

## Specifics of Labyrinth Walking

There is no one way to walk the labyrinth. It can be walked slowly or briskly; it can be danced; some enter on their knees.

As you become more comfortable you may find yourself experimenting with different approaches. In this brochure are some suggested ways that have proven fruitful for others. They are good places to begin.

## Beginning Your Walk

You may wish to remove your shoes. When you are ready to begin, enter the labyrinth from the entrance (west opening). Walk at your own pace.

Remember, the path in is the path out - a two way street where you may meet others as they travel at a different pace. Step aside, around one another. Relax and try not to be self-conscious. Your walk may take 20 minutes or over an hour; there is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. When you have completed your walk you may want to take some time to reflect on your walk.

## Suggested Ways of Walking the Labyrinth

### Walking for inward Peace:

Before entering the labyrinth, recognize the relationships of situations that are disturbing your sense of wellness. As you walk be very aware of your body, your breathing. On the way to the center, imagine each exhaled breath taking away the stress of every situation. At the center, open your heart and mind to receive what is offered. Leaving the labyrinth, imagine each inhaled breath is giving strength and courage to change what you can and let go of the rest.

### Walk with a question:

Take a few moments to center yourself and to identify what the questions are in your life or where your attention is focused at the moment: a new job, marriage, grief, parenthood, the need for new direction, a troubled relationship, etc. Walk the labyrinth seeking new insights or guidance.

We are grateful to the Wisconsin United Methodist Conference Foundation, the foundation of the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay, members of the congregation and other contributors for assisting in the procurement of this labyrinth. We trust that it will be a blessing to you in your faith journey.

## The Labyrinth: A Holy Walk



"Open Hearts, Open Mind, Open Doors"

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Know/Love God

Care for each other

Serve the World

## History of the Labyrinth

The Middle Ages showed a renewed interest in labyrinths and an eleven-circuit design divided into four quadrants became popular. It was often found in Gothic Cathedrals; the most famous of these remaining labyrinths is at Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. Built around 1200, it is laid into the floor in a style sometimes referred to as a pavement maze. The original center piece has been removed and other areas of the labyrinth have been restored.

At the center is a rosette design which has a rich symbolic value including that of enlightenment. The four arms of the cross are readily visible and provide significant Christian symbolism.

## The Labyrinth - A Spiritual Tool

The labyrinth is a tool which offers opportunity to take time out from our busy lives, and leave schedules and stress behind. Walking the labyrinth can bless our lives, and lead us to discovery, insight, peace, solace, and direction. As a work of the Spirit, the labyrinth is more about the journey than the destination, about 'being' rather than 'doing', integrating body and mind, reason and

imagination, thought and feeling into our harmonious whole, as God intended.

Our lives are a journey, a sacred journey, where we encounter joy, sorrow, growth, defeat, grief, celebration, and all the other experiences that challenge and transform our understanding of life. Symbolic of this journey, the labyrinth functions as a meditation tool, a prayer tool, to help us focus and encounter the presence of the sacred in our changing lives. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has no dead ends, and there are no tricks or puzzles to be solved. The path in is the path out and as such represents the wholeness of our lives. So walking the labyrinth is not a left-brain task, but an invitation to use our right brain and the gifts of creativity, imagination and receptiveness.

The journey can take us inward to our center and then back out into the world with new insight into ourselves and God's presence in our lives. It is not magic, however; and like any spiritual tool, sometimes we receive guidance, sometimes new questions, and other times all we hear is deafening silence.

The labyrinth is an excellent space to meditate on a specific care, a verse of scripture, or a question or a joy.

## Walking the Labyrinth

To walk the labyrinth is to touch God and let God touch us. It is a matter of presence and response.

The labyrinth does nothing to make God more present for God is always present.

The labyrinth can make us aware of the presence of God in our lives.

So, be silent,

Walk

Listen

Wonder

Receive God's gifts

Go in peace on your journey

## When is the Labyrinth Open?

The labyrinth will be open for walking on the first Friday of every month, prior to and the following the Taize worship service, at 7:30 p.m. There should be a host present. A regular schedule of open hours will be published soon.