

Introduction to Labyrinth Prayer

Yangon, Myanmar

January 31, 2012



The Rev. Jill K H Geoffrion, Ph.D. www.jillgeoffrion.com jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Introduction of Pastor Jill

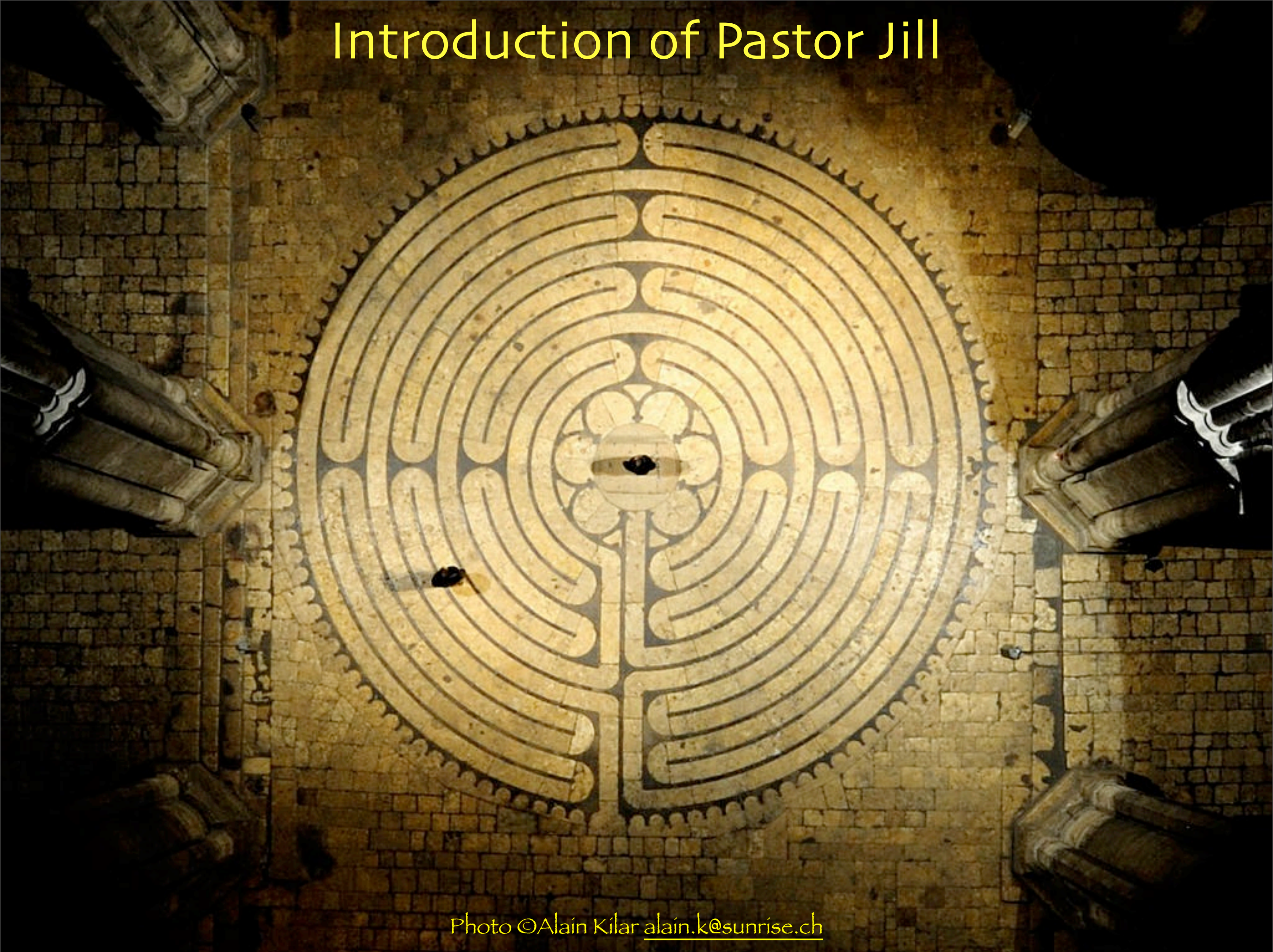


Photo ©Alain Kilar alain.k@sunrise.ch



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

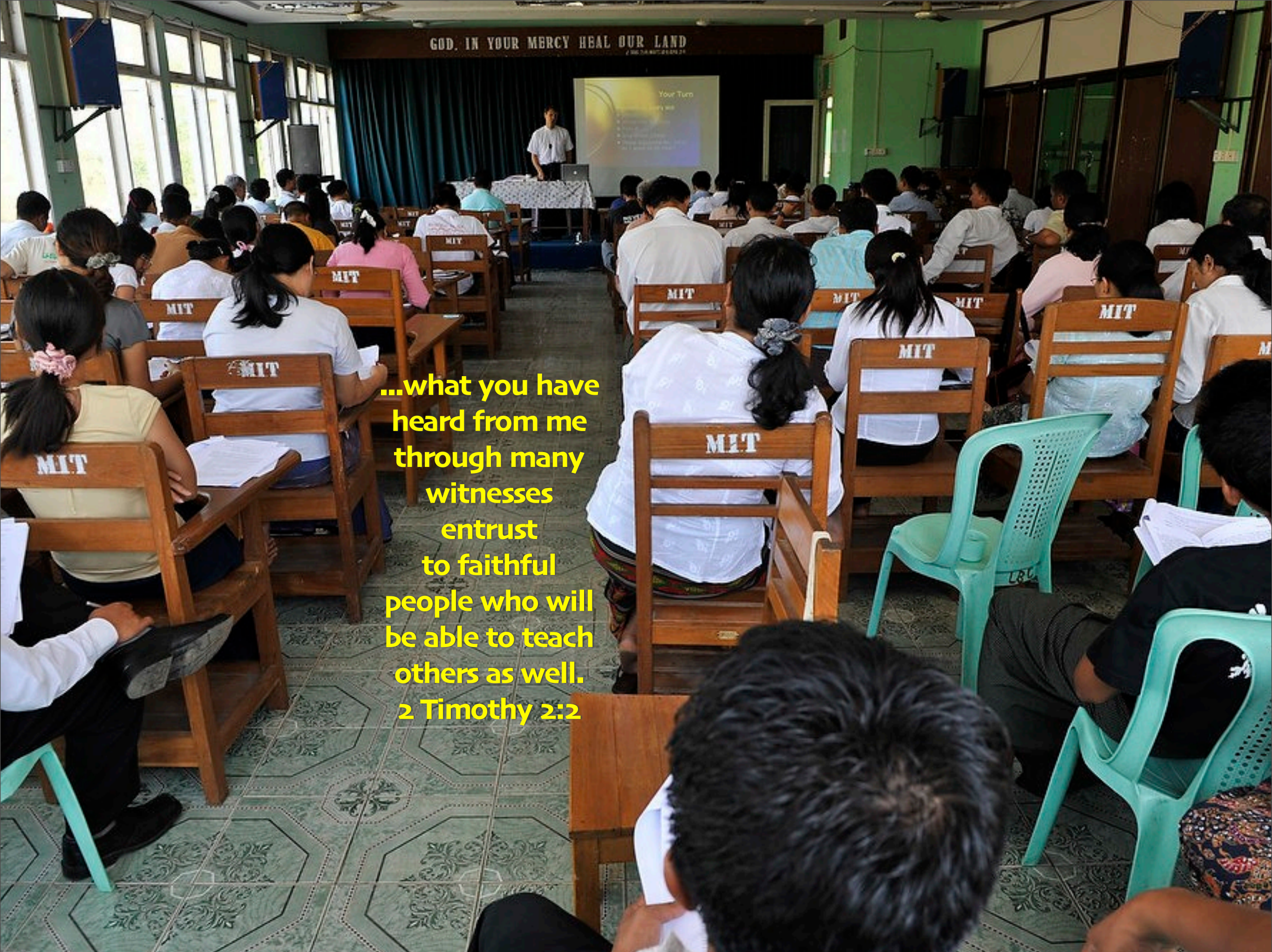


Offering written and web
resources www.fhlglobal.org



Faith, Hope and Love
Global Ministries



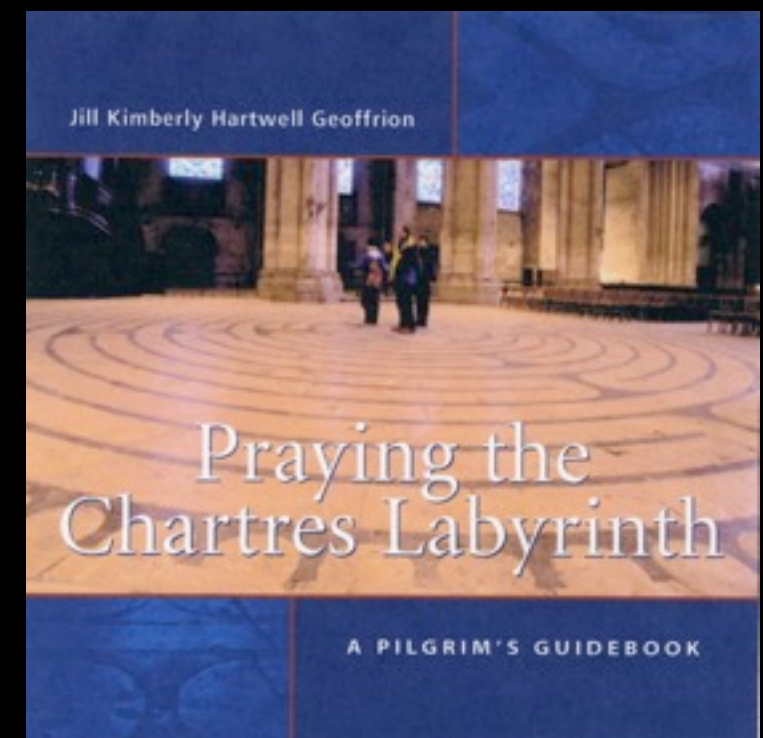
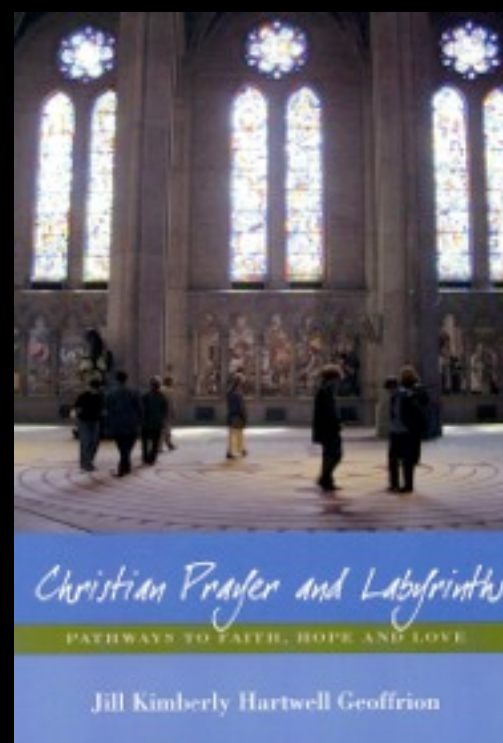
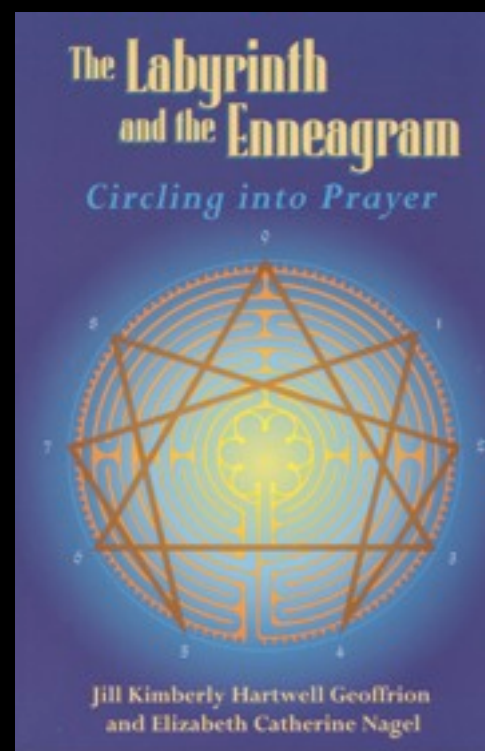
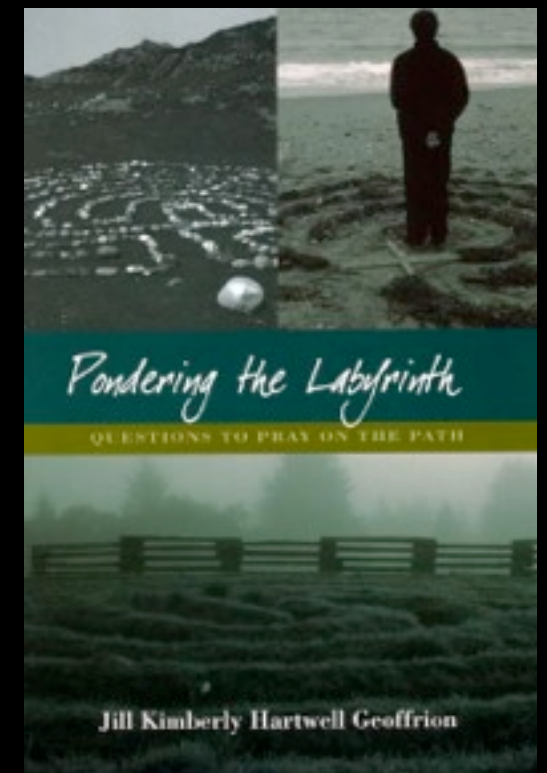
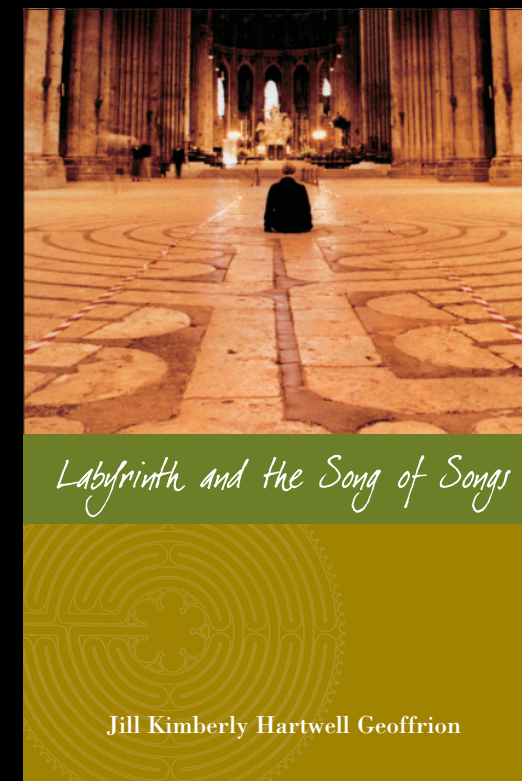
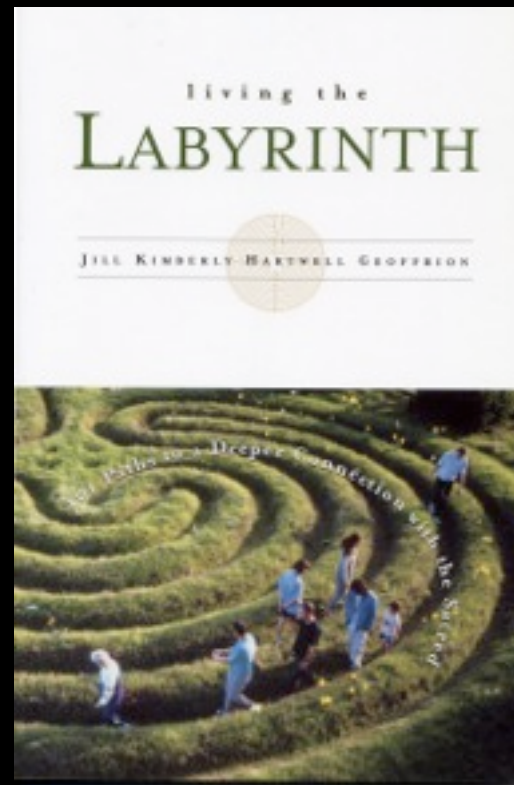
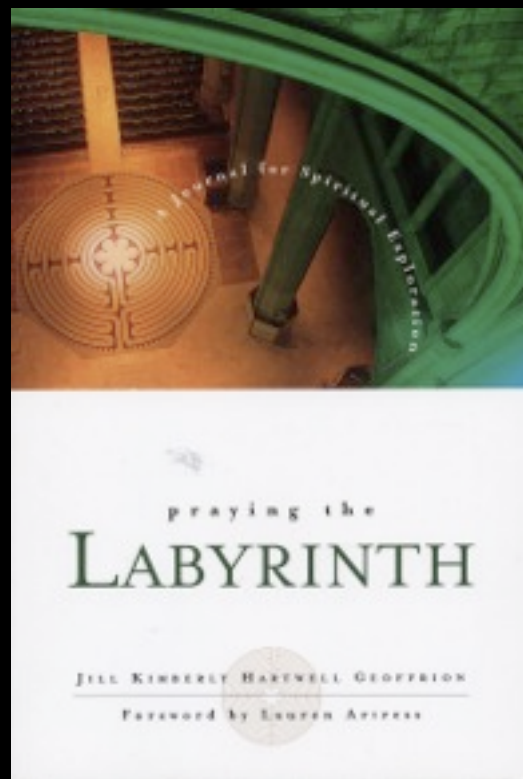


...what you have
heard from me
through many
witnesses
entrust
to faithful
people who will
be able to teach
others as well.
2 Timothy 2:2

Ministry of building and praying labyrinths

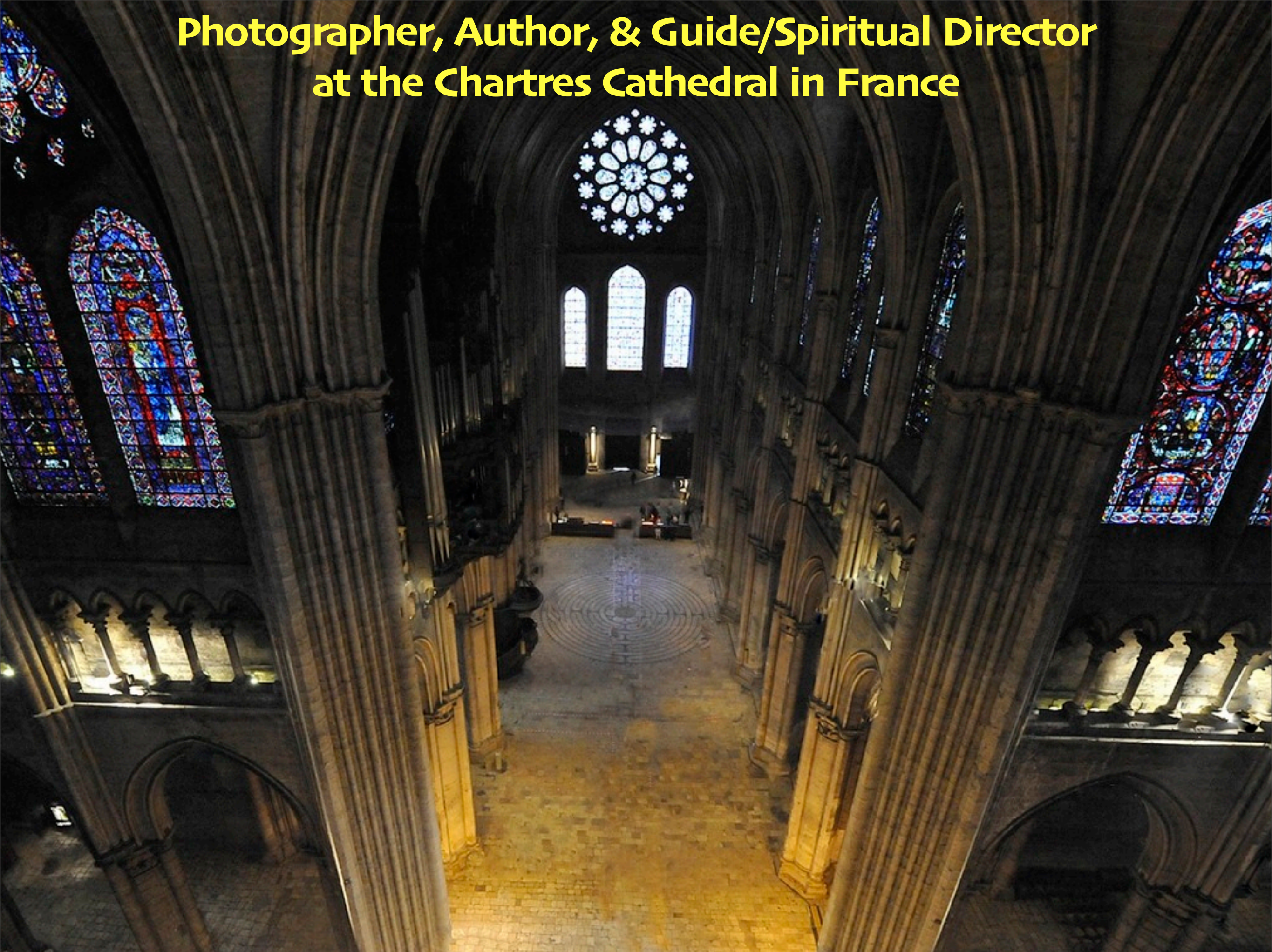


**“May my teaching fall like rain, and my words, distill as the dew,
like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants.” Deuteronomy 32:2**



Books by Jill on labyrinth prayer

Photographer, Author, & Guide/Spiritual Director at the Chartres Cathedral in France



A circular labyrinth with a central flower-like design and a scalloped outer edge. The labyrinth is composed of concentric rings of paths that spiral inward towards the center. The center features a stylized flower with eight petals. The outer edge of the labyrinth is decorated with a series of small, rounded bumps or scallops.

What is a labyrinth?

ALL SING

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

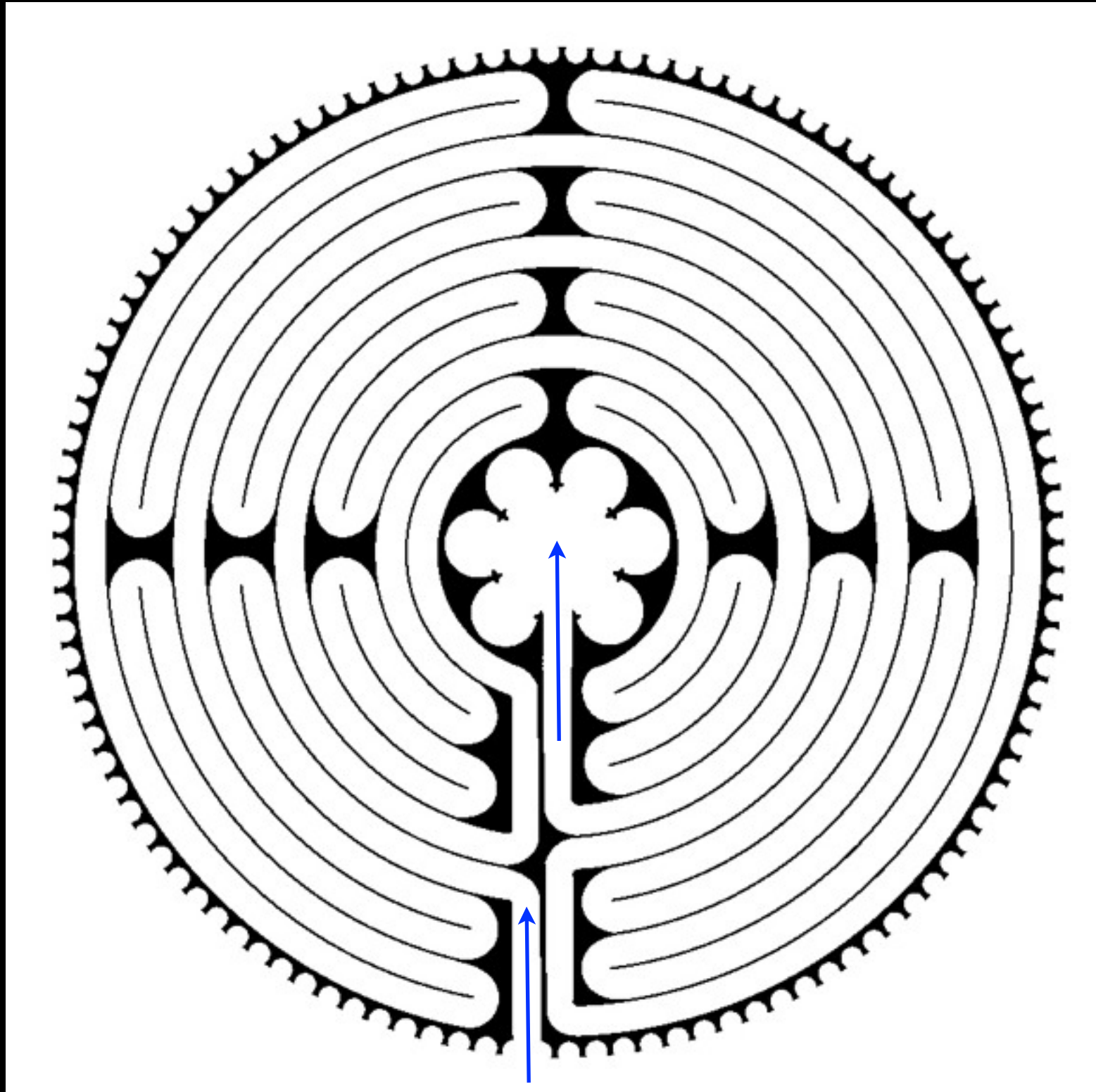
(African American Spiritual)

Call to Worship:

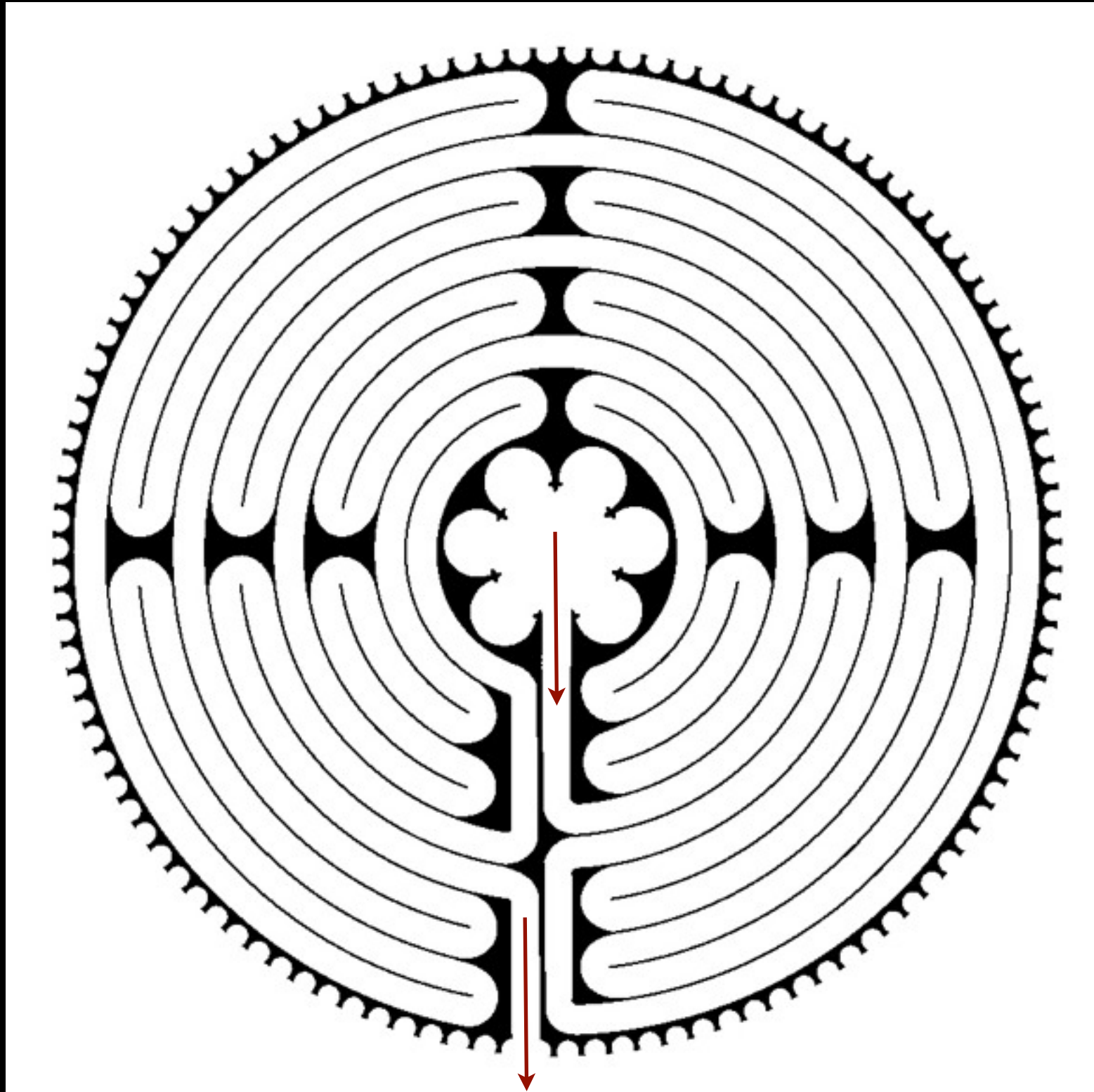
He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8 (NRSV)



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.



As long as you stay on the path, you can't get lost!



**you can get turned around.
If that happens, you will either end
up at the entrance/exit or the center.
Wherever you arrive, you can decide
what to do next.
You can end your walk or continue.**

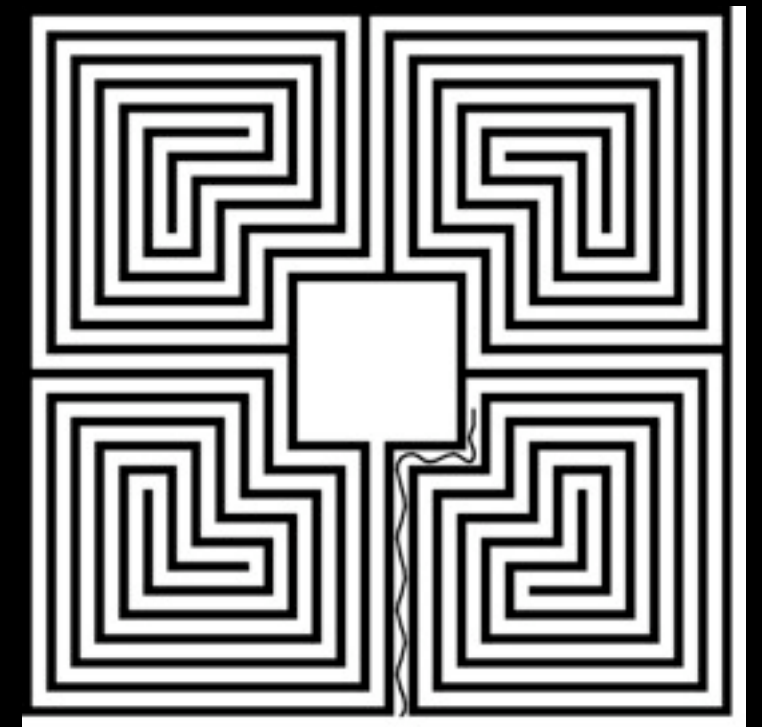
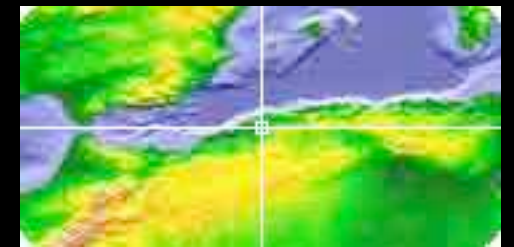
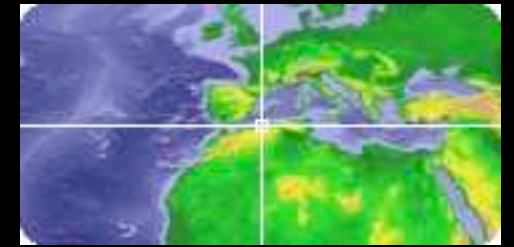
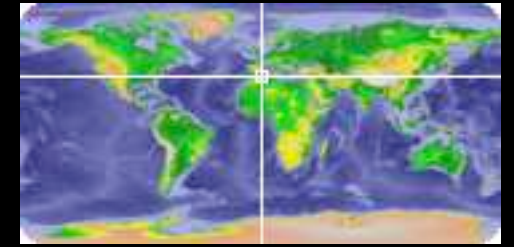
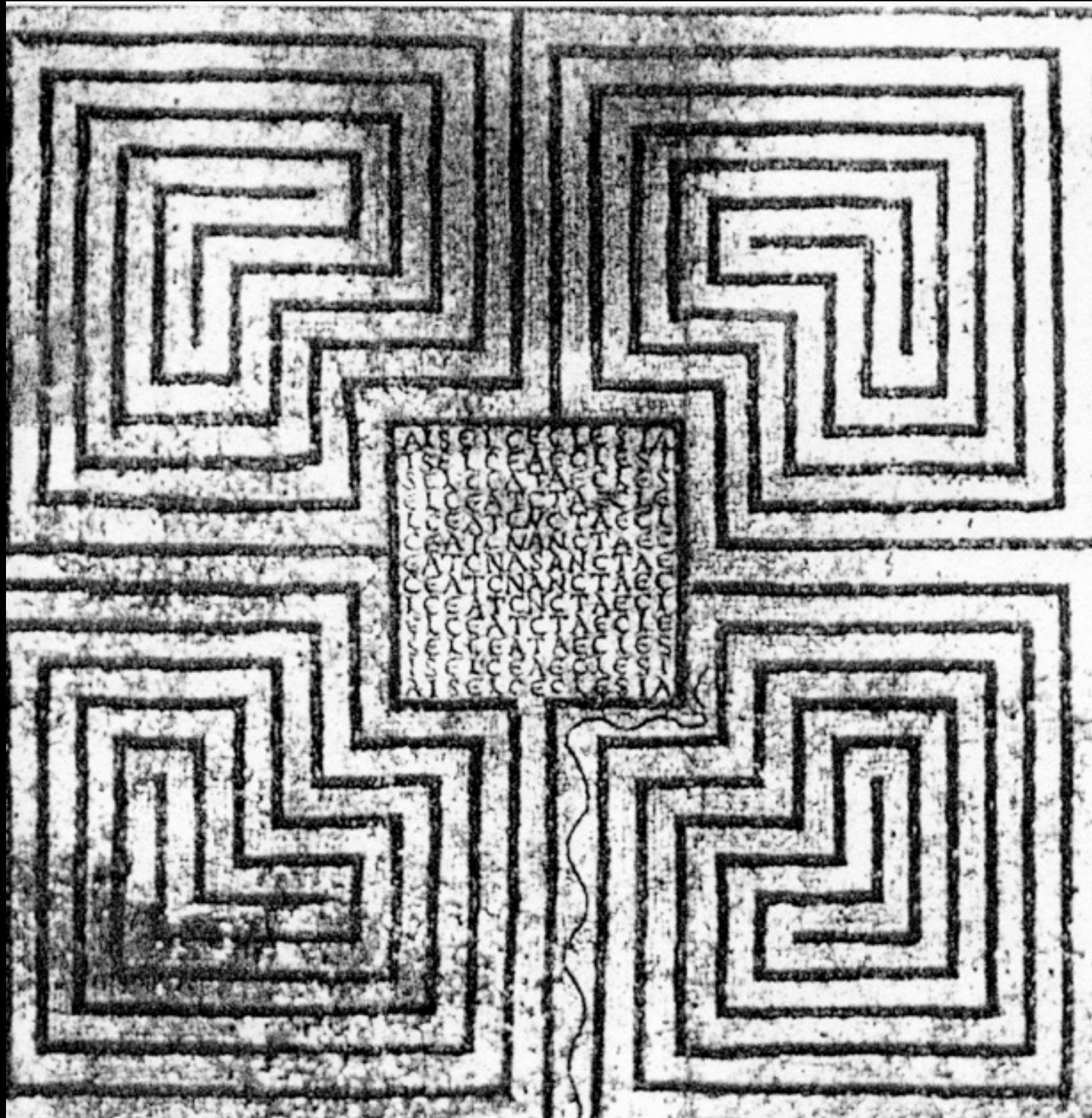
**We do not know the exact origins of labyrinths.
There are ancient examples on every inhabited continent.**



Goa, India 2,000-2500 BCE

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

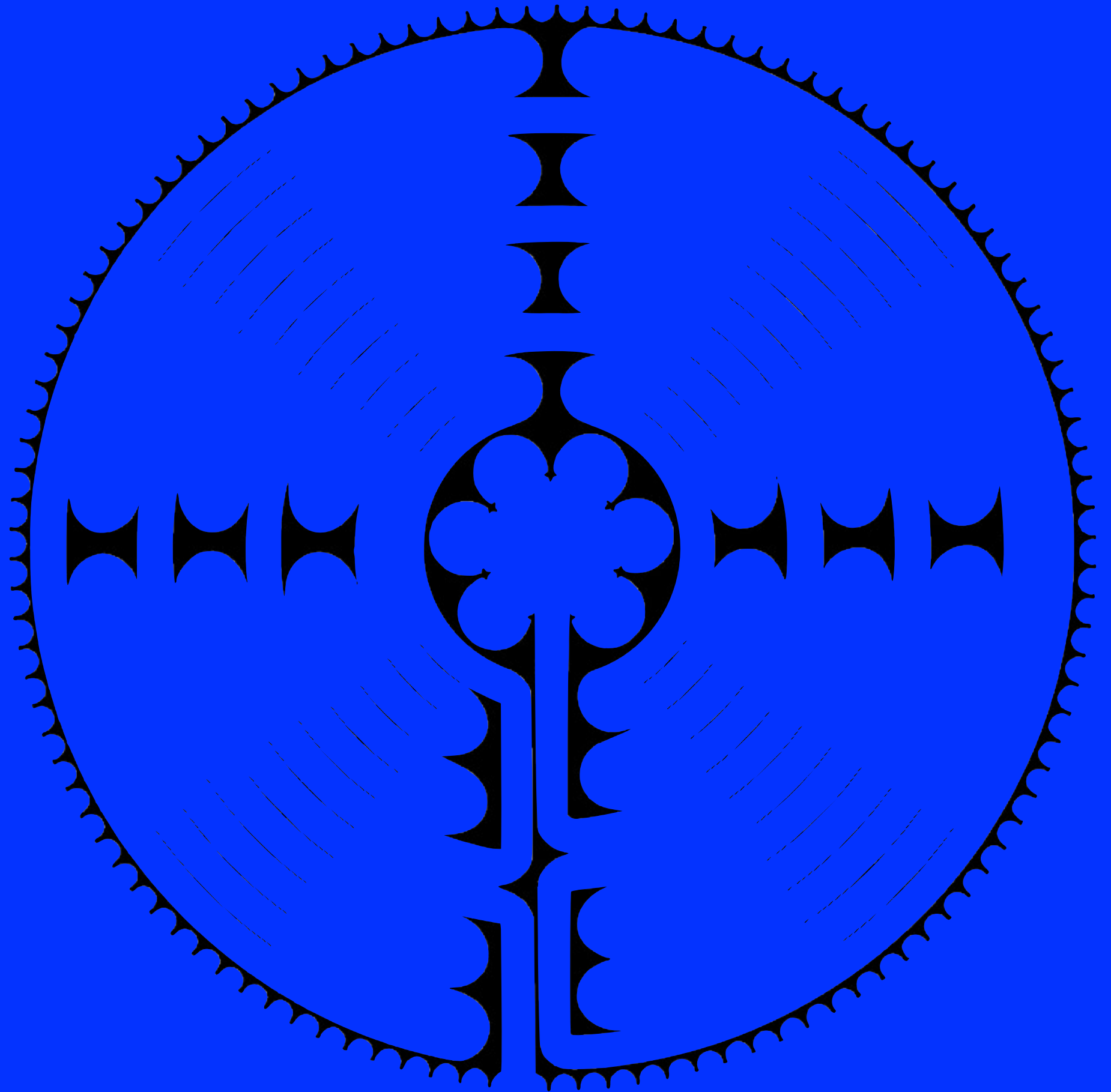
The oldest surviving Christian labyrinth



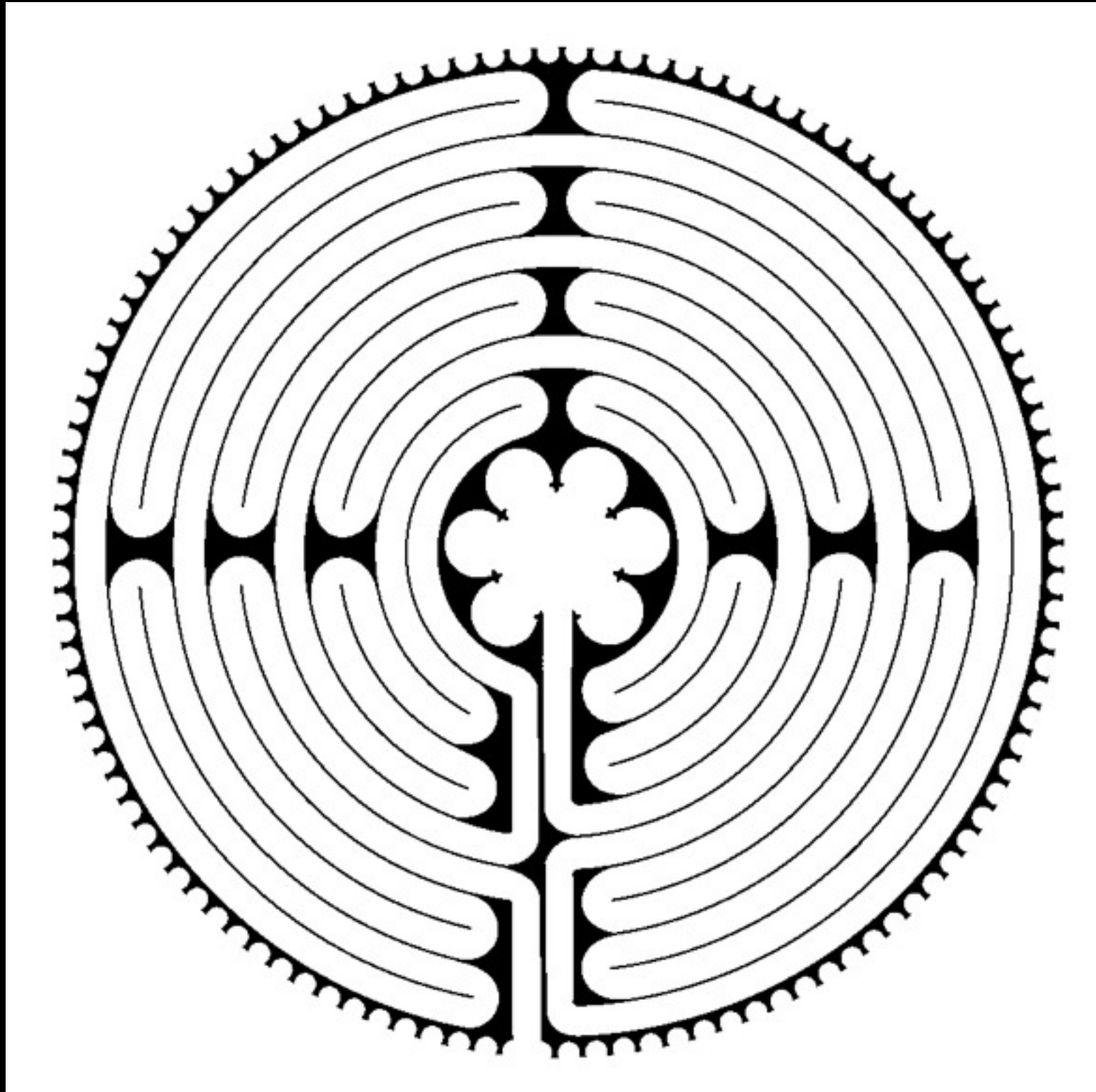
Installed 324 CE in the cathedral in Orléansville, Algeria (Africa)

**The Cross
defines
how we
move on a
labyrinth.**

**We are
“walking
the cross.”**



**Today , there are more than 3,855 labyrinths listed on the world-wide labyrinth locator at www.labyrinthlocator.com.
By June there be a labyrinth on the floor of the chapel at MIT.**



Introducing Labyrinth Prayer



Walking with Jesus





**Journeying with God,
The Path,
Following God's way...**

There are many biblical concepts that relate to praying the labyrinth.



Biblical texts to explore in relation to labyrinth prayer

Abraham as a pilgrim: Genesis 12

Theme of exile as pilgrimage: Exodus

The wise men travel to meet Jesus: Matthew 2:1-12

The shepherds visit Jesus: Luke 2:8-20

The flight of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to Egypt : Matthew 2:13-15

Jesus walking with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus Luke 24:13-53

Christians as exiles and strangers (pilgrims KJV) 1 Peter 2:11-12



**As Christians, Jesus walks with us as we move on the labyrinth.
What we bring to a labyrinth experience
influences what we take from it.**



**There is no one “right way” to pray the labyrinth.
Pray in a way that is natural for you.**

**Praying for others
Resting in center
Praying for self**

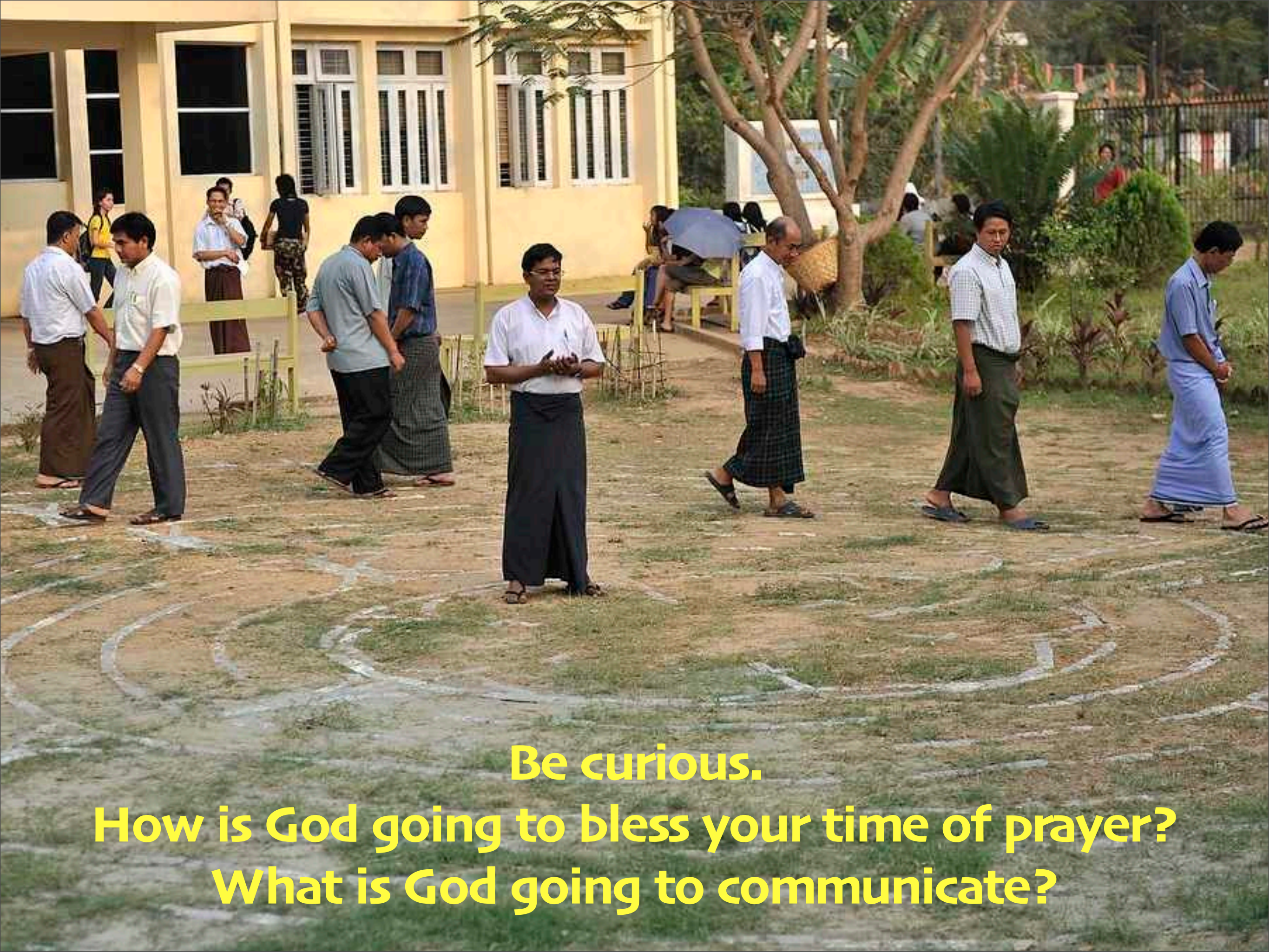
Open to God’s leading

Reciting Scripture

Praying a question

Singing a spiritual song

Photo: Lun Man Hau



Be curious.


**How is God going to bless your time of prayer?
What is God going to communicate?**



Moving our (outer) bodies on a labyrinth helps transformation to happen inside. This is a prayer of the mind, body and spirit.

**Personal and community experience
happen at the same time when we pray a labyrinth
together.**



A group of approximately 15 people, mostly men in white shirts and dark trousers or sarongs, are walking a large, circular labyrinth drawn on a grassy field. The labyrinth consists of many concentric circles with a single path leading to the center. The people are at various points along the path, some walking towards the center and others away from it. In the background, there is a white fence and some trees. The overall scene suggests a communal activity or a spiritual exercise.

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



**Labyrinth prayer allows you to
look at your life as if you were
looking in a mirror.
Ask, "How is this experience like
what is happening in my life?"**

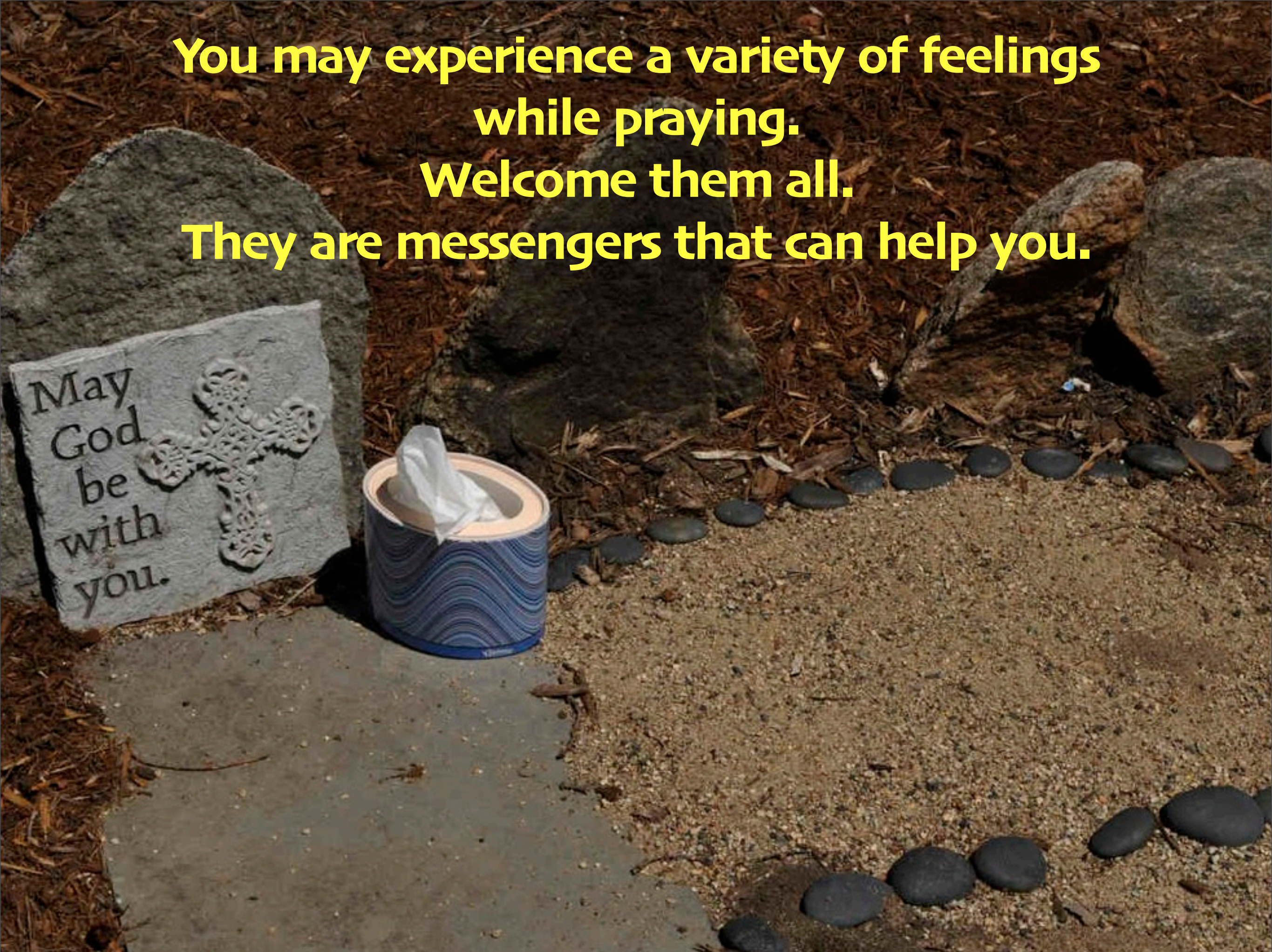


**It's a long journey;
but not too long!**



Some describe walking the labyrinth as “the laying on of feet.”

**You may experience a variety of feelings
while praying.
Welcome them all.
They are messengers that can help you.**



**God meets us when we pray.
Delight in those precious, holy moments!
Stay flexible. Follow God's lead!**



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



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

Labyrinth Prayer



John Hopkins Hospital Baltimore, Maryland (USA)



Lai Baptist
Women's Prayer Group, Myanmar



HEAL Africa Goma, D. R. Congo

Builds community (alone/together; rituals)

Enhances creativity (activating both brain hemispheres)

Shifts emotions (joy, peace)

Supports healing (hospitals, therapeutic tool, ADHD)

Integrates mind-body-spirit

Stimulates thinking (insights, answers, metaphor)

Balances the body (health, grounding, pain management)

Fosters socio-psychological growth (self-knowledge)

Enriches spirituality (incarnational prayer)



Labyrinth prayer offers a contemplative way of approaching and resting in God's presence... The invitation is to...become quiet within, to slow down, not to "escape" from the world, but to attend to all of life with "quiet still awareness", through the lens of the great love of God.

Robyn & Bronwyn Pryor Melbourne, Australia

The flow of Labyrinth Prayer



Preparation

Pause before the threshold of a labyrinth to prepare yourself for the journey ahead.



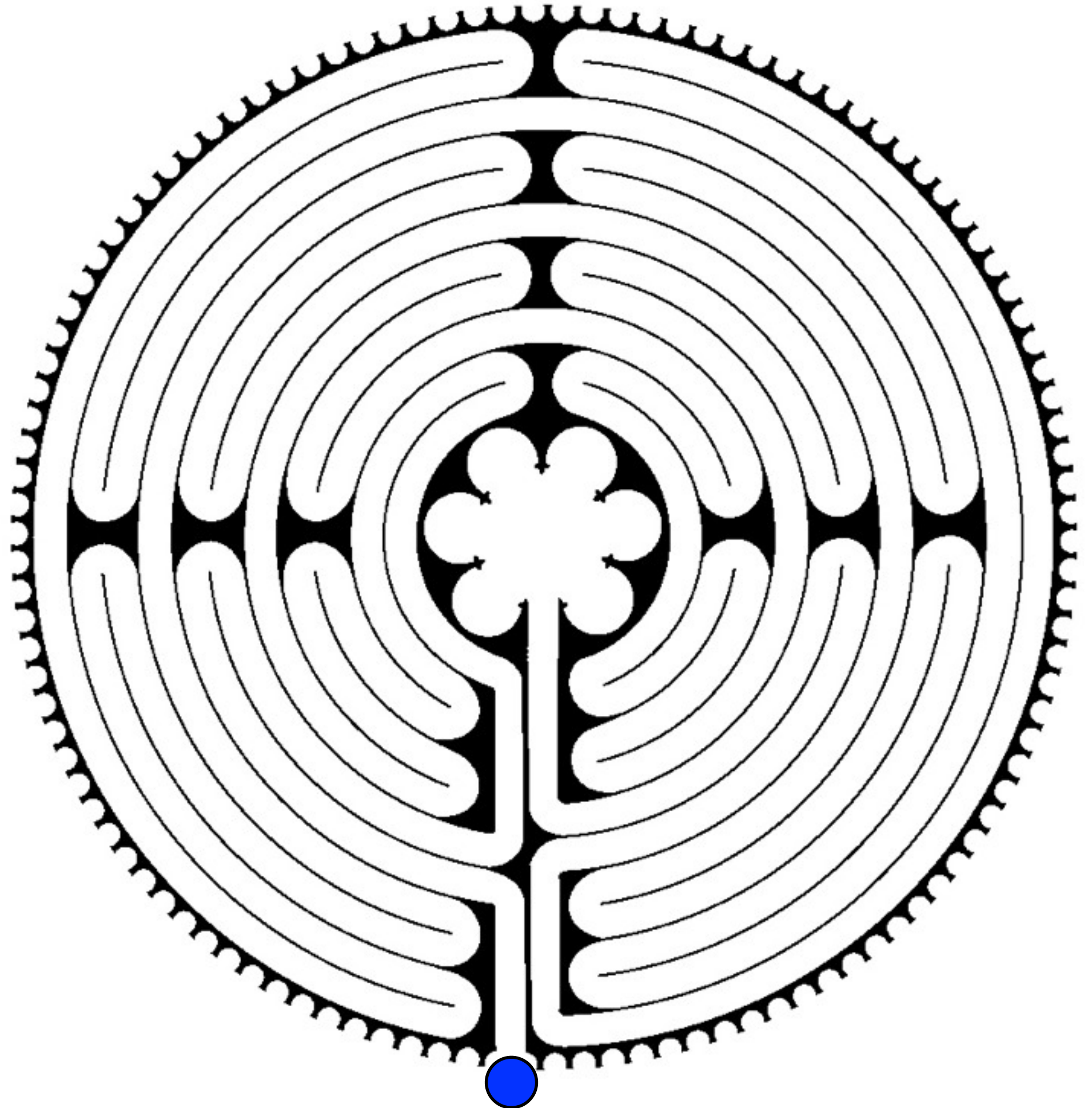
prelude...

setting you
intention...

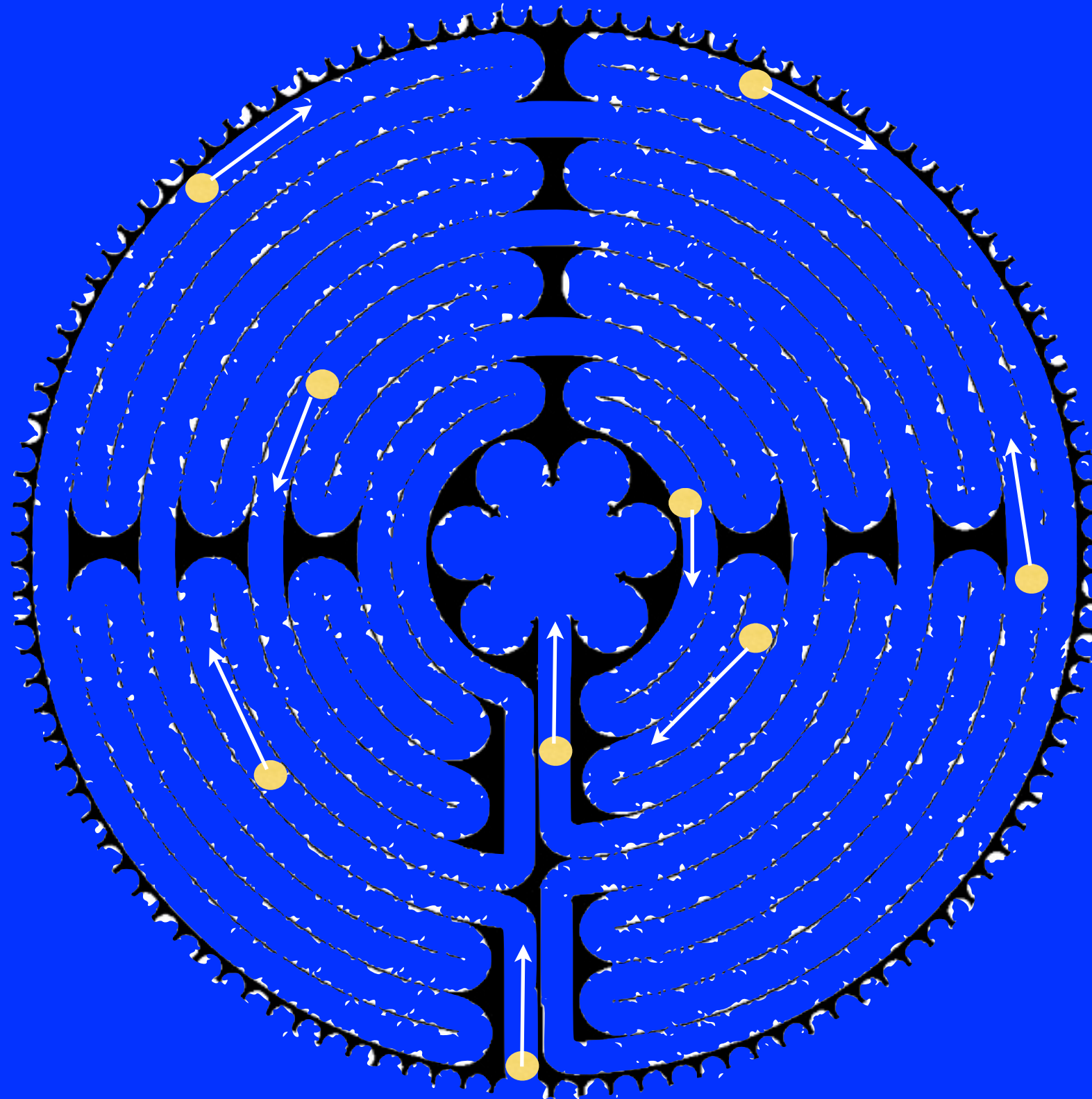
making a
symbolic
gesture of
faith...

**Take time
to prepare
yourself.**

**“What do I
want to
pray
about?”**



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



Find the pace that is right for you.

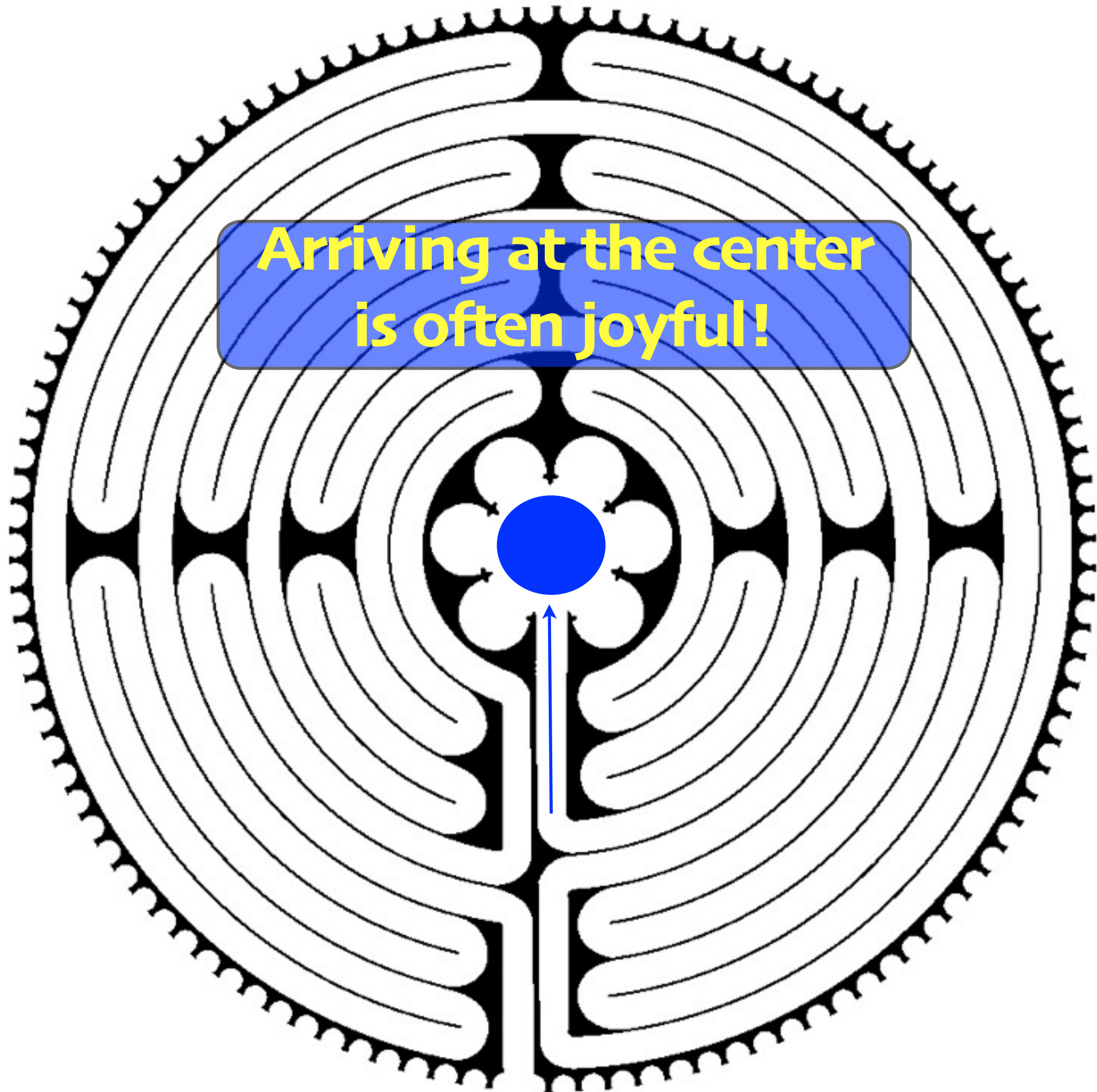


**Turning (rounding the 28 semi-circular turns)
is a significant part of one's labyrinth experience.**



**God is with you as you pray.
God is also waiting for you.**



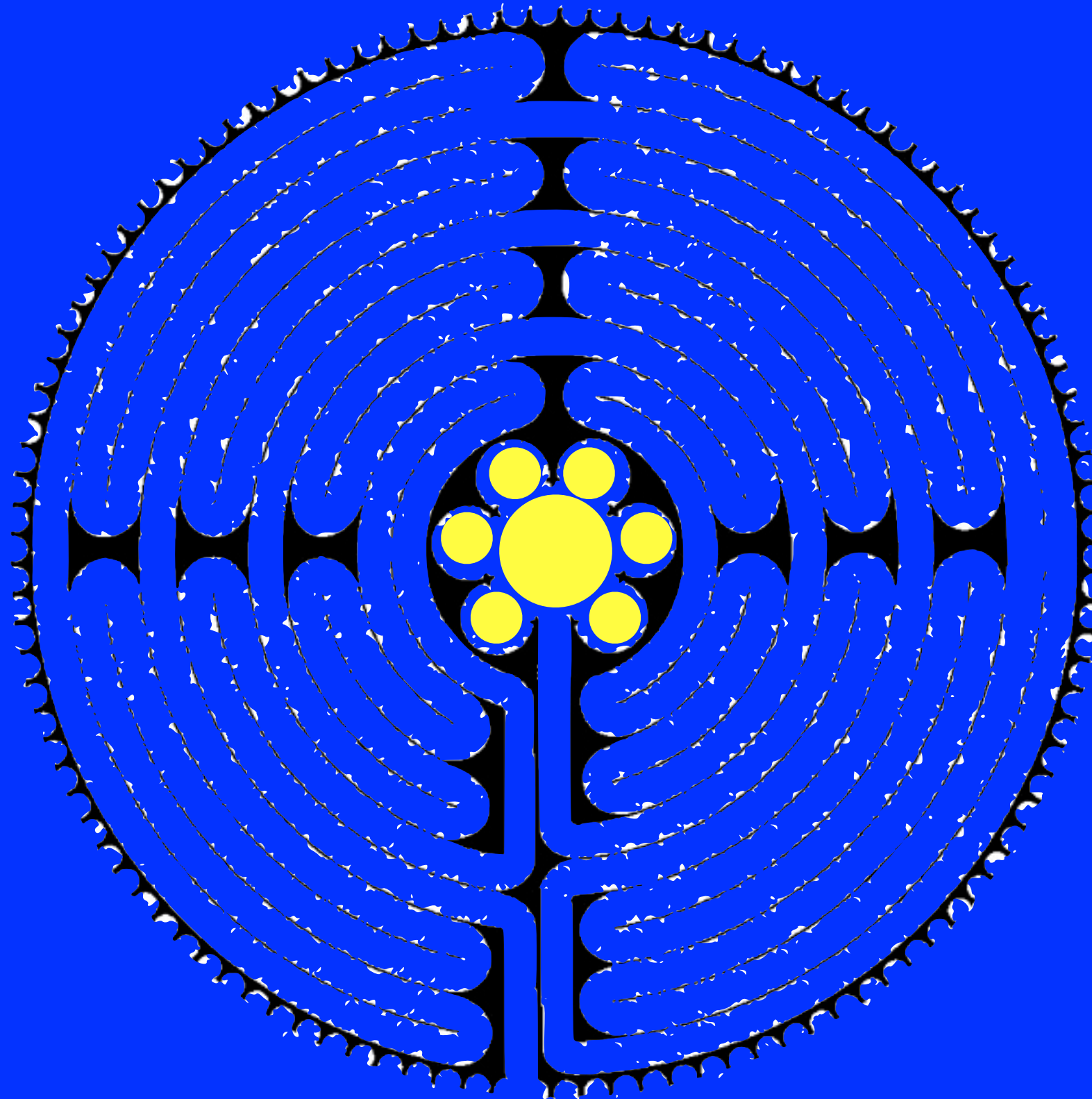


Arriving at the center
is often joyful!

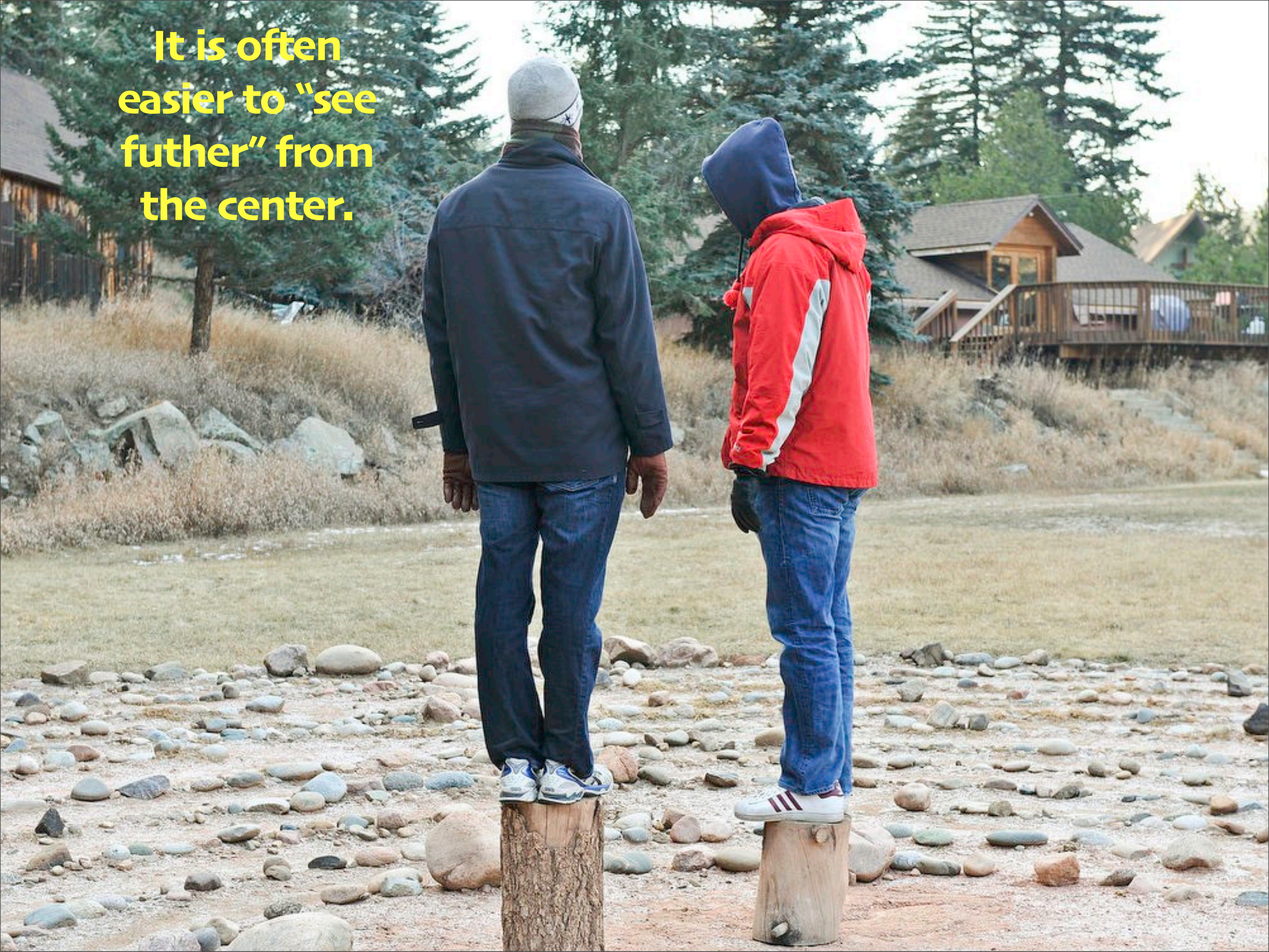


**Don't hurry away from the center.
Rest in God's loving presence.**

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



It is often
easier to “see
further” from
the center.

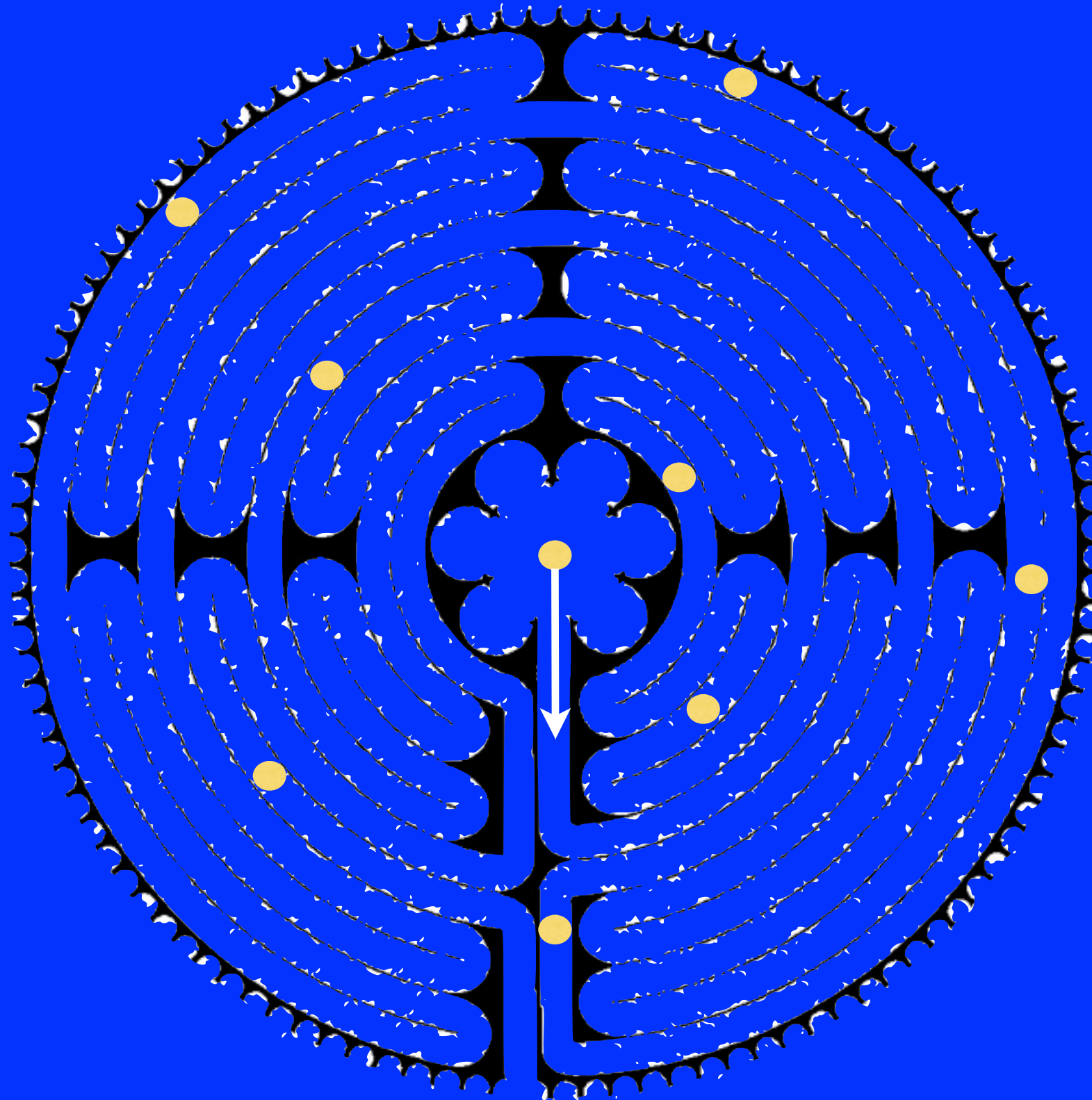


**What else
does God want to communicate to me?**



The Way Back

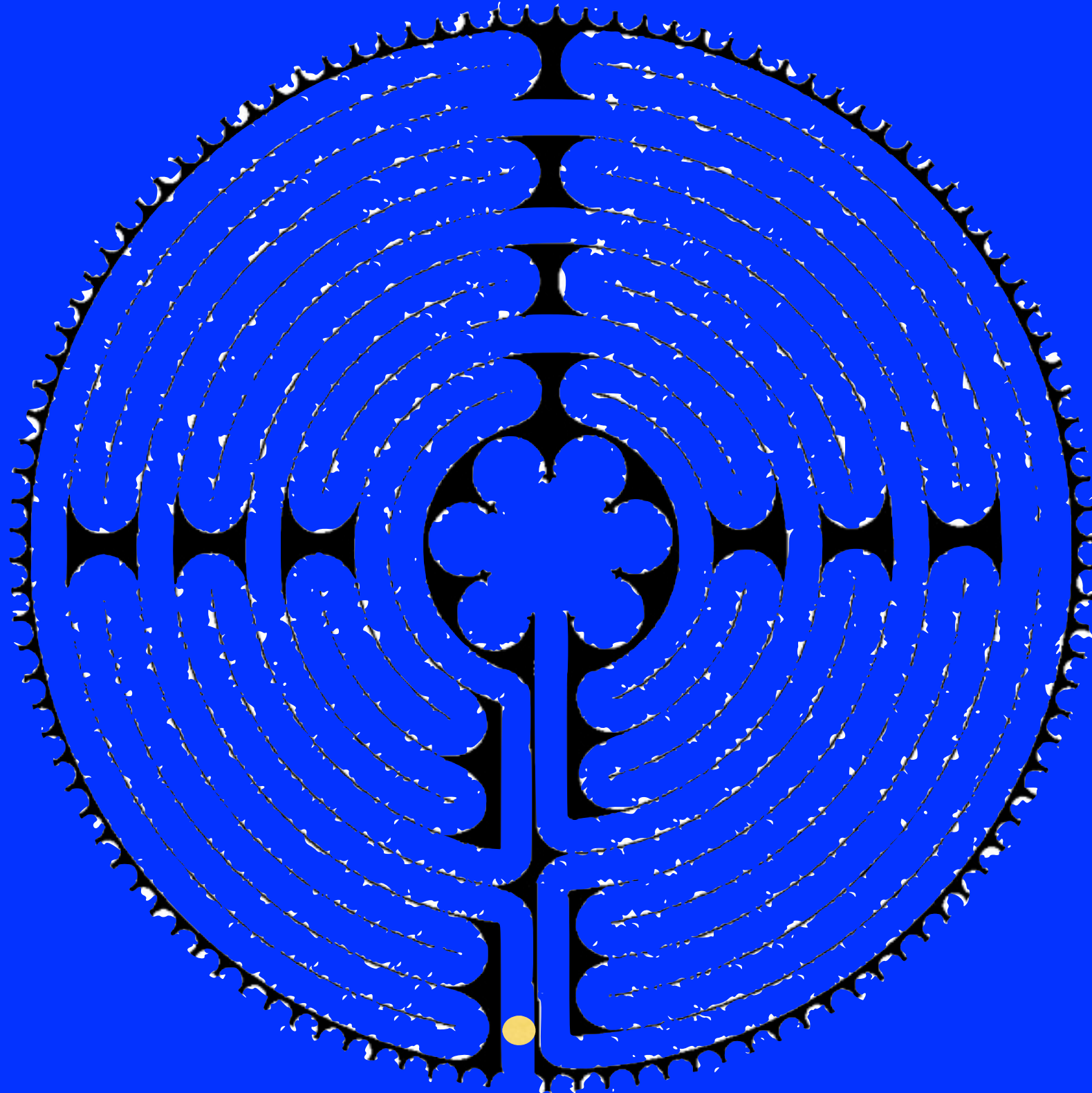
When you are ready, take the “same” pathway to the exit.



A close-up photograph of a hand tracing a path in a wooden labyrinth. The labyrinth is circular with a central flower-like design. The hand is pointing to a path that leads towards the center. The background is blurred, showing some wooden planks.

**What is my next step?
How can I integrate my experience
into my daily life?**

**Before you exit,
pause.**



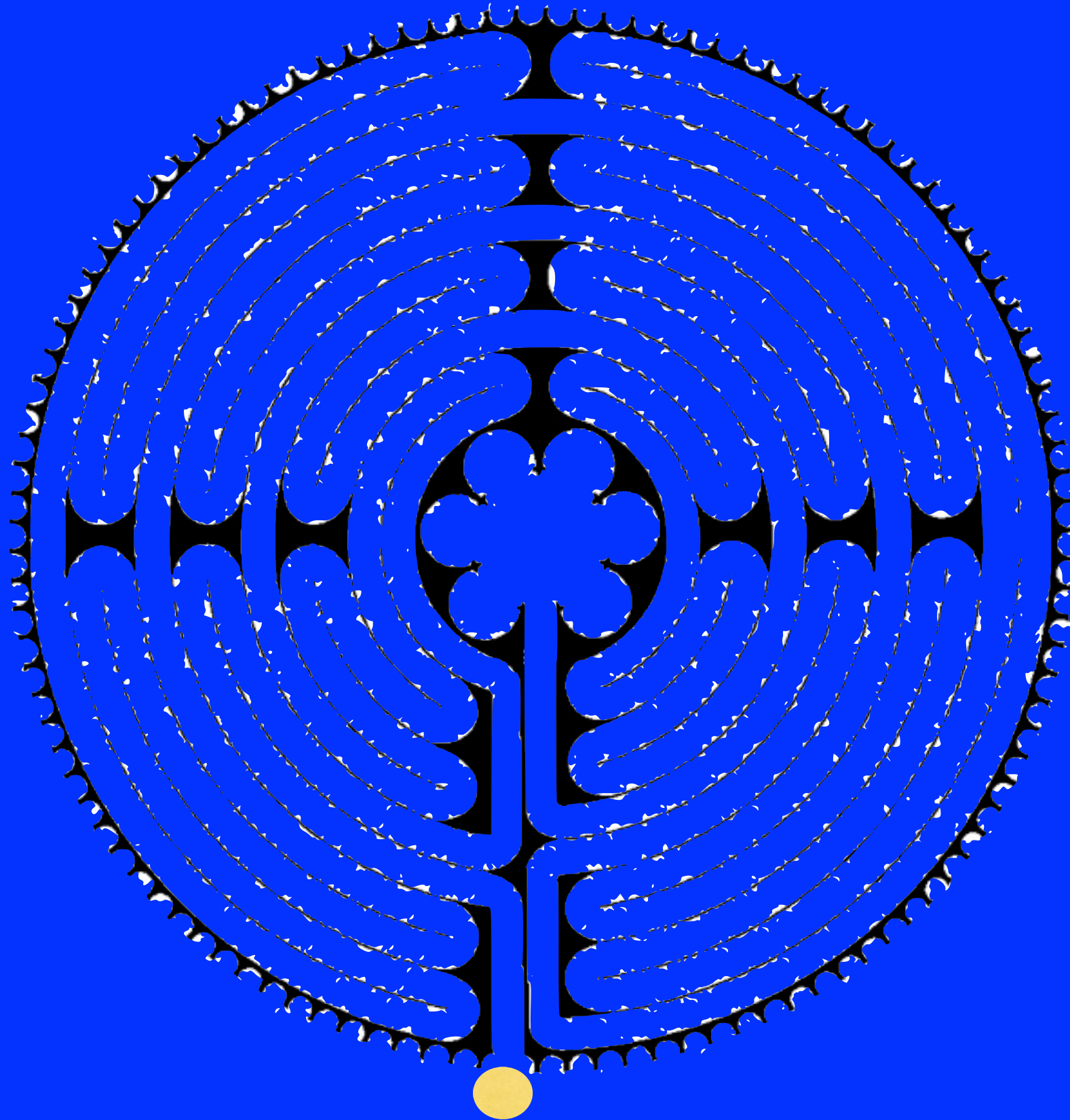
A close-up photograph of a circular wooden labyrinth. The labyrinth is carved into the wood, featuring a central four-lobed flower-like shape and concentric rings of paths. A person's hand is visible on the right side, with a finger tracing a path through the labyrinth. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a wooden surface.

**How you end your time of prayer matters.
Prepare to finish. Be intentional.**

**Take a few moments
to savor the gifts God has given.**



**Revisting Your Prayer Experience:
make time for personal reflection.**



A large circular labyrinth is drawn on a grassy field. The labyrinth consists of many concentric, slightly irregular rings with various paths and dead ends. The lines are drawn in a light yellow or white color. In the background, there is a white fence and some trees. In the foreground, there is a wooden bench and some small plants.

**Write down a few notes.
What did God communicate?**

**What
images,
sounds,
experiences
were important?**

What are my next steps?

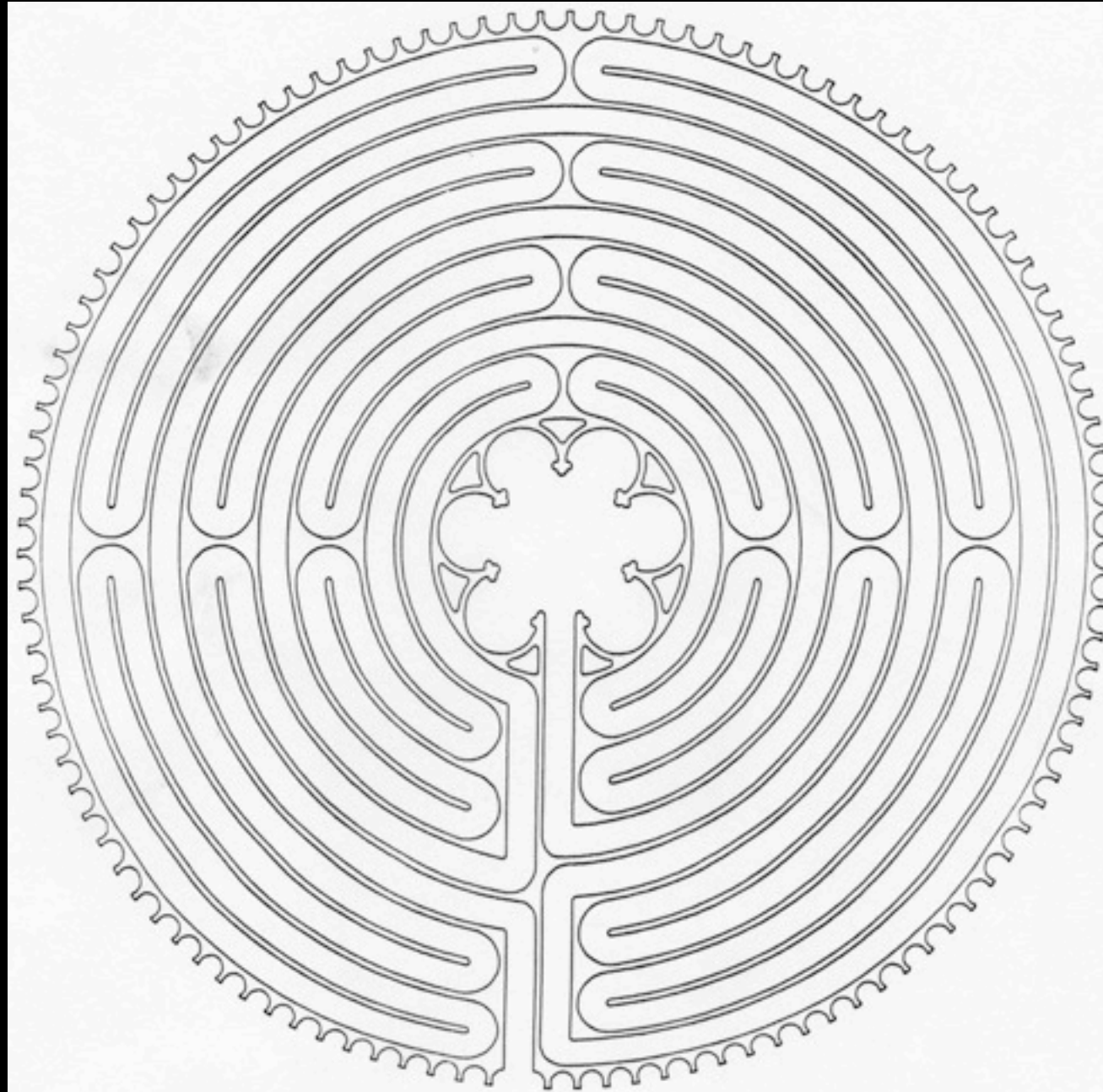


Asking your questions

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.*

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



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.

Our Prayer Song:
We are moving in the love of God, we are moving in the love of God. (2x)
We are moving, we are moving, we are moving in the love of God (2x).



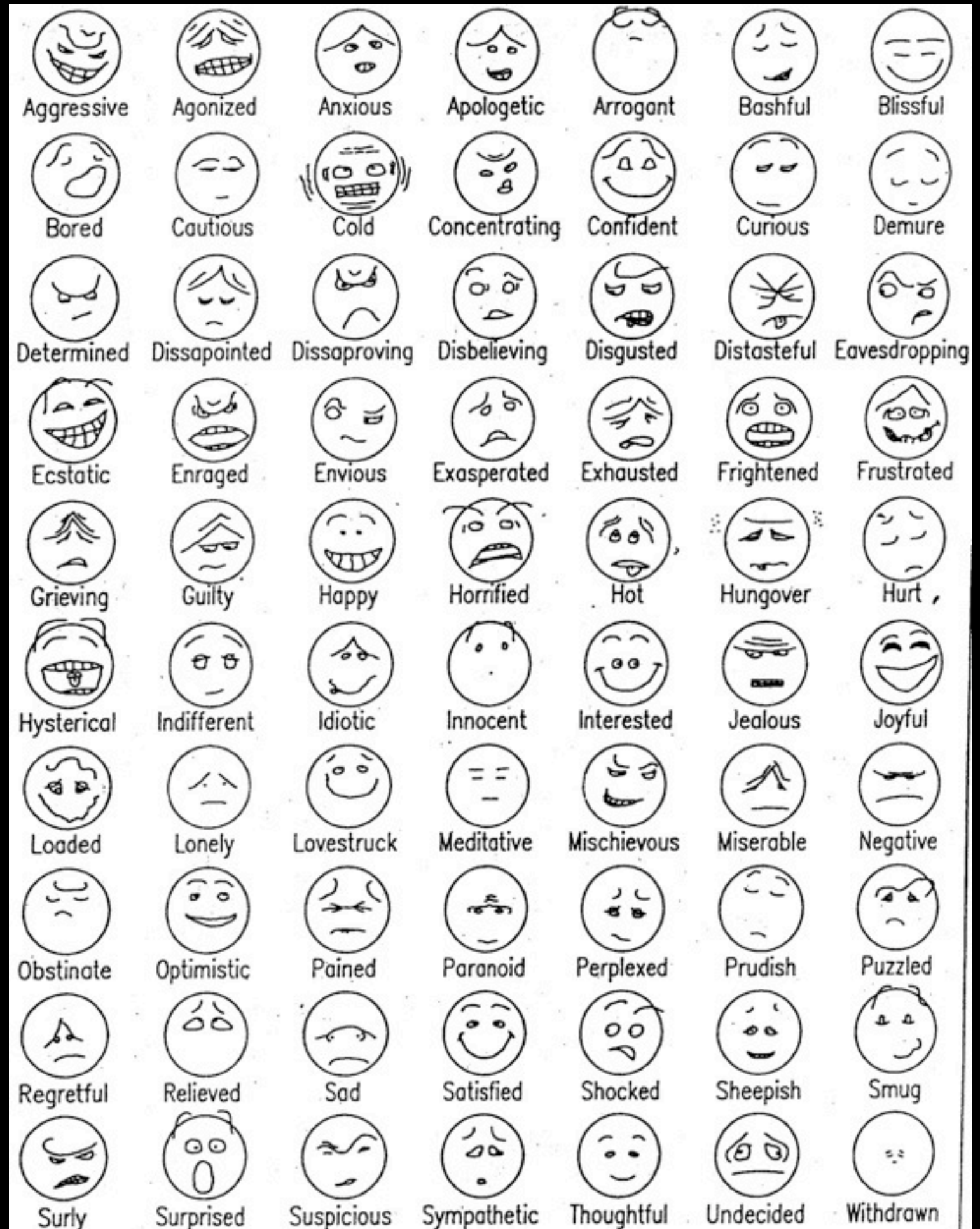
**Pause.
Take a breath.**

Listen with your heart.

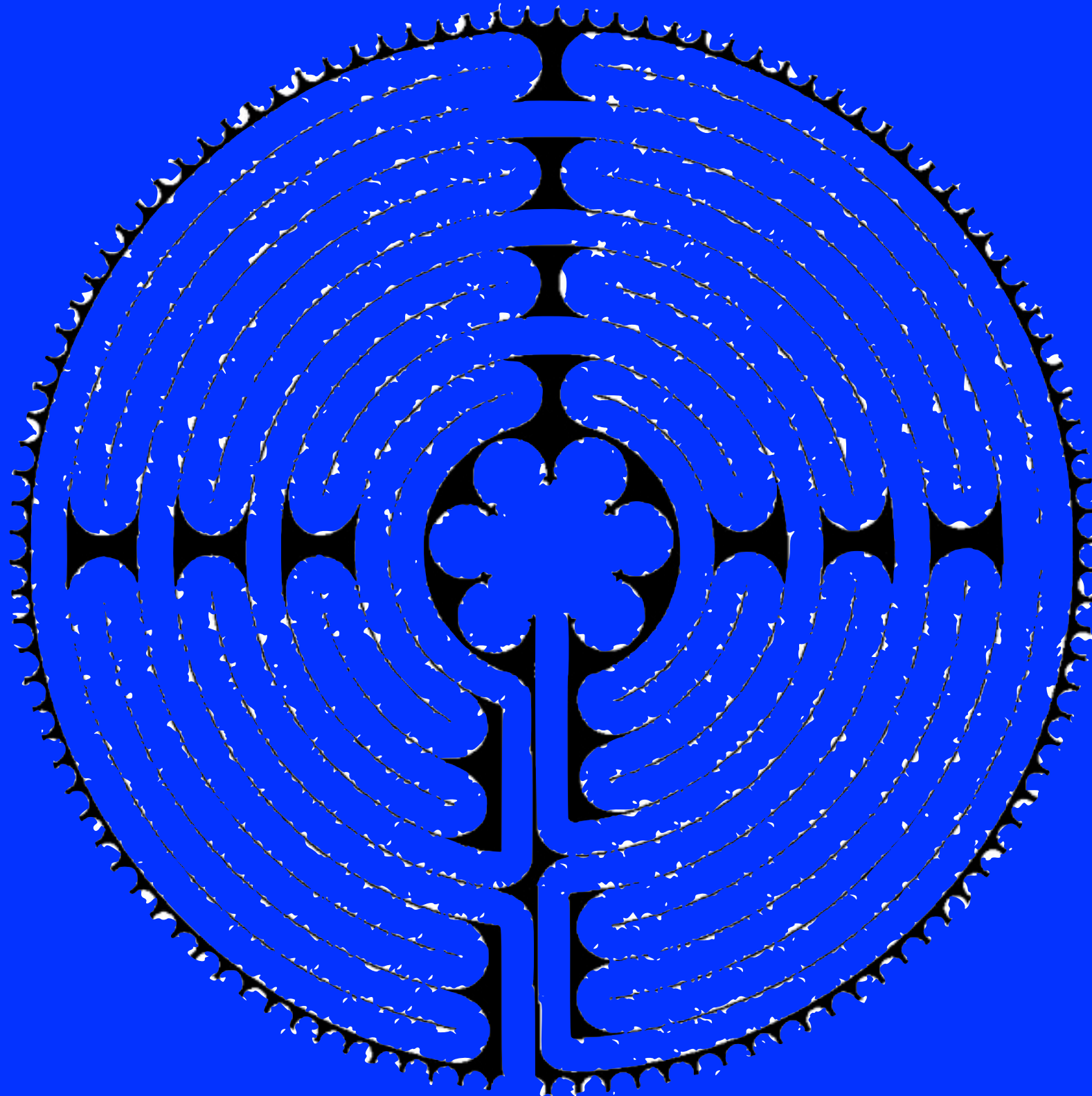
Let us pray.

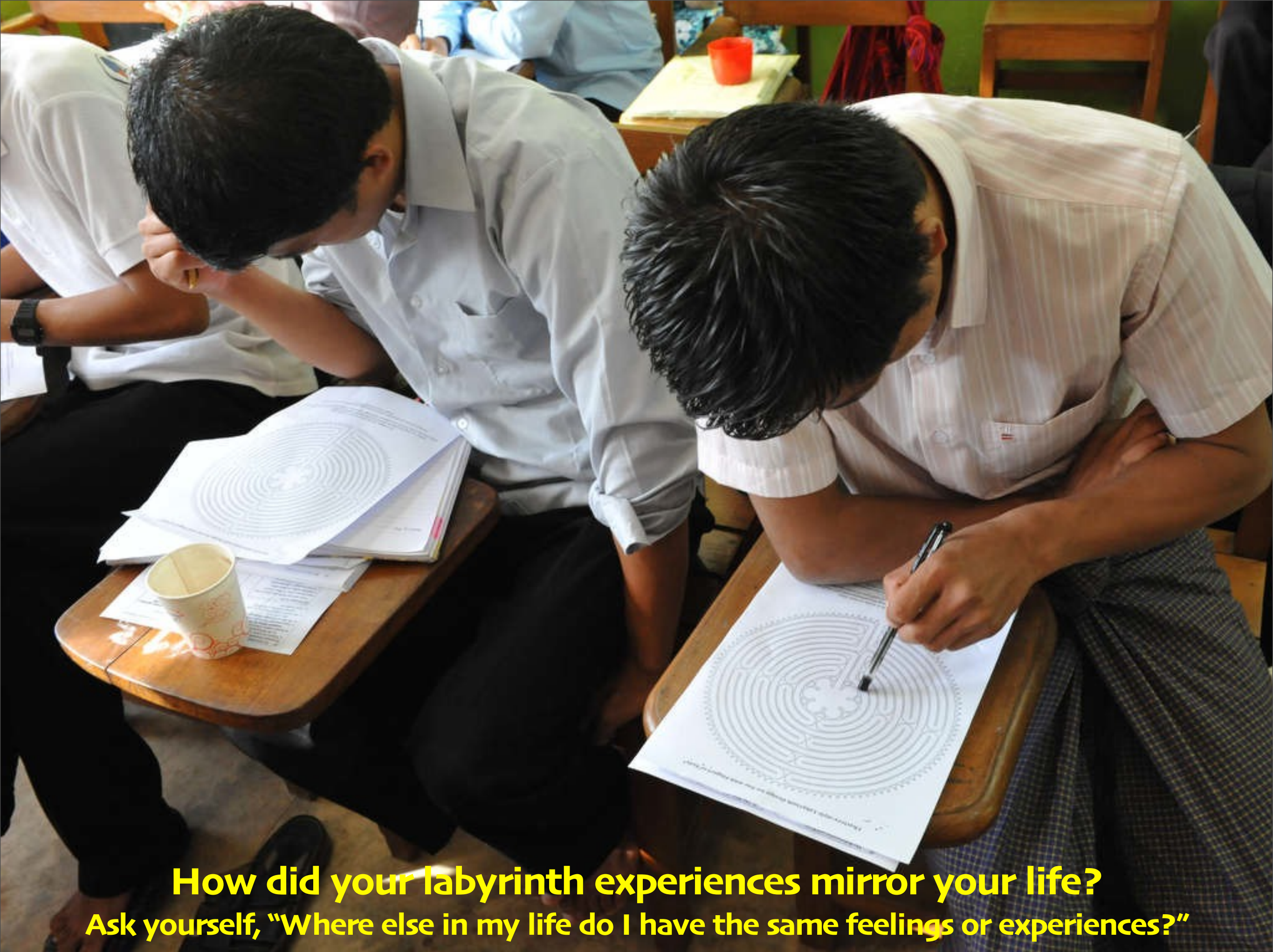


**Share one or two
feelings you
experienced
while praying.**



What did God communicate to you?





**How did your labyrinth experiences mirror your life?
Ask yourself, "Where else in my life do I have the same feelings or experiences?"**

A Benediction





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

**Egyptian blessing for those
leaving on pilgrimage**

A photograph of the interior of a large, ancient cathedral. The space is filled with tall, dark stone columns and a high, vaulted ceiling. In the center of the floor, there is a large, circular mosaic or floor design featuring concentric circles and a central cross-like pattern. A person stands in the middle of this circular design, their arms outstretched, providing a sense of scale to the vast space. The lighting is dramatic, with light sources visible in the distance and on the floor, creating a sense of depth and mystery.

ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Tim's email: tim.geoffrion@fhlglobal.org

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