt, but you can of course use the circles templates to mark directly on the quilt. So this is just plastic template material. I'm gonna draw that 1 inch circle on the template plastic. So I draw that with my pencil. And then I put the little tick marks of the halfway points and I took a Sharpie marker and I drew those lines because those are really important. And then I'm going to cut this out with my paper scissors, not good scissors. I have one that's already cut and ready to go. I take my nail file, and I file the edges smooth. It's very hard to cut plastic smoothly and sometimes you get little bumps and this just ensures that you've got a really smooth edge when you're going to mark this on your fabric. Line up the horizontal line, lay it on my quilt top, and I'm gonna just draw the first row of half-circles and then I'm gonna come back and I'm gonna do the same orientation as I did with the circle template, draw my next row, and so on. And I've got a beautiful visual of what my scallops are gonna look like on this quilt. So I realize that in this innovative, Amish style that I'm kinda breaking into the pieced areas; Normally I would just fill the scallops in this area, the triangle area but I really want them up in this section also so I'm gonna draw those in that section and see what I think so I'm gonna take my little template and I'm just gonna complete the process of drawing these. Oh and this is looking much better. I'm liking this a lot. And this one's gonna go right here. You can see how I'm lining it up, those vertical and horizontal marks and you're just drawing the half-circle. I can already tell that this is exactly what I want it to look like, and I'm very, very happy with my scallops now.

#### Designing cables with a paper folding technique

- Finally, we're going to design cables that will fit your border perfectly, and it's just a great paper folding technique that I think you'll enjoy. We wanna look at that diagram again to get the size that we're gonna need to work with. We're gonna design the cable that fits this border, and it is four inches wide by 24 inches long. Cut a piece of paper, the heavy weight paper that we've been using that is four inches by 24, so that I can get this so that it fits perfectly. And the next thing that we're going to need is just regular copy paper to do our little paper folding exercise. And to determine what size this copy paper needs to be might take a few tries for you to get it just right, but I have already done my few tries and I've determined that I want my paper to be 3 1/2 inches wide. I don't want the cable to go right to the edges of the piecing. I wanna leave a little bit of space, or we would say, breathing room. So, 3 1/2 inches is a great size in the width, and then I've determined that the length of this paper is gonna be 6 1/8. That's kind of a funny measurement, but it seemed to work for the size that I want my cable to be. Fold it in half, and on the right side is my fold. And then I'm gonna fold it in half so that the fold on this edge is on the bottom. That's what it's gonna look like, and we are going to do some measurements. This is the kinda thing that you're gonna play with a little bit, and I've already played with this one a few times to determine this cable is gonna have three strands, so it's triple cable, kinda matching our triple feather, which I thought was kinda nice. And I am going to do 1/2 inch strands. Take my ruler, and on this right side I'm gonna make a mark

1/2 inch, 1/2 inch, 1/2 inch. And that leaves this little bottom piece about 1/4 inch, and that's gonna work out just perfect. On the bottom fold I'm gonna start at the bottom left edge, and I've determined that I like the measurement of 5/8. And I'm gonna do 5/8 increments three times starting right at that edge, and I end up with the bottom having this much space. And I'm gonna draw some gentle curves. And I just connect these lines. Connect now the next one, and this can be kinda sketchy. You don't have to do a really perfect line. And we're gonna go right out to the edge and right up to the top. So, you get a paper that looks just like this. Cut these on the pencil line, and what we're gonna end up with is what I call little footballs. And there's gonna be three of these little footballs. So, here's our biggest football, and then our middle football, and then our small football. And when I open these up this is what I'm going to have. I'm gonna have this little triple footballs. They've all held together. Take these, draw my cable on this paper. And I've already started so that you can see that this is exactly what I've cut out here. There's the large, middle, and small. And I just lay these on my paper, and I drew the outside and the inside, and I did that for the three remaining ones. And this is where we get this wonderful woven kind of look, this overlapping look. So, I'm taking the large football and I'm lining its point with the point of the small football. So, the left point comes to the right point of the small football. And what I also wanna mention is that I've drawn a straight line right down the middle of my paper that's representing my border. So, this was four inches wide, I drew a line at two inches right down the middle. And I'm lining up the fold lines on my football right with that line. Draw what I've already drawn with this one. And this is so cool. You're gonna love what you're gonna see here. It takes a little bit of time to get the drawing just right, and we'll be patient. Draw on the inside. This is exactly what I did on the first set. I end up with this really beautiful woven look, and I also will come back on this side and complete this one, too, so you get that nice, woven look again. I'm a machine quilter, so I like the way I've drawn it where the machine quilting lines will just be continuous. But you can erase some of the lines in the overlapped areas to be a woven kinda braided look, and it can be just beautiful. There's so many variations on this cable that you can do to create really interesting looks. Take a piece of tracing paper, and I'm going to draw my cable repeated the number of times that will fit on that 24 inch length, darken it with my black marker, and I have my pattern that I'm going to use then to mark on my quilt top. And for this design we are going to lay this on a light box and we're gonna trace the cable directly on the fabric. So, you have a really, really beautiful design. Now, this was for the four inch by 24 inch border. Also on this quilt we have four inch by 36 inch borders, those are the length. And I had to do a whole second drawing for that because my paper needed to be a little bit different size to make it fit from end to end perfectly. And the paper that I used for the four by 36 inch drawing was instead of 6 1/8 it was six inches, and then still used a 3 1/2 inch size. I came up with a second drawing for the 36 by four inch. And they look almost exactly the same, but they're gonna fit edge to edge just perfectly, and that's why this is a great technique, because you can make these cables fit your borders just perfectly every time.

## Other Options

### Using stencils and designs from books

- We have just learned how to create custom quilting designs for your quilt top. There are other options also, and one of them is to use patterns from books. My sister and I wrote this *Amish Patterns for Machine Quilting* book and here is one of the feathered wreaths like we learned to



design. This is a great design, but it's limiting in that it is the size that it is. You can reduce or enlarge to create different scaling, but there's still lots of really great designs to use when you look at books with quilting patterns. Another option would be to use stencils, and here's a couple of stencils of feathers, and these are really easy to use on the quilt top because you just lay the stencil down and trace through the little channels, but they are also limiting in that they are the size that they are, so you have to find a stencil that's going to fit perfectly for your quilt top. Next class we're going to learn how to mark these quilting designs on your quilt top.

## **Chapter 2 - Marking and Basting**

### Overview

(bright music) - Now that you have your quilting patterns ready it's time to learn to mark and baste your quilt. We'll start with using a light box to trace our designs. I'll also show you how freehand draw designs directly on your quilt top. We'll use rulers to mark straight lines. And finally I'll show you how to use template plastic and circle templates to mark your scallops. And once your quilt top is completely marked I'll show you how to safety pin baste and use a little hand basting to get your quilt ready for quilting. (bright music)

### Materials

- The materials we'll need for marking our quilt are a light box. We'll need marking pencils and my favorite are a marking pencil called Quilter's Choice by Roxanne's, and they are soft, chalk based pencils that draw on fabric really easily and that's important when we're marking our quilt top. They come in two colors, silver and white, and it just depends on your fabric which one is gonna show up the best. I use the white marking pencil for my quilt top because it was dark and I could see those lines very, very nicely. I'm going to use a handheld pencil sharpener and not an electric pencil sharpener to sharpen these pencils because you want to sharpen it to a short point, not a real long point. They're soft pencils and they'll break easily if you're not careful. And I like them because they're soft, that means they draw on the fabric real easily. The other thing I really like about the pencils is they're completely removable. You don't have to worry about the lines staying on your fabric and they almost wear off the more that you're handling the quilt, but you can use a little eraser, a fabric eraser, to erase the lines off eventually or it's totally water soluble and you can wash the lines off when you're all done with your quilt eventually. We're also going to use some tape and this is to tape our designs in place so they don't move around while we're doing the marking. And we also need our quilt top all ready for the marking. All pressed and ready to go. And we need to have the designs that we prepared. We need our small scale drawing so that we can always refer back to that for placement of our quilting. We want our rulers handy and we want our template plastic and circle template ready to go. And you'll need a light box and if you don't have a light box, you can use a glass table top with a light underneath it or simply place your designs on a window and trace from there. For basting, you're going to need backing and batting. My favorite batting is a batting called Hobbs Heirloom. It's an 80/20 blend and it works beautifully for the Amish style quilts that I'm making. You'll need your backing and batting cut a couple inches bigger than your quilt top on all sides. And for my quilt, that meant I need my backing and batting 38 inches by 40 inches. We'll need T-pins and masking tape to secure our backing for the basting process. We'll need a tape measurer so that we can measure and make sure that our top is evenly laid out. We'll need safety pins. I like to use safety pins for basting and I use size one. And you can use the straight or the curved. The curved are really nice. They're my favorite. I'm going to use a Kwik Klip to close my

pins. And finally, I need to do a little thread basting on the outside edge and I'll need a needle, a thimble, some thread, and some small scissors

## Quilt Marking

### Tracing feathers and cables with a lightbox

- I'm gonna show you how to use the light box to mark your feather on your quilt top. What I've done is I've taped the pattern to my light box, using that removable tape. I've also drawn some horizontal and vertical guidelines that I can position my quilt so it's perfectly centered. And one of the really important places to have it centered from is this center cross, and I've darkened that in a little bit. I also darkened in a little bit the vertical and horizontal guidelines. And, you might notice that I've added a circle on the outside of my feather as kind of a frame, and I did that using the compass just like we did the center spines. So, that is an important part of my little feather design. So, I've got everything positioned perfectly. I'm gonna lay my quilt top on top of my pattern. And I'm going to use those positioning marks, and it's really nice because our piecing is the center of this square. The horizontal line I darkened, I'm positioning right here. I'm positioning my cross in the center, and my vertical line, I'm positioning that. Now, what you might realize is that it's a little hard to see, even with a light box, 'cause my fabric is very dark. But I can see it for the marking. We're in a bright studio, which makes it a little bit more tricky, but I can really see those lines very clearly and you'd be able to see this in your own home studio very nicely. I'm going to get my Quilter's Choice marking pencil, and again, I like the white because I can really see those lines on this dark fabric. I've already marked that outer circle as another way of making sure I've got things positioned perfectly. And I'm going to start in the very center with a small wreath. And I always mark the center spine first, just like we did in drawing the feather. So I'm gonna take my pencil and I'm gonna draw... ..my center spine. And right now, I'm working on just half of this because it's really easy for me to have that positioned perfectly. When I'm all done with that half I'll turn this all around and I'll mark the other half. I've got my center spine marked, and now I'm going to draw my feathers. And it's just a matter of tracing my feathers from the drawing that I did, and because you're getting really good at drawing that basic feather unit, it's gonna be really easy for you just to repeat that shape over and over again. Even if you don't draw it exactly to the pattern, they're still gonna look like beautiful feathers. You might notice too that I'm kinda holding the fabric close to my pencil, and that way the fabric doesn't move around. Alright, I've got the outer one drawn, and now I'm gonna come in and do the inside feathers. And I'm gonna start with this one right here. It's very natural to draw these feathers and it becomes easier and easier the more that you do this to make beautiful feathers on your quilt. I'm just gonna complete my small feathered wreath on the right side, and then I'm gonna continue with the middle feathered wreath, doing the center spine first, the feathers on either side, and then I'll do the large feathered wreath in the same format. Once I'm done with the feathers on the right side, I'm going to turn my quilt top 180 degrees, reposition it perfectly, and finish the feathered wreaths on my whole quilt top. Another design that we are gonna use our light box for is our cable. And I'm going to bring my cable pattern to my light box, you can see I've turned my light box to orient it better for my cable design. I am going to use my tape to tape it in place. This is important, 'cause you don't want this design to shift as you're marking, it could be quite a problem. So I'm taping it down really good, so it's not gonna shift at all. And we're gonna mark the cable in portions, because my light box isn't as long as the cable. Once I have it positioned perfectly, I'm

gonna bring my quilt top and I'm gonna find the spot that is perfect to begin marking my cable. Now, my border is six inches wide, and I'm only using a four inch cable. What I'm going to do is I'm gonna look at my small-scale drawing, I'm going to note that I have a two inch border at the bottom, that I'm gonna use when I get to the angles with the ruler work. So, what I have done is I have drawn that two inch line, and I'm using that to position my piece along this line. And it's very, very easy to line this up. This is gonna just lay nice and flat, and I wanna make sure it's in exactly the right spot at this edge. And I'm gonna just lift this up a little bit, and it's perfectly lined up. So I'm gonna get my marking pencil, and I am going to start marking my cable. The one thing I would suggest with a cable is that you keep some kind of order to the strands that you're marking. So I tend to start at the top. I'm gonna do strand number one, and I just real carefully hold the fabric as I'm marking. And I'm going to go as far as I can, as far as I can see this line easily, and maybe to about right there. And then I'm gonna follow my line back and I'm going to do strand number two. And I'm carefully marking, really pretty easy to do. I know a lot of people think marking is hard to do. It is not hard at all, it just takes a lot of time. And you just need to allow yourself the time to be able to do a great job. So now I'm on strand number three. And sometimes things shift a little bit, I just had to move that slightly to get it back down. And now I'm gonna come back, and I'm gonna do strand number four. So I have one side of my cable positioned perfectly and drawn. And now I'm gonna follow my line back and I'm gonna start on the bottom strands. There's one, two. Three, four of these and I'm gonna start on strand number one and so on. (pattern paper crinkling) And I follow back so I'm right on track. It's easy to get a little confused when you're doing all these multiple strands, so that's why I keep track of this by always following back to where I started. And I'm a little confused right now, so let me get back on track here. So there is my strand one, two, and now I'm going back on strand number three and I'm back in line. So don't rush, just kinda sit back, take your time, and, oh, it's coming along beautifully now. Almost done with strand number three, and now again, following really carefully along that line, and I'm able to start back again. (pencil sketching) And I have two of my shapes done, and that's about as far as I can get without now repositioning this, moving the quilt down, repositioning again on this section of the quilt where the light box is. But I think you can see it looks beautiful and it's really easy to do.

#### Drawing feathers free-hand

- Another way to mark feathers is draw them freehand directly on your quilt top, and we made some paper patterns to be able to have a guide for the center spine, and these were made out of the heavy weight paper, so it's really easy to draw along the edge, and I've made those horizontal and vertical guidelines so it's really easy to line them up on my quilt top. Now we've already done the center feather, with the tracing, with the life-box method, so we're not going to do that one, but I'm going to position my spine circle for the middle feathered reef, and get it perfectly positioned, and then if you want to use a little tape, if it will help it not shift around a little bit when you're drawing the spine. So again we always start with the center spine, we're gonna pull our marking pencil in again, I've sharpened it I like to have sharp marking pencils, and I'm going to, oops, I'm a little bit off here, let's get it moved up just a tad, and I can take the vertical and horizontal lines and line them up with the piecing. I can bring a ruler in, and that's helpful also to get that lined up just perfectly, so that way looks good, and now I'm going to position, oh that's much better, we'll bring it up just a little bit, and I think I've got it right on now, so I'm going to take that tape so that doesn't shift at all. And now I'm going to just take my pencil, and real carefully draw right along the edge of that paper. And I need to move my tape here a little bit because it's in my way, there we go. And

I've done this side, so take that out, oh see how you can see that just beautifully, and then I'm going to take the next size center spine, and this one's easier, because these lines touch that piecing, so it's really easy for me to get that position perfectly, and then I'm going to draw my next center spine. When we draw freehand, the only thing we need a pattern for are the center spines, and what we're gonna do then, is we're gonna draw these feathers, just as if we were drawing them on paper when we originally learned how to do this. And this is actually my favorite way to do this because I've become very comfortable with that basic feather unit. I have a picture of a feather to look at always, so that I know exactly what direction the feathers are going, and remember in designing, I like to draw the feathers clockwise, I'm going to do the same thing when I'm drawing on fabric. Let's try a few. So basic feather unit, and I'm gonna do a few on the outside and then I'm going to come in and do a few on the inside. And you can see that it is pretty easy to draw on fabric, with these pencils, the pencils just kind of glide along. I'm stopping every once in a while to make sure the height isn't getting too high or too low, and remember we're on intermediate feathers because, we are now drawing them sideways, we'll eventually be drawing them upside down, but we are feather ambidextrous now, we can do this in any direction, and I'm feeling like my pencil is getting a little dull, and I already have a second one sharpened, so I'm just going to go right over to that. Again just like when you were learning to draw these on paper, take your time, go slow, don't rush and you'll get a much better result. Basic feather unit, just repeat it over and over again. And I'm half way around the center wreath, and I can either continue on the other side or if you're more comfortable drawing from the right, again you could turn this 180 degrees and you could draw it from that orientation. Once I'm done with the middle feathered wreath, then I'm going to go out to the large third feathered wreath and do exactly the same thing, so it's really easy, it's very relaxing, I think, to draw your own feathers freehand on the quilt.

#### Cross-hatching and ruler work

- Now it's time to use our rulers to create different designs on our quilt top and I'm gonna start with the crosshatch grid. And again, I always like to reference my original small scale drawing to make sure I understand exactly where I'm gonna put these lines on my quilt. And I had decided that I was gonna break into these piecing lines and I want to draw those lines that I know what the crosshatching is gonna stay within, so I'm gonna bring my big ruler and that was an inch and a half from this line, so I'm gonna find my inch and a half on my ruler and these rulers are really great because it's really easy to find the increments and you can get everything very straight and true by using the horizontal lines and the vertical lines. So I found my one and a half inch line and I've lined up the horizontal line so that it's straight on and I'm gonna mark that line. And so now I have this area that I'm gonna do my crosshatch grid. And the first lines I'm gonna draw are in this direction, so from this corner to this corner, and I'm gonna take my ruler and I'm gonna lay it along the diagonal and I'm gonna be careful how I position this. This is the first line so you want it to be perfect. And I'm gonna draw right along the edge of the ruler and I go right up to that feather, right up to that little line on the outside of the feather. And I'm gonna find on my ruler now three-quarters of an inch 'cause we had determined when I was doing my designing that three-quarter inch grid was what was gonna look great on this quilt, and so I'm gonna move my ruler and I'm finding the three-quarters and I'm gonna take it all the way down, make sure it's lined up perfectly and it's always measure twice, mark once, so really think about that. That's three-quarters, that's exactly what I want. And I'm gonna continue marking in this direction. Measure twice, that's three-quarters of an inch. And I'm gonna continue on. And mark pretty dark on this so that you really can line these

up. It's pretty easy to see on the navy fabric, but my gray fabric is a little hard to see the marks, so I'm marking that white pencil really dark. And I'm on my last one in this direction. And now I'm gonna use the other side of the ruler and I'm gonna come back to this diagonal and I'm gonna do my three-quarters inch on this side, really lining it up carefully. Remember to always take your time. Don't rush through this. You want to be accurate and you want your lines to be visible. I'm almost done with these. Got just a couple more to mark. And now I have the lines in one direction and I'm gonna turn the ruler the opposite direction and this is what is making my crosshatch grid. I'm lining up from point to point and I'm gonna mark my next line. So really, really easy to do. But just pay attention. So three-quarters now, I'm up here. And I've got that one, looks just about right. You might want to stop and sharpen your pencil about this point and I already have one that's already sharpened, so I'm gonna use that one now. And I'm gonna continue. Not hard to do at all. Just be accurate. And now we're gonna take the other side of the ruler and I'm gonna come along this diagonal, just like that. And I'm taking my time, getting that positioned perfectly. Always looking at that three-quarters inch. And one more little short line. And I have my crosshatch grid marked on this corner, and you'll just repeat that for the next three corners and you'll have your crosshatching done. Now we're gonna mark our rays and these are in this three inch by 20 inch border, so I'm looking at my small scale drawing to reference the correct area on my quilt. And I also have the drawing that I did when we were designing to help me remember the size that I'm working in. And we had talked about using the measurement of  $1\frac{7}{8}$  and so I'm gonna mark that on my littler border area here. And I'm gonna use a little bit smaller ruler instead of that bigger ruler that we needed for the longer lines, these are gonna be just short lines. And I like this little ruler for that. And so what I am going to do is I'm going to just put my little tick marks at  $1\frac{7}{8}$  along this edge and I'm gonna do it all the way down and then I'm gonna draw those lines on my border, so here is my first one and then I'm gonna bring it down and I'm gonna do my next line. And I will do that on, all the way down. And once I get that done, I'm gonna do those reference points for the rays. And what I had determined was that I would take this three inch measurement and I would just make little tick marks at one inch on the left side and at the top I would center this. We're a little bit smaller than three, but I'm gonna just kinda center it so that I get those one inch increments at this point, then I'm gonna take this ruler and I'm gonna draw from point to point on the diagonal, that's the first ray that I mark, and then I'm gonna keep it centered, keep this ruler right at this bottom right corner and I'm just gonna swing the ruler up so that I'm oriented to that tick mark and I'm gonna swing the ruler up so I'm oriented at that tick mark, and then I'm gonna do the same thing on this side. And it's really, really easy to mark the rays on this little border here. And then I'm gonna continue that all the way down till I get all of the rays marked on this three inch border. The next border that we can work on for our angles is the one right next to it and this is the one that we do the arrows. And this is in a two inch area. And if I need to kind of reinforce what I'm doing, I can pull my drawing back and I can say, oh yes, that is exactly what's gonna go there. Our, in the two inch area, and I'm gonna mark one inch increments and I'm gonna take, this ruler is really easy to do this because it has just a really well designated one inch area by two inch. So I'm gonna just take my ruler and I'm gonna go right along here and mark up an inch at a time. Now if I'm really careful and I'm thinking about it, to save a little bit of time, I'm gonna mark the center of that, so that's two inches, it's at that one inch mark. And I should do it for this one too. And I'm gonna go all the way up, doing the same thing, making these little marks. And we'll do a couple more here. Once I get that marked like this, then I'm going to draw the arrows. And I actually like to look at these drawings again, 'cause which directions do those arrows go? It's really easy to get confused at this point. So I'm looking, they're

pointing down. And I'm reinforcing that by looking at my drawings. And this is easy, again, to do. You're just gonna find the corner and your little tick mark. And I'm gonna go all the way up the left side and I'm gonna turn my ruler and I'm gonna come down the right side. So ruler work it's just very, very easy to do. You just want to measure carefully is the important part of that. So here's my arrows. It's a really great start on those arrows. I would just complete them all the way up on that border. And then the last thing I'm gonna do with ruler work is this outer border, which is about an inch wide and I'm gonna do one inch increments and we're gonna do that little sawtooth, remember, in the quilting. It's not gonna be a pieced area. And I am going to have this inch area already designated, so our cable was four inches, that's marked on here. I've got my one inch area, and always on the edge of the quilt there's a quarter inch of seam allowance that your binding will go on, so I've actually drawn the line for that. We're gonna use the same small ruler and we are going to mark one inch increments. Pretty easy to do. And we're gonna go all the way up this side with our one inch increments. And the next thing that we want to do is we want to draw the little diagonal lines. And again, I want to look at my drawing to make sure I'm drawing them in the correct orientation. And on this one we're gonna draw them in this direction, from point to point on this diagonal. And I'm gonna just lay my ruler, and again, ready for a sharp pencil, and I'm gonna just continue drawing this. Easy, easy to do. And we're gonna continue that up this whole side. We've used rulers to create very interesting ideas for the quilting on our quilt top, from crosshatching, to rays, to arrows, and I think you can use this in a variety of ways on your quilt top.

#### Two ways to trace scallops

- The final design we're gonna mark on our quilt top are the scallops. I'm going to again look at my small scale drawing and I'm gonna remind myself of the size that we're working within. It is a seven inch area. I am going to use one inch scallops, one inch circles. So I've got the area right here that I'm going to mark these scallops. I'm gonna take my small ruler and I am going to put my little tick marks at one inch along this edge. So this is in that seven inch area and I've got my one inch tick marks. I'm gonna use my circle template first to draw my half circles of my scallops. I have my little one inch mark designated. Again there's those little tick marks that are on the horizontal line and tick marks on the vertical line. I'm gonna take my little tick marks and I'm going to line them up with my one inch area. I'm gonna start drawing my half circles. I'm just gonna move right along with this first row. What I'm doing is drawing on the inside of this circle. I'm trying to stay really close to the edge of the template so I get the perfect half circle. All the way down. We're almost there. Paying attention to where to stop, don't go too far. Then I'm gonna come back to the left and I'm gonna take my one inch circle and I'm gonna line up those horizontal tick marks and I'm gonna look at the vertical tick mark down here that's gonna line up with my mark right here. So everything stays perfectly even. I'm gonna come along. Easy to do but again, you wanna take your time and make sure everything is lined up perfectly. I feel like my pencil's getting a little dull again so I'm gonna grab a sharp pencil. Oh that's much better. I'm gonna complete my second row. All the way down. Now on the edges, you will get kind of half scallops. I need to complete the one down here. I'm gonna continue, if I'm using the circle template, I'm gonna continue until this whole area is filled with the little scallops. Another way to do this is with our template plastic pattern that we made of the circle, the one inch circle, and then the little lines indicating our horizontal and vertical positioning. And I'm going to just take this and I'm gonna line it up. Just like that. Same concept. Now we're drawing on the outside of our template plastic. I'm just gonna draw my little half circles all the way down lining up the little vertical and horizontal lines. Oh that's great. I really like doing it this way

with the template plastic circle because you're drawing on the outside of the plastic and for me it just seems a little bit easier to get things positioned. But either way is fine. We're just gonna continue until we get the whole area filled with our little scallops. Continue marking the remaining scallops in this area and then complete the other three areas and you will be done marking your quilt top. Remember this process of marking a quilt top takes a while to do. I think this quilt top took me about three to four hours to completely mark. So just take your time, enjoy what you're doing. You're going to have beautiful results with a just beautifully marked quilt top. We've got feathers, cables, straight line ruler work with grids and angles and arrows. Then finishing off with the scallops. You'll end up with a wonderful quilt top.

## Basting

### How to baste your quilt

- It's time to baste our quilt layers together and we start that process by laying our backing down on a hard surface if you have it. On bigger quilts sometimes I do this on the floor with carpeting and it works fine also. I'm going to lay this out evenly. I am going to use tape, masking tape to tape this to the surface so that it doesn't shift or move as I'm doing the basting. I usually put the tape, oh, about every maybe four or five inches. It doesn't have to be super close together, but it's just a way to keep this backing so that it doesn't move around. If I were on a carpeted floor, I actually use T pins to do the same thing. I'm gonna work and now I'm gonna do the opposite side. You don't want to stretch this so that it's really tight or taut, you just want it to lay smooth so there's no fullness trapped in. Almost there, just a couple more pieces. That looks really smooth. At home I would be working with this on the whole quilt top. We're just showing you half of it, because it fits into this area very nicely. The next thing I'm gonna do is I'm gonna bring my batting, and I'm gonna position that. Remember our batting and backing is a couple inches bigger than the quilt top. It doesn't have to be a perfect measurement, it just needs to be a couple inches bigger on all sides. I'm smoothing this so that it's gonna lay nice and flat. See how great that looks? Really nice and smooth. Now I'm ready to bring my quilt top over the batting. That looks great. I want to smooth my quilt top very carefully. You don't want to distort anything. You don't want to pull so much that you're distorted the piecing at all. I like to smooth, what we call kind of on the straights of the grain, not on the bias or on the angle, 'cause that can pull and distort things. We want to always go in this direction and in this direction. Coming from the center down. This is looking great. Once the quilt top is smoothed and you think it's even, I do one last step. I take my long tape, and I'm gonna do a little bit of measuring. That looks like it's about 34 and a half which is perfect. I'm gonna to come up and I'm gonna do this in. Oh, perfect again! Perfect this way. On the actual quilt, if I was doing the whole thing, I'd measure it in the opposite direction, but I'm actually gonna do a little measuring from the middle and I'm just gonna see how I'm doing here. See if it looks like it's pretty accurate. I think I am right on. I'm ready to start putting my safety pins in. I'm going to use my size one safety pins. I just kind of throw a whole bunch of them down. Scatter them all over. I like to do my first row of pinning from the center towards me, so in a vertical line from the center. I'm gonna start with my first pin. I like to pin about every three inches. I've learned from experience, that for me three inches is about the size of my four fingers and I don't have to have a ruler out then I can just use my fingers to get a nice even placement of my pins. You might notice that I'm not closing my pins as I go. I'm gonna put all the pins in and then I will close them when I'm all done with that, because you get a little

distortion if you close the pins as you go. We don't want that to happen. I have my vertical row of pins. Now I'm going to do the same thing on the horizontal row. I'm gonna put pins about every three inches. Make sure you're going through all of those layers. You can kinda feel the pins as it kinda hits that surface. That looks good. Then I'll do the same thing on the opposite side about every three inches. Going through all of the layers. Then I'm gonna come back and I'm gonna put pins in a quadrant at a time. I'm gonna start on this quadrant. Again, I'm just gonna put pins every three inches in vertical rows. Get some pins a little closer to me. Some people will say that pin basting is their least favorite part of the quilting process. It is, just takes the time it takes. It's one of those things you just want to realize it's so important in the steps of what you're doing making a quilt to have a well basted quilt is going to make your quilt in the end just perfect. So take your time. Know how important it is to do a really good job with this pinning. Scatter some more pins over here. So about every three inches. If you don't put the pins close enough, things might shift as you're doing the machine quilting at the home sewing machine. It's always better to put a few more pins in than not enough. For demonstration, I'm only putting the pins in in one quadrant, but you would wanna go ahead and finish putting your pins in the whole quilt and then you can go back and close the pins. What I like to use is this little quick clip. It's very, very easy and quick, obviously a quick clip to close the pins. This part of the quick clip lays under the point of the pin. Then you just pull the head of the pin over it and close it. Then we go on to the next one. This goes under the point and we close the head over it. This goes under the point and you close the head over it. You get really good at doing this very quickly. Once all your pins are closed, the next step is to use a needle and thread and by hand baste the outside edge, so it's nice and secure and tight when we get to the quilting of it along the edge. I want to take my tape off. Just carefully pull that away. Once I get that tape off, can be a little sticky, I'm gonna use my hand sewing needle, I like to match the color thread to the top fabric just in case you don't get all of these threads out eventually they won't ever show. I like to use a thimble when I'm hand sewing. I'm going to put my little thimble on. I'm gonna baste along the quarter inch of my seam allowance. It's just a small basting stitch. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. I wanna pull on the backing, the batting, and the quilt top so that it's really nice and snug, that you don't trap any fullness along that edge. I think this is a really important step to having everything really secure when you're doing the quilting along the edge. I prefer to do this by hand, because I have a little bit more control and accuracy to have that edge be nice and snug. It does take a little bit of time, but it's gonna be a great result. Continue hand basting all four sides of your quilt, and you are done with the basting process and we are ready for quilting, which is my favorite part and I'm so I'm so excited to machine quilt this quilt.

### **Chapter 3 - Machine Quilting Like a Pro**

#### Overview

- In our final class we're going to learn how to machine quilt your project. We're going to start with straight lines with a walking foot. And then we'll move on to free motion quilting. And we will stitch our feathers, our cables, our scallops, and we'll do straight line work also with our free motion quilting. Machine quilting is my favorite part of the whole process and I'm so excited to share with you my techniques. (light music)

#### Materials

- The materials we need for machine quilting, of course we need a sewing machine and it's a good idea to have it serviced and oiled and ready to go. We'll need a fresh sewing machine needle, I like



sharp needles and the size I'm using is a 70/10 and that's determined by the weight of the thread that I'm using. I need a walking foot attachment and this is for straight lines to anchor your quilt. I'm going to use my darning foot and I like the open toe version. A straight stitch throat plate versus a zig-zag throat plate for better stitch quality in machine quilting. We need threads to be able to machine quilt and my favorite threads are cotton threads. I like a little bit thinner cotton thread, especially for when we're doing some of the free motion designs where we're doing restitching and you don't see that restitching. I also want to think about the color of the thread I'm using and I used on my project a beautiful orange thread which acts as an overlay of quilting and I'm using a gray thread in the bobbin because that matches the backing fabric. You might want to try other threads, sometimes a more matching color thread is more desirable. I also need some thread snips to help me easily clip my threads at the sewing machine. I use fingers cut off of rubber gloves because they add grippiness to my fingers as I'm trying to move the quilt for free motion quilting. You could also use some gloves that are available that have little grippers on the finger tips, whatever's more comfortable for you. I'm going to have a quilt sandwich, that is the fabrics that are in the quilt top, the same batting and the same backing and I'm going to practice everything before I go to my actual quilt project. I like a container to put my safety pins in as I remove them when I'm stitching. It's always good to have extra lighting. It's really important to be able to see those lines that we've marked on the quilt and of course, we need our basted quilt project ready to go.

## Free-Motion Quilting

### Straight lines using walking foot

- We're going to start with the straight lines using our walking foot. And I've attached my walking foot, I've got my machine threaded, and I want to practice first before I go to the actual quilt to make sure that everything is set up just perfectly. So I'm going to bring my little practice piece in and the straight lines that we're going to do with the walking foot are what I refer to as stitching in the ditch. And in piecing, they are the lines of the piecing and the seam allowances on that quilt top were pressed in one direction, and stitching in the ditch means that we're going to stitch on the lower side of that. And it's almost an invisible stitch, you don't really see it but it's a way to anchor the quilt to start the quilting process. So, I'm going to bring my little practice piece into my machine, what you're going to see is the navy side is where the seam allowances are pressed to, and the gray side is where I'm going to do my stitching, but it's going to be right next to that navy side. And I'm going to put my presser foot down, and I want to always put my bobbin thread to the top of of my quilt piece before I get started because that bobbin thread will get sewn in, and it will be quite a mess. So I'm going to take my needle down and back up. I'm going to lift up on my presser foot and I tug on that top thread and it forces the bobbin thread to come up and I just pull it all the way up to the top. I always want to know where my threads are at all times. So I'm going to hold on to both of those threads as I get started. The other thing we always need to do in machine quilting is secure our starts and stops and I do that by making about eight to ten very small stitches. So what I'm going to do is reduce the stitch length on my sewing machine, I'm using a straight stitch. And I'm going to reduce that stitch length to about ^point five zero, or to about point five ^depending on your machine, what it might say. And I'm going to make those small stitches, then I'm going to bring my stitch length back up to an average size stitch length. And, you know, that's a personal choice. A lot of people use a two point five. I like my stitches a little smaller than average so I'm at about two

point two. And I've got the setting just right. And now I'm just going to make sure that that stitch is going right along, on the gray fabric, right next to the navy fabric. And the walking foot's job is to pull the layers of that quilt through evenly so that you don't get any shifting or movement of that quilt top or the batting. So it's a really nice way to get started because it's just going to feed the layers through perfectly and I'm going to stitch down to the end of this row, and when I'm about a quarter of an inch from where I want to stop, I'm gonna again reduce that stitch length to point five, create about eight or ten little stitches. Bring the quilt towards me a bit, clip those threads with my curve tip scissors, lift up from the back and I'm gonna clip the back thread. And then I'm gonna come back to the top, clip those threads right flush with the fabric. So as you can see, it's almost an invisible stitch. It just kinda tucks into that seam area, but it's going to do a great job of anchoring. I have been successful with my practice piece, and now it's time to go to my quilt project and do those straight lines for anchoring. What you're going to see is my quilt is rolled. I roll my quilt so I can manage it easily at the sewing machine. The biggest issue in machine quilting, when we get to the real quilt project, is managing the bulk of the quilt. So I've got the bigger part of the quilt to the left of my machine, and I've got the smaller area is going to be in the arm of the machine. So even big quilts you can still manage successfully because of this rolling, or sometimes I call it packaging. I'm going to bring the quilt up over my shoulder. I don't want it to drop down in to my lap because even with my walking foot, with regular sewing, it will still pull a little bit, and you won't get even stitching. So I'm going to find the place where I'm going to start this and I got to get a little bit of a thread end here so I can hold on to this. Bring that bobbin thread to the top, so I bring the needle down and back up. I'm going to pull on that thread so I can bring that little tail up, and I've got now both of the threads to manage. I'm going to start now right at that corner. And in this orientation my gray fabric that I'm stitching on is to my left, and the seam allowance side is to my right. Same exact process that we did on the practice piece. I've got my stitches set at those small stitches, so I'm gonna make my eight to ten little stitches for securing. I'm going to bring my stitch length back up to two point two zero, and I'm going to stitch this ditch seam very carefully so that it's placed in the proper spot. And I have to stop every once and a while to kinda re-adjust the quilt, so that it doesn't get kinda out of whack. And I'm just getting that position perfectly. I can see I need to take a pin out. So you don't want to sew over your pins. Carefully remove that pin, and I'm going to continue stitching. (sewing machine hum) And again just managing this quilt so it's going to be nice and evenly fed through the machine. As the quilt is moving away from me, you need to have a surface behind your sewing machine so that it can move smoothly. So I've placed a little mat board so that it's going to be easy to move this. If it was a table cloth or something it would drag and it would be really hard to get smooth stitches. So think about your sewing room set up is important. (sewing machine hum) Straight lines with a walking foot is kinda boring, it's not really exciting but it's really important. So just get in there, do a good job, stay focused on that placement. We're getting there, we're almost to the end. You can see how nicely that's feeding everything. There's no fullness building in front of the foot and that's due to the walking foot, but it's also due to having a well basted quilt. So it's all part of the process, everything is important. And again, when I get to about a quarter of an inch from where I need to stop, I'm going to reduce that stitch length to point five, and I'm going to create those small stitches. Eight to ten little stitches. And I'm going to then clip my threads. And I go to the back, come back up to the front of the quilt, top of the quilt and clip those threads. And in this orientation I have one more row of stitching in the ditch. And it's going to be this row right here. So I'll repeat that same process with that row. Now it's time to do the opposite side. And we just take the quilt away from the machine, turn it 180 degrees and repeat

those two rows. And then we turn the quilt a quarter turn and we do the same two steps on those two sides. And you are done, with the straight lines with the walking foot.

### Free-motion quilting basics

- We're gonna start with free motion quilting now, and I love free motion quilting. It's so much fun and you have so much variety in what you're doing with your quilt. But I have to get my machine set up for this. I've attached my darning foot. I've also put my straight stitch throat plate on. Remember, when you have a straight stitch throat plate, don't ever do a zigzag stitch or your needle will break. So just, you know, be very very careful about that. We're also going to lower the feed dogs, so the feed dogs are gone. You're gonna be moving the quilt to create the stitches. And I also have my little fingertips on. These are cut off of rubber gloves, and they just create a little bit of grippiness, so that I can move the quilt easily, because free motion quilting is all about moving the quilt. And you have to be able to do that very, very easily. We are going to do what I call my basic skills for you to get warmed up. So we're gonna take our little practice piece and we're going to learn the basics of how I secure my threads, and starting and stopping, how I get smooth easy movement of my stitches, and how I am able to get good placement of those stitches also. So it's all about the basics, and it's just good to get warmed up. So I'm gonna start with always bringing the bobbin thread to the top. And this is so important in free motion quilting. I brought the needle down and then back up. I'm gonna lift up on my presser foot and tug on that top thread. Forces the bobbin thread up. And I'm gonna hold onto both of those as I start the stitching. Now, the first thing to think about in free motion quilting is, once the feed dogs are gone, you have to move the quilt to create stitches. And that's-- it's all about movement of that quilt. We also wanna start with those small stitches. So what you're gonna do is you're just gonna move the quilt really slowly to get those little stitches, and then you're gonna move the quilt a little faster to get a more average size stitch. So I'm gonna just start stitching and make those small stitches. And then I'm gonna move the quilt faster to get a more average size stitch length. When I get to a place where I can stop sewing, I'm gonna have the needle always stop in the needle down position. And most machines have the ability to do that, to tell the machine. I'm gonna come in and I'm gonna clip those threads so that they're out of my way. And now I have the freedom to use both of my hands to move the quilt around. So the first thing that goes into the way that stitches are made in free motion quilting is how fast or slow you move the quilt. So movement of the quilt is really important, getting very comfortable moving that quilt in any direction. And I'm just doing a series of wavy lines. You can even go back over your stitching if you want. The other thing that goes into making stitches in free motion quilting is sewing speed. And what that means is my foot on the foot pedal, how fast the needle's moving up and down. You need to have the sewing speed match the movement of the quilt to get even stitches, to get consistent stitches. So I'm gonna just talk about sewing speed for a minute. I don't ever wanna sew super fast. Because if sew this fast, I have to move the quilt so fast to keep up with that, that I get really out of control. But I also never sew super slow, because that gives me really, really awkward stitches. I'm sewing somewhere between medium and medium-high. So movement of the quilt and matching that sewing speed is what's going to give me consistent stitch length. (machine whirring) And sometimes it depends on what you're doing, how fast you're gonna move the quilt and how fast you're gonna sew. What I'm doing here is just kind of random, it's not a marked design. I can move the quilt fairly quickly, so I'm sewing fairly quickly. And in order to stay on a marked design, I have to move the quilt slower, I'm gonna sew slower. So it's a really important concept to learn how to create consistent stitch length. And my little rubber glove fingers are

helping me move the quilt easily. (machine whirring) I also want to think about always keeping my fingers on the quilt while I'm stitching. If I lift my fingers off of the quilt when I'm still sewing, the quilt doesn't know what to do. You are basically the feed dogs, and the quilt will move where you don't want it to move. So anytime I wanna reposition my fingers, I stop sewing, the needle goes down, and then I move my fingers to a better position. Those are what I call my two basic skills that are going to enable you to be successful in free motion quilting. So what they are again is being sure that you are matching the movement of the quilt, your sewing speed to that, and then never lift your fingers off of the quilt while you're sewing. So you will get great, great free motion quilting with that. So once you've kind of warmed up a little bit with thinking about those basic skills, what I wanna talk about next is the feather. And I wanna just show you a more basic feather to get us warmed up for doing our feather. So I'm going to end my stitching here. I'm gonna create those small stitches by moving the quilt slow, I'm going to clip my top thread and I'm gonna just lift the back up again and clip my back thread, and I'm going to just come to this little practice feather that I just drew freehand on my quilt, and I'm gonna talk a little bit about working with the feather and following a marked design. So I'm gonna keep the same thread in, it's the same thread we're using on our projects, so we're kind of testing everything out. I'm going to always start at the top of a feather and work down. So now I'm gonna take, and always bring that bobbin thread to the top, always start with those small stitches, because it's all about building habits in free motion quilting. And even though we're just working on a practice piece, and it doesn't really matter if the stitches are secured, what I want you to do is become, just like it's routine. It's a repetitive thing, you're always gonna secure the stitches when you start and when you end. I'm going to make those small stitches by moving the quilt really slow, and then I'm going to do that center spine. And I'm gonna try to stay right on that line. When I get to the bottom, I'm gonna create those small stitches at the end. I call this path number one on my feather stitching. And I'm gonna clip my threads top and bobbin, and I'm gonna come back to the top and I'm going to do path number two. And path number two is going to be this side of the feather, and this is where feathers are really fun to free motion quilt. Again, it's all about a repeat of doing the same thing over and over again, just like in drawing feathers. We're gonna stitch the feathers in a repeat. So I'm going to start with this first feather, and here's where I want to re-stitch to get to the next feather. And I'm gonna re-stitch to get to the next feather. Remember to stop sewing with the needle down when you wanna move your fingers to a better position. (machine whirring) I'm using a contrasting thread, so I'm really trying to get that re-stitching right on top of the previous one, and that's gonna take practice, so don't worry if it doesn't happen right away. (machine whirring) And once I have the left side done, again make those small stitches by moving the quilt really slowly, clip those threads, and now you're ready to do the opposite side of the feather, which I call path number three. It's done in the exact same format. On your practice piece you will want to check your tension to make sure your top and bobbin threads are even, are meeting evenly. And if they're not, this is the time to make that adjustment. Now I'm gonna come back to the top and I'm gonna do path number two, which is the inside of the feathers. Don't worry if your spine looks a little wobbly, once the feathers come up into that you won't even notice that at all. (machine whirring) Also remember when we were drawing feathers, we wanna draw slowly, take your time, and do a good job. It's the same thing with stitching the feathers. Take your time, go slowly. There's nothing wrong with that. (machine whirring) Now I'm going to end my stitching right there and clip my threads. And then I'm going to come back and I'm gonna do path number three. Always clipping your threads as you go. I'm gonna do this side of the feather. (machine whirring) Once you get going on this it becomes easier and

easier. I'm feeling a little bit more comfortable now that I'm on this side of the feathers, and I'm just starting to relax. And I think the feathers are really looking beautiful. (machine whirring) Again, this is one of the things that I make look pretty easy because I've done a lot of this. Don't worry if your feathers aren't perfect right away. They'll get better and better the more that you practice. (machine whirring) Now I've finished path number three on the right side of this feather. And some people might ask why I wouldn't just continue and do the other side. I would be stitching from the bottom up, and I find I don't get as good results. So I prefer to wait and do that until I have the quilt positioned in the opposite orientation. And from this point, I'm gonna complete the middle feather on the right side and then the large feather on the right side, and then I will turn the quilt 180 degrees and I'll do those three feathers on the opposite side. I have done my three feathered wreaths on one side, and I've turned the quilt 180 degrees, and now I'm going to do the same thing on the opposite side. And an important thing to think about are those small stitches that you're going to use for securing. It's important to make those in kind of an inconspicuous area. I'm going to start a little bit in from where I ended, so they'll be almost a little overlapping stitching. But what's gonna happen is that the other feathers are gonna come in here also, and it's all gonna get kinda blended in and hidden. So let's get started on that. Sometimes I actually take the wheel of the sewing machine and I bring the needle right down to the perfect spot that I'm gonna start, 'cause that's important. You want that to be in exactly the right spot. And I'm gonna do that center spine first. Remember to always stop with the needle down, stop sewing, and then move your hands to a better position. If you feel any resistance of the quilt, if it's caught somewhere, you can't move as freely to go good work, so just stop and kind of readjust the quilt at the machine, and you're good to go again. And I'm getting very close to where I need to do the small stitches at this side, and again I'm gonna overlap them just a little, and create those small stitches on this part. And that's the center spine, my path number one. I'll clip my threads and then I'm gonna come back to the top and I'll do path number two, which is the inside feathers. I'm gonna get adjusted. Oh, let's clip our threads here. And from this point on, it's pretty much the same thing that we've been doing, but again, remember, I want to start right about here, make my small stitches in this kinda inconspicuous overlap area, and then I'm just gonna continue to do my beautiful feathers. (machine whirring) Get things adjusted here a little bit so it's a little easier to move, and I'm good to go. (machine whirring) I'm also getting pretty good at that little re-stitched area on my feather. You know I've done that whole other side with those three wreaths. I'm really starting to get into the groove of free motion quilting. You do kinda get into a zone, and it's just great when that happens. (machine whirring) I've finished my center feathered wreath, and there's a little motif I designed that goes right in the middle of the quilt. And the reason I did that, that I felt I needed that, is we wanna have an even amount of quilting, and it felt like there was too much un-quilted in that center area, it was gonna kinda poof out too much. So I designed that little flower shape. And I'm gonna stitch that right now, they're very, very easy to do. But I didn't wanna do it at first, because everybody's eye goes right to the middle, and if I wasn't stitching perfectly, it might be very noticeable. So I'm gonna do a really good job now that I've warmed up. I'm gonna start right in the center. It's kind of a fun shape, it's like four petals of a flower, and you can keep it continuous by just working your way around one petal. And I'm going to stop right here 'cause I wanna clip those threads. I don't wanna get those caught up in my stitching. So I'll move those out of the way, and I'm just gonna, just kind of circle around. (machine whirring) Phew, I finished that center motif and I think it looks great. I was a little nervous about it, but it's gonna be perfect. And now I'm gonna just complete the rest of my feathers.

### Straight lines with free-motion quilting

- We're gonna do our free motion straight lines now. We did some straight lines with a walking foot. And those were the anchoring type of straight line. And these are straight lines within the quilt top that's easier to do them free motion. And we can do some what I call traveling to get from line to line. And you don't have to start and stop so much. So I think you're gonna enjoy this. It takes a little bit of practice. We're gonna start with our grid. And on my quilted piece, I did some of the straight lines already that separated the grid from the scalloped area. And those are the lines that I'll use to travel with. And I'm going to start with these lines, which are, I guess I would call those the horizontal lines. We'll say that for now. And I'm going to just stitch along. Now what I have found is really important when you're doing straight lines free motion is try not to go too far before you stop and reposition your hands. Because you'll get a little out of whack. So stop every inch or two. Whatever you need to, to keep that movement smooth and even. That's what you want, those straight lines to look straight. As straight as possible. When I get to this line that separates it from the scallops, I'm gonna use this to travel to get to the next of these lines for the free motion stitching. And this is similar to what we would do in feathers. Where we did that little restitched area. So you want to stay right on top of the original stitching. And now I'm going to go right along my straight line. One of the things that can be really helpful is every once in a while, you get a little blind spot when you are doing this kind of multi-directional work. My darning foot is kind of offset a little bit. And right now, I'm having a little bit of a hard time seeing where that straight line is. So I'm just going to tilt the quilt a little bit. And now I can see where that straight line is coming from. So just a little tilt. You don't want to move it very much. And I'm gonna go until I get to this line on this side. And then I'm going to do that traveling right along here. And now I'm to my next line, right here. And remember, these were  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. And I'm just gonna keep on going. One of the things that I get asked a lot is, when I stop to reposition my hands and I start again, sometimes I get a really awkward stitch. And we're going to stop a lot here to reposition our hands so that we have really good control. And how I start again so that I don't get that awkward stitch is I make the first stitch in the same hole that I stopped in. So I make my stitch in the same hole and then I move the quilt. I also think about stopping at intersections of the lines. Because then if you do get a little wobble, there's another line that's gonna cross over it, and you're not gonna notice it as much. I've reached another place where I'm gonna travel. I want to stop here and think about where my line is. And my lines are getting a little bit light. If that happens, and you're really having trouble seeing your mark lines, just remark them again. Just keep your marking pencil right by you. And just draw the line so that you can see it a little bit better. So I'm gonna travel down to right about here. And now it's time to follow the line in this direction. And we're gonna just continue that until we get all of the rows done in that orientation. I've completed all of my what I was calling the horizontal rows. So not it's time to do the vertical rows and create our grid. And we're gonna travel right along the ditch here. And now I'm gonna come and go in this direction. Sometimes, when the first rows that you do those horizontal rows, if they look a little wobbly, once you come back across them with the vertical rows, and this is a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch grid, it hides all of that. It just looks like little squares of the grid. So don't get too concerned about that. And now I'm ready to travel up to my next one. And we're gonna come this direction. You can see how it's becoming a nice little grid work. And you're just gonna continue this for the rest of this corner. And then you've got three more grids to do on the three remaining corners. I'm gonna do my rays that are also straight line work. And I'm just gonna get started and talk a little bit about the order that I'm stitching these. So I did my first ray and now I'm going to stitch in the ditch, doing that traveling to get to the next ray. Clip my threads first. There

we go. And now I'm gonna come to the next ray. Just follow the straight line. On to my next. At this point, I'm gonna use this line that's marked that separates the little ray units. On to my next ray. And my last ray goes right along here, down along this line. But I really want to complete that straight line. So I'm gonna do a little restitching back up. And that separates those little square units. I finished my first ray and you just continue on in that same fashion. I wanted to say that I'm using contrasting thread for this straight line work free motion. Which is very, very obvious if you're off a little bit of the line. And if you're just new to this, maybe a more matching color thread would be advisable. And you wouldn't be quite so nervous about doing the straight lines. But I also think it's okay if they're not perfectly straight. I think that when I was looking at mine to begin with, they looked a little off. But when I was done, it was beautiful. So I think we need to relax a little bit and just kind of enjoy what we're doing. I'm gonna do the next straight line work which are my little arrows. And these are really great, cause it's shorter straight lines. So it's gonna be a little bit easier. I'm gonna do this in two paths. Horizontal line, and then I'm gonna do the diagonal. And you're just gonna do this little back and forth on one side. And I'm gonna clip my threads. Nice to clip your threads because my left hand is holding those threads and it makes it harder for me to control moving the quilt. And this is all about controlling the movement of the quilt. I'm gonna end my stitching, clip my threads. And I'm gonna come back and do my other side. Which would be considered my path number two on my arrows. And I think these are really fun to do. I think it's those little short lines. Really pretty easy to get straight lines as you do your free motion work. Just make sure you touch at the center where the point of that arrow is. You don't want to leave a little gap there. You want to complete that. We have one more area using straight lines. And it's that little sawtooth area. And it's exactly the same as what we just did on the arrows. It's just one side of them. And it's just a little back and forth on one side. And you've got all your straight line work done.

#### Free-Motion quilting scallops

- Now we're gonna do the scallops, and this is probably the easiest one to do on this whole quilt project, and it's really, really fun to do, just a series of little half circles. (sewing machine stitching) You can do one scallop at a time and reposition your hands and the quilt. Sometimes you can get two or three done at a time. (sewing machine stitching) I started with the bottom row, and then I'm just gonna keep building on top of that. You could go backwards. We have done some of that, but for me it's so much easier to see that line. I'm gonna stop, clip my threads, come back to the top, do the next row of scallops. I think I just get really good results that way. It's such an easy pattern when you start at the top and work down. So now I'm on my next row. (sewing machine stitching) Almost done with my second row. It's getting a little bit easier for me. You saw I did a couple of the little half circles in a row. And now I'm done with my second row, and I'm just gonna come back to the top, and I'm gonna complete this area of scallops and then I've got three more of those areas to do.

#### Free-motion quilting cables

- We're gonna stitch our cables now and it's pretty much the same thing that I've been talking about with some of the other motifs, we're gonna do a number of paths to complete the cable. And our cable has those three strands, it's actually gonna take us eight paths to complete our cable. And we're gonna work from the top of the quilt to the bottom and you are going to do that whole segment. I'm gonna just do a little bit of this, so that you can see this. On path number one at the top of the cable and I'm gonna stitch all the way down this one row. So path number one. Then I'll

come back and do path number two, path number three, and so on. And on the actual quilt you would do the whole length of that border. And I'm gonna start with my small stitches. I think it's really nice that the cable is the last thing that we're doing on this project, because you've warmed up and you've gotten really comfortable with free motion quilting. And I would say the one thing about a cable is that it's got these really smooth curves, sort of gradual curves, and if you wobble on those they're a little bit more noticeable, so you really wanna take care to have smooth movement of the quilt. And I take my time, I need to make sure I can move this easily, so I'm adjusting the quilt a little bit, and now I'm good to go again. I'm gonna do just one segment here, I'm gonna end my stitching right here, but you would wanna complete this whole path number one. Clip my threads from the first path and I'm gonna start one path number two. Just nice, smooth movement. Stop often to reposition your hands. I'm often asked where I look when I am stitching. Do I look at the needle moving up and down? Do I look an inch ahead at the marked line? And I actually have a very specific spot that I try to look at. It's kind of like driving a car, you don't look at the steering wheel you're holding onto, you kind of look at the road ahead of you, but I don't get too far ahead. And actually if I were to just look kind of on the inside of this darning foot, maybe two stitches ahead, that's, I think, the perfect place to look. And most of the time when I say this in class I do some pretty good stitching, so we'll see how I do. And I've completed path number two. And I did pretty good after I made that comment about where I'm looking, so I think that is really helpful. Come back and do path number three. My line is right there and I'm looking kind of right at the edge of that darning foot I have a really good idea of where to move that needle. Oh, that's really good. And I've completed path number three. I'm getting some nice, smooth stitching. Remember to think about consistency of your stitch length. If you are getting really little stitches, and that happens sometimes when you're following a marked line, you're sewing too fast for the movement of the quilt. Just back off on your foot pedal a little bit, sew a little bit slower. Some machines have speed dials, you could slow that speed dial, so you're not allowed to sew really fast. So if you're getting really little stitches you're sewing too fast. I've completed my four paths of the top part of the cable and now it's time to do the rest of that cable. So that would be considered path number five. As I was doing this one my quilt got kind of tucked down underneath the sewing machine, the tray of the sewing machine, and I should have stopped and reorganized it, but I forgot to do that, and I got some sort of awkward stitches. I have a really easy way to take the stitching out and kind of retry that area. So I'm gonna show you how I do that. All I really need to take out is this little area right here. You can see there's some really big stitches and it got a little wobbly. And I do that by using these little curved tip scissors that I've been using to show you how I clip my threads. And I'm gonna take right in this area where there's a big stitch and I'm just gonna clip that and I kind of pick out a couple stitches on either side. And from the back I'm gonna clip the bobbin thread in that area, so I just find the bobbin thread on the back and I carefully clip that. Coming back to the top, grab ahold of some of that top thread, and can you see how that gray bobbin thread is popping up? And I'm just gonna clip those threads. And I pull and clip and you can take out stitching really fast. In fact, at one point I thought this pretty easy to do and I started taking everything out, and you don't need to do that. Only if it's really, really obvious that you've had some big wobbles. Don't get in the habit of doing this all the time. But I'm gonna take it out right to where that intersection of the lines are, 'cause that's where I'm gonna make my small stitches to secure everything again. So I clean that area up, get all those little threads out of there. And I'm gonna do this on this side now, just to again, where that little intersection of lines are. I don't have to go very far on this side, so you can really get those going fast and sometimes you take out more than you want. Because I want things to look good on



the top and on the back on my quilt I'm gonna just flip this over, I'm gonna clean the back area up a little bit too, so I don't want lots of little threads kind of hanging out everywhere. So I'm gonna clip, clip on this side. Start my stitching two stitches into the previous area. And my small stitches will secure the original stitching and it will secure the new stitching. And sometimes I just bring the needle down and back up to bring that thread up real carefully, so it's in exactly the right place. And now make my small stitches. And I'm gonna get myself situated, because I don't want that quilt to get tucked under the tray table again. I wanna be able to move this really smoothly. Oh, I think that's much, much better. And then on this side I'm gonna make those small stitches again on top of this stitching. And let's see how I did. Oh, it's so much better. I'm so glad I did that. It really, really turned out nice. And I'm gonna complete the remaining paths of that cable and have a beautiful border cable on my quilt.

## Finishing Your Quilt

### Finishing touches

- I've finished the quilting on my quilt, and I think it just looks so beautiful. I'm so happy with my Amish-inspired quilt project. I do need to add a binding, and I use a 2 1/2" wide double binding. And the fabric I selected for my binding is a little different than what you might see on a typical Amish quilt. It's a print, it's actual a little stripe, and I just thought it made it a little more innovative to use this stripe with all the colors in the actual quilt top. I also want to add a sleeve to the back of my quilt for hanging, cause this is a quilt I will probably hang on the wall. And I use the same fabric as my backing. Depending on the size of your quilt will determine the size you make your sleeve, but mine, I think is about a four inch wide sleeve, so I've added that. And then, we always want to finish with a label on the back of our quilt, because we want to document our quilt. It's really important to have a history with our quilt. I used the same fabric from my quilt top, the gray fabric, and I want to use a permanent type of a marker. If the quilt has a name, I like to name my quilts, and this one's called "Simple Star." I put that name on the label. The size of the quilt, finished, is 34" x 36". I always wanna have my name, and at least, where I'm from, Ann Arbor, Michigan. And the date that the piece was completed, so November of 2015. I also like to add other information about the quilt, like perhaps the fabric that you've used, the type of thread you've used, maybe the batting. And for mine, I wrote on the back of the label that it was for a Creative Bug Work-Along Class. We have this beautiful complete quilt, and we've learned so much in this class. We started with design concepts, for creating your own original motifs. We learned how to mark those on our quilt top with easy marking pencils, and just easy concepts to get that done. And then we learned how to do beautiful machine quilting, straight lines with a walking foot, and free motion quilting, to create our feathers, our straight line work, scallops, and we finished with a cable. And I couldn't be happier with this project. I think it is innovative. it breaks some of the rules. Don't be afraid to do that. And I hope you will enjoy making your own innovative Amish project.