

**Following are just a few ideas for creative travel:**

**Concentric Circles**—Start walking on the outer circuit and work your way to the innermost circuit instead of following the path.

**Trinitarian Movement**—Enter, go straight to the other side, back to center, then to each side of center making the sign of the cross.

**Interceding for Others**—Think about others for whom you would like to pray and their needs. Walk the labyrinth. Name them at the center. Express gratitude for God's care as you leave.

**Meditative Phrase**—Repeat the same phrase over and over as you walk ("I offer to you Lord," "I am a pilgrim, Lord," "Grant me your peace, Lord," "I am empty, fill me up," "Father, Son, Holy Spirit," "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy."). This is also a centering way to bring a "chatter mind" back into a meditative focus.

**Reconnecting**—This is an opportunity to connect with the memories of deceased friends and family. As you walk the labyrinth open your heart and mind to memories of a person who has died.

**Zeroing In**—As you stand at the mouth of the labyrinth notice things like the temperature, sounds, what you see, smells, and your feelings. Now choose one image, emotion, sensation, scent, or sound and focus your attention on it exclusively as you walk.

**Following & Leading**—Meet a friend and decide who leads and who follows. The leader determines the pace. In the center spend as much time as you like without talking. Switch roles on the way out of the labyrinth. Discuss.

*If we really want to pray,  
we must first learn to listen;  
for in the silence of the heart God speaks.*  
-Mother Teresa

*One of the oldest images of the mystery of life,  
death, transformations and return is the labyrinth.*  
-Edward C. Whitmont

*Divinity is like a wheel, a circle, a whole.*  
-Hildegard of Bingen

Sources and resources for further reading:

*Exploring the Labyrinth: A Guide for Healing and Spiritual Growth* by Melissa Gayle West, (2000), Penguin Group.

*Living the Labyrinth* by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion, (2000), Pilgrim Press.

*Praying the Labyrinth* by Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion, (1999), Pilgrim Press.

*Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice* (Rev. ed.) by Lauren Artress, (2006), Broadway Books.

We encourage you to further reference these books and other labyrinth resources.



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# THE PRAYER LABYRINTH

**The labyrinth, a part of  
Christ Lutheran Church's  
memorial garden**

*God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone,  
but also on the trees,  
and in the flowers and clouds and stars.*  
-Martin Luther





# THE PRAYER JOURNEY



## **What is a Labyrinth?**

A labyrinth is a pattern, usually in the form of a circle, that has one path, beginning at the outer edge and leading in a circuitous way in the center. Unlike a maze, there are no dead ends—one is never lost.

The journey promotes safety and peace. The path in is as important as the path out.

Labyrinths have been used for centuries for prayer, meditation, and symbolic pilgrimage as well as personal and spiritual growth.

Labyrinths can be found in almost every religious and cultural tradition around the world. Their symbolism has been found on rock carvings, coins, pottery, and clay tablets dating back almost 4000 years. During the Middle Ages, labyrinths were built in many cathedrals in Europe.

## **The Walk: How and Why?**

Walking the labyrinth is an “active way of praying”. It allows for integration of mind, body, and spirit.

There is no “right” way to pray and no “right” way to walk a labyrinth. It is about letting go; relaxing; and allowing the presence of God to lead and speak to you.

The labyrinth walk may be celebratory, meditative, reflective, or answer seeking. One can walk alone or with others. Simply enter and follow the path to the center. Time spent in the center is up to the walker. Leave when ready and follow the path out of the labyrinth.

Walking the prayer labyrinth may provide a variety of experiences. The walk may provide a greater sense of closeness to God. The walk may provide a greater sense of closeness with fellow walkers and community. The walk may provide clarity on problems or questions. The walk may provide relief from a stressful world. The walk may bring comfort and peace.

*So much can come during a labyrinth walk—  
self awareness,  
insight,  
answers to prayers,  
resistance,  
memories,  
ideas,  
a sense of God’s presence,  
tears,  
longings,  
sensations of pain,  
hopes,  
powerful awareness,  
new dreams,  
images,  
songs,  
concern for others,  
release,  
visions,  
commitment —  
the list is as varied as the walkers.  
It is not always easy to be ready to perceive  
what comes.  
That’s why I pray for openness and courage.*

—Praying the Labyrinth by Jill Geoffrion