

# Praying the Labyrinth

Yangon, Myanmar January 2009

Prepared by ©jkhgeoffrion

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Labyrinth of Life



Lake Minnetonka Ice Labyrinth

“Lord, teach us to pray...” Luke 11:1



Chartres Cathedral, France



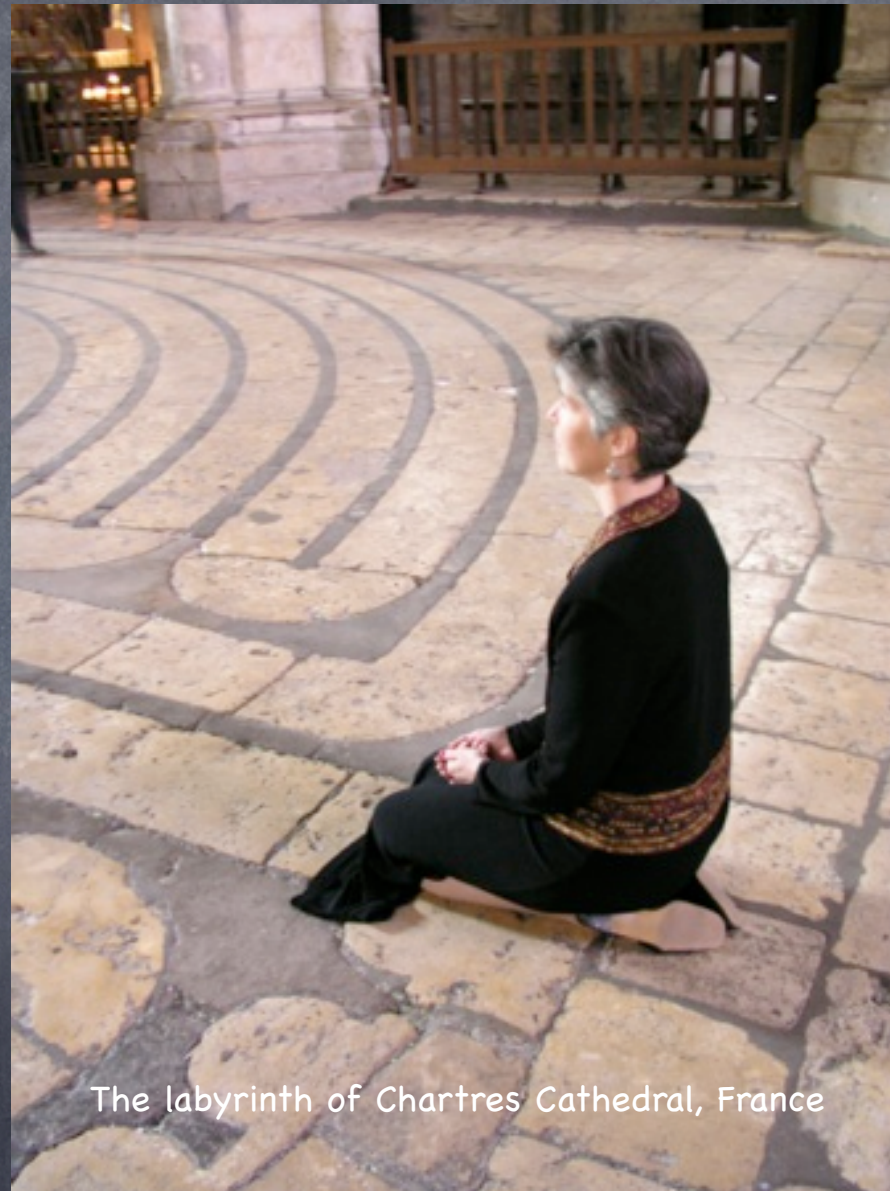
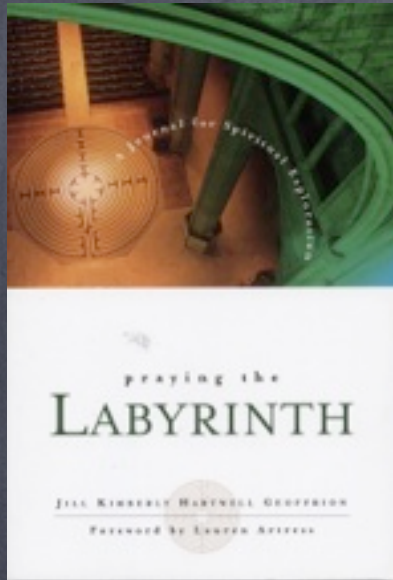
Hudson Hospital, Wisconsin



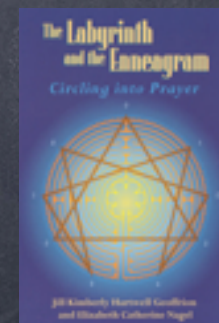
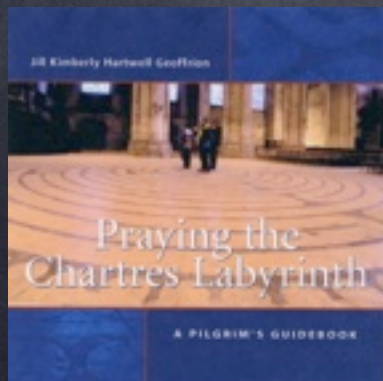
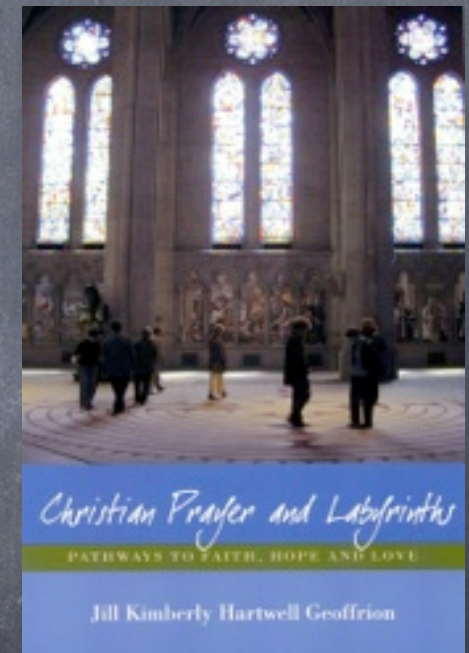
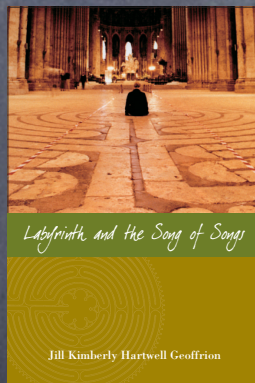
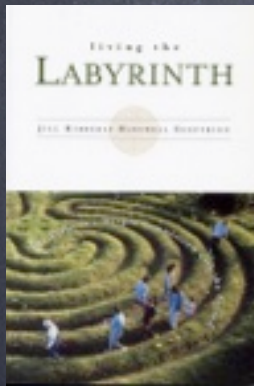
National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.



"May my teaching fall like rain, and my words, distill as the dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants." Deuteronomy 32:2



The labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral, France



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We are walking in the light of God,  
we are walking in the light of God. (2x)

We are walking, (we are walking)  
we are walking, (we are walking)  
we are walking in the light of God. (2x)



Temporary masking tape labyrinth, Atlanta Georgia, USA 2008

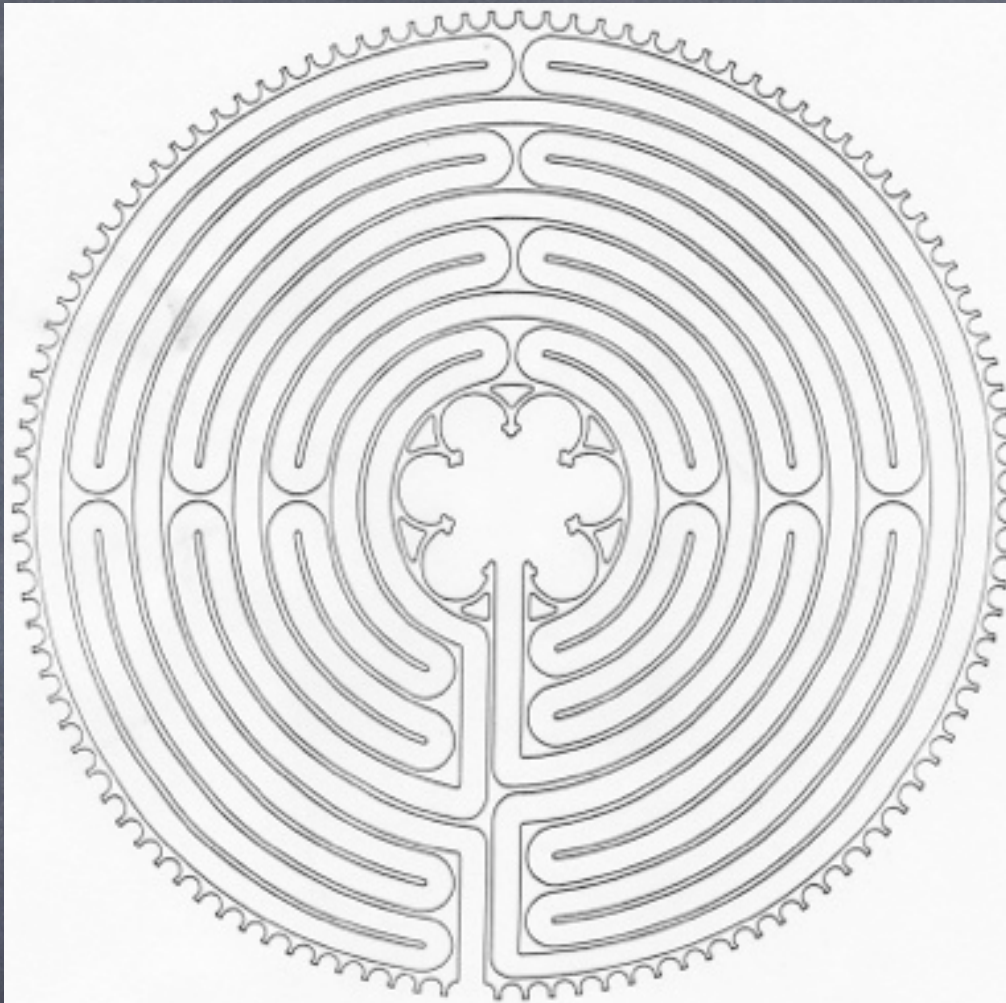


Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth in France.  
Installed in the floor of the church church in 1201. It is 38 feet across!





# Praying a labyrinth with your finger



***Experiencing the Labyrinth Through Your Hand or Eyes***

***Use your finger, a pen, or your eyes  
to follow the pathway  
to the center  
and back out.***



# What would you like to say about your experience of labyrinth prayer?

Mounded earth, 7 circuit classical labyrinth. California, USA



“Jesus said to them, “Come away to a deserted place...and rest a while.” Mark 6:31



# What is a labyrinth?



Millenium Park Labyrinth, Plymouth, Minnesota, USA

"It is solved by walking." (Solvitur ambulando) Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-430)  
"If you want to get to know God better, take a walk with God." 8 year old Asa



Labyrinths are pathways for prayer...



Chartres, France Cathedral labyrinth, built in 1201 AD

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God..." Psalm 42:2



Labyrinths have a single pathway that turns back on itself at least once before reaching a center.



3 circuit labyrinth, paint on canvas. The most ancient of labyrinth patterns.

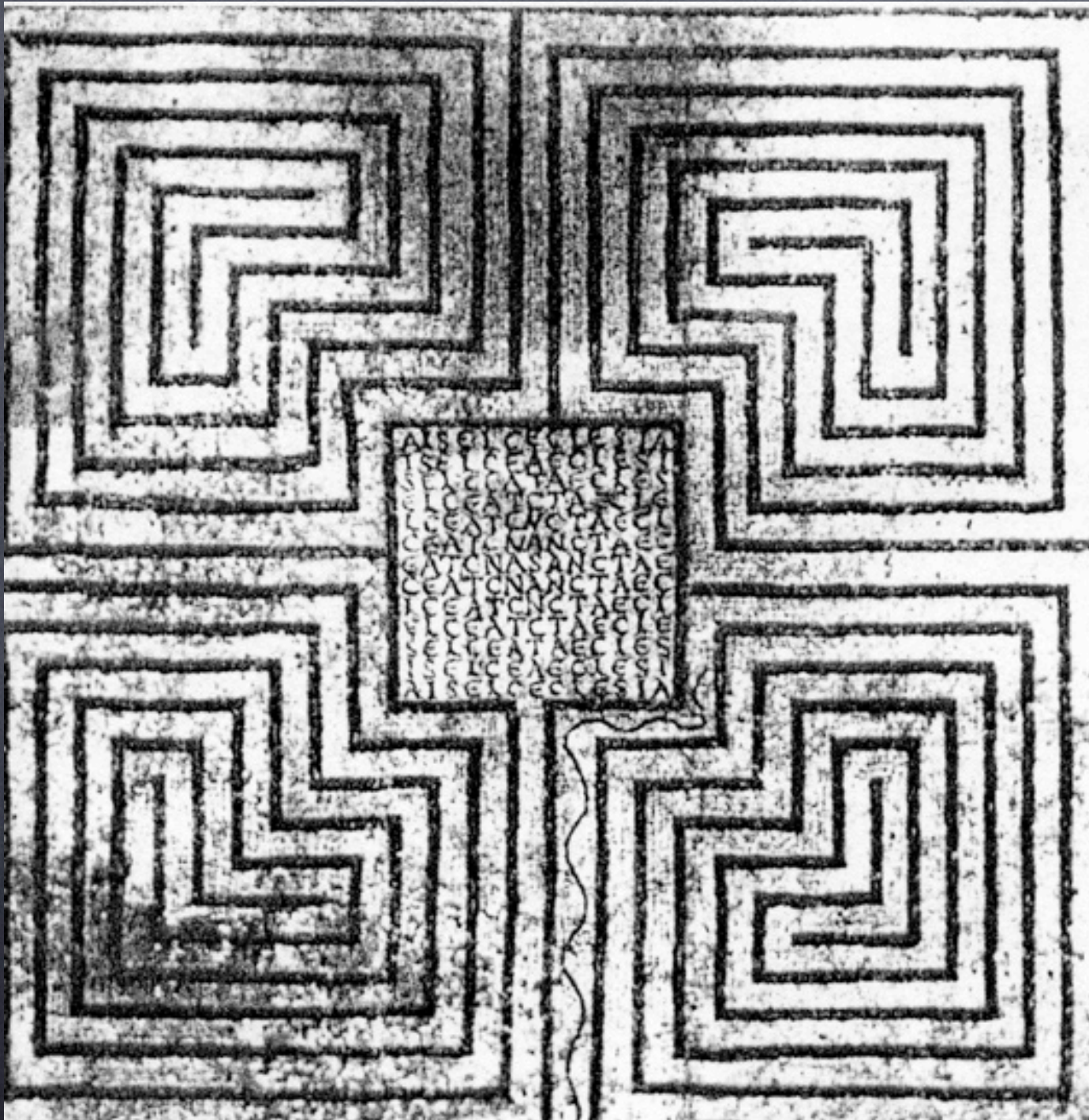


"Follow me..." Jesus Luke 5:27





The oldest Christian Labyrinth still in existence  
can be found in Algiers, Africa is dated from 324 C.E.



"Thus says God:  
Stand at the  
crossroads  
and look,  
and ask for  
the ancient paths,  
where the good way  
lies;  
and walk in it,  
and find rest  
for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16

In the Cathedral of Algiers,  
Originally in the Baliscal of Reparta,  
Al-Asnam, Orléansville



# What do you need to know about labyrinths before you pray them?

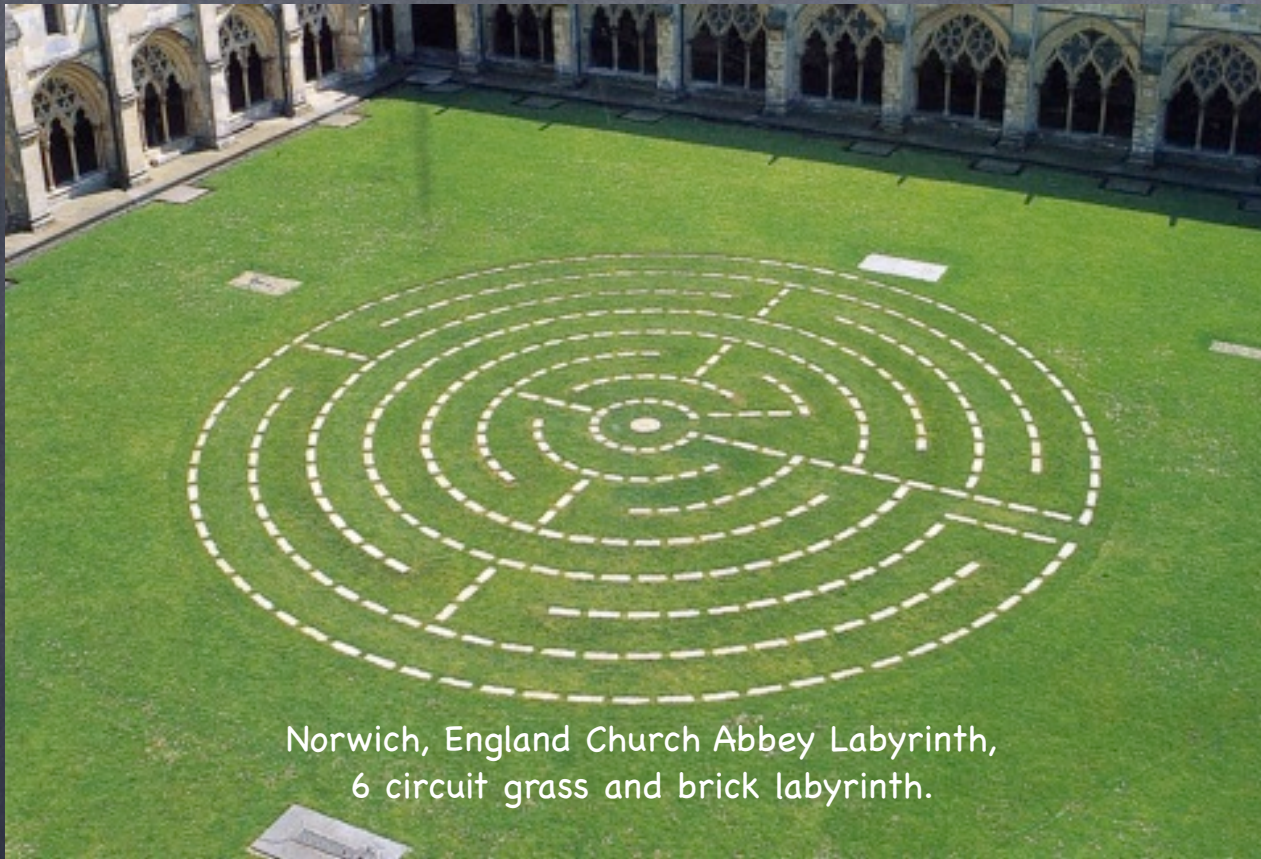
11 circuit Chartres-based rock on gravel labyrinth, Sedalia, Colorado, USA



“Listen, my child, and be wise, and direct your mind in the way.” Proverbs 23:19



A labyrinth is different than a maze.  
You can't get lost in a labyrinth.



Norwich, England Church Abbey Labyrinth,  
6 circuit grass and brick labyrinth.

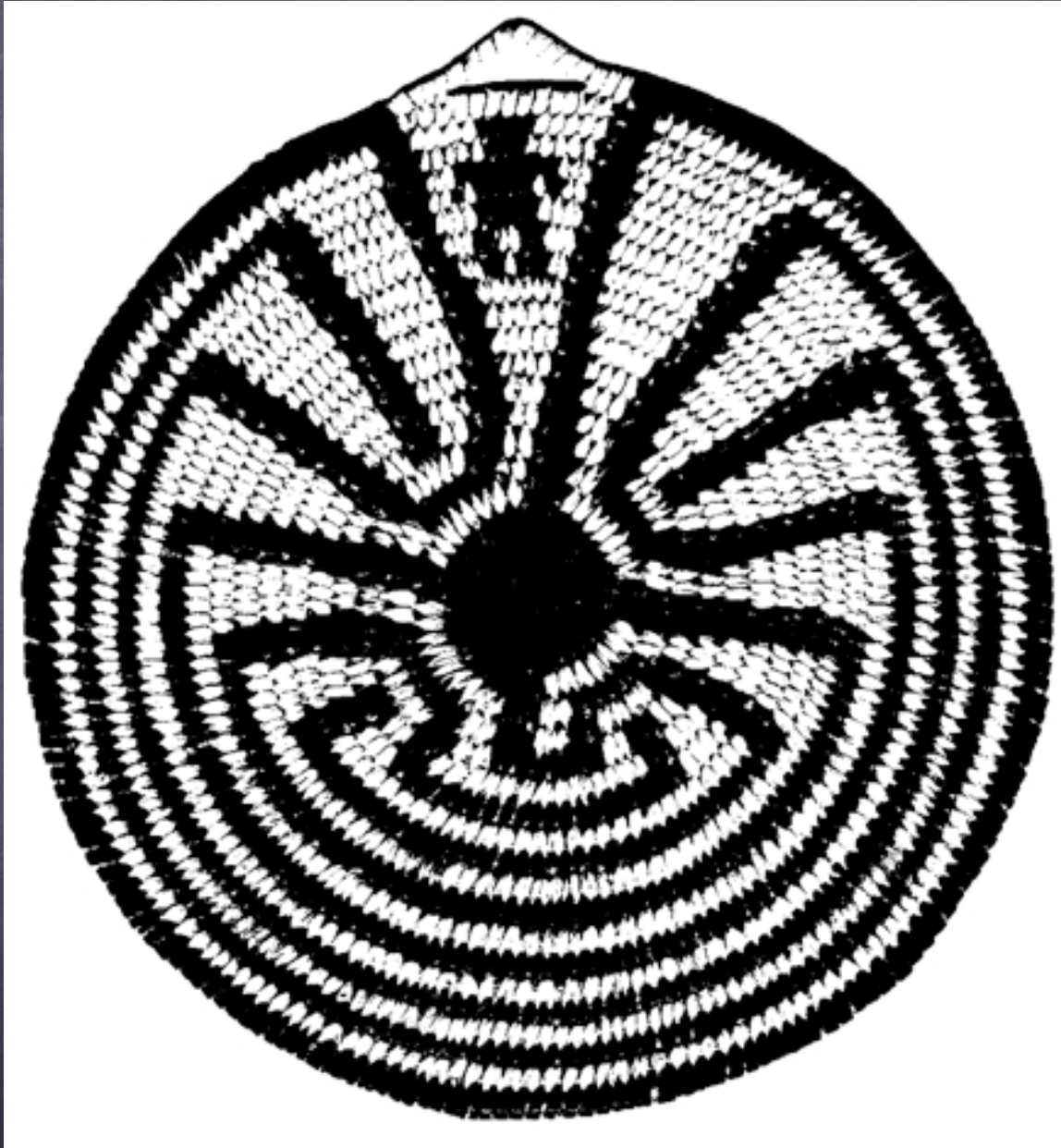
"O that my people would listen to me,  
that Israel would walk in my ways!"  
Psalm 81:13



Saffron Walden Maze, England



As long as you stay on the path, you will arrive in the center.



Native American  
Woven Basket  
Labyrinth,  
7 circuit pattern

"Do not be afraid, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, I will help you." Isaiah 41:10



On the labyrinth, one follows the way (path) to the center.  
One thus practices walking towards God, Our Center.

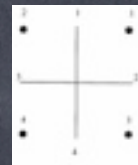
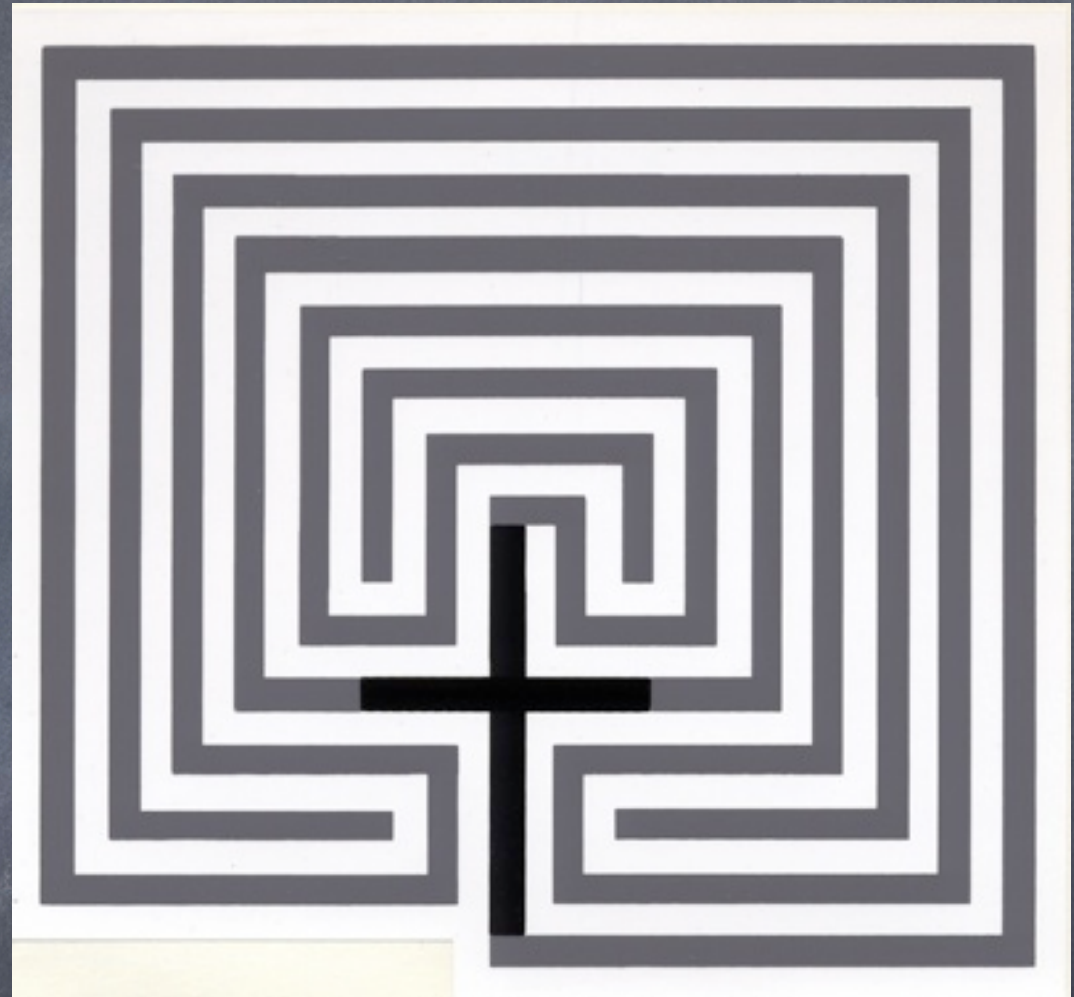
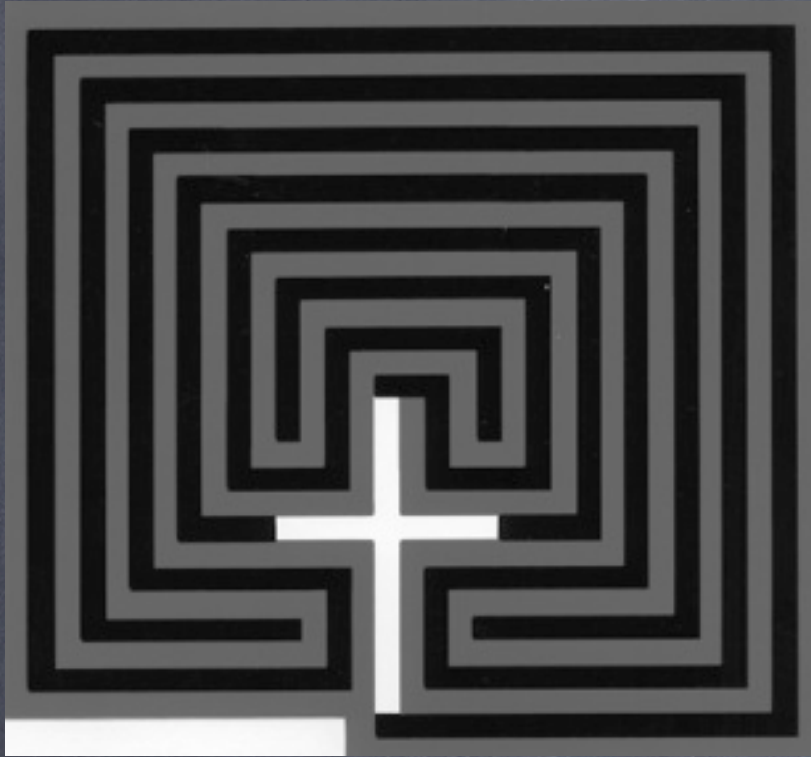


St. Quentin, France Cathedral labyrinth, 11 circuit octagonal pattern.

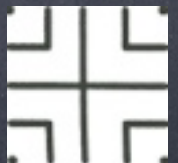
"I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus John 14:6



There is a cross in the center of most labyrinths.



Hansen Art labyrinths,  
7 circuit classical squared,  
with highlighted crosses.



"May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14



You enter the labyrinth, take the pathway to the center, rest there, and then return on the "same" pathway, crossing the threshold once more.



Tree of Wisdom Labyrinth, Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Building, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."





Labyrinths are  
sometimes walked  
alone, but they  
can also be places  
of shared prayer.

"You shall put these words of  
mine in your heart and soul...  
Teach them to your children,  
talking about them  
when you are at home  
and when you are away..."  
Deuteronomy 11:18



Children love to run the labyrinth. Find the pace that is right you.



"David danced before God with all his might." 2 Samuel 6:14



It is okay to walk around people, or to stop and let them walk around you.



© Cheryl F. Dudley

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27



Use common courtesy when sharing the path. It is like a 2-way street.

DeepHaven 11 circuit Chartres-style Labyrinth,  
grass pathways and brick dividers, Minnesota, USA



"Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 6:23



Sometimes people walk the labyrinth together, sometimes alone, and sometimes one person walks while others pray for that person.



Prayer group supporting one another while walking a labyrinth, Northfield, Minnesota, USA

“Pray for one another..” James 5:16b



Labyrinth prayers can be walked or danced.



International Labyrinth Society Gathering Atlanta, GA 2008

"Praise God with tambourine and dance..." Psalm 150:4



The labyrinth is often like a mirror in which God helps one to see her/his life more fully.



Harvest labyrinth made of the fall fruits of the garden, Minneapolis Convention Center 2004, USA

"Jesus said, 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" John 8:32



Notice what is happening around and within you  
as you are using a labyrinth. Make everything a part of your prayer.

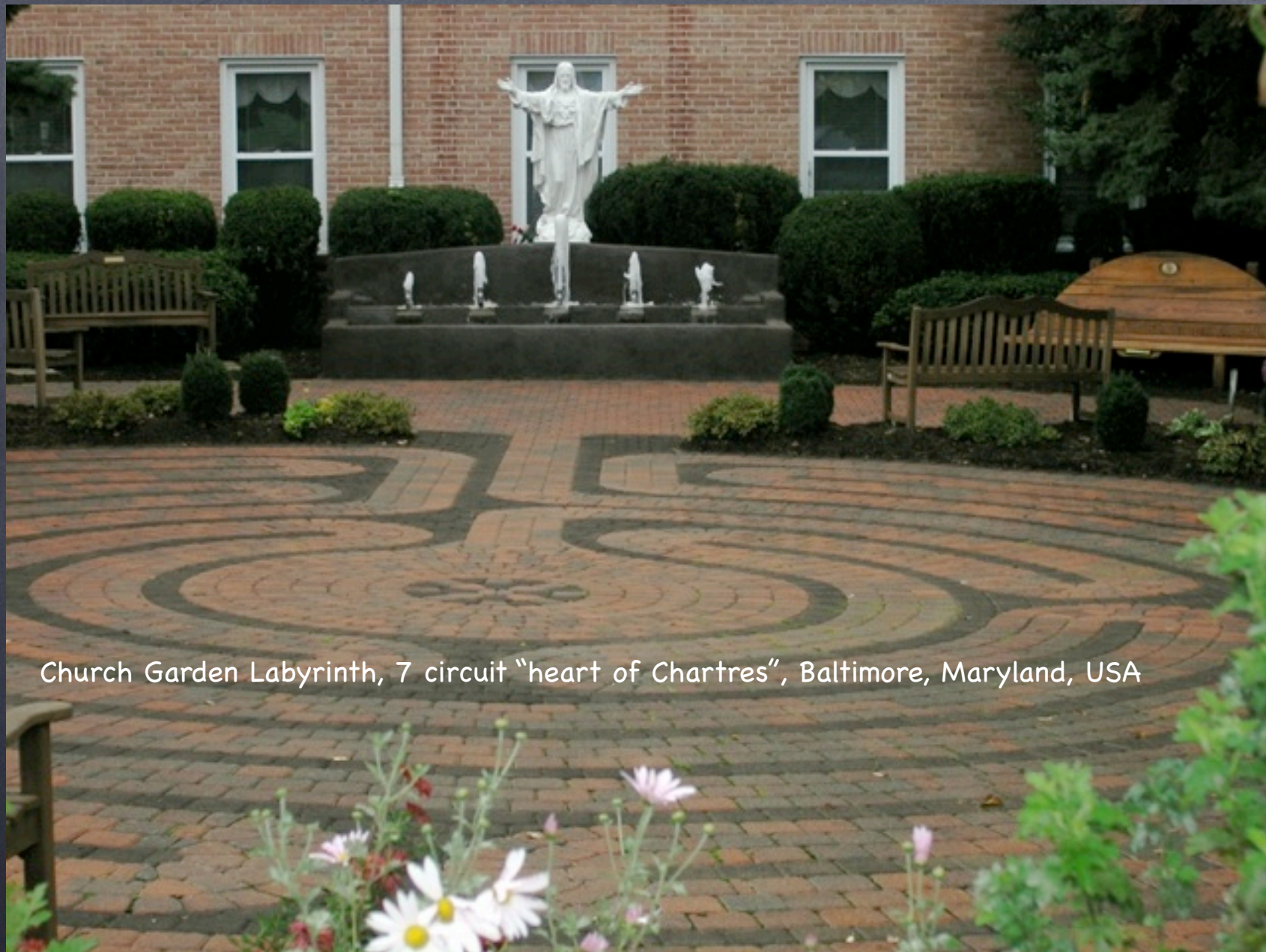
11 circuit rock on soil/grass labyrinth, Columbine, Colorado, USA



"...for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my God in heaven." Matthew 16:17



Jesus walks with you as you move on the labyrinth.



Church Garden Labyrinth, 7 circuit "heart of Chartres", Baltimore, Maryland, USA



Community  
Sanctuary Garden  
and Peace Walk  
"This is a  
gathering place  
that invites people  
of good will to  
share quiet  
conversation,  
peaceful reflection  
or a tranquil walk  
through the  
labyrinth."

This refreshing  
environment  
provides a life-  
giving energy and  
renewal to  
relationships and  
neighborhoods."

"Jesus himself came near and went with them..." Luke 24:15



Pray with your whole body as you move.



7 circuit labyrinth made from sticks placed on sand. International Labyrinth Society Gathering in Minnesota 2004, USA

Psalm 63:4 "I will lift up my hands and call on your name."



Before entering a labyrinth you may ask, "What do I want to pray about?"



Christmas Eve Eucharist on the labyrinth, Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

"Let my cry come before you, o God, give me understanding..." Psalm 119:169





One suggestion  
for praying the labyrinth:

On the way to the center,  
pray for yourself.

In the center,  
rest with God.

On the way back to the  
threshold,  
pray for others.

Or, you may prefer  
to repeat a simple  
prayer phrase such  
as:

"May Your will  
be done."

Matthew 6:10



After completing prayer with a labyrinth, it is helpful to take time to reflect on the meanings of the experience.



7 circuit concentric labyrinth made from old pine needles. Church campgrounds, Massachusetts, USA

"Come let us reason together says God..." Isaiah 1:18



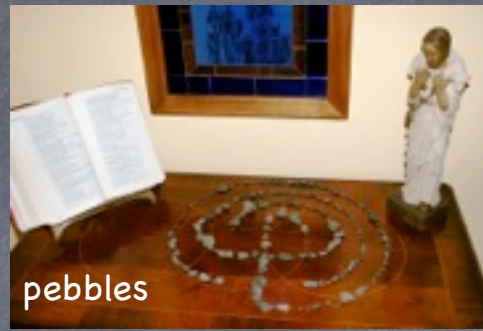
There is no "right" or "wrong" way to pray on a labyrinth. Pray in any way that you like!



post cards



cotton balls



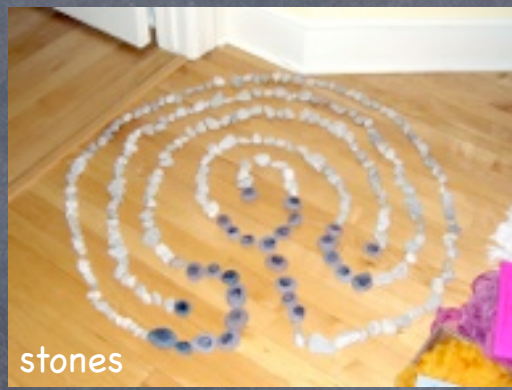
pebbles



popsicle sticks, flowers



pennies



stones



glass beads & smooth stones



dried beans



Hersey kisses



glass stones & lavender



blue stones

"If the Son of Man makes you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36



What are some of the ways that contemporary Christians use the labyrinth?



Amiens, France Cathedral labyrinth



"Show me Your ways, so that I may know You, and find favor in Your sight." Exodus 33:13



Labyrinths are often like oases in the desert. Communities and churches use them as tools for healing where trauma has occurred.



"The amazing port street labyrinth is:  
a common space for all,  
a winding space in which you  
can not get lost,  
a place where people meditate  
and gain spiritual centering  
and healing,  
and a witness for the peace  
and healing we desire in our  
community."



Labyrinth built by a church in a violent neighborhood. Baltimore, Maryland, USA

"Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed, save me and I shall be saved,  
for you are my praise." Jeremiah 17:14



Labyrinths are sometimes used as a tool to explore the possibilities of reconciliation.

Charism canvas labyrinth, modern design for racial reconciliation, New York City, USA



"God, who reconciled us to Godself through Christ, has given us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:18



Many labyrinths are found in hospitals and other healing environments.  
They are used by staff, patients, and their families.



John Hopkins  
Hospital  
Labyrinth,  
Baltimore,  
Maryland



For everything there is a season and a time for everything under heaven...  
a time to heal..." Ecclesiastes 3:1,3





Chartres-style concrete labyrinth, Florida, USA

Labyrinths are created  
to be places where  
people can  
communicate with Christ  
about the burdens  
they are carrying.

"Cast all your anxiety  
on God,  
because God cares  
for you."

1 Peter 5:7



Some labyrinths are created for special times of prayer.  
Others are permanent.



Flag and tape labyrinth, International Labyrinth Society Gathering in Lenox, Massachusetts, USA

"Jesus told them about their need to pray always, and not lose heart." Luke 18:1



Labyrinths are sometimes created  
as places of joyful connection and community celebration.

Dedicating the newly laid out 3 circuit Neighborhood Blessing Labyrinth in grass with tape. Minnesota, USA



"You show me the path of life.  
In Your presence there is fullness of joy..." Psalm 16:11



Labyrinths are often described as pathways of peace...



7 circuit concentric Path of Peace Labyrinth,  
Moriarty home, Minnesota USA

"Peace I leave you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27



# What are your questions about praying with labyrinths?



St. Edwards Episcopal Church labyrinth designed as part of the sanctuary (chairs go on the path dividers), Long Lake, Minnesota, USA

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8



# Labyrinth Prayer Experience

## Hymn: Praying the Labyrinth



Text: Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion ©1998  
Tune: DIX (For the Beauty of the Earth)  
Dedicated with gratitude to Madeleine Sue Martin.





To your o-pen mouth we come,  
pausing with expectancy.  
Posing questions, praying dreams,  
gath'ring courage, hope and faith,  
Circle, you hold life indeed.  
With thanksgiving we proceed.



Dancing Woman Canvas Labyrinth Labyrinth Society Gathering 2008



Stepping in, the way is sure,  
Pacing comes in its own time.  
Breathing slows, awareness dawns,  
Trusting, longing fill our hearts.  
Pathway, you hold life indeed.  
With thanksgiving we proceed.



HEAL Africa Lava Labyrinth, Pastor and Children      Goma, D. R. Congo



In the center we are held,  
deeply knowing, deeply known.  
Healing, wholeness rising up,  
Wisdom, insight overflow.  
Center, you hold life indeed.  
With thanksgiving we proceed.



Kitgum, Uganda Labyrinth at Elementary School ©Lynn Coghill



Back we go, the way we came,  
Weaving, winding in and out.  
Moving t'ward the world beyond,  
Op'ning hearts to needs perceiv'd.  
Pathway, you hold life indeed.  
With thanksgiving we proceed.



Atlanta Georgia Temporary Popsickle Stick Labyrinth 2008



Once outside we gaze within,  
wond'ring at the peace we know.  
Spending moments filled with awe,  
taking leave with strength renewed.  
Circle, you hold life indeed.  
With thanksgiving we proceed.



Chartres Cathedral floor labyrinth as seen from triforium balcony, France



In groups of two:  
What would you like to share about your labyrinth prayer experience?



Chartres-Style Metal Labyrinth



What other questions or comments do you have now?



Welcome Sign, Long Lake, MN (USA)

Upper: Calvin Presbyterian church labyrinth



Thank you  
for this opportunity to share about labyrinth prayer with you!

