



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

RESTORING ALL PEOPLE TO UNITY WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER IN CHRIST



Guide to Walking a Labyrinth

Your life is a sacred journey. And it is about change, growth, discovery, movement, transformation, continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your intuition, taking courageous challenges at every step along the way. You are on the path... exactly where you are meant to be right now... And from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story into a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing of courage, of beauty, of wisdom, of power, of dignity, and of love.

- Caroline Adams

We are all on the path... exactly where we need to be. The labyrinth is a model of that path.

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The Labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools.

Suggestions for Walking the Labyrinth:

1. Prepare to walk. Take some time to move from your everyday life to the labyrinth experience. Remove your watch, slow your breathing, still your mind. Open yourself up to possibilities.
2. Begin your journey. Pause at the entrance to the labyrinth to take a cleansing breath and focus your attention. You may ask a question, say a prayer or recite an affirmation.
3. Walk the inward path. Put one foot in front of the other, and walk at a measured pace that is comfortable for you. On the way in, let go of things you want to leave behind and release things that stand in the way of your spiritual journey. Pause when you need to. Don't focus on the center as a goal.

4. Spend time in the center. Take as long as you wish. You may stand, sit, kneel or lie down. This part of the journey is about being present to your inmost self and to the power of the divine. You may wish to pray, journal or simply be open to the stillness. Respect the boundaries of others with whom you share this sacred space.
5. Take the return path. Begin walking back the way you came. On this part of the journey, focus on what you will bring out from the center and back into your life. Resist the urge to “sprint” to the end. The return journey is as important as every other part of the labyrinth.
6. There is no **“correct”** way to walk a labyrinth! It is a very personal experience.
7. Labyrinths are unicursal: you walk the same path going in and coming out. That means that you will probably encounter other walkers going the opposite direction. When you do, step to one side to let them pass. Take your cue from passersby, and from your own process, about whether to acknowledge them with a nod or smile, or simply allow them to pass.
8. Walking a labyrinth can be a very emotional experience. Tears are not uncommon, especially during the inward path when you are focusing on release. Let your thoughts and emotions flow as easily as you can, and don’t be embarrassed.
9. Finally, enjoy your spiritual adventure!

Source: <http://www.lessons4living.com/labyrinth.htm>

Suggested Prayers for Personal Use Along the Way

A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

For Guidance

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Quiet Confidence

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.