

WELCOME TO ST. LUKE'S LABYRINTH

About the Labyrinth

The Labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint, found in many religious traditions in various forms around the world and dates back thousands of years. The seven-ring labyrinth, like St. Luke's, is the oldest form known in human history. Early Christians adapted the labyrinth as a way to experience God's presence and guidance and to enrich their spiritual life. By the Middle Ages these ancient patterns were inlaid in floors of cathedrals throughout Europe. The labyrinths were also incorporated into beautiful gardens.

Throughout history Christians have gone on pilgrimages to sacred places in an effort to experience God and receive illumination. The labyrinth may be experienced as a spiritual pilgrimage without having to travel a long distance to a holy site such as Jerusalem, Rome, Iona or some other sacred place. During Advent, for example, a pilgrim could walk the labyrinth as if going to Bethlehem to worship the Christ Child and return to share the joy and peace.

There is no one right way to walk the labyrinth. When you walk the labyrinth, just walk with an open heart and open mind ready to receive whatever the Spirit has for you. Walking the path in silence, prayer and meditation can lead to a variety of experiences such as peace, healing, insight, courage, forgiveness, affirmation, etc. Everyone's experience is personal and different.

Location

St. Luke's labyrinth is located behind St. Luke's Episcopal Church, across the alley, and in a grass lot (Eighth and Dewey – one block south of the Community Center). The labyrinth is available to anyone in the community at any time and is free. Church groups may want to call ahead to reserve a time.



If you are not sure about this spiritual exercise, try it on at least three different occasions before drawing conclusions. You may be surprised. Or, you may need to find a spiritual discipline that is more suitable for you. Remember, any approach to spirituality should be in addition to the daily devotions and the Holy Eucharist.

Guidelines

- Walk in silence – especially if there are others on the path.
- Since the way in and the way out are the same, you may meet others on the path.
- Walk at your own pace, which may cause you to pass others or be passed on the path.
- Feel free to walk, run, skip, dance or crawl the labyrinth.
- Scriptures, prayers, poems and other materials may be used, especially in the center, but sometimes these can get in the way of personal meditation.
- Some people begin their walk with a few moments to quiet themselves, bow, make the sign of the cross or hold out their hands with their palms up. Do what seems right for you.
- Remember, the experience of walking the labyrinth varies widely from person to person. God meets us where we are to bless and guide.
- This is a sacred space. We pray that you will find and experience what you are seeking – what you need.

Walking the Sacred Path

One way to walk the labyrinth is to use a three-fold process of Purgation, Illumination and Union. Begin the journey by taking a few minutes to be quiet and prepare yourself. A prayer hymn by Daniel Iverson sets the tone.

*Spirit of the Living God fall fresh on me.
Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me.
Spirit of the Living God fall fresh on me.*

Purgation, Shedding, Emptying (melt and mold) In this first stage, as you walk toward the center, identify and let go of the barriers in your life which interfere in your relationship with God. These might include sin, anger, self-pity, stress, worries, doubts, confusion, resentment, etc. Offer them to God as you open your heart, mind and spirit.

Illumination, Centering (mold and fill) This stage takes place in the center of the labyrinth. Spend as much time as you want in the center for prayer, meditation, or reading something you have taken with you. Face different directions or sit, kneel or stand. Center your life again on Jesus Christ. Do whatever works for you before starting on the journey back.

Union, Filling, Intention (fill and use) The journey outward follows the same pathway back into the world, God's creation. Filled once again with God's Spirit you can face life with a different perspective and deeper faith. With renewed energy and strength, you walk toward the work God is giving you to do.

Following the pilgrimage, take a few minutes to reflect on your experience. Some people like to make notes or keep a journal so they can remember or track their experiences.

Scripture on the Path

The use of Holy Scripture on the labyrinth can be meaningful. For example, a disciple may read a portion of scripture before entering the labyrinth. Moving toward the center remember event, persons, teaching, history, phrases and images of the scripture.

At the center, reread the text and ask God to reveal the Living Word to you – speak to you. Let go of the words of the scripture and listen from within your spirit.

As you leave the center to go back into the world, allow the Word to enlighten your path and your spirit as Jesus' disciple. Allow Jesus to teach and guide you in faith living.

Note: Poetry, music, prayers and other materials may be used. Be careful that these materials not get in the way of your being with God.

Support for the Journey

If using the labyrinth has helped you identify specific needs or concerns and you need spiritual direction or pastoral counseling, please call your priest or pastor as soon as possible. A sign of health and strength is asking for help when it is needed. The clergy of St. Luke's Episcopal Church would welcome your call and respond to your need. Call Fr. Lee Stephens at 336-1212.