



Quilts and the Holidays

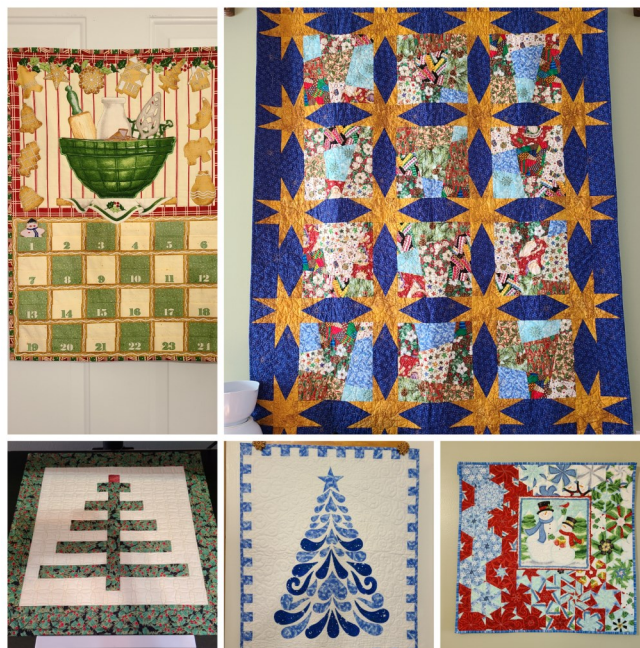
Timeless Stitches — Quilt Capital of Kansas



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The holiday season is upon us. Lights are going up on houses around the neighborhood and the reflection of lights on Christmas trees through windows is brightening our drives through town as we go about the business of life. What to do if you're not feeling the season as intensely or just don't have the space for a tree and all the décor that goes with it? I've been there so many times. A few years ago, I moved 6 times in 6 years, each time to an apartment or shared housing situation where there really wasn't room for a full-blown Christmas tree. There were also years when I was feeling the recent loss of my parents or living completely alone for the first time in my 60+ years and just didn't feel like going through the emotions. If you're feeling any of these feelings, know you're not alone.

Even if you're not a quilter, there are options out there that can bring a bit of joy to your life without filling your house with all the trimmings. Before I became a quilter, I had framed favorite Christmas cards to display in subsequent years. I still put out a few favorite items from the multiple plastic totes of holiday decorations—the evergreen spray with jingle bells on the front door to greet visitors, a few items made by my mom, and Mom's and my collection of nativity scenes that sit on the TV cabinet, but each year it seems to be less. I've come to accept the fact that the tree takes up much needed space that my husband and I use daily for our quilting and gaming space.



Over the last several years I have made numerous Christmas themed or winter themed quilts that range from small wall hangings to full size quilts. I'm blessed to live in a home with a huge expanse of bare wall with high ceilings in the living room/kitchen where we installed two 80" long decorative curtain rods that hold large quilts. We change them out by season and this week we got both changed out for the winter. I've also added several smaller quilts to the walls—a lovely applique tree that I quilted with swirls as if it were sitting in swirling snow, a quilted Advent Calendar that has a bowl full of fabric "cookies" that fill the 24 pockets that count down to Christmas, and a fun wall quilt of snowmen playing in the snow. These and a few others provide a festive look without adding the large tree.

At Christmas we visit our daughter's home for the family gathering and she decorates her entire house! Her boys love it and get to help decorate as well. They have Mom's tree that is done just the way she wants it and downstairs they have the boys' tree that may be a little heavy on decorations at the bottom, but that will change as they continue to grow. The 9-year-old now gets ornaments much higher than his little brothers. Whether you decide to decorate or not, your decision is perfectly okay. Embrace those feelings and know it's okay to be a minimalist or an excessive decorator—just do what feels right for you.