

Walking the Labyrinth As a Spiritual Tool

Prepared and Presented in Asia, 2009

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Prayer: Connection with God

Labyrinth prayer: moving connection with God

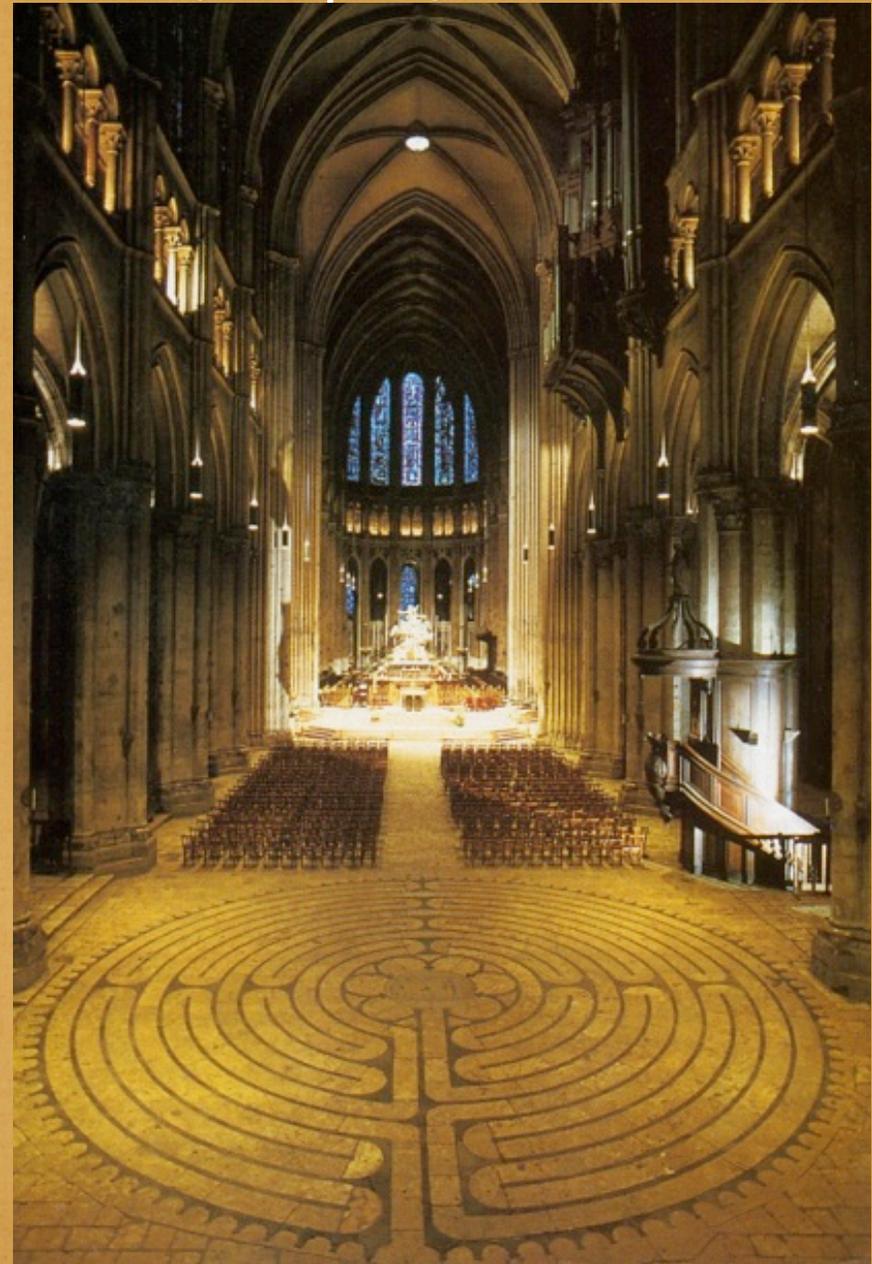


A labyrinth is a pathway that turns back on itself
(changes direction) before reaching a center.



Millenium Park Slate & Grass Labyrinth, Plymouth, Minnesota, USA

Why is labyrinth prayer becoming so popular world-wide?
It provides a “new” way to pray.



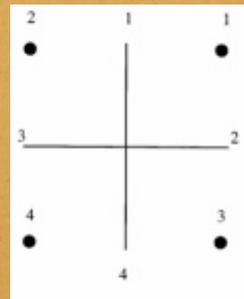
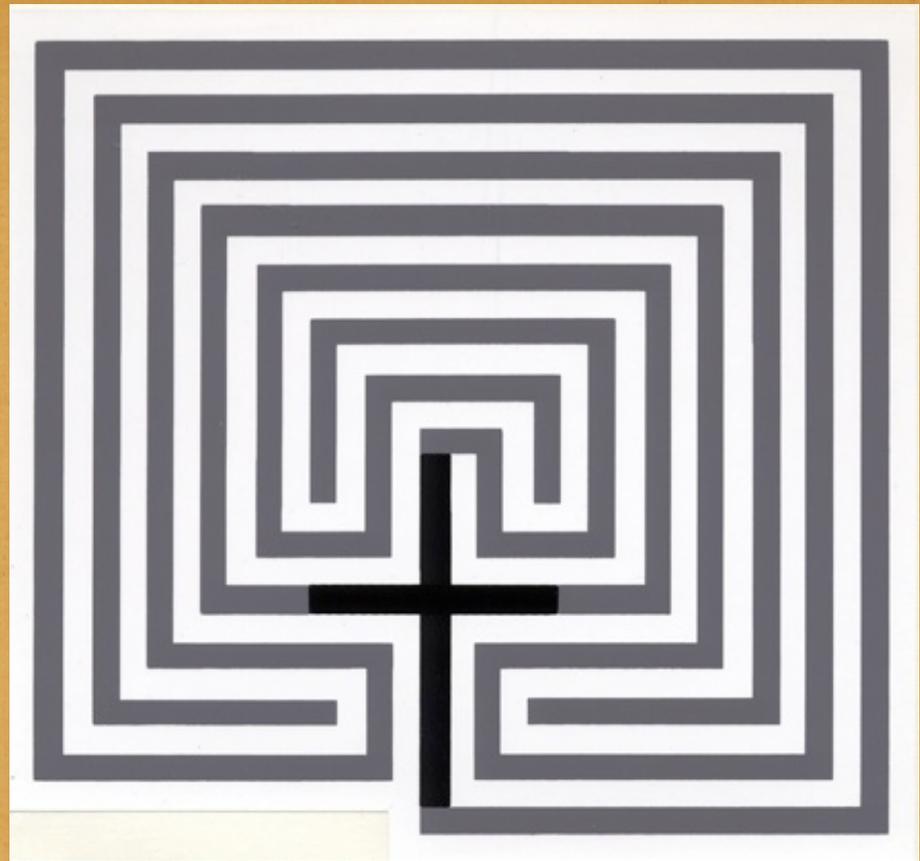
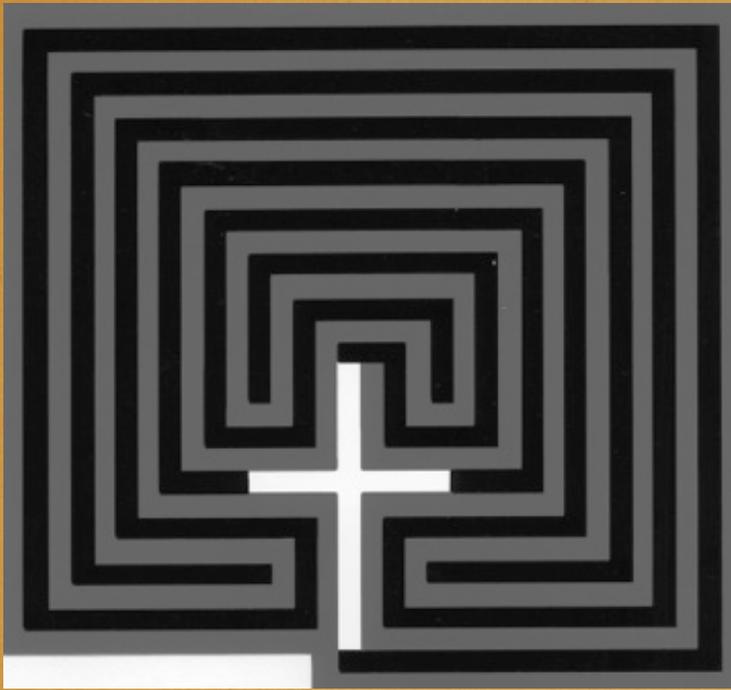
Labyrinth installed in a church in France in 1201 AD

Journeying with God, The Path, Following God's way...
There are many biblical concepts that relate to praying the labyrinth.

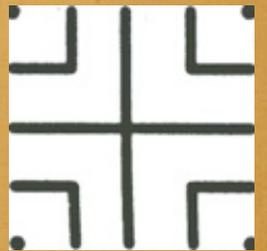


Glenridge Residence Concrete and brick labyrinth, Atlanta Georgia (USA)

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

Jesus walks with you as you move on the labyrinth.



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

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

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

1. People to encounter God in an intentional and extended way.

Example: “As I was moving I began praising God...”



What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

2. People report a transformation in their thinking and feeling.
Example: "When I started I was sad. While I was walking I began to feel joy."



San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California (USA)

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

3. Unarticulated hopes, dreams, values, concerns, priorities, memories, perspectives, and insights surface.

Example: "For the first time I felt that things could change..."



Franciscan Retreat Center, Phoenix, Arizona (USA)

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

4. It allows people to realize scriptural truth at a deeper level.

Example: “As I went around and around I came to understand that God really is the light of the whole world.”



Kitgum Labyrinth, Uganda Photo© Lynn Coghill

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

5. It is a special place where one can go to be with God.

Example: "I need a quiet place to pray. The labyrinth is my prayer village..."



11 circuit Chartres-style labyrinth, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California (USA)

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

6. It is a spiritual practice ground.

Example: “As I prayed, I realized that many of my prayers are very short. I want to find a way to pray for longer, the way I did on the labyrinth.”



Rancho de los Caballeros, Wickenburg, Arizona (USA)

What are the benefits of labyrinth prayer?

7. It allows people to understand more about their lives and faith.
Example: "As I walked, God showed how He has been working in my life."



People enjoy praying with their whole bodies,
not just their minds.



Labyrinth of Life, Lakeshore stones on mulch, DeepHaven Retreats, Minnesota (USA)

Most people report feeling calm and peaceful during and after praying a labyrinth.



Grass labyrinth, Camp Courage, MN (USA)

People pray the labyrinth in the many ways
that they usually enjoy praying.
There is no one “right way” to pray the labyrinth.



Yale University students praying the labyrinth (USA)

There is always just one path that always leads to the center.
You can not “get lost” when praying on a labyrinth, but you can get turned around.



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

If you get “turned around” on the path,
you will either end up at the threshold or the center. If that happens,
decide where *your* prayer is inviting you to go.



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

The pace with which you pray the labyrinth will vary. This is okay.



When starting to walk after another person, give him/her a little space to find his/her own pace.



Episcopal Cathedral, Phoenix, Arizona (USA)

If you meet someone going the opposite direction, do whatever you would usually do if you met someone on a narrow path.



7 circuit mounded earth labyrinth, Mendocino, California (USA) Photo © Cindy Pavlinak

God can use everything that happens during your labyrinth prayer to teach, encourage, and guide you. Pray the labyrinth as if you were looking into a mirror to understand more of what God wants you to see.



Grandmother and grandbaby, Labyrinth of Life, DeepHaven Retreats, Minnesota (USA)

Approach your labyrinth prayer with curiosity.
Be open to discovering what God may communicate in this safe environment.



Friends and Family Labyrinth, DeepHaven Retreat Center, Minnesota (USA)

Sometimes people pray the labyrinth by themselves.



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

Sometimes people pray the labyrinth
with a prayer partner.



Companion Labyrinth, DeepHaven Retreat Center, Minnesota, USA

Sometimes people pray the labyrinth while others pray for them, “watching” with eyes of faith.



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

Sometimes people pray the labyrinth by themselves (but as part of a group).



Companion Labyrinth made of stones on mulch, DeepHaven Retreat Center, Minnesota (USA)

Sometimes people pray the labyrinth
as a group.



Canvas painted labyrinth, International Labyrinth Society Gathering Atlanta, GA (USA) 2008

Today we will be walking the labyrinth contemplatively while asking God for wisdom for our ministries.



MIT Labyrinth, Yangon, Myanmar 2008

Preparing: decide what you would like to pray about
before you begin



Chartres-style grass and brick labyrinth, DeepHaven Retreats, Minnesota (USA)

Threshold: pause to honor the beginning *your* labyrinth prayer
and ask God to walk with *you*



Threshold Stone, Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth, Limestone and marble stones, Chartres, France

Pathway: moving towards the center (follow where you are led)



Turns: changing direction while still on the way to the center (seeing something from a different vantage point)



Praying labyrinth of life in DeepHaven, MN (USA)

Center: resting in God's love (stay as long as you like)



Returning: Taking the “same path” back out to the threshold.



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

As you come to the “end”, give thanks for how God has been with you and what God has shown you.



Concrete 11 circuit Chartres-style labyrinth, San Francisco Theological Seminary (USA)

Take time to reflect on this prayer experience.
Write *your* thoughts down, or
creatively express what has taken place.



Center of brick-paver Chalice Labyrinth, Atlanta, Georgia (USA)

What questions do you need to have answered
before we pray the labyrinth?



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

Questions to pray with today:

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me RIGHT NOW?

What needs to change in the way I live my life?

What needs to change for my leadership to be more fully aligned
with God's will?

If my leadership was more fully aligned with God's will,
how would I pastor differently?

Or, pray about something else that God is leading you to pray about.

Use this time to reflect on your labyrinth prayer.
Write or draw your responses to any of the following questions.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me RIGHT NOW?

What new insights or convictions did I receive?

How might I need to align my will to God's will
for my life and leadership?

What physical messages did I receive while moving my body in prayer?

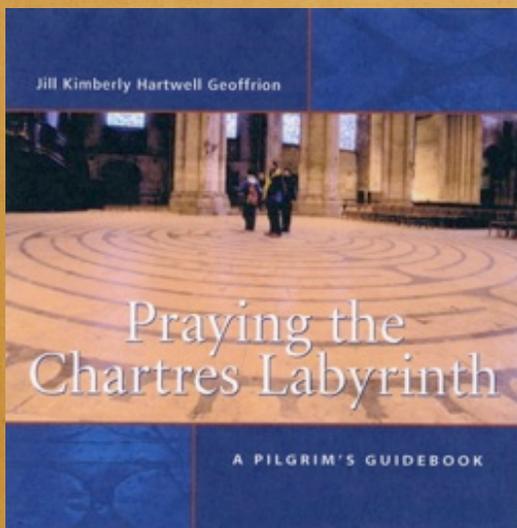
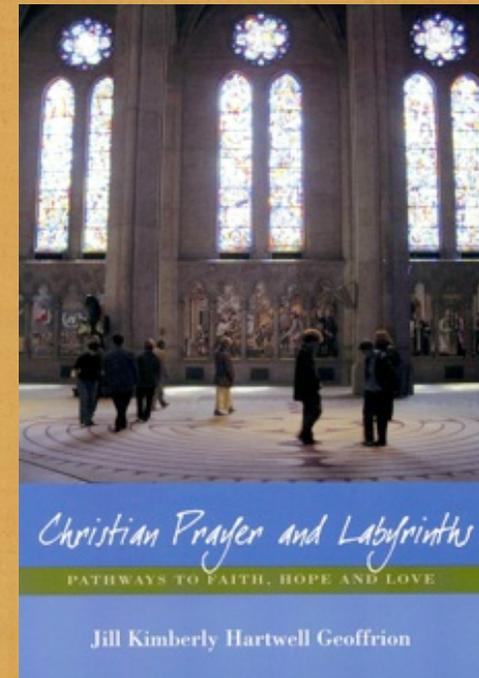
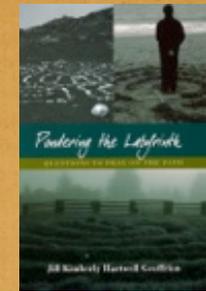
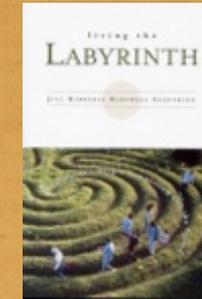
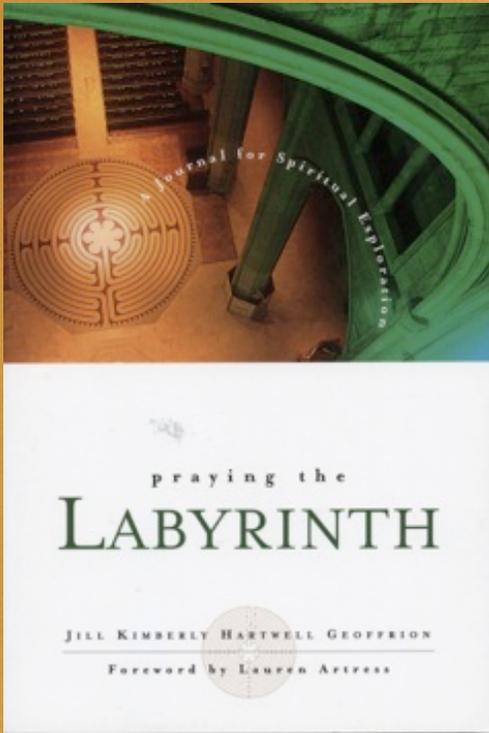
What else do I want to reflect on from my labyrinth walk?

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



DeepHaven brick and grass labyrinth, Minnesota, USA

“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



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