

Labyrinths for Spiritual Practice

The Labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint, found in all religious traditions in various forms around the world. By walking a replica of the Chartres labyrinth, laid in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France around 1220, we are rediscovering a long-forgotten mystical tradition that is insisting to be reborn.

The labyrinth has only one path so there are no tricks to it and no dead ends. The path winds throughout and becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives. It touches our sorrows and releases our joys. Walk it with an open mind and an open heart.



There are three stages of the walk:

- * Purgation (Releasing) ~ A releasing, a letting go of the details of your life. This is the act of shedding thoughts and distractions. A time to open the heart and quiet the mind.
- * Illumination (Receiving) ~ When you reach the center, stay there as long as you like. It is a place of meditation and prayer. Receive what is there for you to receive.
- * Union (Returning) ~ As you leave, following the same path out of the center as you came in, you enter the third stage, which is joining God, your Higher Power, or the healing forces at work in the world. Each time you walk the labyrinth you become more empowered to find and do the work you feel your soul reaching for.

Guidelines for the walk: Quiet your mind and become aware of your breath. Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go. The path is two ways. Those going in will meet those coming out. You may "pass" people or let others step around you. Do what feels natural.

Our Diocese, through the Clergy Wellness Commission, has a labyrinth, which was made for us by a person in Ontario and painted by our youth in PEI. The craftsperson who made it does this out of a passion for the work and a donation on the part of the buyer to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. For more information on having one made for your parish, please refer to the Reverend Al Meloche at drummingdeacon@pei.sympatico.ca. You may have seen our Diocesan labyrinth when it was on display at our last Synod. It is 25 x 25 feet (you need a very large space for it), and white with a purple pattern. This beautiful meditation tool is available to you and your parishes should you wish to use it. Please inquire if you would like to hire a workshop facilitator to introduce the Labyrinth to your community. The labyrinth is currently being used frequently by the hospital chaplains and as a result, it is being housed in the Victoria General Spiritual and Religious Care office. For more information on booking it, please email the Reverend Keirsten Wells at keirstendewells@gmail.com to arrange.

The following is a fantastic website about labyrinths and how they are used in an Episcopalian context: <http://www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/>