

An aerial photograph of a large, circular labyrinth drawn on a dirt courtyard. The labyrinth consists of many concentric, slightly irregular paths that spiral inward from the outer edge. The courtyard is surrounded by a white concrete wall. In the background, there are lush green trees and a paved road with a blue car. To the left of the labyrinth, there are two red umbrellas and some greenery. The overall scene is outdoors and appears to be a well-maintained area.

Preaching as a Journey: Labyrinth Lessons for the Preacher

Asian Seminary 2012

Prepared and presented by ©The Rev. Jill K H Geoffrion, Ph.D.

www.jillgeoffrion.com jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

www.fhlglobal.org

Let us See What Love Can Do

© Music - Francis Gurtz
Lyrics - William Penn

Canon

1



Let us see what love can do,

2



let us see what love can do,

3



let us see what love can do.

Introduction of Dr. Jill





Wed June 5, 1982 (30 years of marriage!)

Ordination June 3, 1984

Serving as a
pastor/minister
for 28 years



Our Family



Daniel 23 years old

Timothy 25 years old
(Stella)



Teaching, Inspiring, and Encouraging



Teaching courses, workshops, and seminars



Coaching of individuals, groups, & non-profits



Providing labyrinth experiences, retreats, pilgrimages, and creative opportunities for spiritual renewal

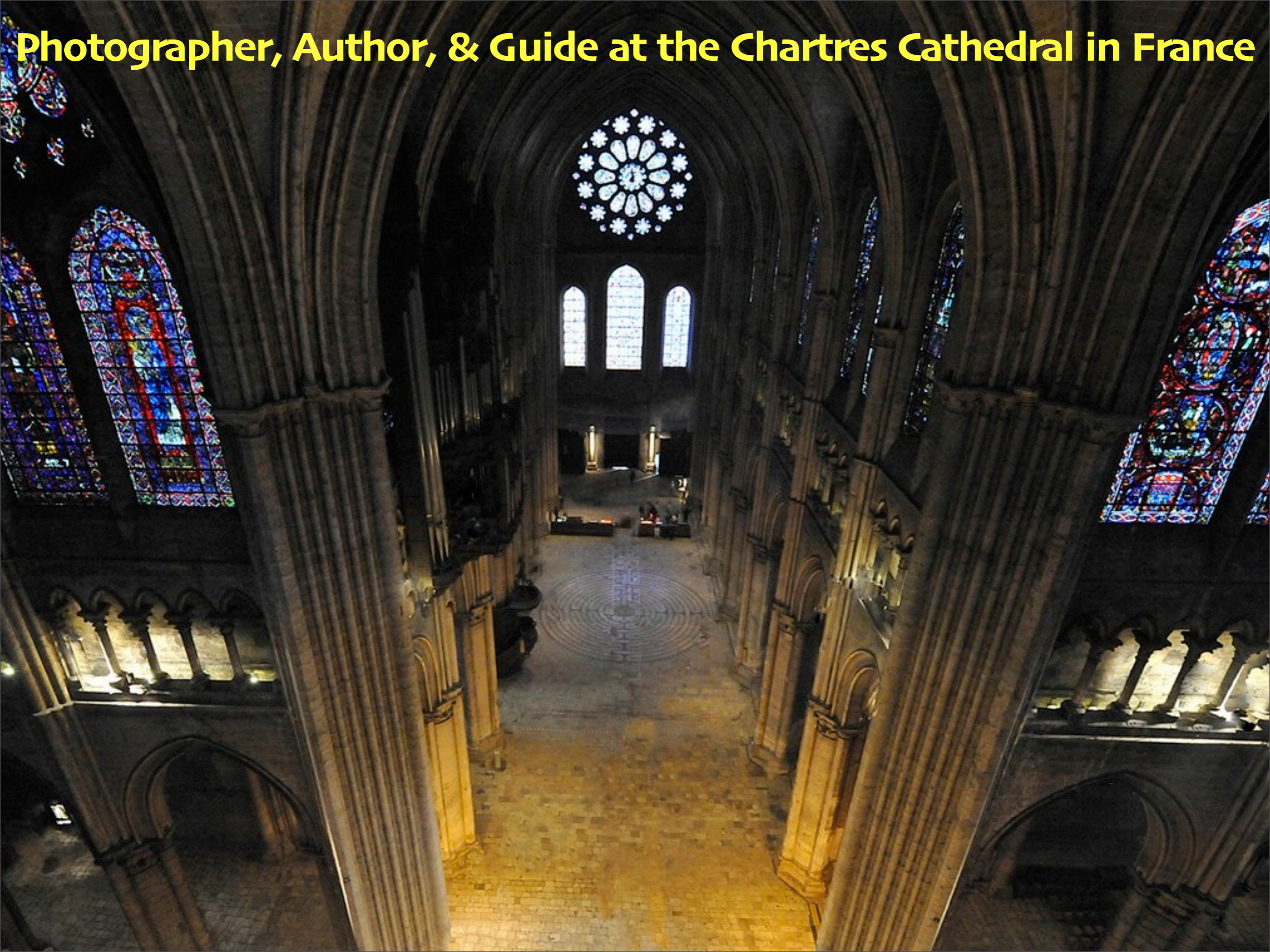


Offering written and web resources www.fhlglobal.org



Faith, Hope and Love
Global Ministries





Photographer, Author, & Guide at the Chartres Cathedral in France



Ministry of Preaching

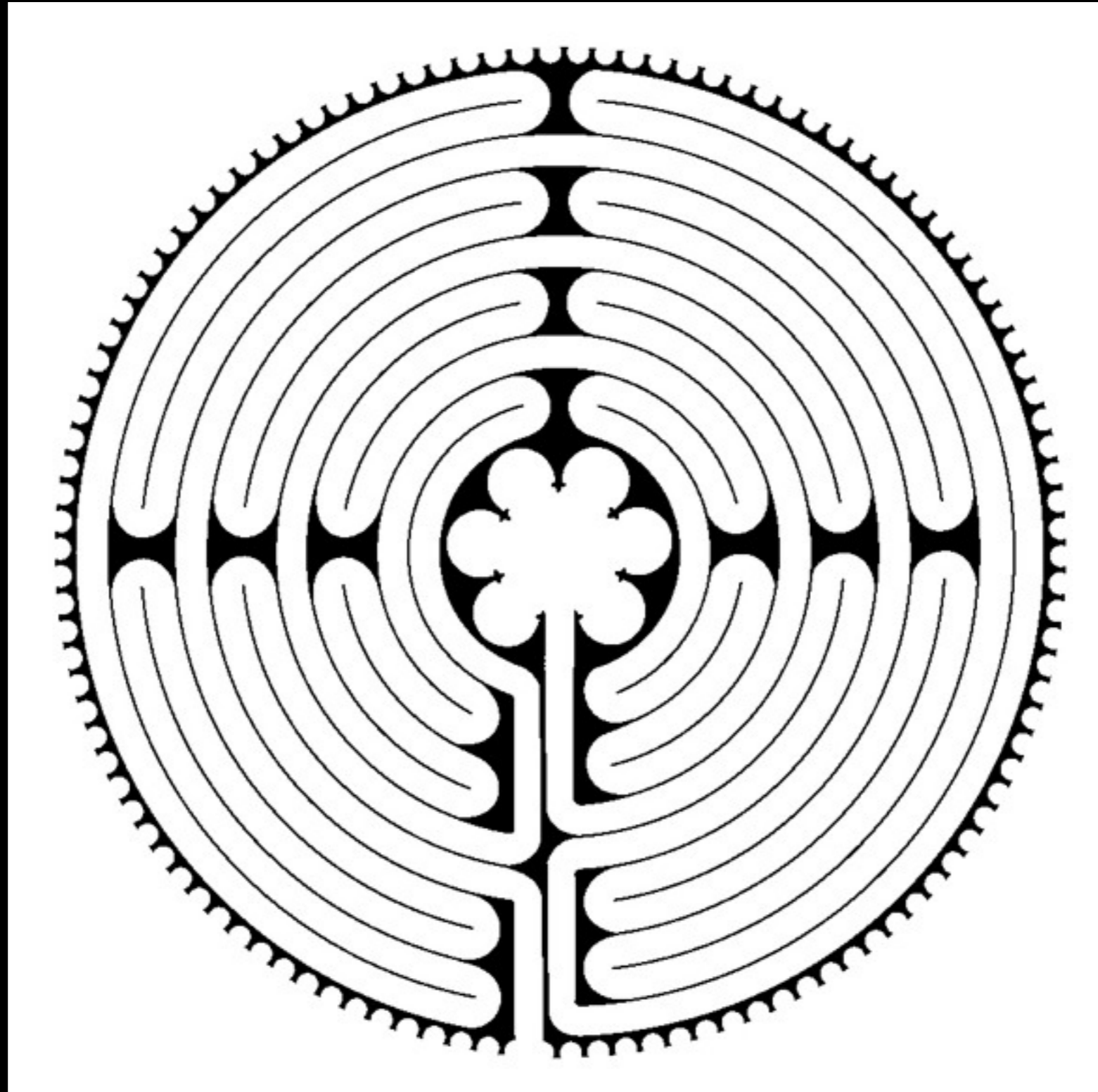


What is a labyrinth?



A labyrinth is a pattern with a single pathway that turns back on itself before reaching a center.

The same path is used when returning to the single opening in the perimeter.





You can't get lost!

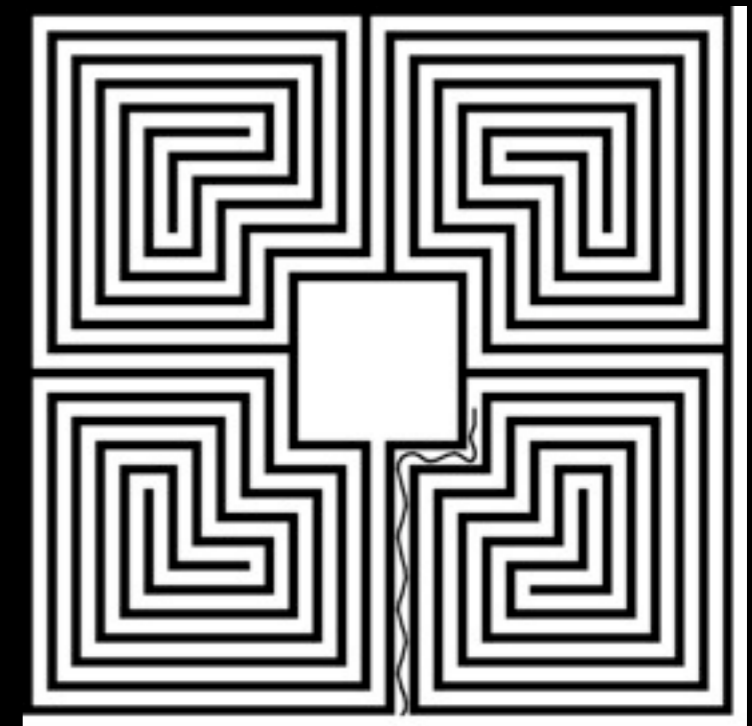
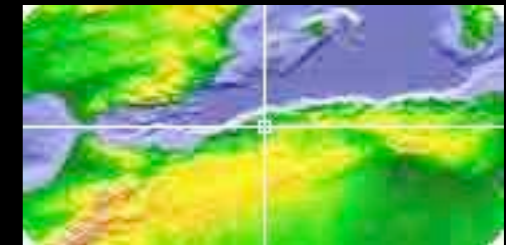
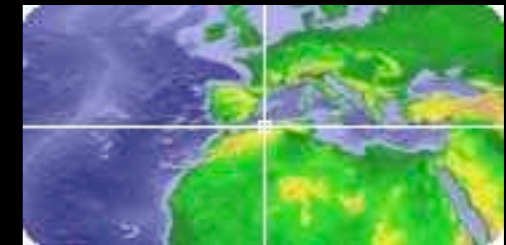
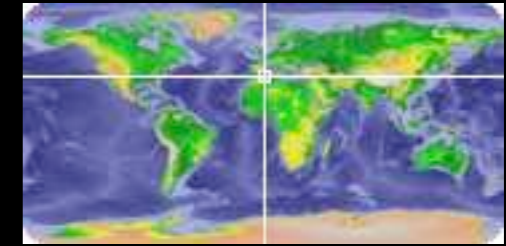
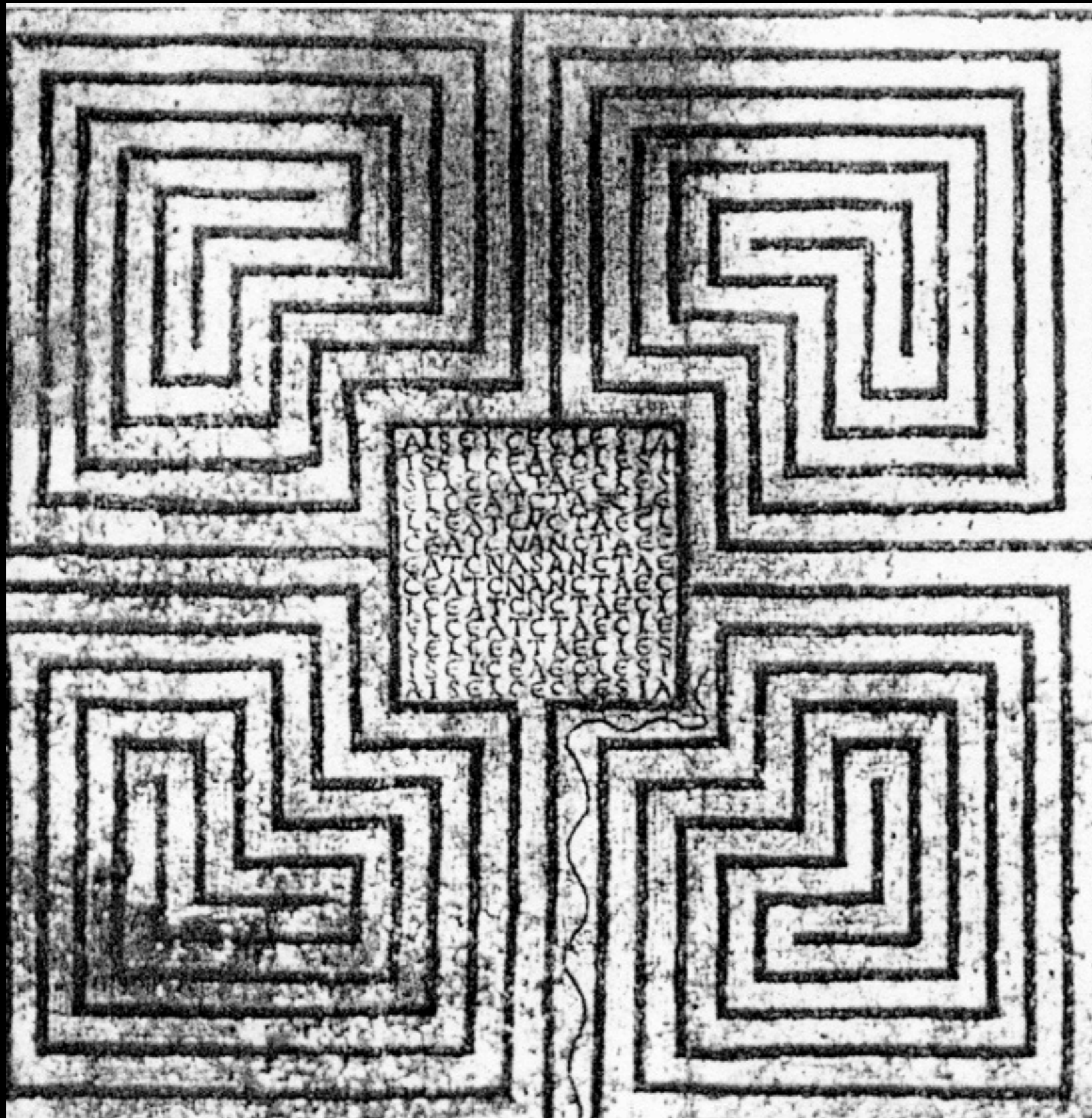
We do not know the exact origins of labyrinths.
There are ancient examples on every inhabited continent.



Goa, India 2,000-2500 BCE

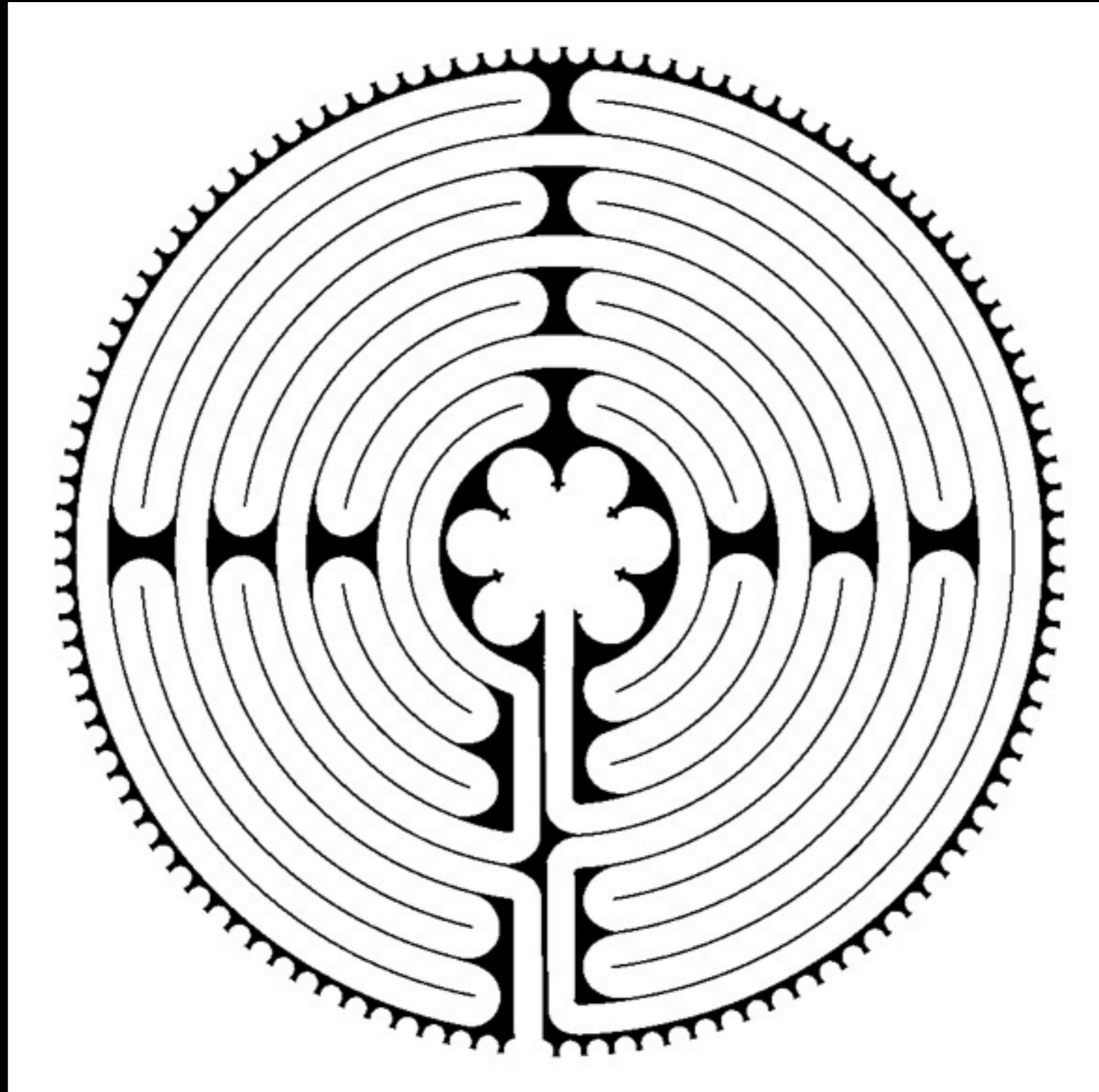
©Jeff Saward see [Labyrinths and Mazes](#) & www.labyrinthos.net

The oldest surviving Christian labyrinth



Installed 324 CE in the cathedral in Orléansville, Algeria (Africa)

Today , there are more than 3,855 labyrinths world-wide. www.labyrinthlocator.com



Introducing Labyrinth Prayer





**External movement on labyrinths
invites internal shifts.**

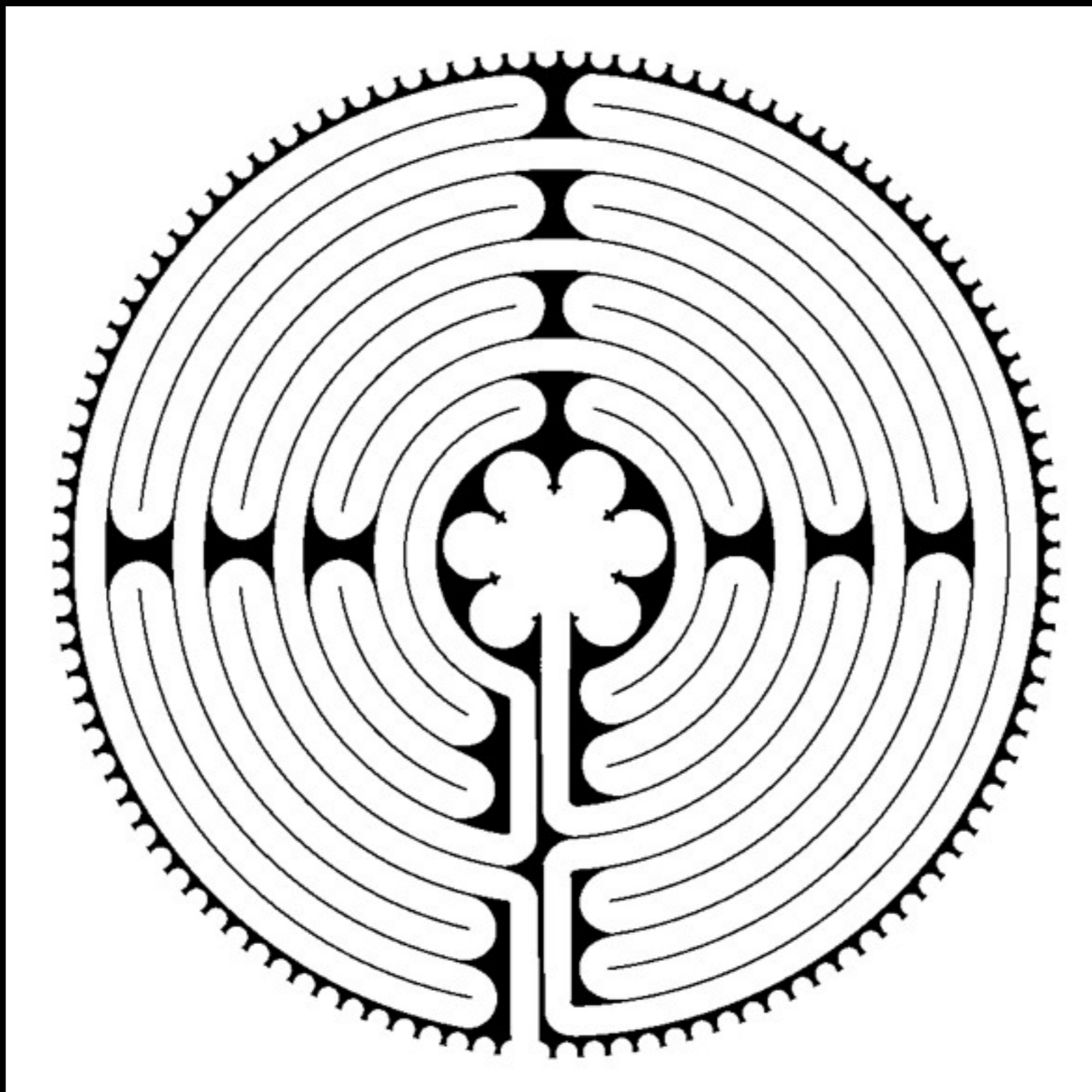
A group of approximately 15 people, including men and women in various attire (white shirts, saris, and blue uniforms), are walking a large, circular labyrinth drawn on the ground in an outdoor courtyard. The labyrinth consists of multiple concentric circles with radial paths. The courtyard is enclosed by a white wall, and there are trees and a paved area visible in the background. The text is overlaid in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

**We need
safe, sacred places
where in God's presence
we can be truthful
about our lives.**

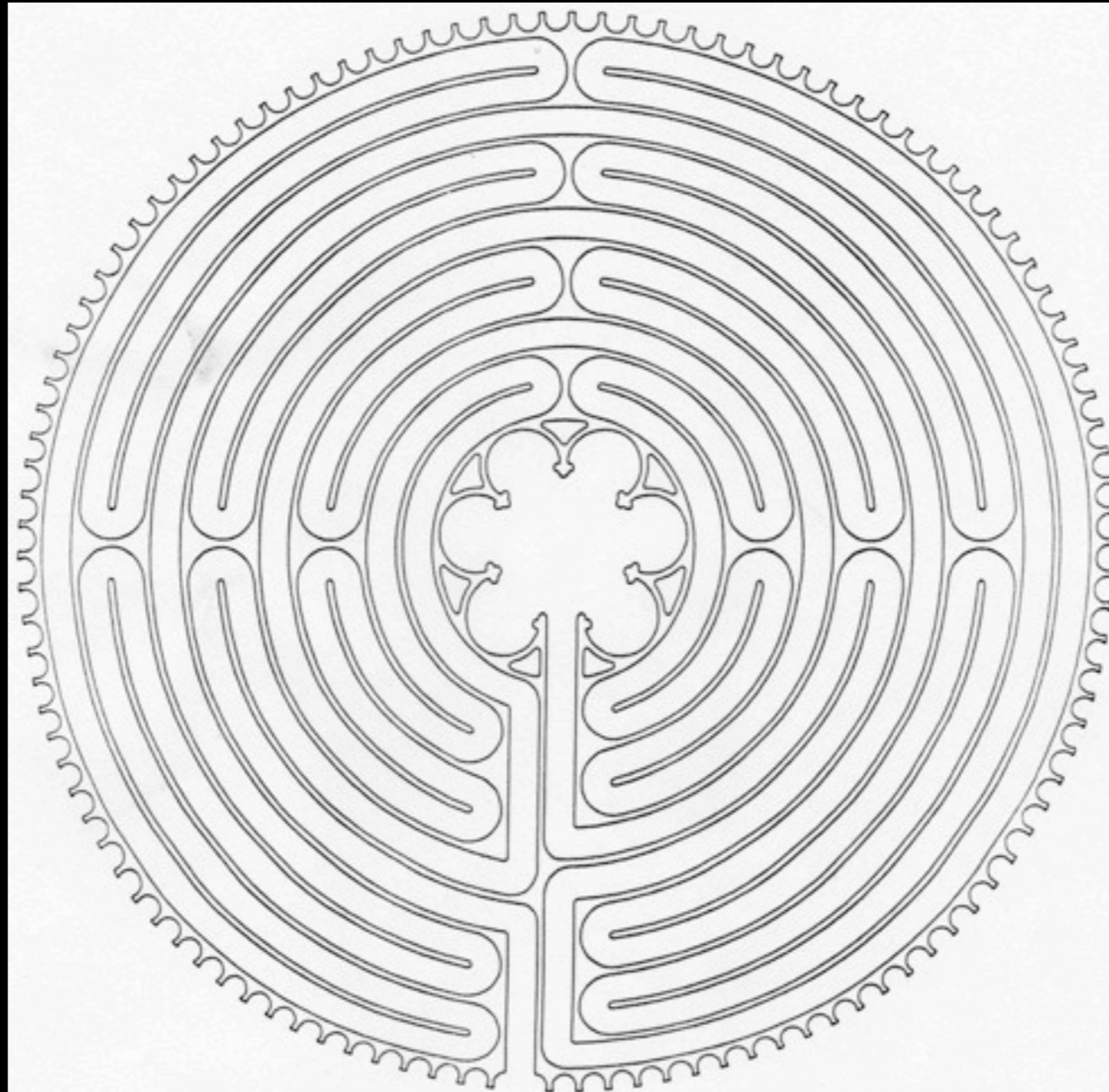
**Personal and community experience
happen at the same time.**



Experiencing Labyrinth Prayer



Praying using a paper labyrinth



Experiencing the Labyrinth Through Your Hand or Eyes

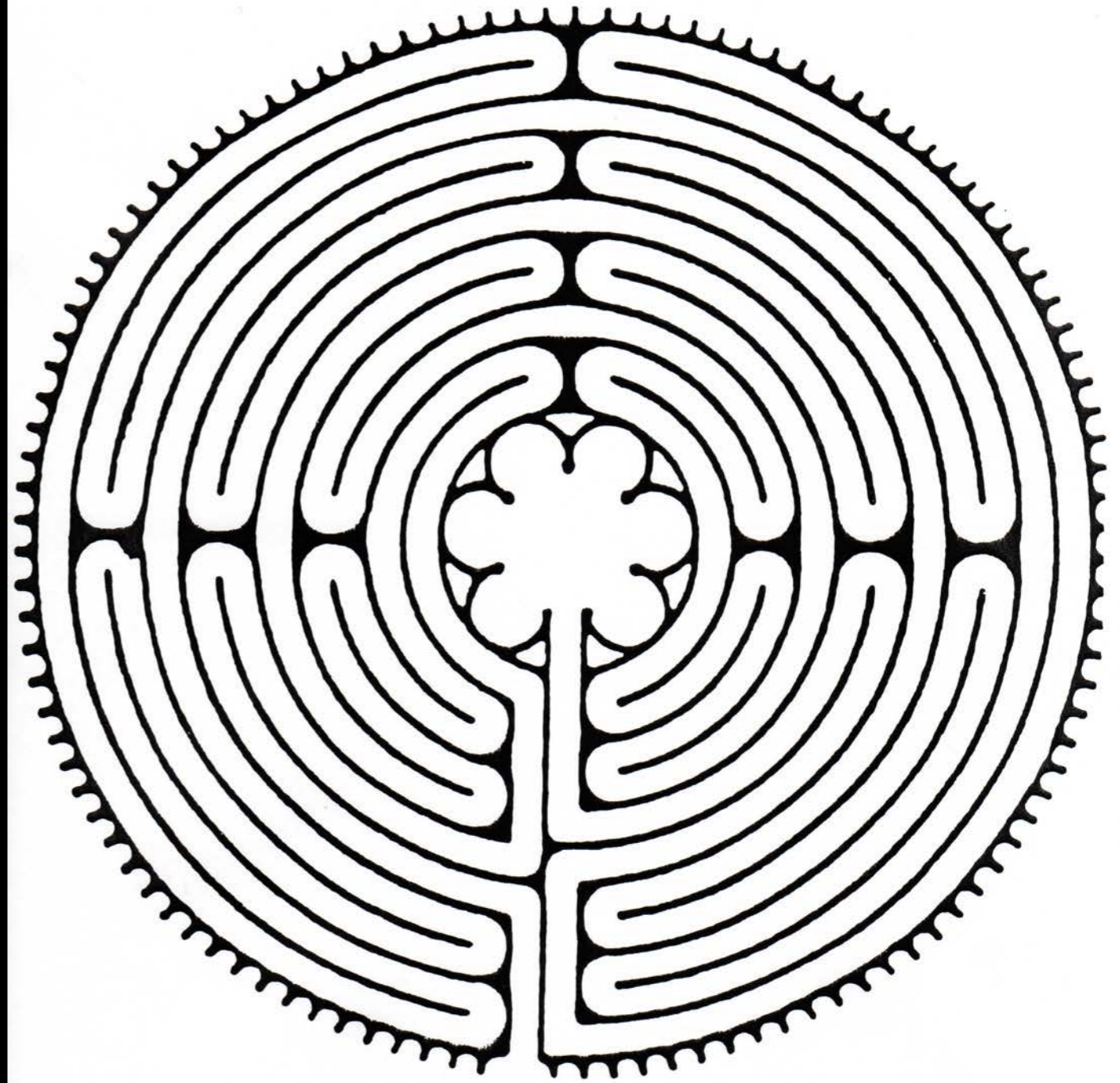
*Use your finger, a pen, or your eyes
to follow the pathway
to the center
and back out.*



Walking the Labyrinth by Hand

Use your finger or a pen to follow the pathway from the entrance in to the center and back out.

1. Before you begin, decide what you are going to pray for.



Walking the Labyrinth by Hand

Use your finger or a pen to follow the pathway from the entrance in to the center and back out.

1. Before you begin, decide what you are going to pray for.

2. Place your finger near the entrance of the labyrinth. Prepare yourself.



Walking the Labyrinth by Hand

Use your finger or a pen to follow the pathway from the entrance in to the center and back out.

1. Before you begin, decide what you are going to pray for.

2. Place your finger near the entrance of the labyrinth. Prepare yourself.

3. Cross the threshold. Enter. Follow the path with any finger. Pray as you move towards the center.



Walking the Labyrinth by Hand

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1. Before you begin, decide what you are going to pray for.

2. Place your finger near the entrance of the labyrinth. Prepare yourself.

3. Cross the threshold. Enter. Follow the path with any finger. Pray as you move towards the center.

4. Rest in God's presence as your finger rests in the center of the labyrinth.



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4. Rest in God's presence as your finger rests in the center of the labyrinth.

5. When you are ready, move your finger out of the center and back along the path towards the threshold (exit/entrance).



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5. When you are ready, move your finger out of the center and back along the path towards the threshold (exit/entrance).

6. When you get close to the threshold, pause. Thank God for whatever has happened.



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7. Take time to reflect on your labyrinth prayer experience.



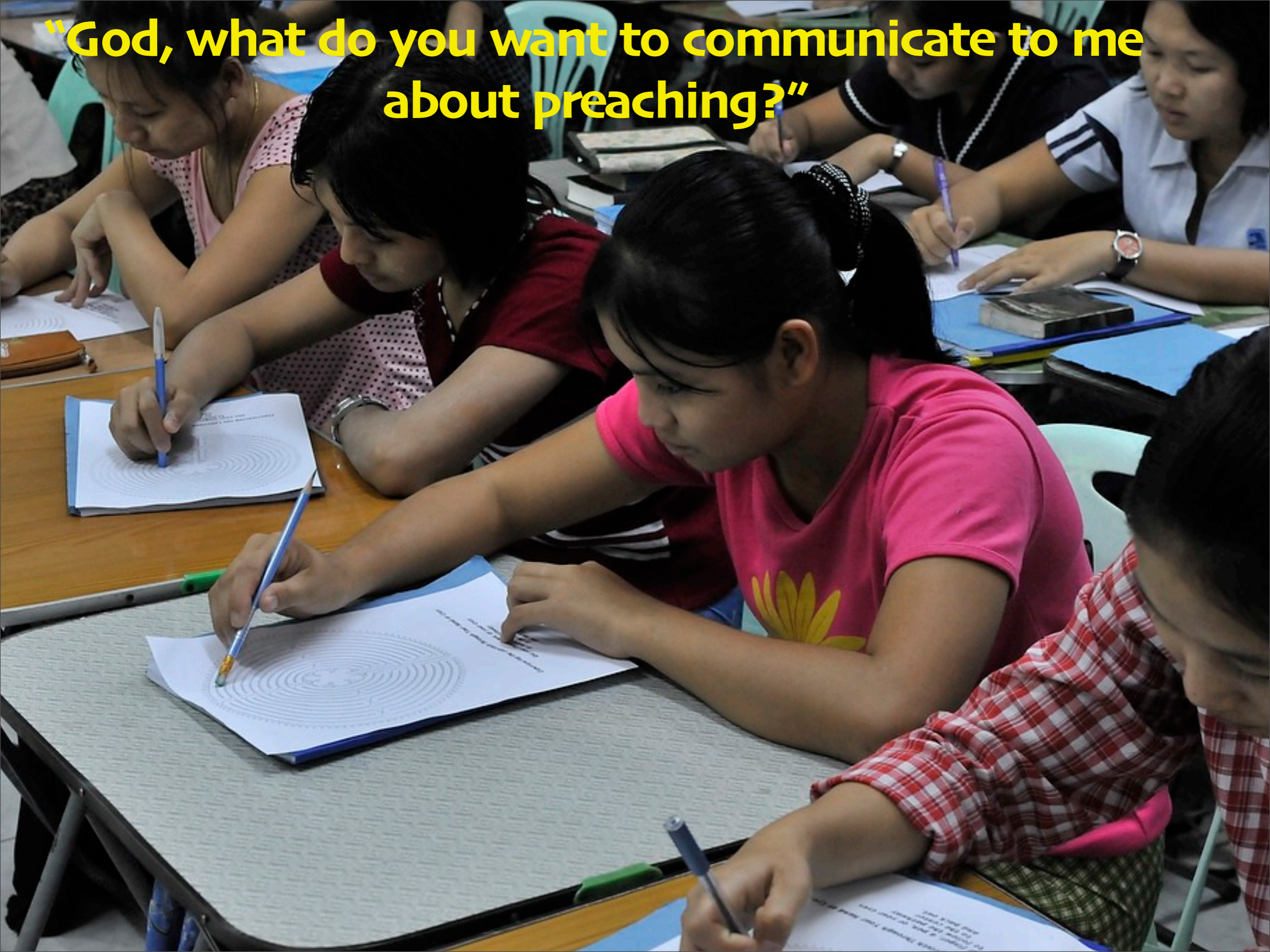
Walking the Labyrinth by Hand

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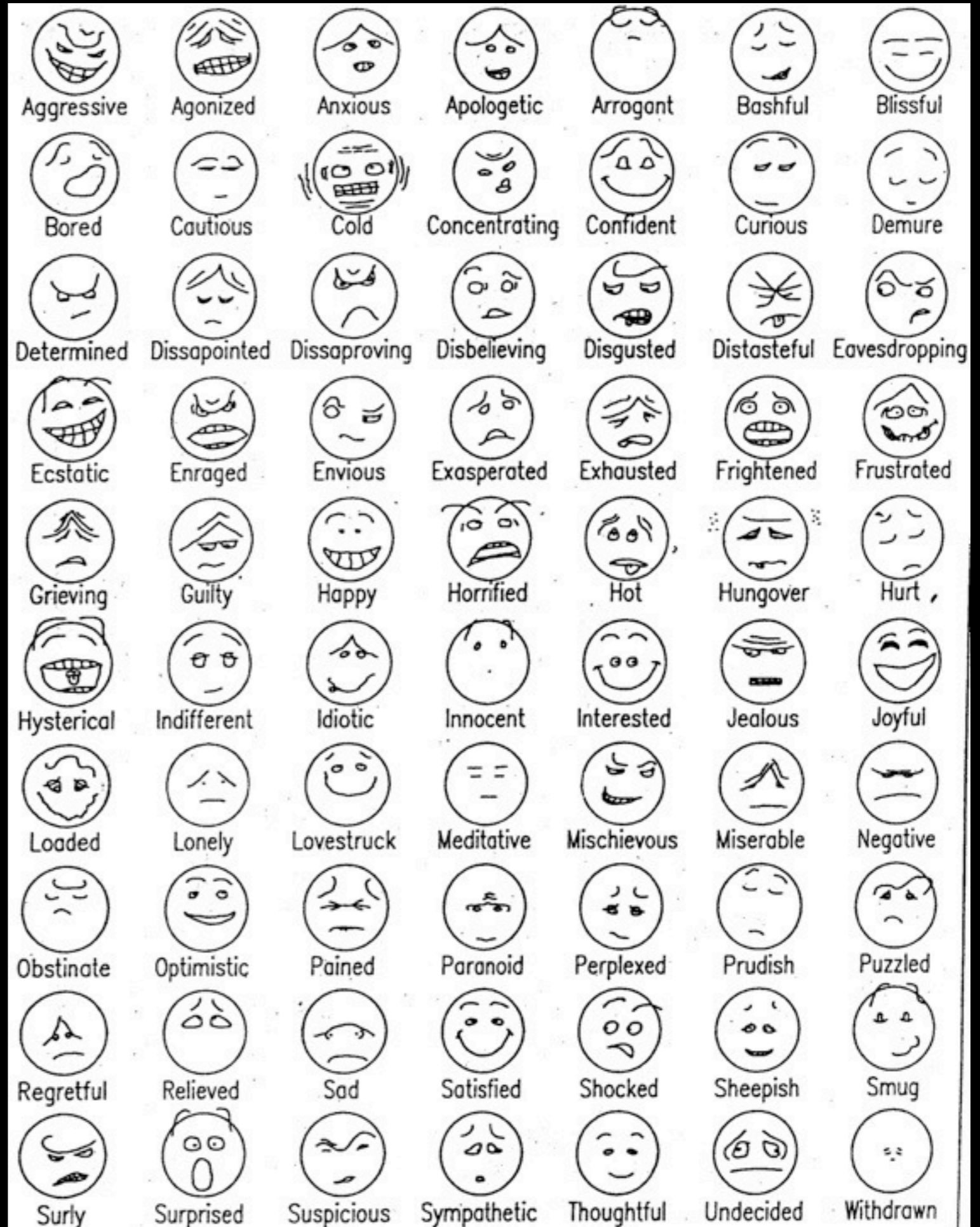
**Your prayer focus while using the labyrinth:
“God, what do you want to communicate to me
about preaching?”**



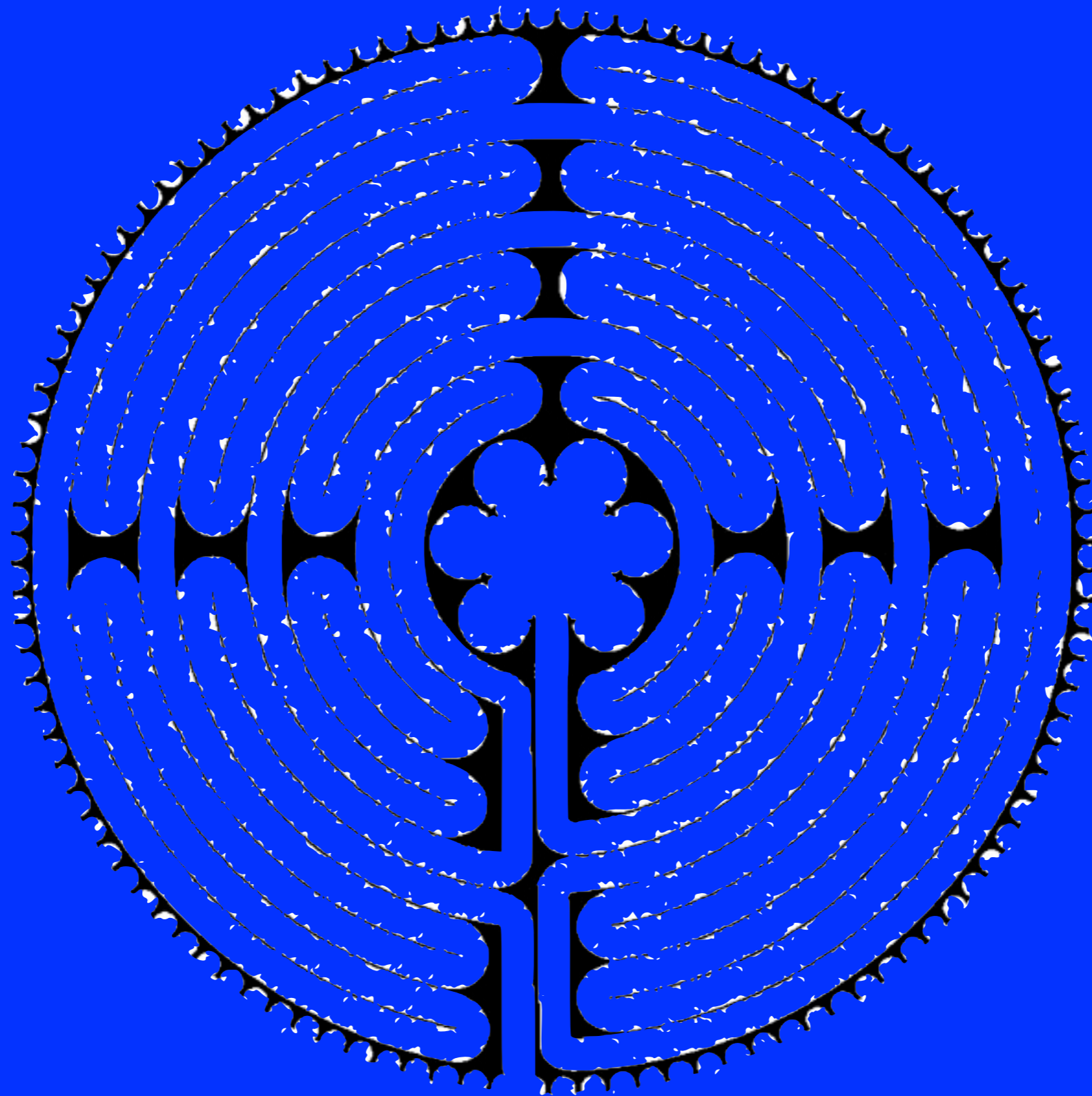
“God, what do you want to communicate to me about preaching?”



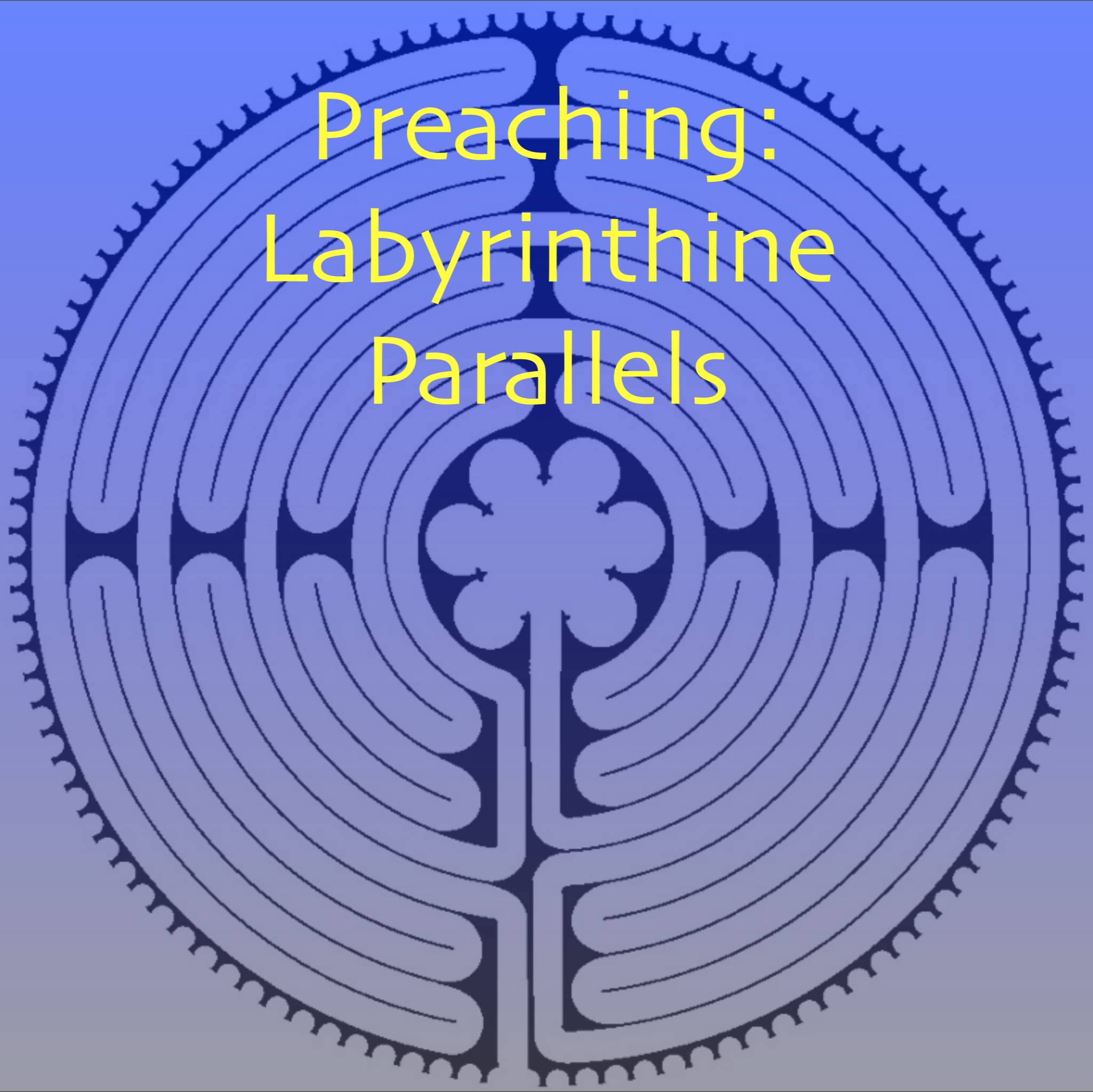
Share one or two feelings you experienced while praying.



What did God communicate to you?



Preaching: Labyrinthine Parallels



**There is no one “right way” to pray the labyrinth--
or preach!**





**The more you use a labyrinth, or preach,
the more natural it will become.**



**Curiosity is a good starting point.
The more open you are, the more God can speak!**



**Labyrinth experience
is a mirror of one's life.
Preaching also mirrors
your life.**

**God meets us when we pray--or when we preach.
Delight in those precious, holy moments!
Stay flexible. Let God lead!**



While the path is "predictable", what happens inside us is not!

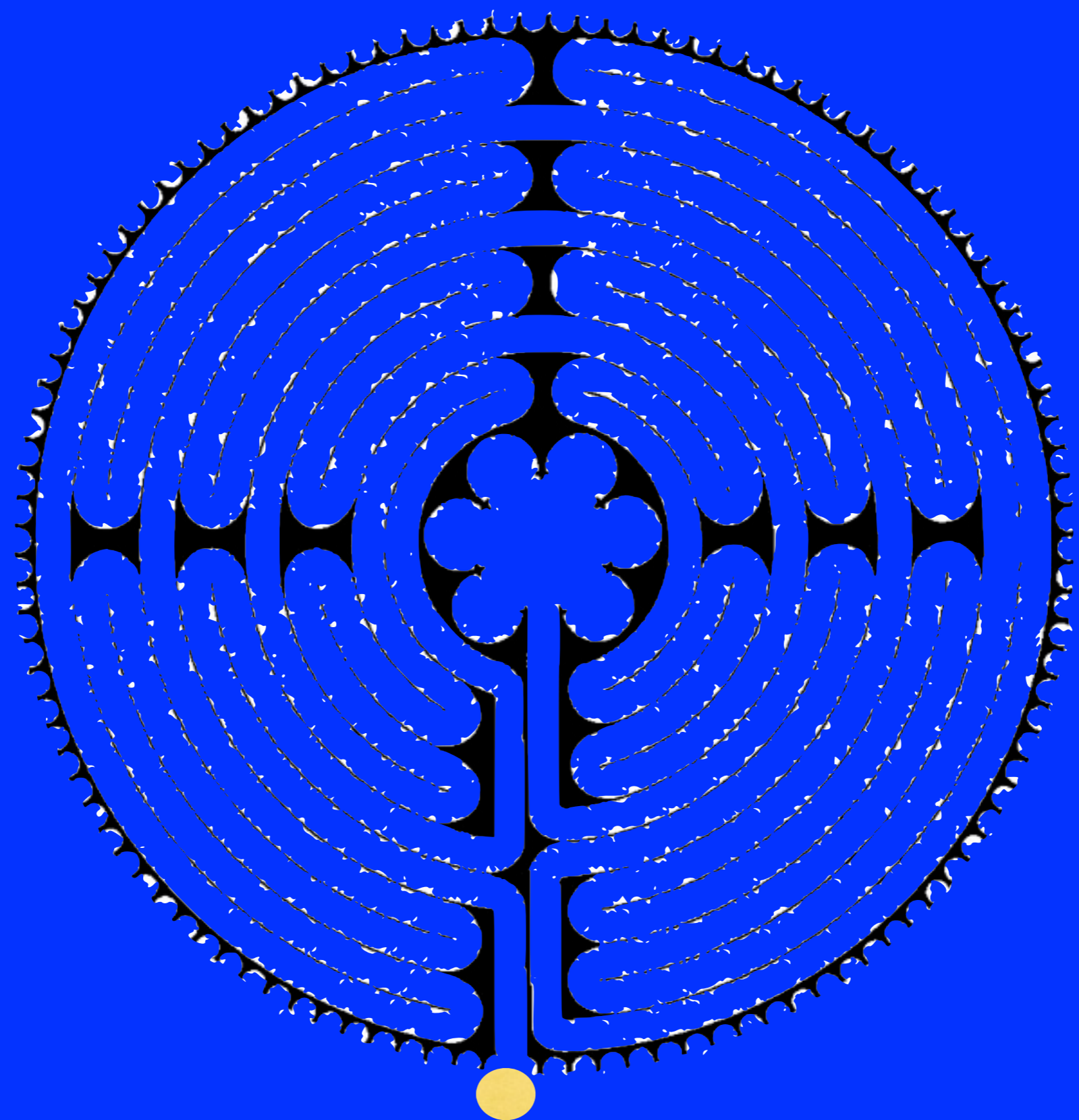


**We can't see what God is doing in others.
But experience and faith tells us,
God is working in them.**

A circular maze with a central floral design, rendered in a light blue color on a darker blue background. The maze is composed of many concentric, winding paths that eventually lead to a central area containing a stylized flower with six petals. The overall design is symmetrical and intricate.

Sermon Preparation and Delivery

Sermon Preparation



**Pause. Take a breath.
Listen with your heart.**





1. What is God communicating to you?



1. What is God communicating to you?

2. What does God want to communicate to the congregation?





**Prepare one hour
for each minute of preaching.**

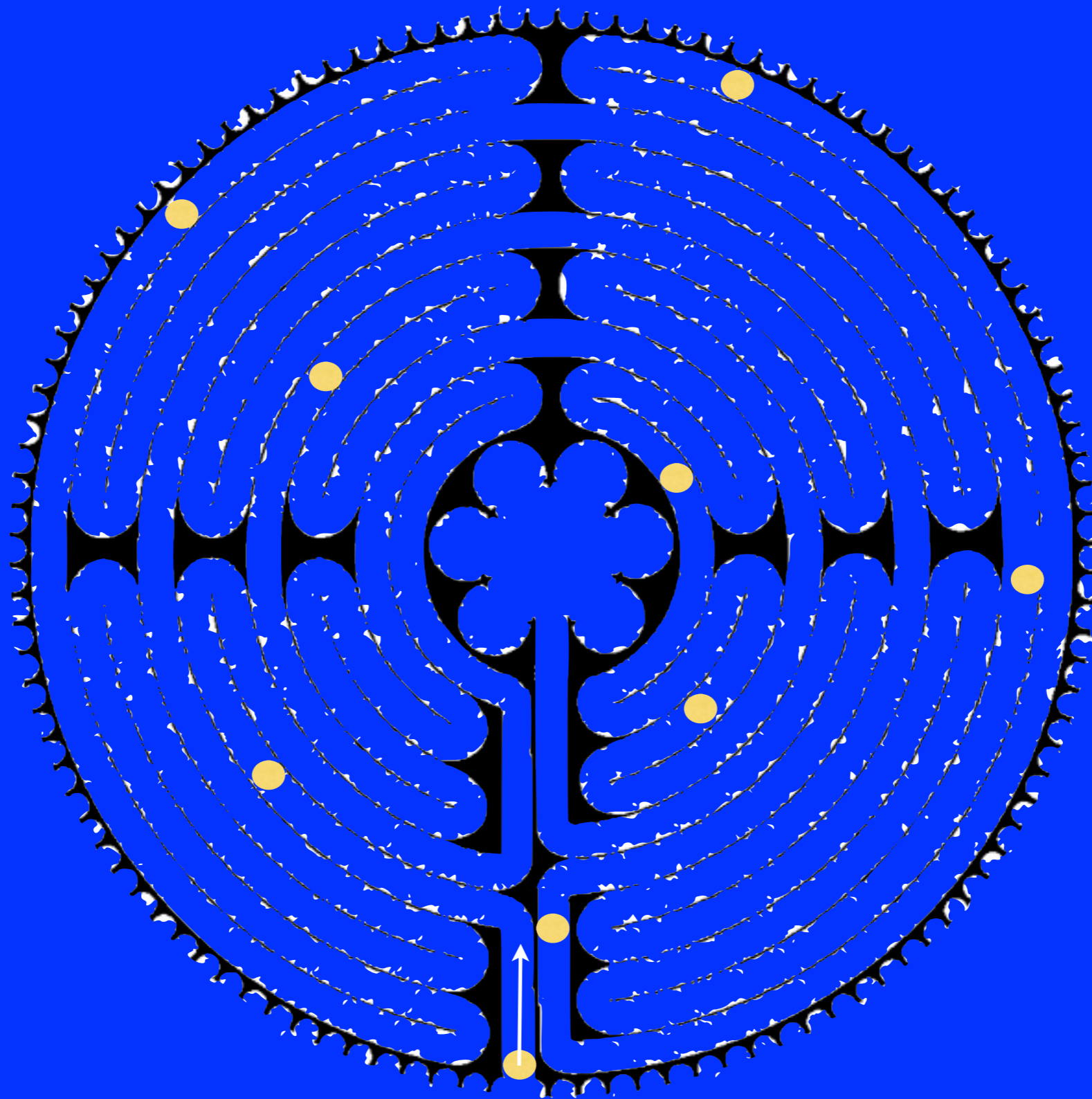
**Write out your whole sermon.
Preach from an outline.**





**Practice your sermon
OUT LOUD,
preferably looking in a
mirror!**

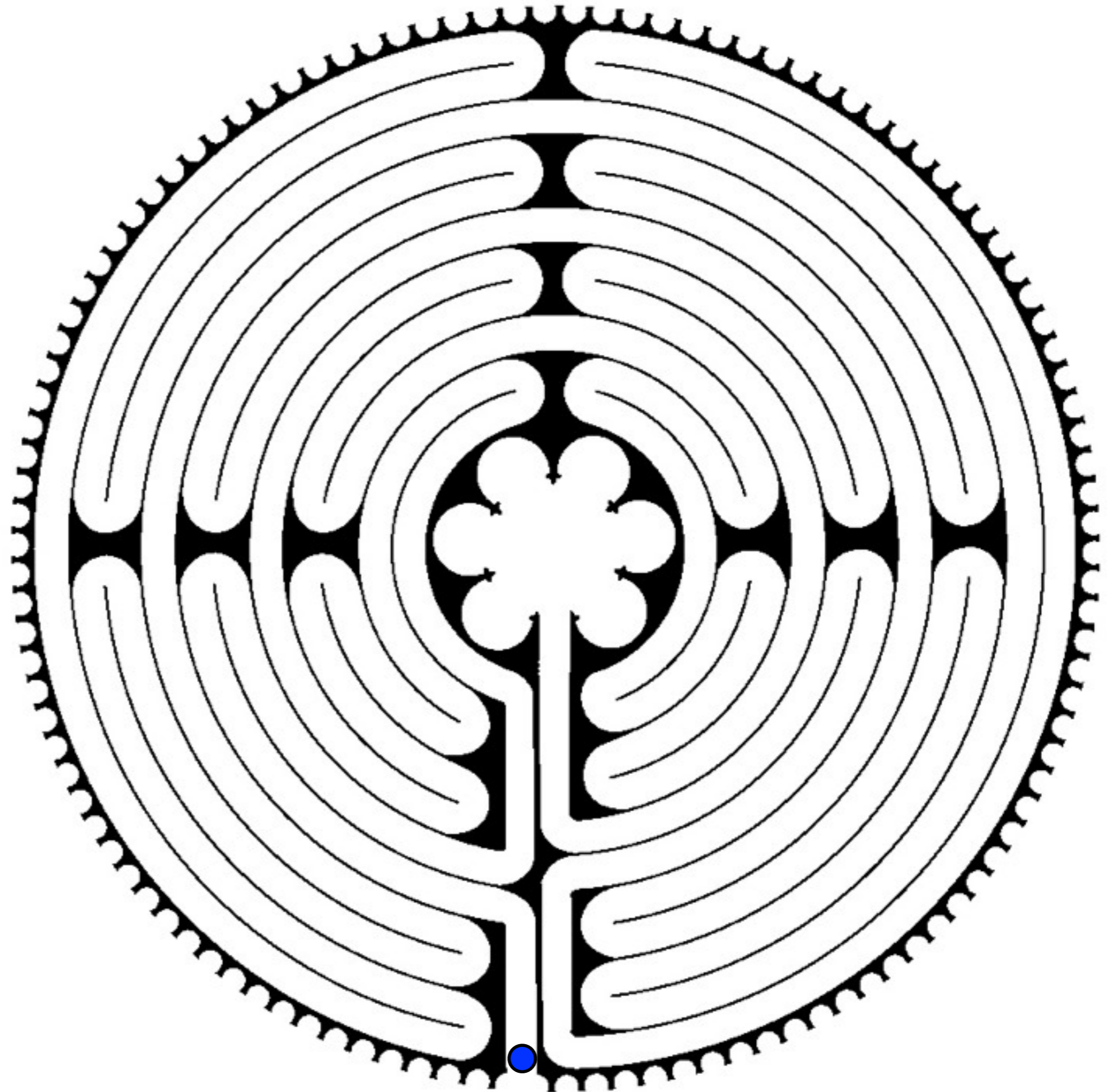
Moving Towards the Center: Getting to the Point (but not right away)!



**How you
begin
matters.**

**Start
strong!**

**Engage
your
audience
right
away!**

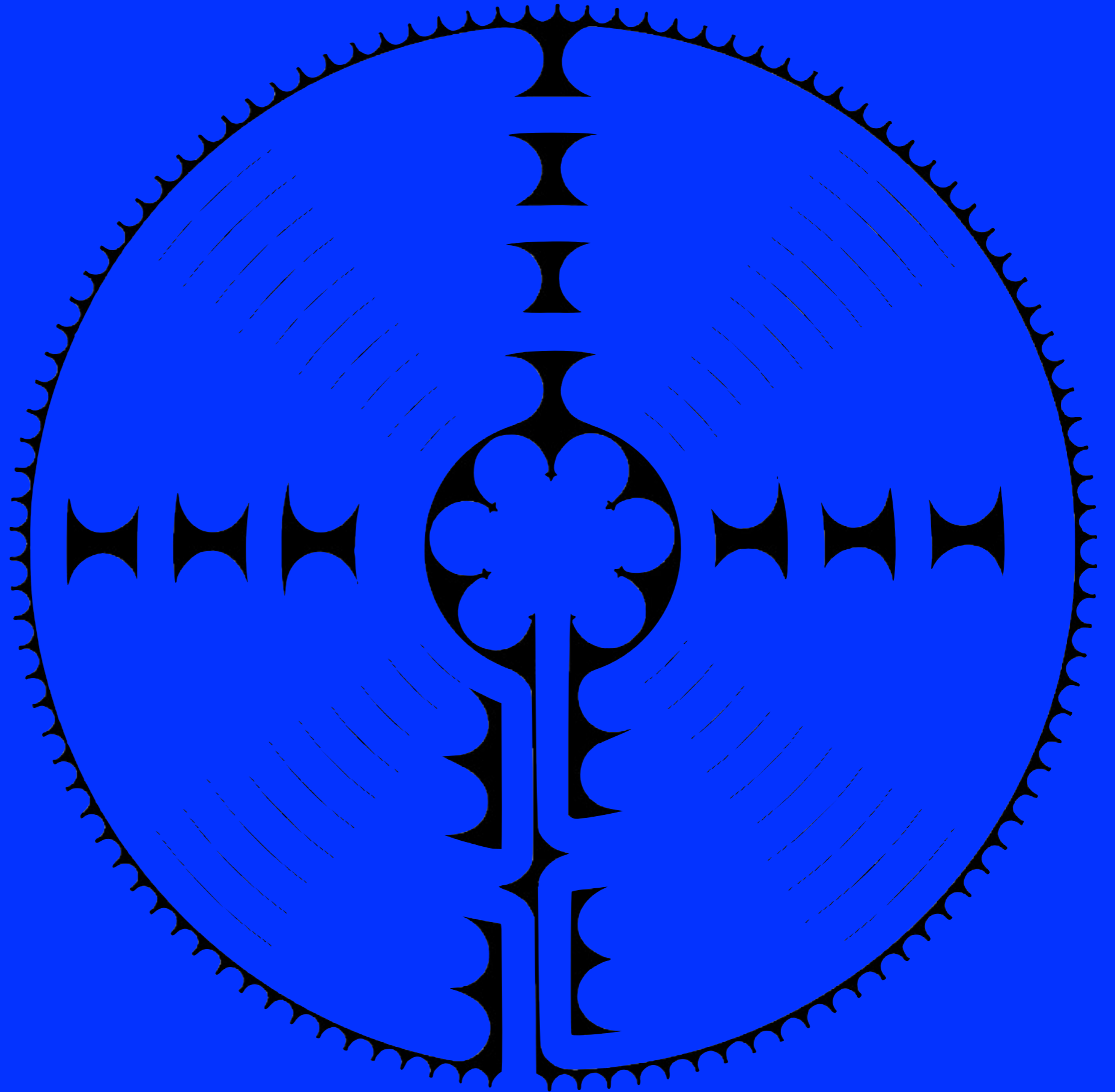


Find the pace that is right for you.



**Stay
connected
to the
underlying
structure
of your
sermon.**

**(Patterned
movement)**



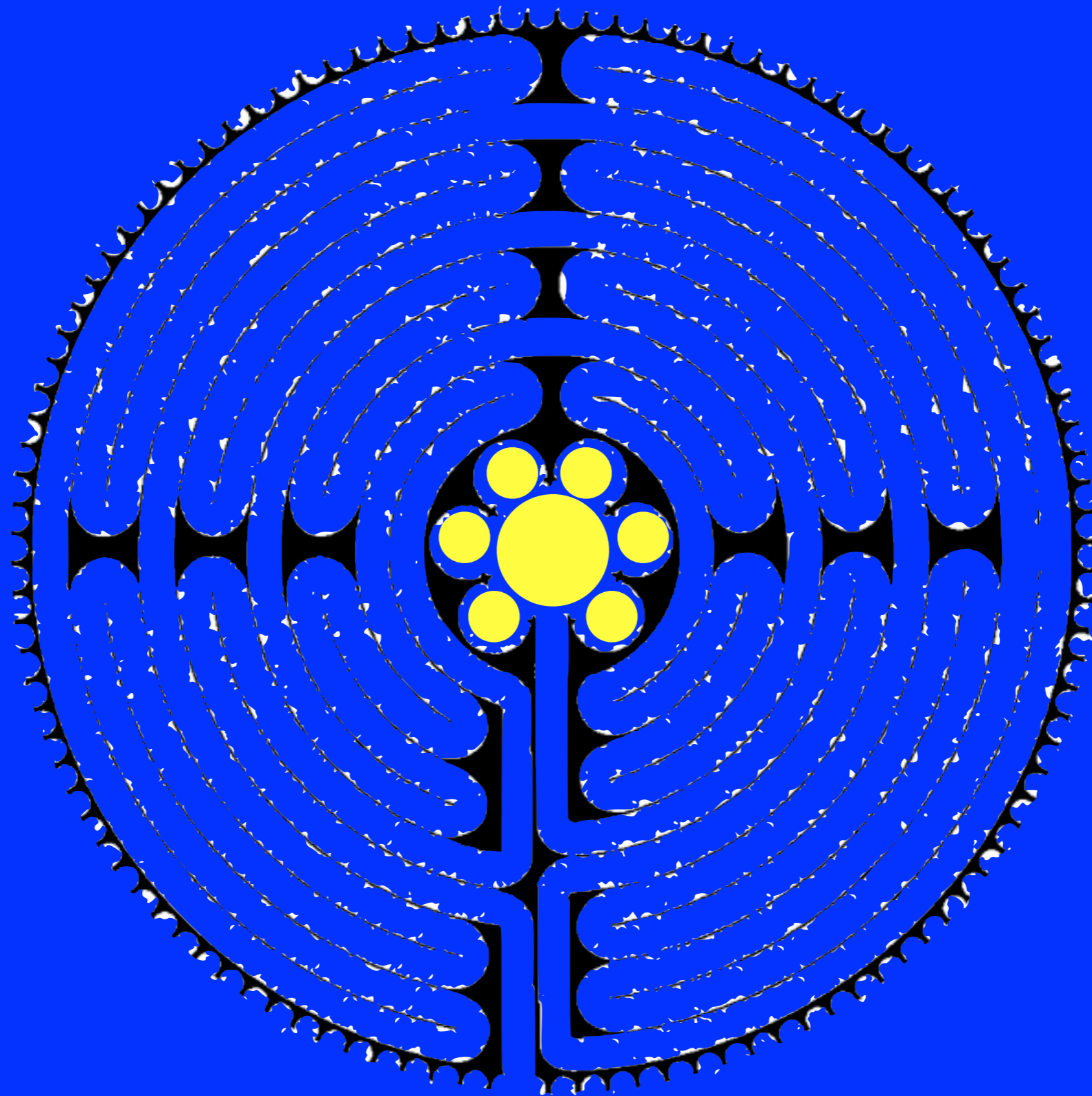
A group of people, including men and women in traditional Burmese attire (white shirts and long sarongs), are walking along a path made of flat stones. The path is laid out in a series of concentric, slightly irregular circles and a central straight line. The ground is a mix of dirt and sparse grass. In the background, there are several large, leafy trees and a few buildings, suggesting a park or a community area. The sky is overcast.

**It's a long journey;
but not too long!**

**Never stop listening to God.
Follow where the Holy Spirit leads
(even if it isn't planned).**



Resting in the Center: the experience of God's grace



**God is with you and with the congregation.
God is also waiting for each one of you.**



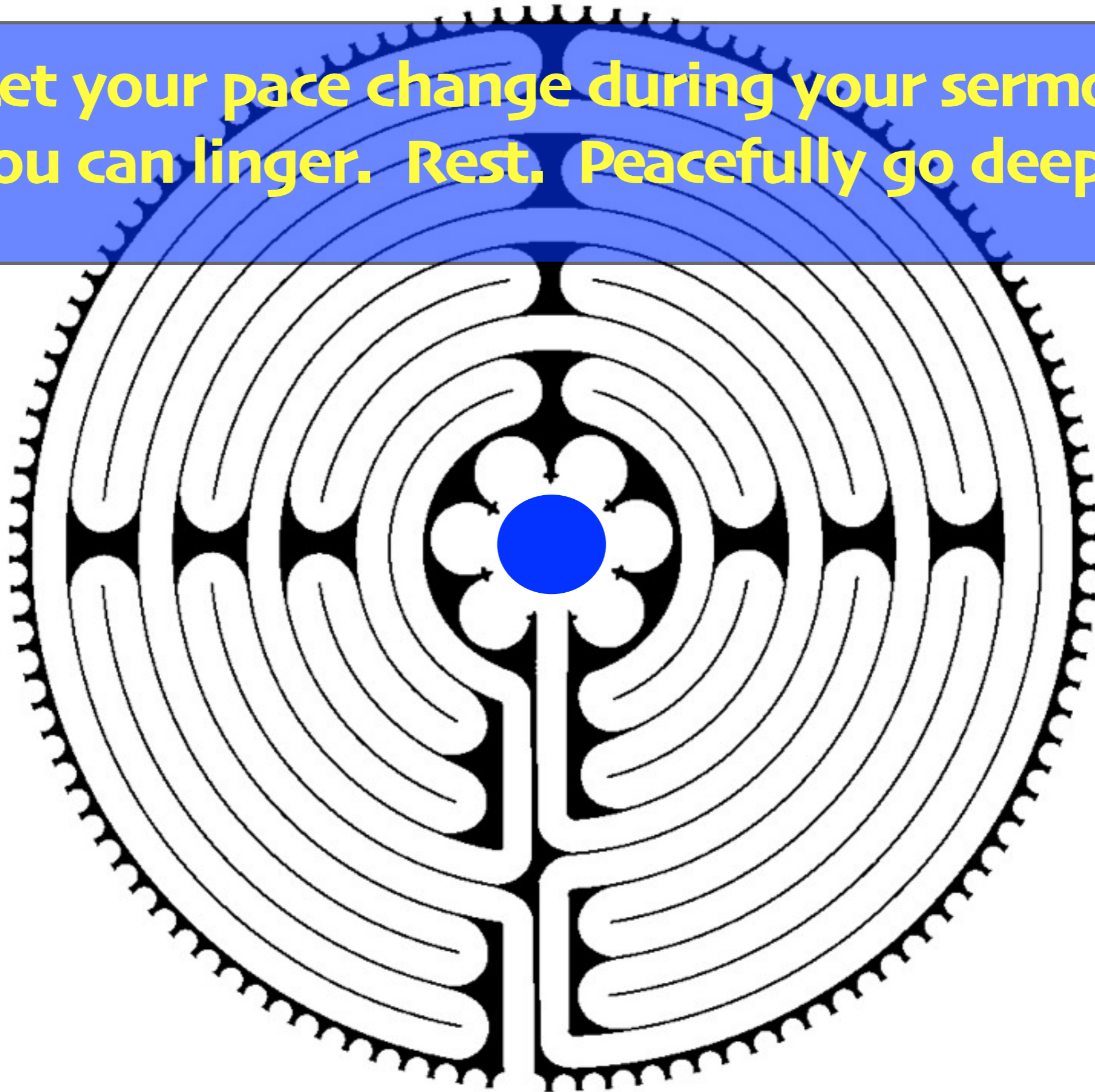


**Your job is to help people connect with God--
not just listen to you.**

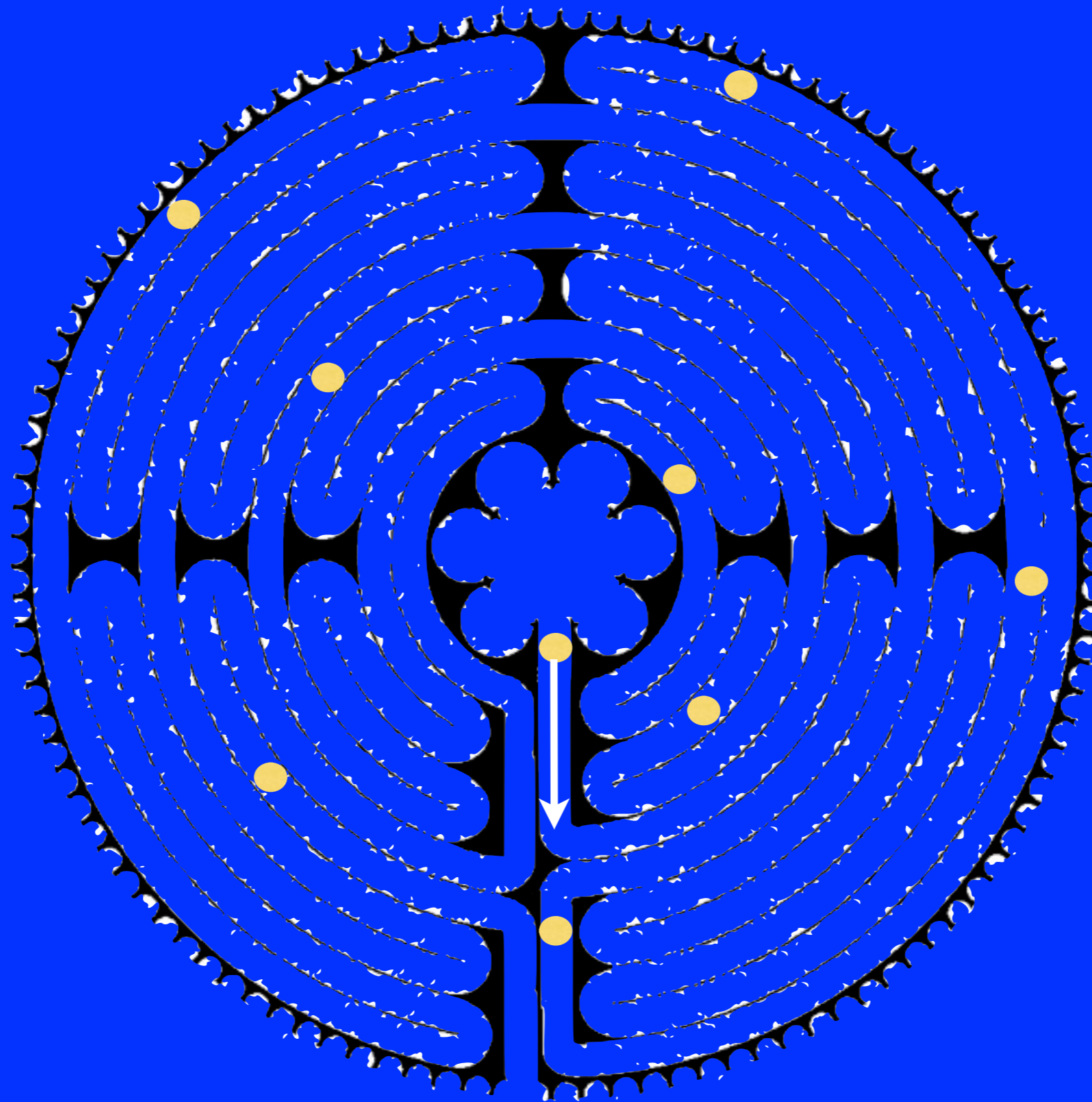
**What is the heart of your message?
How can you preach it in a way that
strengthens those who receive it?**



Let your pace change during your sermon.
You can linger. Rest. Peacefully go deeper.



The Way Back to Daily Life: helping people to integrate the message



A close-up photograph of a hand tracing a path through a wooden labyrinth. The labyrinth is circular and features a central figure, possibly a religious icon, surrounded by concentric, winding paths. The hand is positioned on the right side, with the index finger pointing into one of the paths. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting with wooden beams.

What next?

**How can your congregation
live out what you are preaching?
Be concrete! Be contextual!**

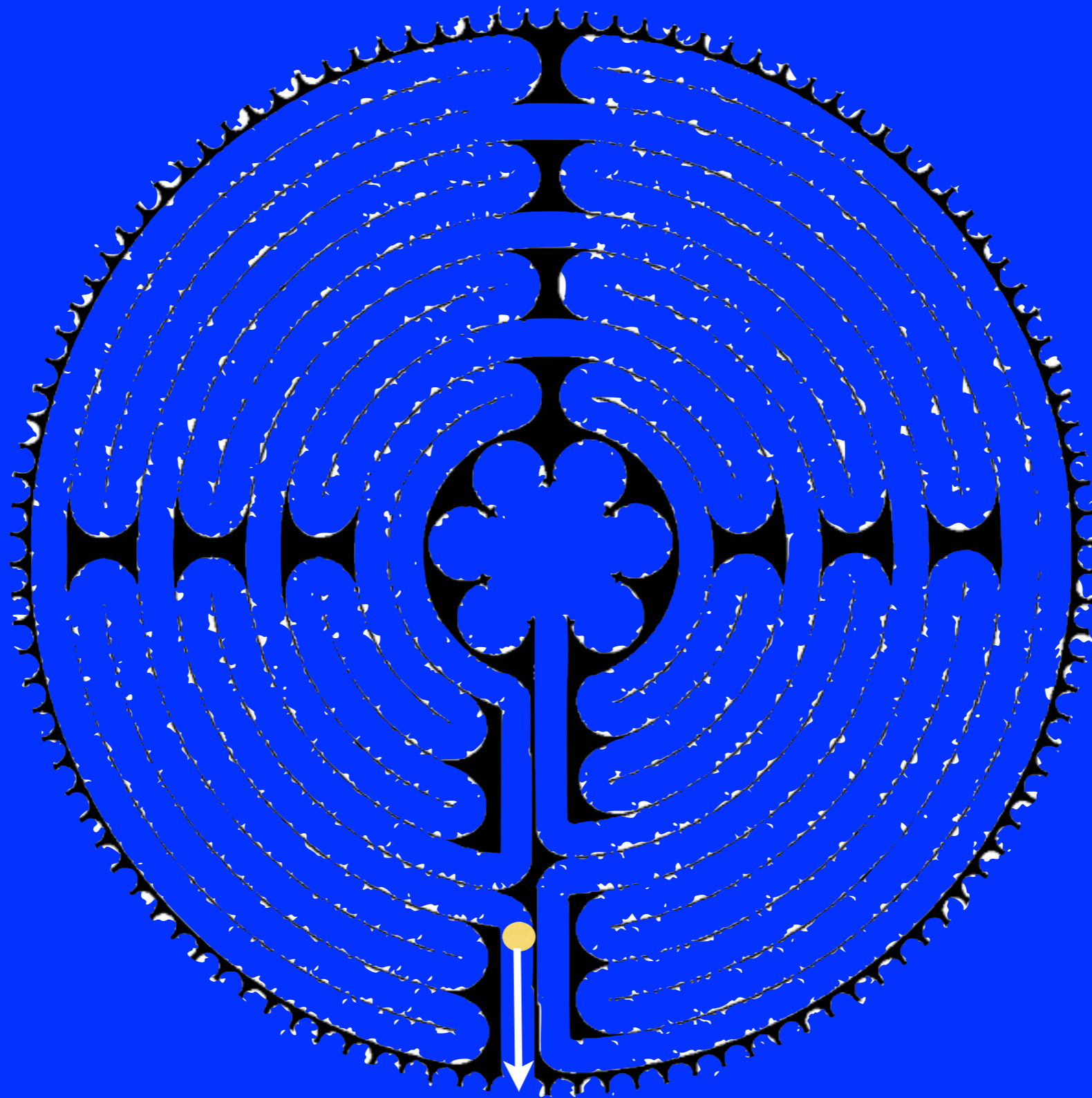
Don't let yourself be distracted.

**People may do odd things during your sermon,
keep focused on preaching!**

**Don't limit God
because you don't know what is going on!**



Finishing Strong: Your conclusion



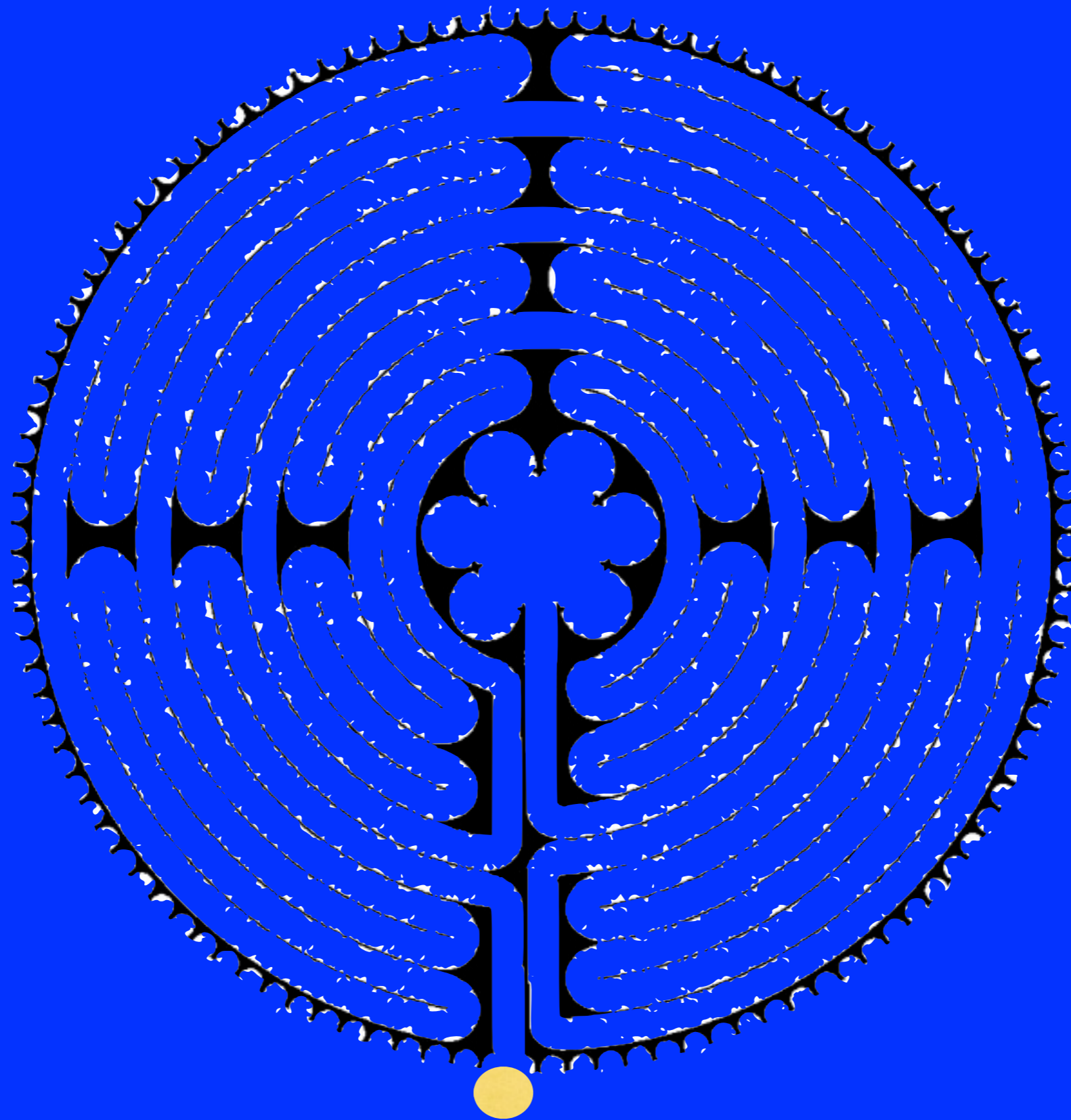
A close-up photograph of a circular wooden labyrinth. The labyrinth is intricately carved into the wood, featuring a central floral or star-like pattern. A hand is visible in the lower right corner, with a finger tracing a path through the maze. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.


**Invite the congregation
to pray with you.
Ask God to make the sermon live.**

**Give people time to really pray.
Let them respond to what God has communicated.**



Revisting Your Sermon Experience: Personal Reflection and Growth



A large circular labyrinth is drawn on a dirt and grass area. The labyrinth consists of many concentric, winding paths that spiral outwards from a central point. The paths are drawn with a light-colored material, possibly chalk or paint. The surrounding area includes a white fence in the background, some greenery, and a blue pipe in the upper right. A wooden bench is visible in the bottom right corner.

**What
was effective
or helpful?**

What did God teach me?

**What
was effective
or helpful?**



A large circular labyrinth is drawn on a lawn with yellow text overlays. The labyrinth consists of many concentric, winding paths that spiral inward toward a central point. The paths are drawn with a thick yellow line. The surrounding area is a mix of grass and dirt. In the background, there is a white fence and some greenery. A blue pipe is visible on the right side of the image. A wooden bench is partially visible in the bottom right corner.

What did God teach me?

**What
was effective
or helpful?**

What would I do differently if I could preach the sermon over?

How can I use the feedback I received to grow



How can I use the feedback I received to grow

as a preacher?



How can I use the feedback I received to grow

as a preacher?

as a pastor?



How can I use the feedback I received to grow

as a preacher?

as a pastor?

as a person?



How can I use the feedback I received to grow

as a preacher?

as a pastor?

as a person?

Suggestion: tape your sermons and listen/watch yourself.



Silence
for prayer:
"God,
what are you
communicating?"

AND
COURAGE.

WISDOM,

LOVE,

PEACE,

BE SAFE
AND WELL



**Be Safe and Well
Peace,
Love,
(Wisdom),
and
Courage**



**Be Safe and Well
Peace,
Love,
(Wisdom),
and
Courage**

**Egyptian blessing for those
leaving on pilgrimage**



ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Jill's email: jill.geoffrion@fhlglobal.org



Suggestions from Pulpit

Let us See What Love Can Do

© Music - Francis Gurtz
Lyrics - William Penn

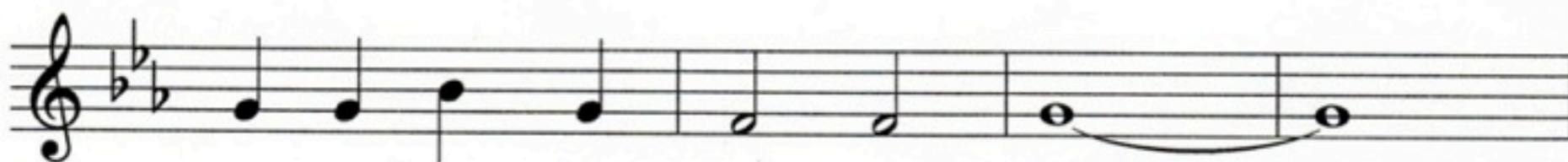
Canon

1



Let us see what love can do,

2



let us see what love can do,

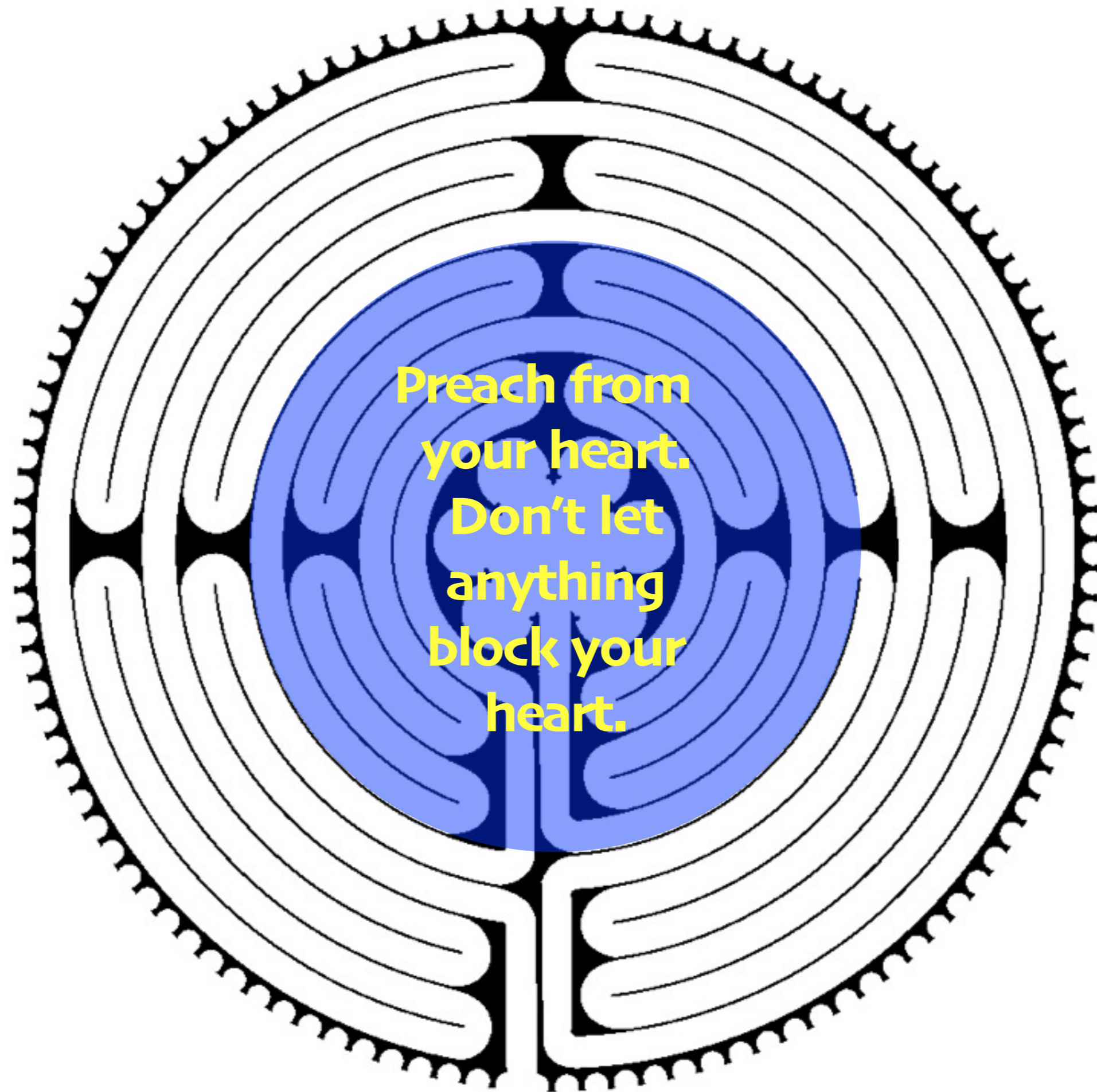
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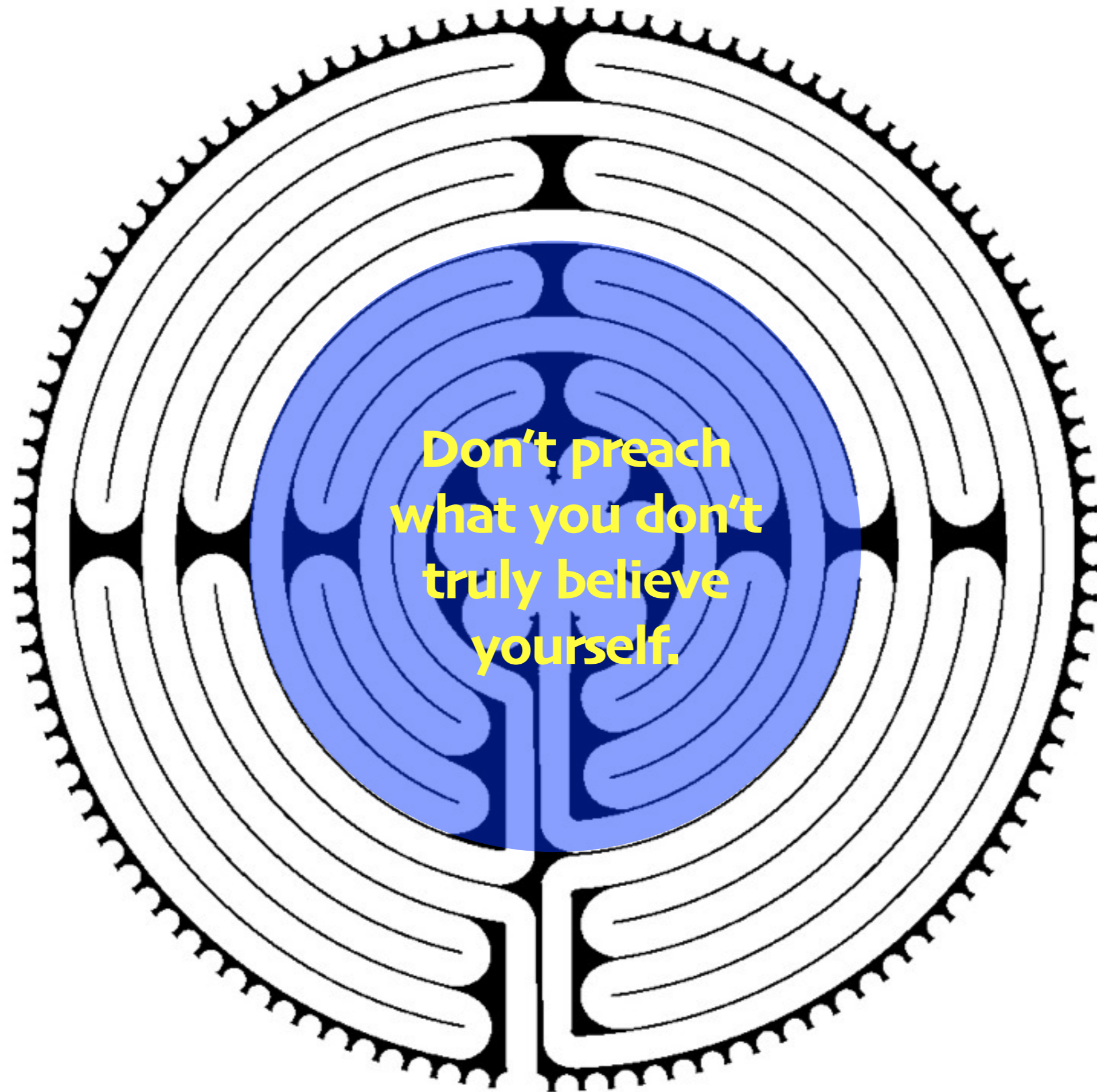
let us see what love can do.



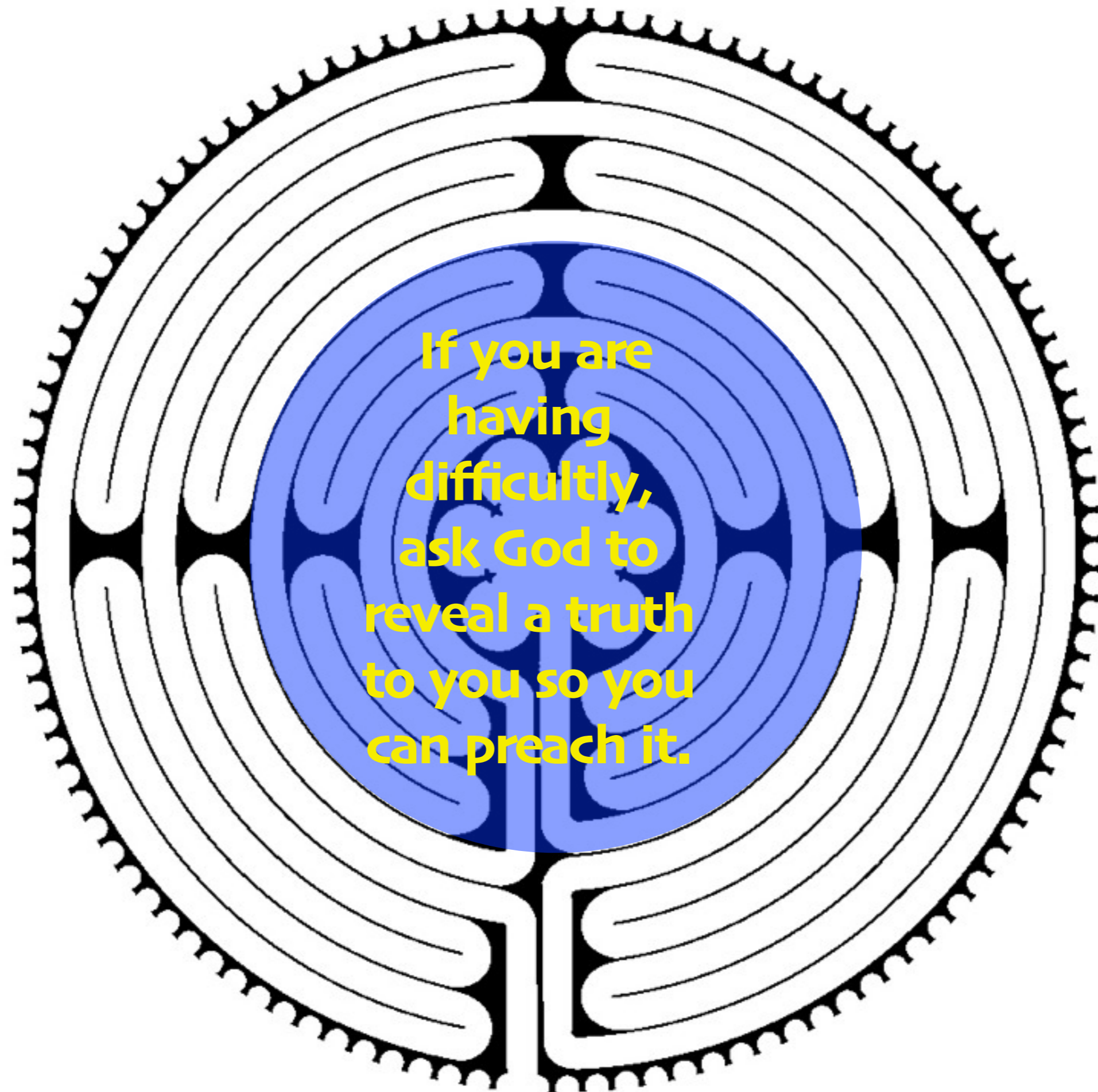
Asking
your
questions



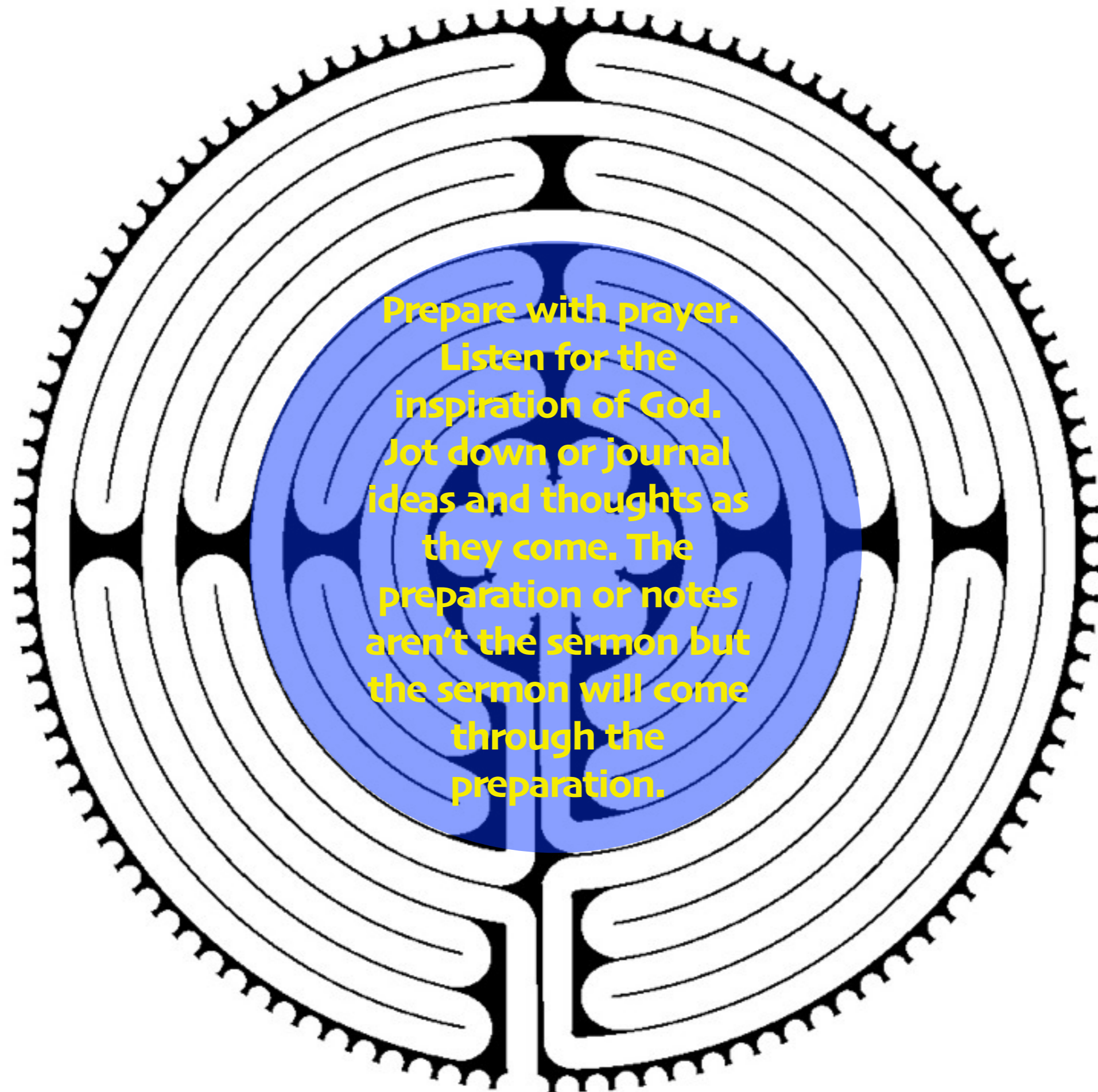
**Preach from
your heart.
Don't let
anything
block your
heart.**



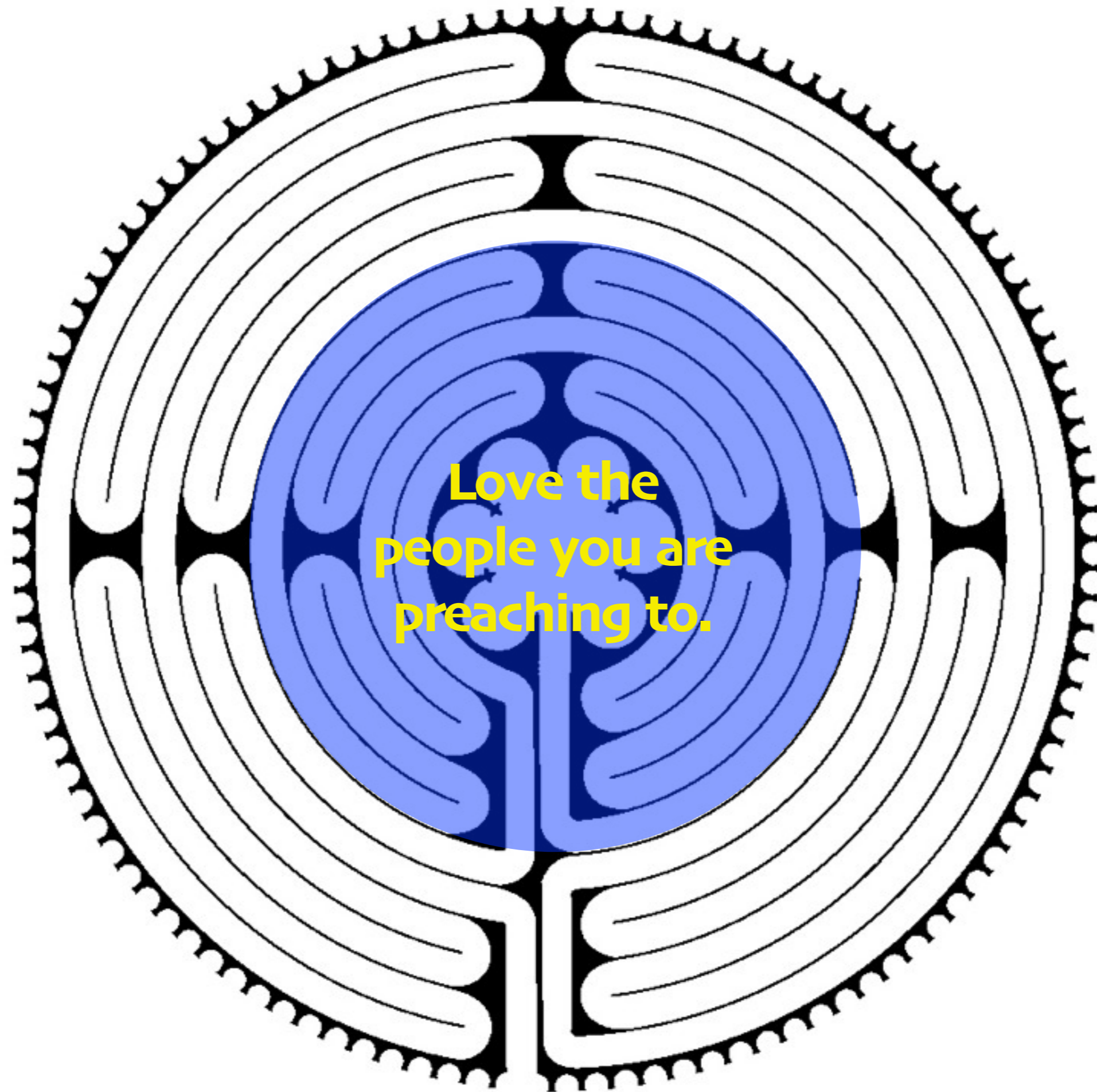
**Don't preach
what you don't
truly believe
yourself.**



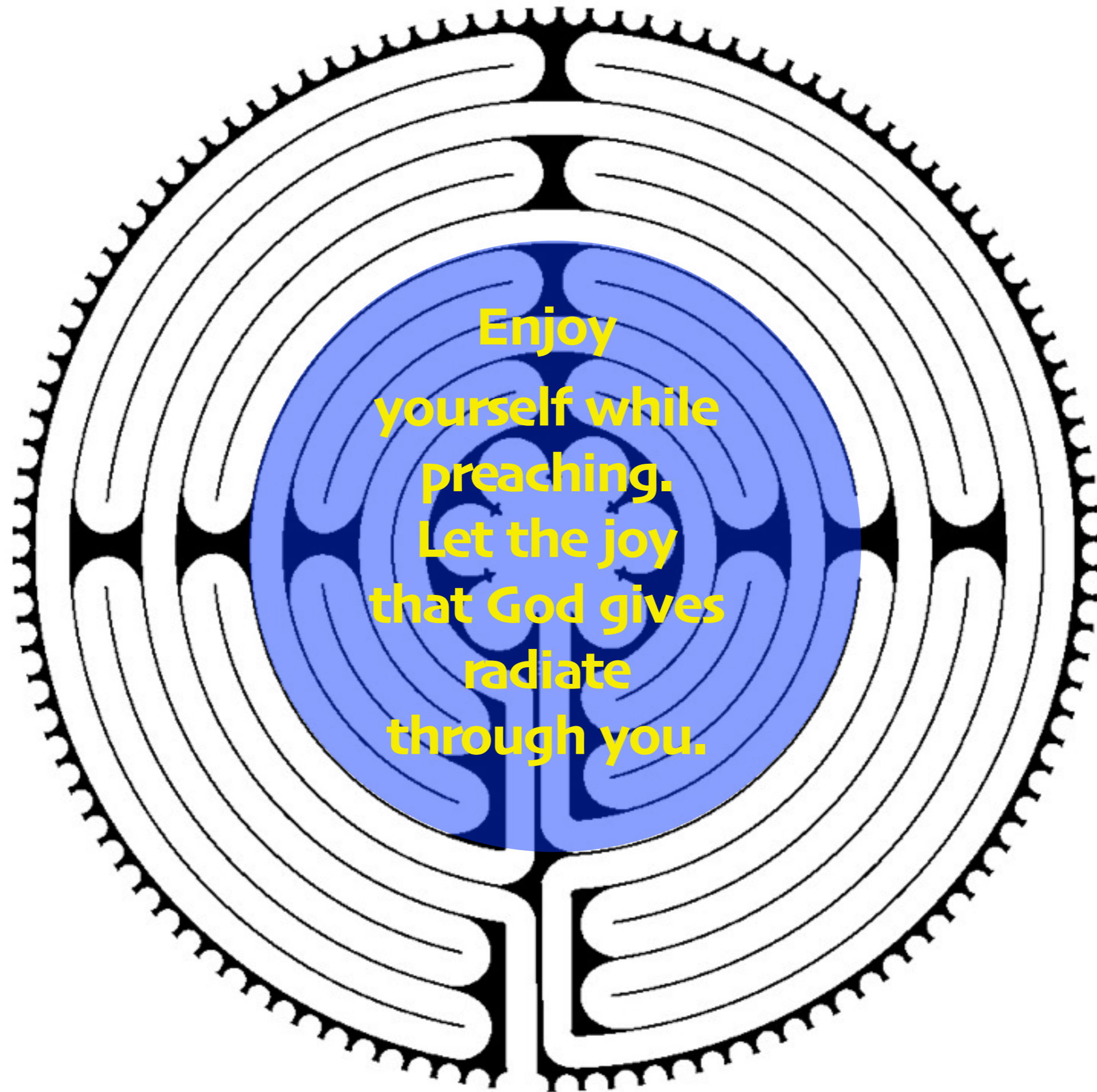
If you are
having
difficulty,
ask God to
reveal a truth
to you so you
can preach it.



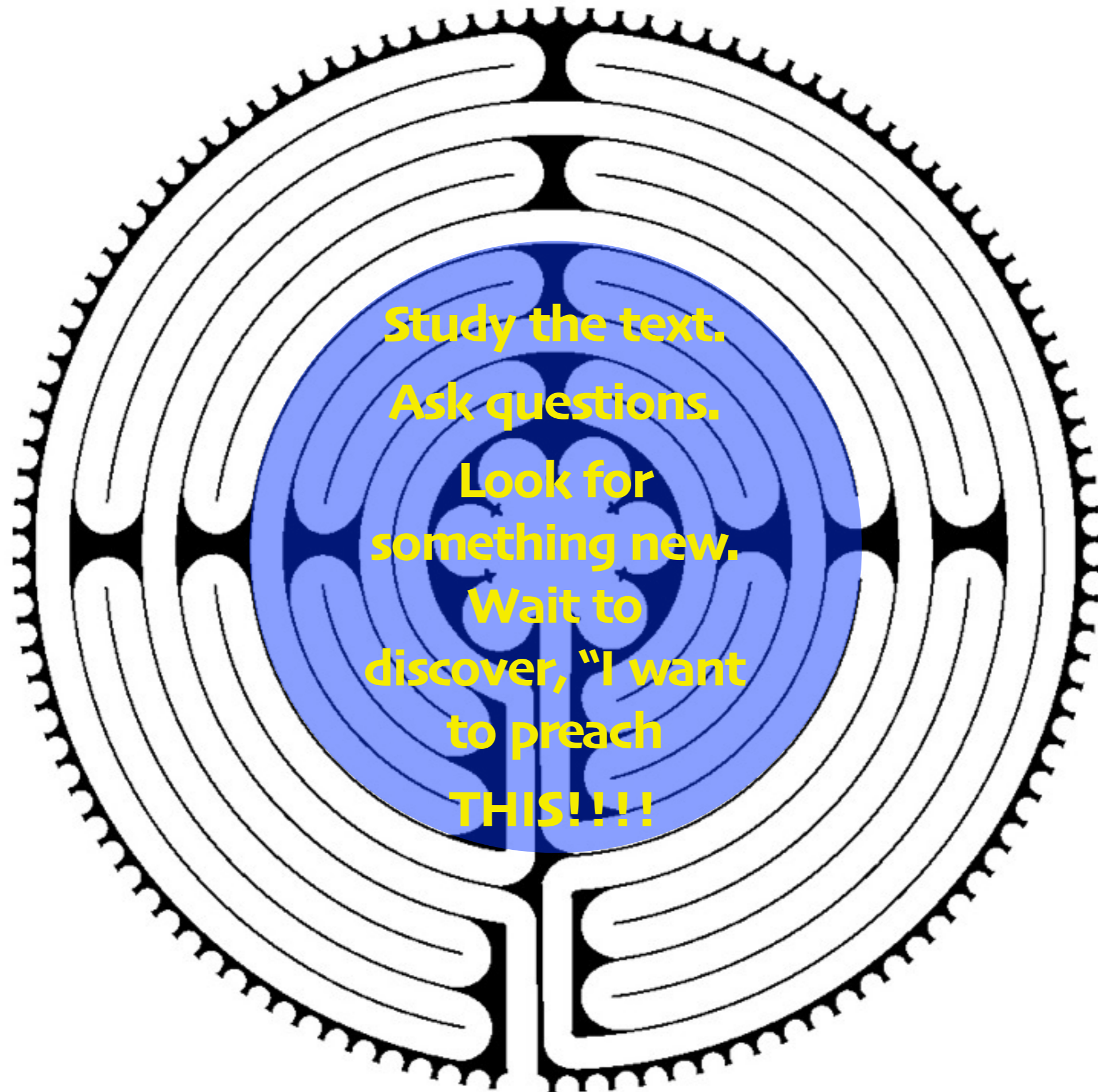
**Prepare with prayer.
Listen for the
inspiration of God.
Jot down or journal
ideas and thoughts as
they come. The
preparation or notes
aren't the sermon but
the sermon will come
through the
preparation.**



**Love the
people you are
preaching to.**



**Enjoy
yourself while
preaching.
Let the joy
that God gives
radiate
through you.**



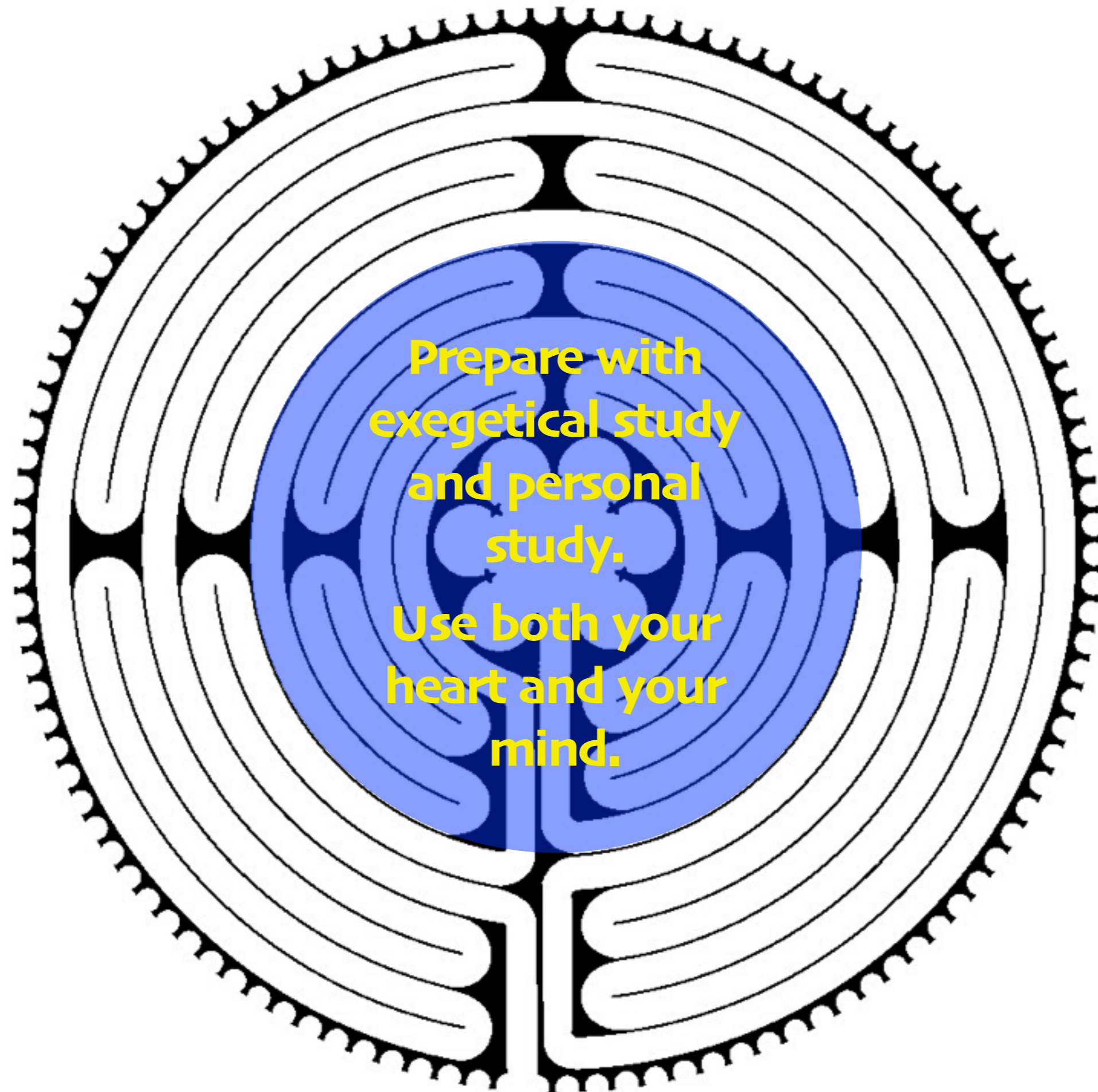
Study the text.

Ask questions.

**Look for
something new.**

**Wait to
discover, "I want
to preach**

THIS!!!!

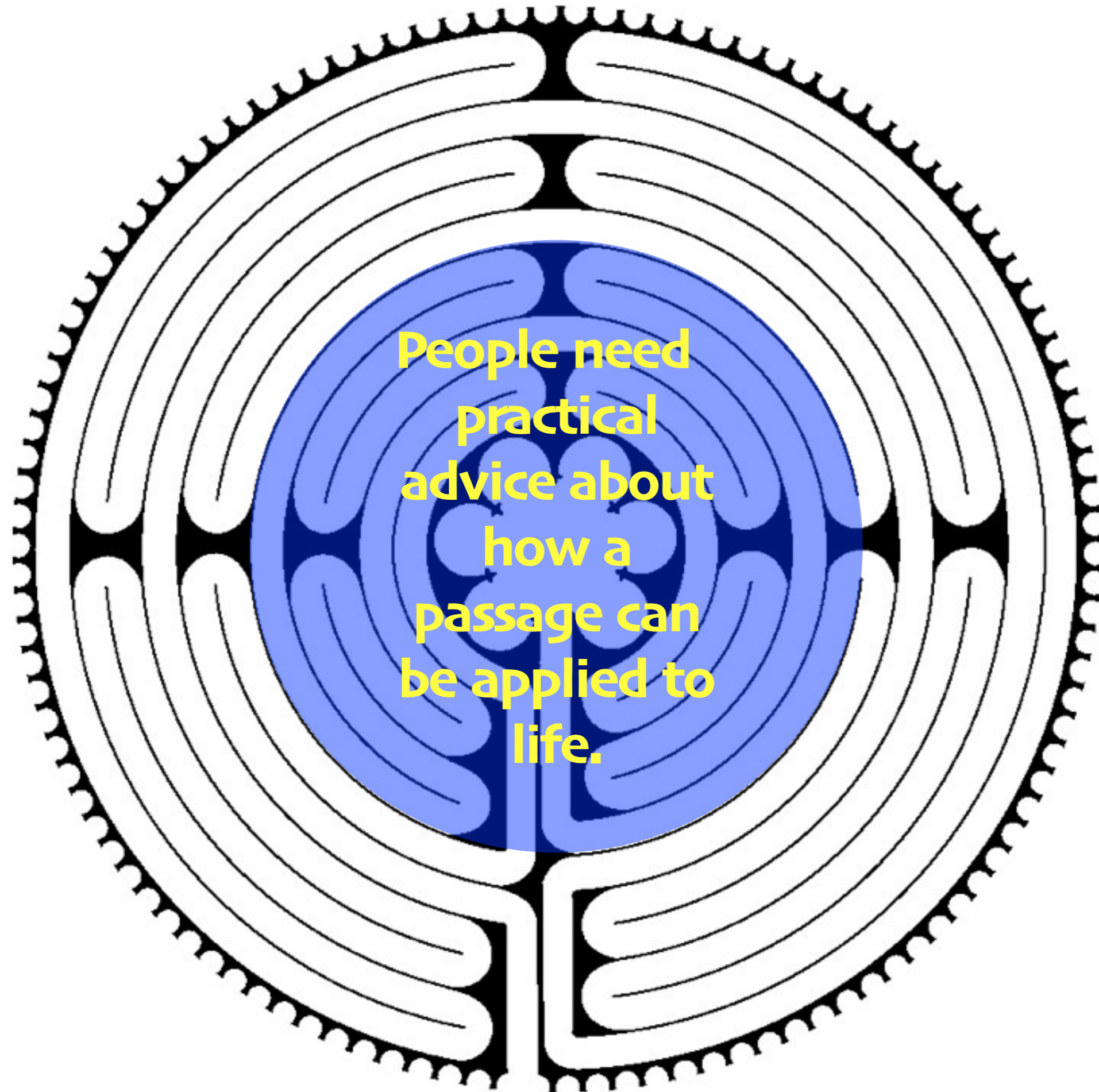


**Prepare with
exegetical study
and personal
study.**

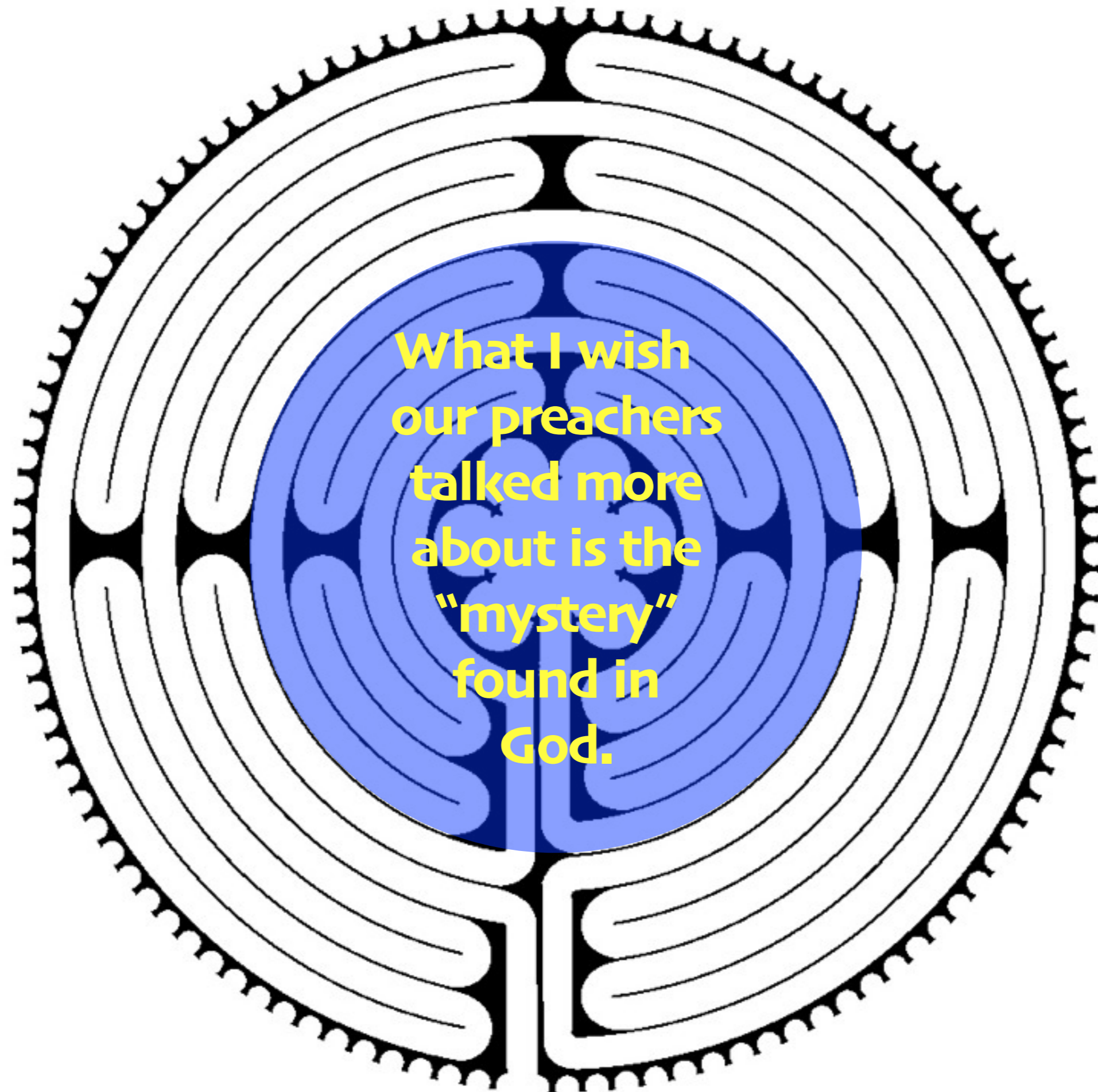
**Use both your
heart and your
mind.**



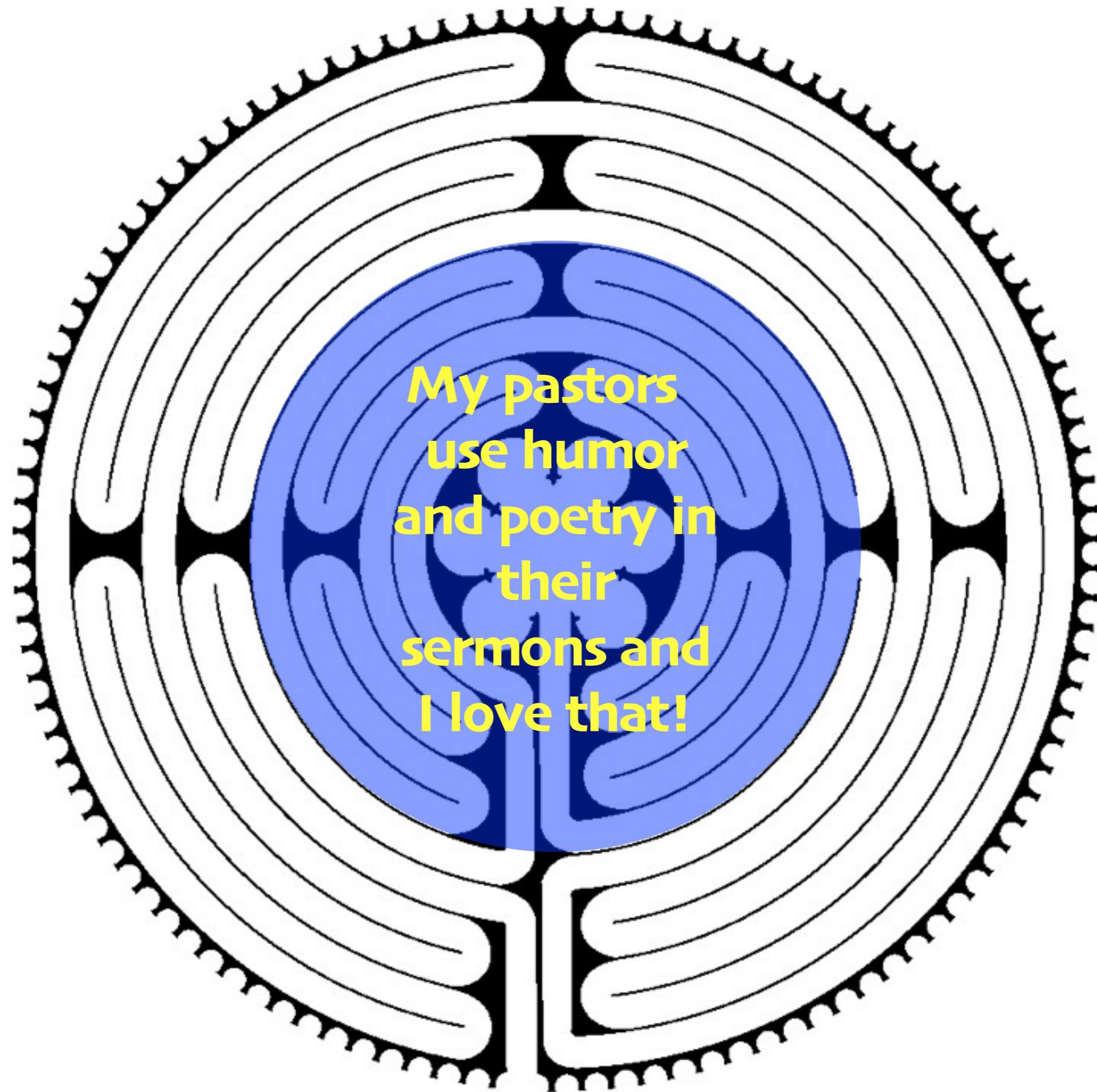
Suggestions
from
the Pews



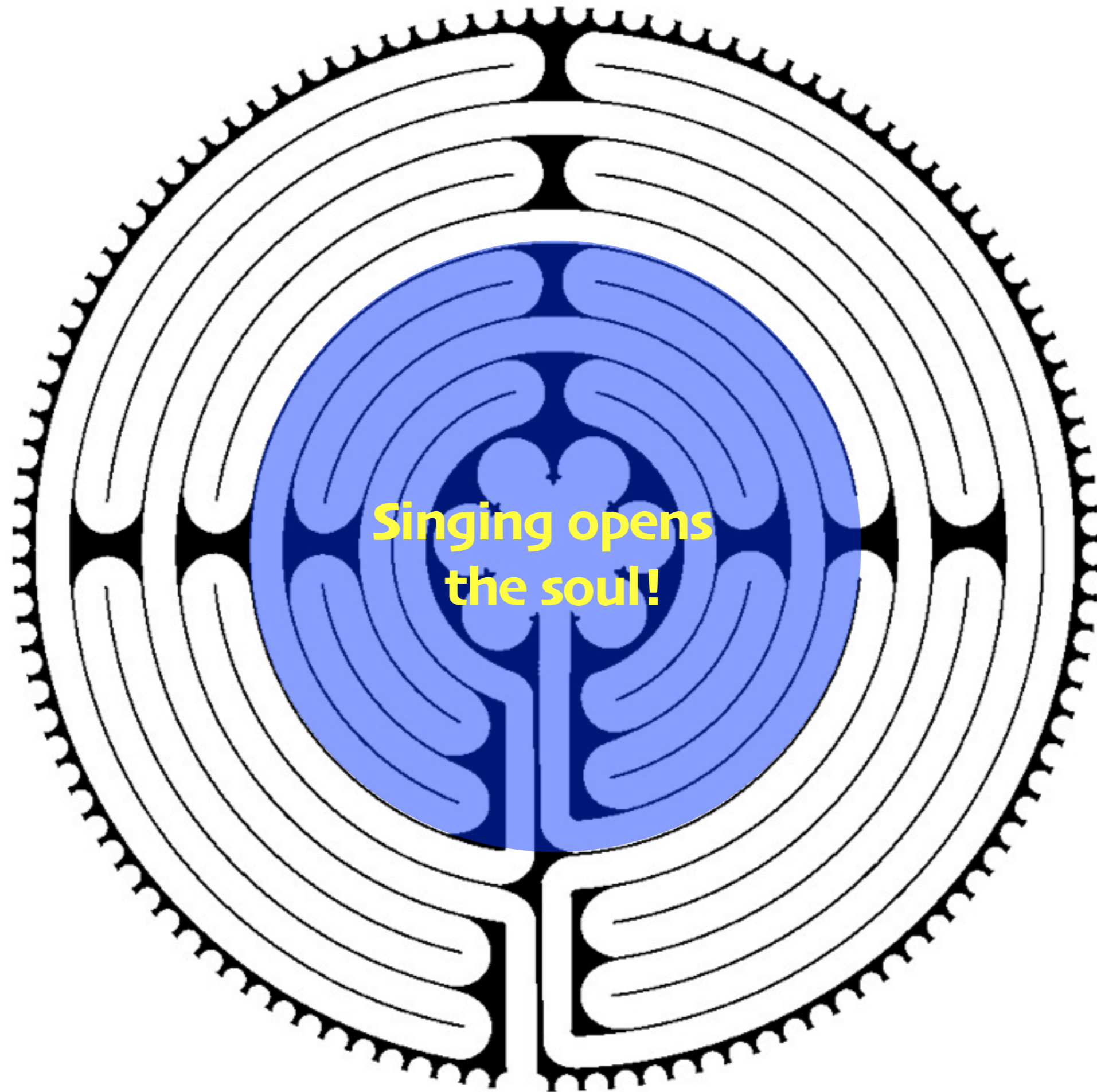
People need
practical
advice about
how a
passage can
be applied to
life.



**What I wish
our preachers
talked more
about is the
"mystery"
found in
God.**



**My pastors
use humor
and poetry in
their
sermons and
I love that!**



**Singing opens
the soul!**

Franciscan Benediction

May God bless you with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths,
and superficial relationships
So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
At injustice, oppression,
and exploitation of people,
So that you may work for justice,
freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears
To shed for those who suffer pain,
rejection, hunger, and war,
So that you may reach out your hand
to comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
To believe that you can make a difference
in the world,
So that you can do what others claim
cannot be done
To bring justice and kindness
to all our children and the poor.

Amen.



ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Jill's email: jill.geoffrion@fhlglobal.org