

# God the Knitter

(Sermon by Cheryl Williams, preached at Footscray Baptist on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – Psalm 139, esp. vv 13-14)

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When I was about 7 years old, I was causing havoc for my mother and grandmother, so my grandfather took me aside, sat me on the couch and with some needles and wool taught me to knit. He had taught his two daughters to knit when they were a similar age but with nails and string. Both of them were fantastic knitters and used to knit for a craft shop. I have been knitting ever since that day on the couch. I knitted my first jumper as a teenager, my grandmother bought the wool, and I knitted a jumper with cables - I was very pleased with myself and wore it for years. The photos on the screen are more recent items I have knitted, nowadays I really only do kids toys and clothes. I have made countless Banana's in Pyjamas, I do one for every new baby I hear about.

I love it, I find it relaxing. Now I am not going to give you a knitting lesson but let me share with you some of what is happening when you are knitting.

First, you choose what you want to make, then find a pattern, the right size needles and yarn. The yarn might be chunky or very fine, it might have different textures or variegated colours. All very deliberate choices. Then you begin.

You take the wool in your hands and place it upon the needle and begin to create stitch by stitch. There are only two stitches in knitting, plain and purl and everything is created from them - it is how you use them, twist them, increase and decrease them that forms the pattern and garment. You can change colours and create fair isle patterns, or you can change the order of your stitches and create Aran patterns. You hold the garment in our hands as you continue to knit and as the garment grows.

Every stitch in a knitted item is done stitch by stitch, you can't skip or you will end up with a hole. You handle every stitch individually, it takes time and when you are just beginning you must be patient. You hold it all in your hands, needles and yarn and work stitch by stitch. Knitting is much slower than crocheting.

Row by row the garment grows and then you can shape it in all kinds of ways.

Tension is important, consistent tension is important or the garment will pucker and be quite uneven.

Sometimes you make mistakes, but they can be fixed, if you drop a stitch you can pick it up. Or if the mistake is too far back you simply unravel what you have done and begin again. If you leave a dropped stitch the whole garment will eventually unravel.

To me the whole experience is joyful. I no longer knit for myself, rather I knit to give times away. I love the creating process. I have been knitting little dolls lately, just one simple pattern but depending on the colours I use and how I sew it up they can become little Paddington bears or cats or clowns or Winnie the Pooh. The challenge of inventing new designs is fantastic. Many years ago, I designed a child's jumper which was one of twenty featured in a national craft magazine and the jumper I had knitted and submitted was given to a child's charity, so that child had a 'one-off designer' jumper. I am in my happy place when I am knitting.

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You knit me together says the Psalmist when describing God.

David in the Psalm we have before us today, explores how intimately he thinks God knows him, flaws and all, and as we know David had plenty of flaws! David a shepherd boy who fights the giant Goliath, has many wives and also an affair with one of his army generals who is then killed, a poet and plays the harp.

In this Psalm he is reflecting on the God he has come to know. A God who knows him completely and holds him fast. A God who forms him, knits him together, who has fearfully and wonderfully made him.

I want to explore this image this morning. Of course, the bible is full of images of God, none of which capture the essence of God completely, but all of which, give us a glimpse of this God who has formed us all.

God the knitter, I know this sounds like an odd way of describing God, but stay with me. The bible speaks of God creating in this way a few times - God creates garments for a naked Adam and Eve. Job describes God as the one who knits him together with bones and sinews (Job 8:11-12).

Paul in Ephesians 4:16 talks about the body of Christ being knit together, *16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

As I suggested before knitting is a deliberate act. It is creative, joyful, relaxing. It takes time and care to get it right. It takes practice to get good at it. It can be challenging and when a flaw is discovered you might have to begin again, but it can be transformed. Every garment is different. You hold the entire creation in your hands as you create. The final creation is unique, different to every other one. The final item has been created lovingly.

God knits us together, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The psalmist invites us to think about ourselves as being knitted together by God - loving held in God's hands as we are created. Bringing both joy to the creator and that which is created. Each of us unique, different shapes and colours and textures. Each known intimately by the creator who has worked every stitch, who has fixed up the flaws and who has delighted in watching the growth of the item. Each of us deliberately created by God, created with purpose. Each of us transformed from simple items into something of beauty. God lavishes time on each of us as he lovingly creates us. God holds us in his hands as he carefully, lovingly stitches us together, stitch by stitch.

Knitting takes dexterity, intentionality, time, creativity and patience. Knitting is an intimate act.

God from the beginning has been knitting us together, indeed has been knitting the entire world together.

May we know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together by a loving God. Amen.