THE SACRED PATH
Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform
What is a Labyrinth?

- The Labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world.
- They are used as a way to quiet and focus the mind, find balance, encourage, meditate, gain insight, celebrate, spiritual growth, and healing.
- The Labyrinth is not a maze. It is a continuous circular path that winds into the center with one way in and one way out.
- There is no right or wrong way to walk a Labyrinth.
Brief History

- Labyrinth comes from the Greek word *Labyrinthos* meaning place of the double-axe (symbol of royal power).
- The Labyrinth has been around for at least 4000 years.
- It is an intricate structure of passages generally synonymous with a maze.
- Famous for holding the Minotaur.
- Greeks, Romans, Egyptians had Labyrinths.
- Contemporary scholars make the distinction that the Labyrinth does not have choices of path and direction. The path is only one path leading into the center.
- Christian use of the Labyrinth appeared around 1,000 AD.
  - The Labyrinth was used as a substitute pilgrimage to Jerusalem for those who could not make the real pilgrimage.
Description of Our Labyrinth

• Chartres-style, Medieval Eleven-Circuit Labyrinth.
  • Circles eleven times, with the twelfth being the center circle.

• Borrowed from Grace Church in Yorktown.

• You will walk about 1/3 of a mile.

• Circuits:
  • Number of times the path goes around the center.

• Center:
  • Where the path leads and leaves (the pilgrimage).
  • For the Chartres style Labyrinth the center is the “New Jerusalem”.
Description of Our Labyrinth cont...

- **The Petals:**
  - There are six petals around the center symbolizing the six days of creation (also a symbol of the rose representing the Virgin Mary).
  - Clockwise (left to right) 1) Mineral Kingdom, 2) Plant Kingdom, 3) Animal Kingdom, 4) Human Kingdom, 5) Angelic Kingdom, and 6) The Mystery or the Unknowable.
  - Also, if lines are drawn through the centers of the petals it forms a thirteen point star which is a symbol for Jesus.

- **Labrys:**
  - The double-ax, or butterfly, pattern between the turns on the path.
  - These ten Lybrys form a cruciform when viewed from above.
Description of Our Labyrinth cont...

- Lunations:
  - The outer cusps (112) and foils (111) encircle the Labyrinth.
  - There are twenty eight per quadrant.
  - They are symbolic of the lunar cycle.

- Left-handed or Right-Handed Labyrinth:
  - This is determined by the direction of the first turn in the Labyrinth. (Our first turn goes left so it is a Left-Handed Labyrinth).
  - There are thirty four turns in this Labyrinth.
  - The Labyrinth turns towards the center thirteen times, representing thirteen full moons.
  - In Numerology, thirteen represents Jesus (12 + 1).
Walking the Labyrinth

- **Takes practice** – at least three times to begin to feel the Labyrinth.
- There is no right or wrong way to walk the Labyrinth.
- It helps to prepare prior to walking the Labyrinth.
  - Decide what you are using the Labyrinth for:
    - Answer to a question
    - Healing (forgiveness, illness, grieving)
    - Spiritual Guidance
    - Prayer
    - Reconnecting with yourself
    - Reflection
    - A peaceful moment
- **Take time to quiet the mind.**
  - Suggest removing your shoes, adds to the reverence and mind set.
  - Have a plan about what you want to do in the Labyrinth.
  - Sit quietly a few minutes and focus on your breathing and your heart beat. Or use a mantra. (This is a repetitive one word chant or sound)
Walking the Labyrinth cont...

- Offering Sacred Acknowledgement that what you are doing is important.
  - Before entering the Labyrinth you can use one of these Sacred Acknowledgements.
    - Sign of the cross
    - Hands in prayer position
    - Bless yourself with Holy Water or Ointment
    - Light a candle
    - Have the group perform a laying of hands
    - Carry something sacred to you (Cross, Bible, Rosary ...).
• Start off in intervals (one minute apart) or wait for the person ahead to complete at least three turns before starting.

• Suggestion – walk the Lunations first.

• When you begin, let yourself find your own pace.

• It is okay to pass one another.

• Be open, don’t have pre-expectations.
The Four R’s

- Remembering -
  - As you enter, remember that you are blessed.
- Releasing –
  - As you walk: let go, be open, empty yourself.
- Receiving –
  - At the center, sit, stand, and stay as long as you need.
  - Visit the petals.
  - When you have reached the center – what are your thoughts?
- Resolve –
  - On the way back reflect on those thoughts you had at the center and how you will implement them. What will be the next step in your life?
Spiritual Growth Guidelines

- Some Suggestions if you are using the Labyrinth for Spiritual Growth.
  - To Know God
  - To Deepen in Compassion
  - To Lessen Your Judgments
  - To Increase Patience
  - To Find Your Purpose
  - To Share

- Ask the question and listen for the voice
  - What do you hear? Note all of your thoughts.
  - Follow your thoughts.