

Labyrinth Prayer & Communion: Vespers MIT

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How many people have no prior exposure to labyrinths?
How many have walked a labyrinth 1-5 times?
How many are regular labyrinth users?



Canvas labyrinth Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey USA



21st century Christians are looking for holistic spiritual tools that connect the body, mind & spirit.

The labyrinth holds no power of its own, and there is nothing magical about it. Rather, it is simply a creative tool that facilitates our thinking about our faith and experiencing God in fresh ways. When we walk, reflect, and pray on a labyrinth, God is likely to use the experience to draw us closer and to help us to see aspects of our lives that we might not be able to see otherwise. Even more, the Holy Spirit can use our labyrinth prayer experience to transform us inwardly in ways that change our lives outwardly.”

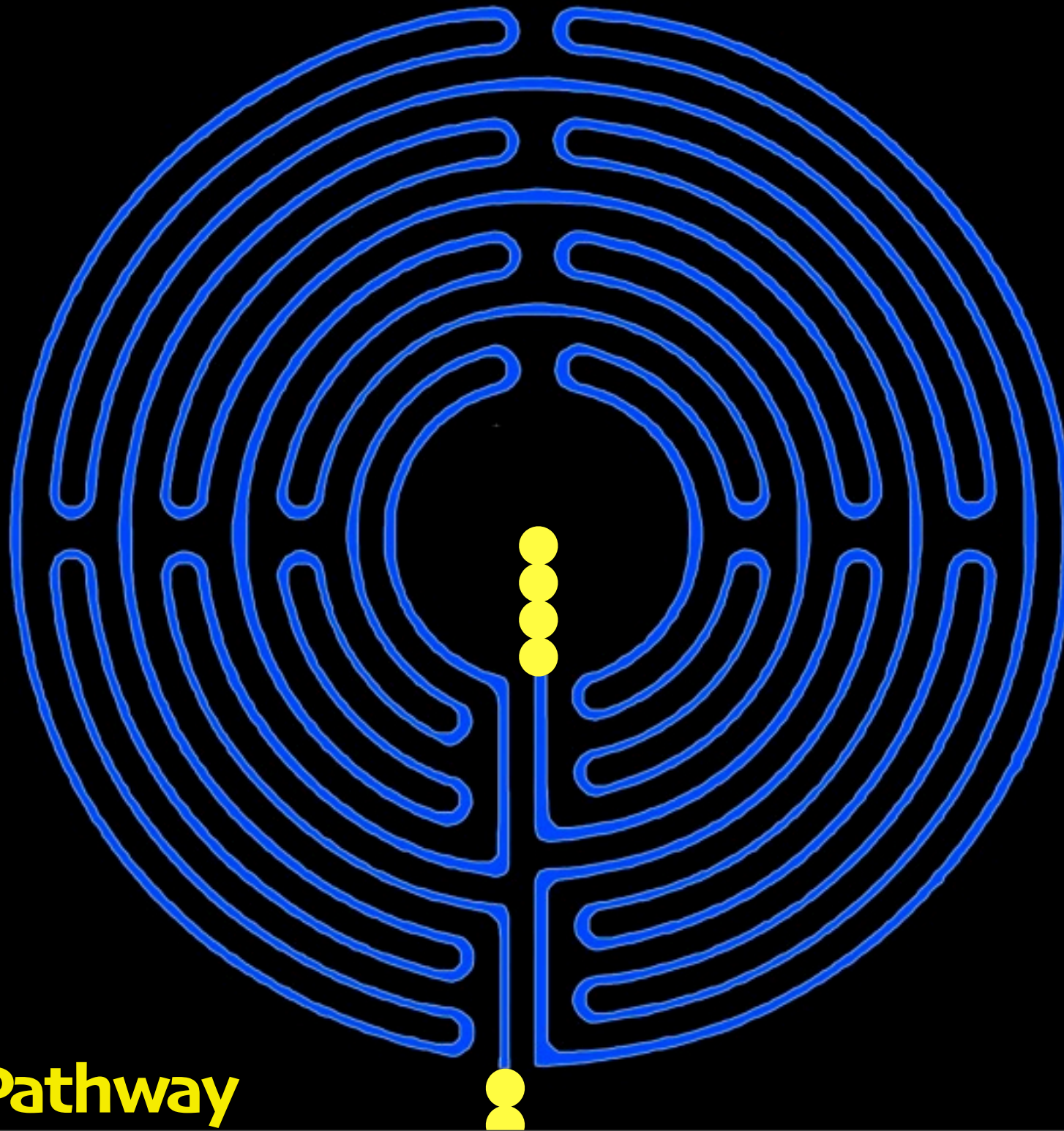
Tim Geoffrion,

The Powerful Use of Symbol and Metaphor in the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Rich Symbolism in Labyrinth Prayer.

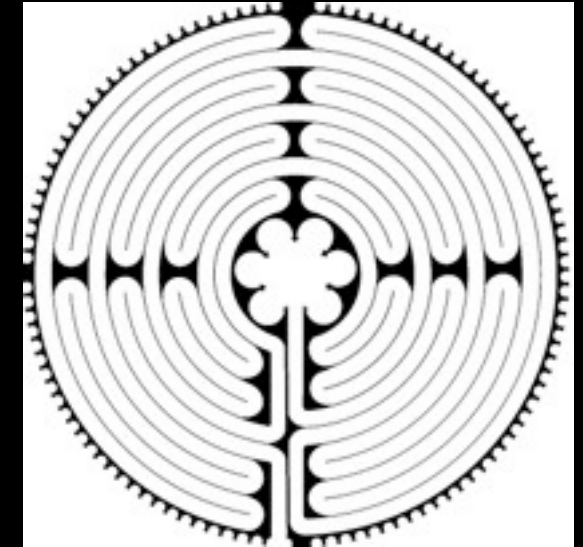


Ministers pray on a labyrinth Musanze (Northern), Rwanda 2009

**A labyrinth is a single pathway that turns back on itself
before reaching a center.
It is an enclosed design with a single opening in the perimeter.**



Pathway



**Overall
design or
pattern**

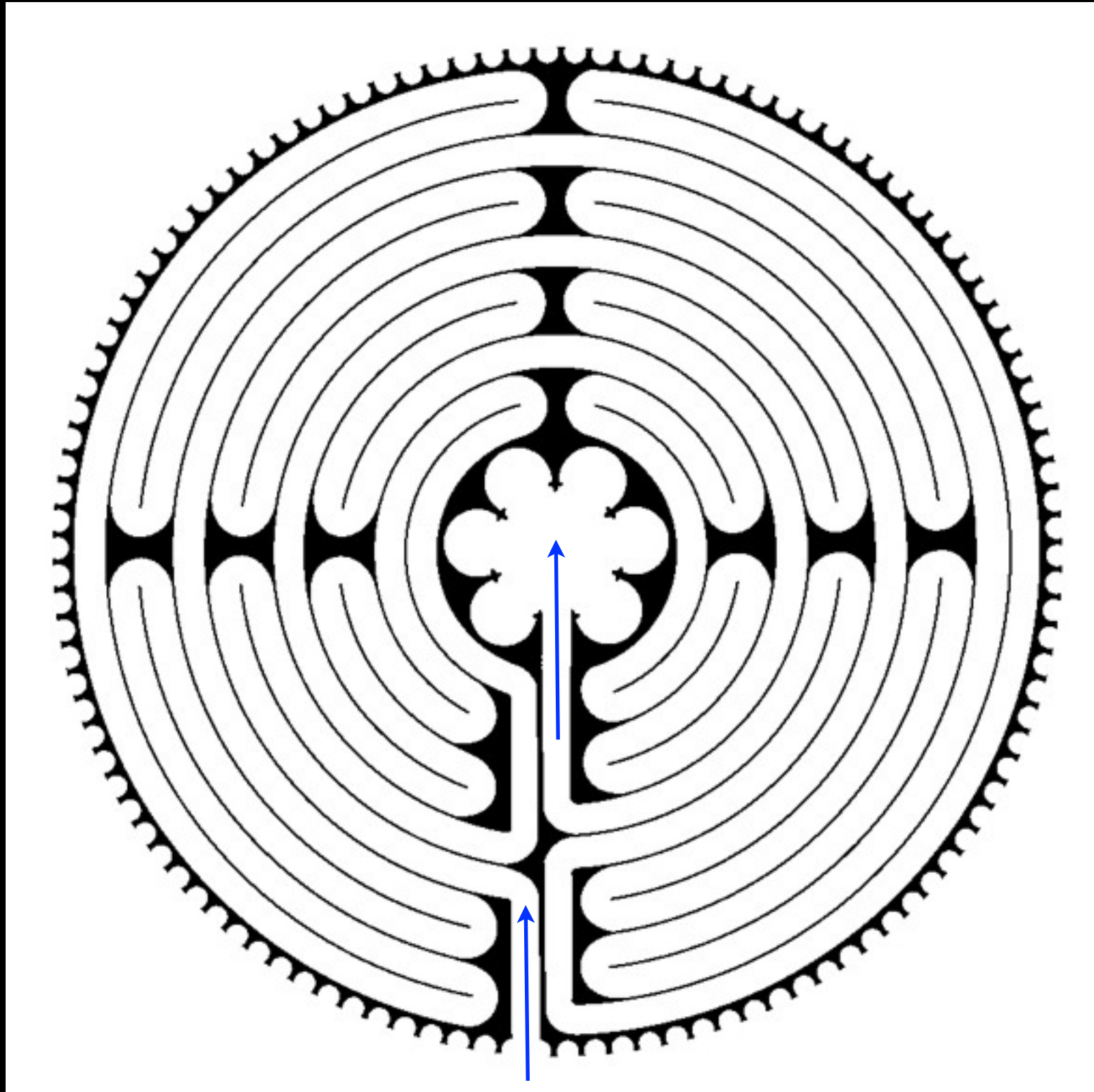
A labyrinth has one--and only one--pathway.
Mazes and wingabas have many.
There are no tricks or dead ends in a labyrinth.
You can't get lost.

Karen Wingaba Maze
at a Buddhist Temple
Yangon, Myanmar

**Labyrinths are enclosed (safe) spaces
where there is always a way out.**



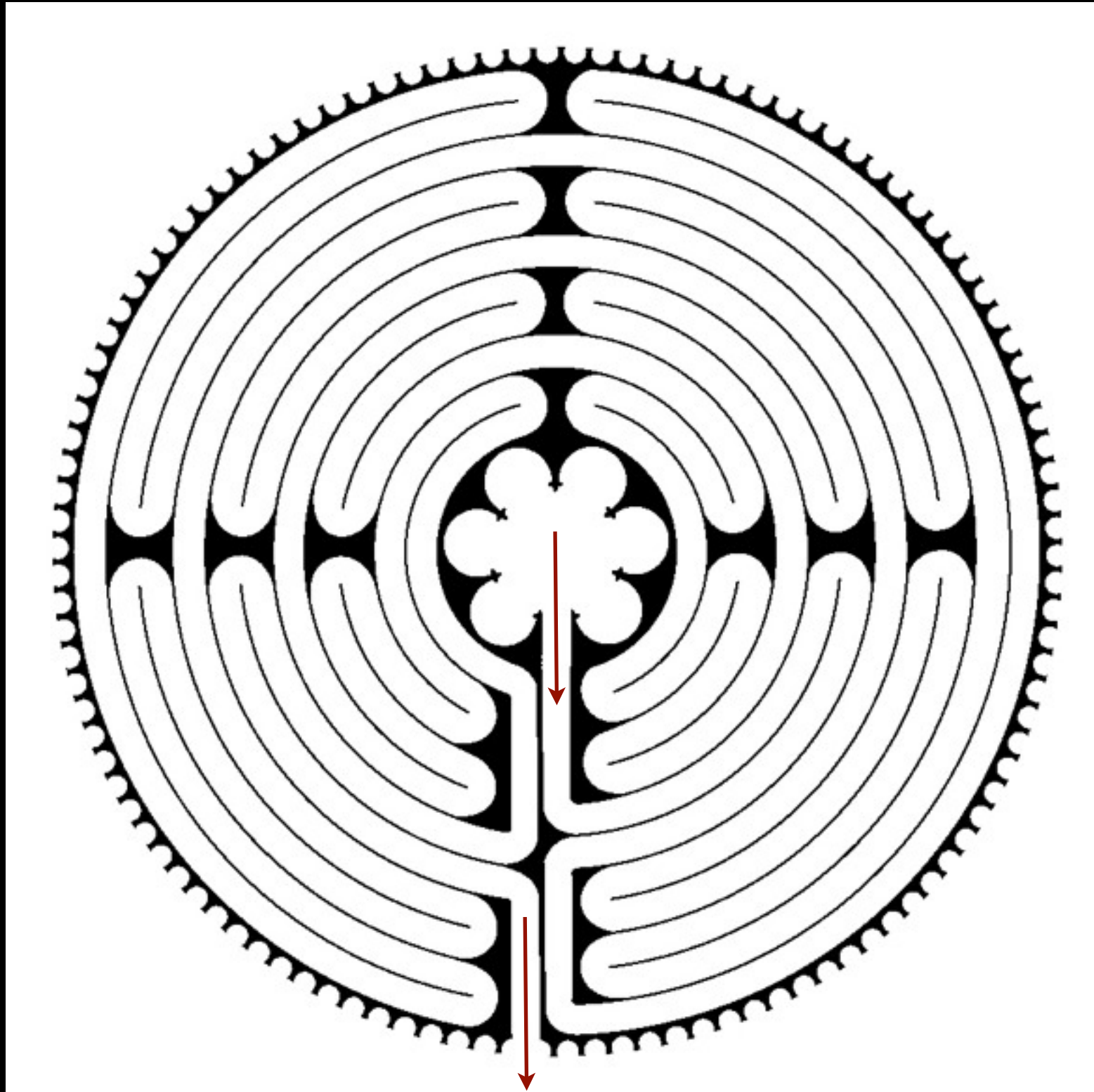
**You enter the labyrinth through its “gate.”
and follow its pathway to the center.**



**Once you have decided to enter a labyrinth,
your only choice is whether or not you keep going.**



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



At first the pattern may seem confusing.



**If you follow the path,
you will discover it can be trusted to lead you to the center
--but not directly!**



**Labyrinths have lots of twists and turns
(There are 32 on the way to the middle
of a full Chartres-style labyrinth).**



Finger labyrinth originally designed for the visually impaired.




**Between the frequent turns are stretches of the path
of various lengths,
some short and some longer.**

HEAL Africa, Goma, D. R. Congo

**You may feel surprised, confused or even “lost,”
but if you choose to trust the path and stay on it,
it will lead you to the center.**





If you step off the path, it is possible to 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.

External
movements
on
labyrinths
invite
internal shifts.

Minister, D. R. Congo



**While moving our bodies back and forth,
our linear thinking mind is given the opportunity
to shift towards creativity.**



**Walking a labyrinth can serve
as a wonderful metaphor
for your journey through life.**



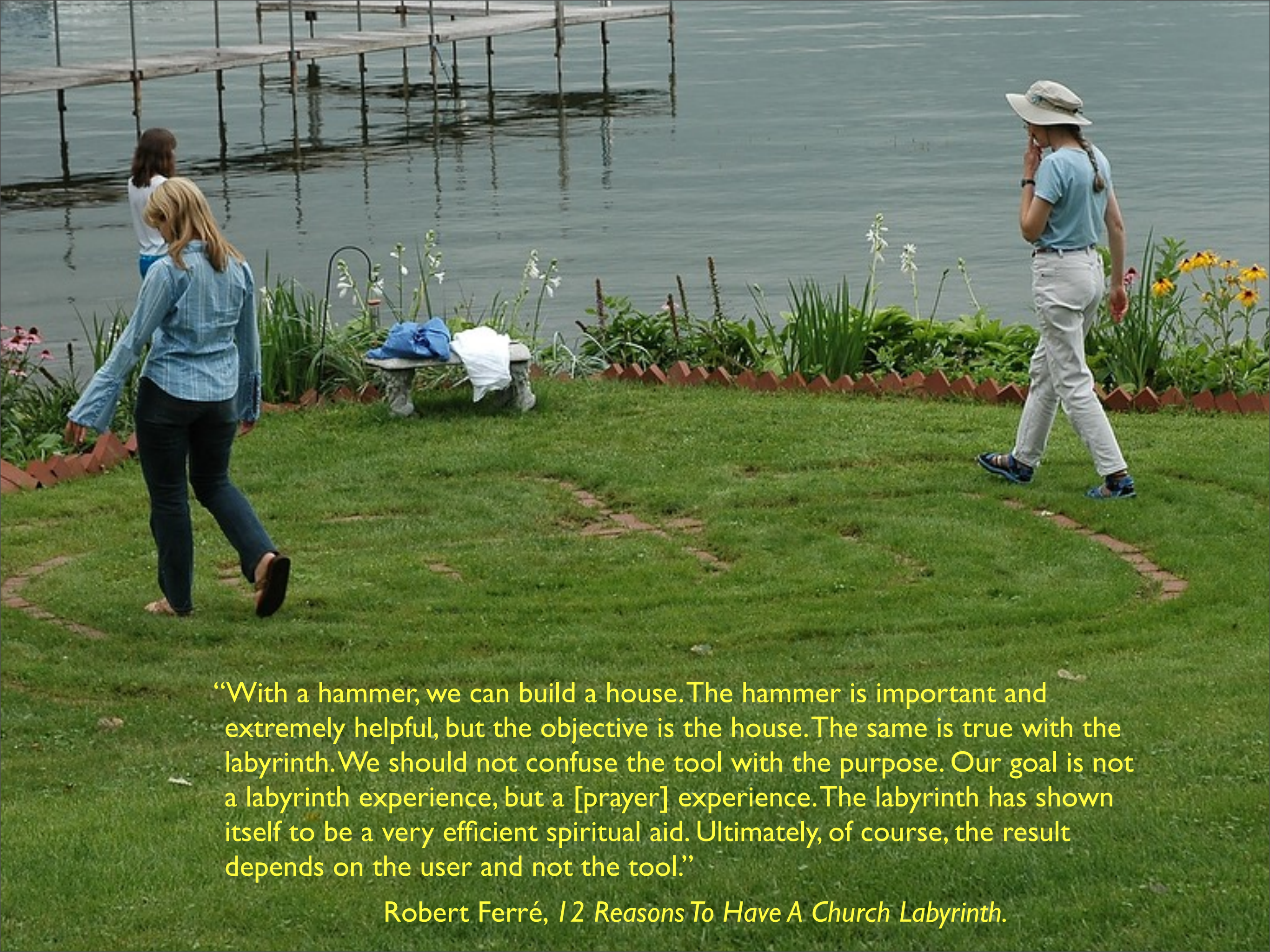
**Chalice Labyrinth
Atlanta, Georgia USA**

You may experience a variety of feelings while praying.
Each is a messenger that can serve you.



**The spiritual practice of walking (praying on) a labyrinth
can serve to remind you, body and mind,
that God is guiding you faithfully--
especially when you are not at all sure of it!**





“With a hammer, we can build a house. The hammer is important and extremely helpful, but the objective is the house. The same is true with the labyrinth. We should not confuse the tool with the purpose. Our goal is not a labyrinth experience, but a [prayer] experience. The labyrinth has shown itself to be a very efficient spiritual aid. Ultimately, of course, the result depends on the user and not the tool.”

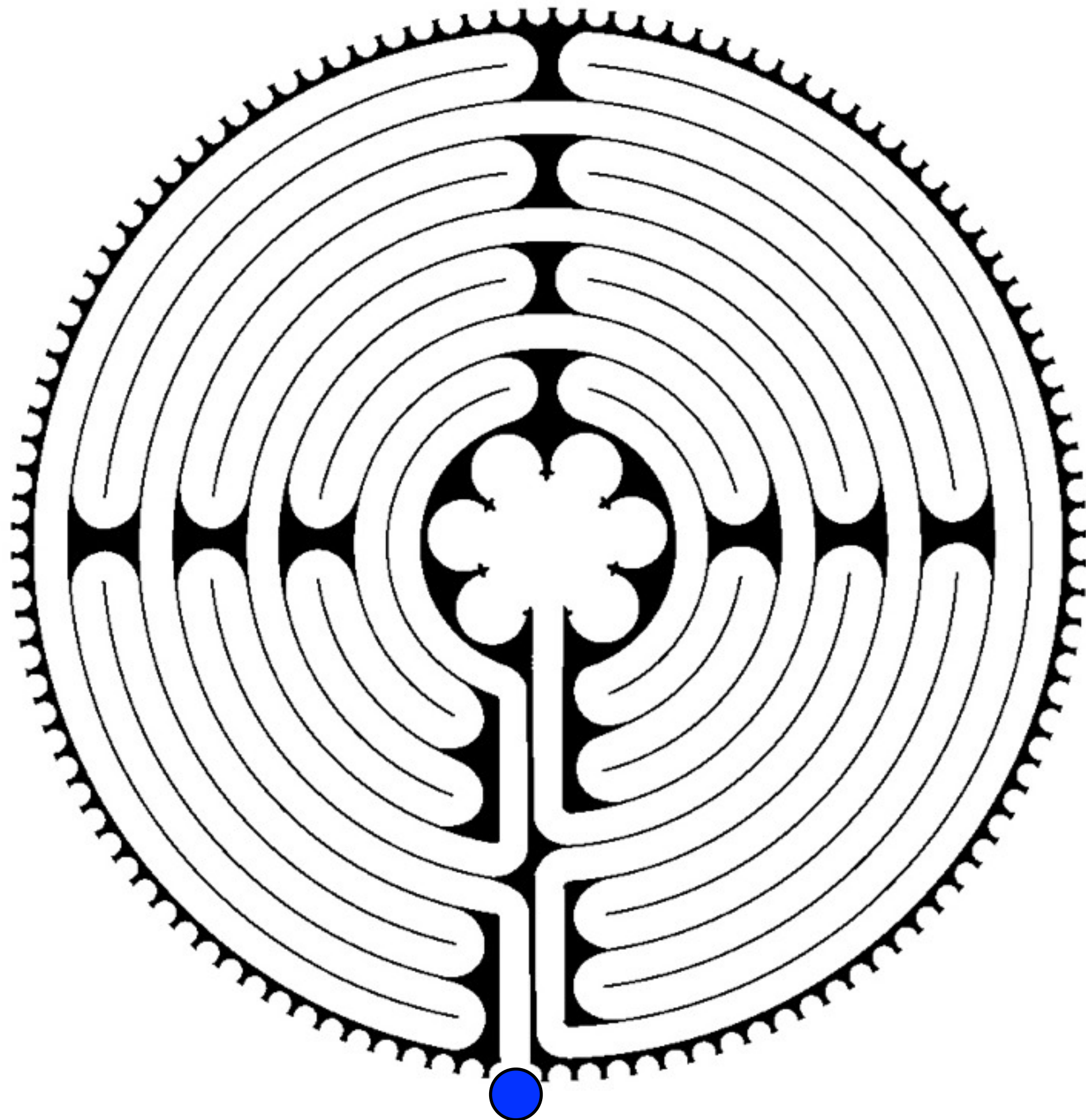
Robert Ferré, *12 Reasons To Have A Church Labyrinth.*

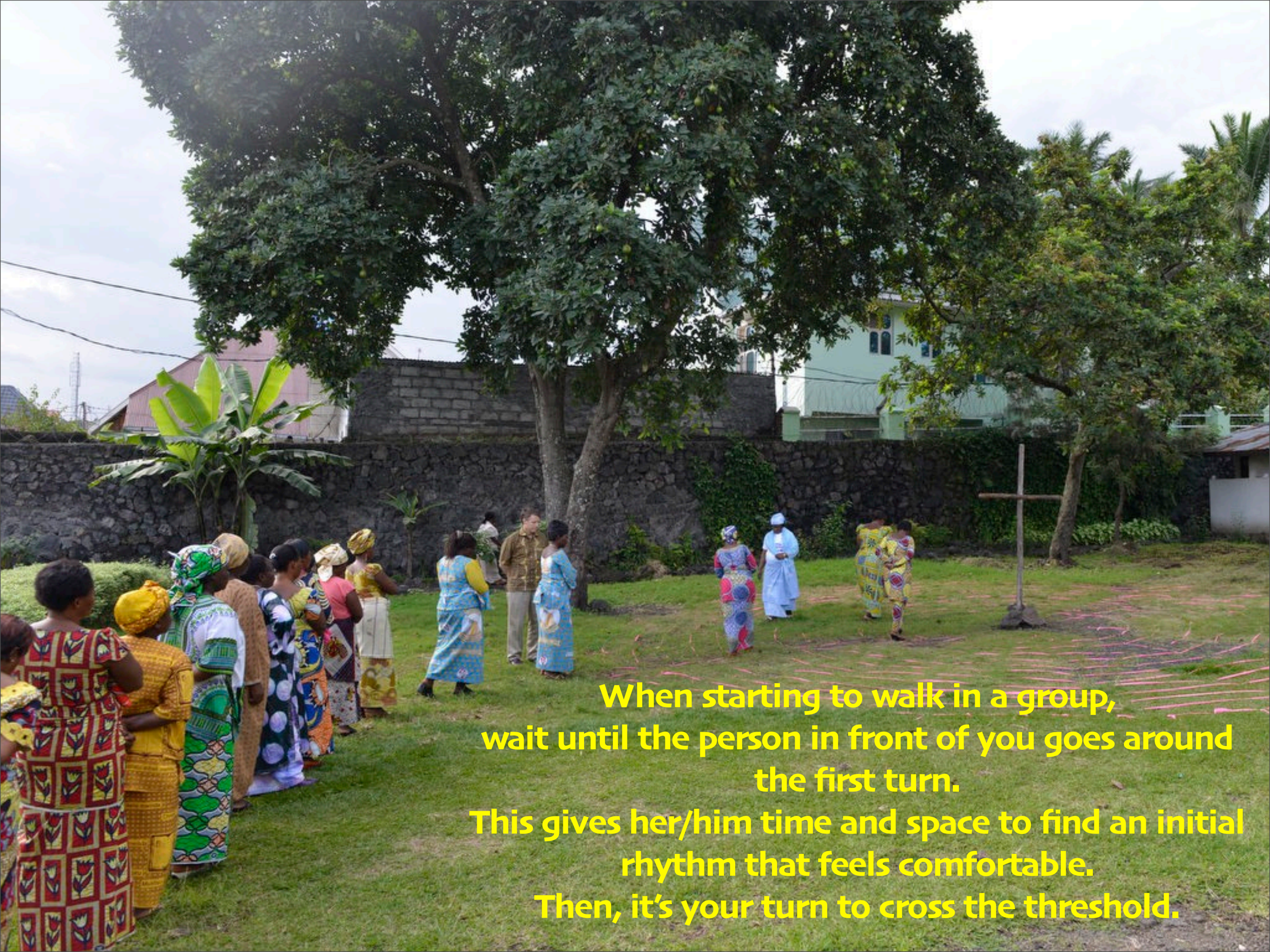
The flow of Labyrinth Prayer



**Take time
to prepare
yourself.**

**Begin your
prayer on
the outside
of the
labyrinth.**





**When starting to walk in a group,
wait until the person in front of you goes around
the first turn.
This gives her/him time and space to find an initial
rhythm that feels comfortable.
Then, it's your turn to cross the threshold.**

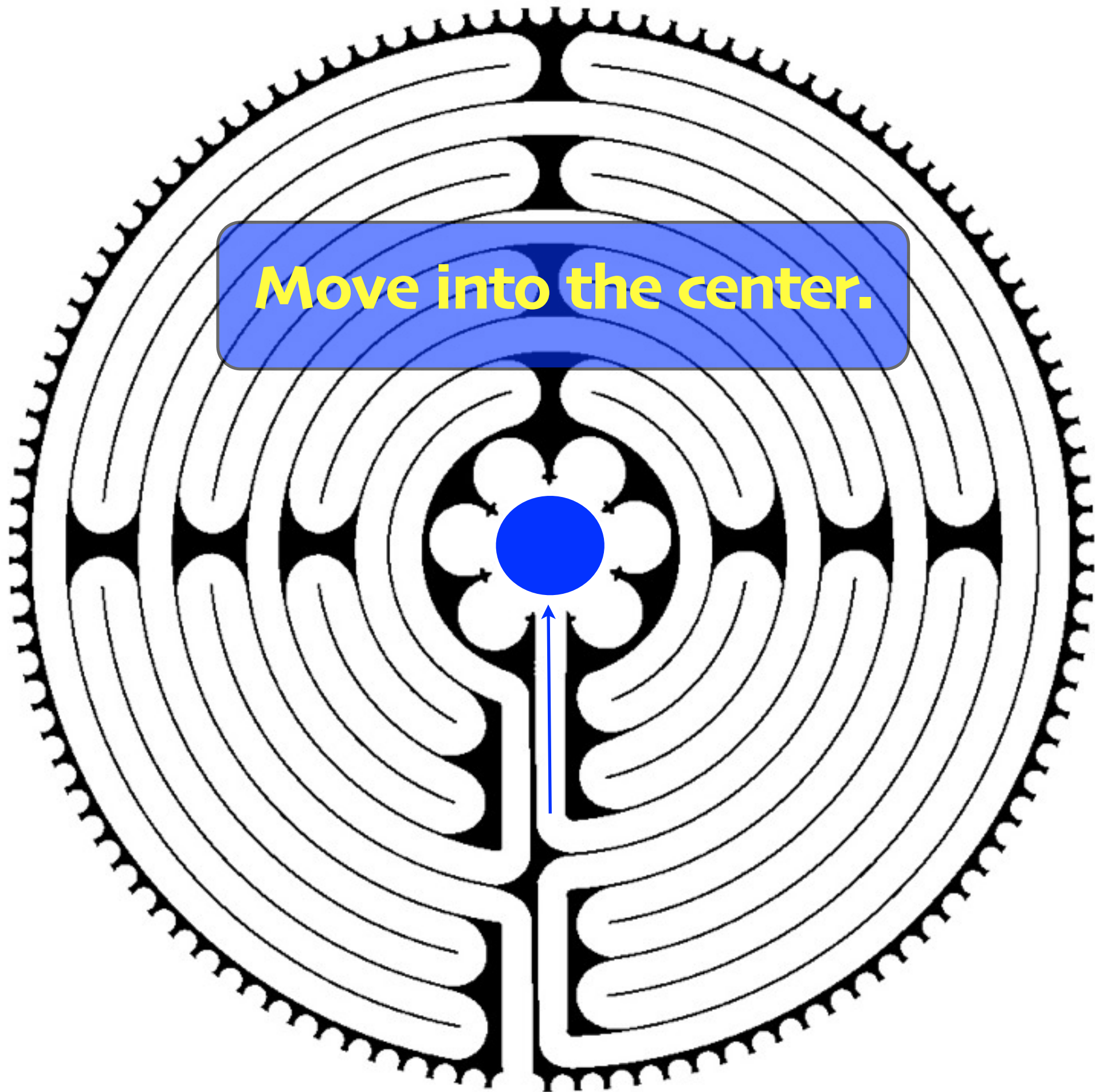


**Follow the
path to
the center**

**When walking the labyrinth you can move around another person,
let someone “pass” you,
or pause.**

**Labyrinth etiquette allows for all these options!
Do what you would do if you met someone on any narrow path.**



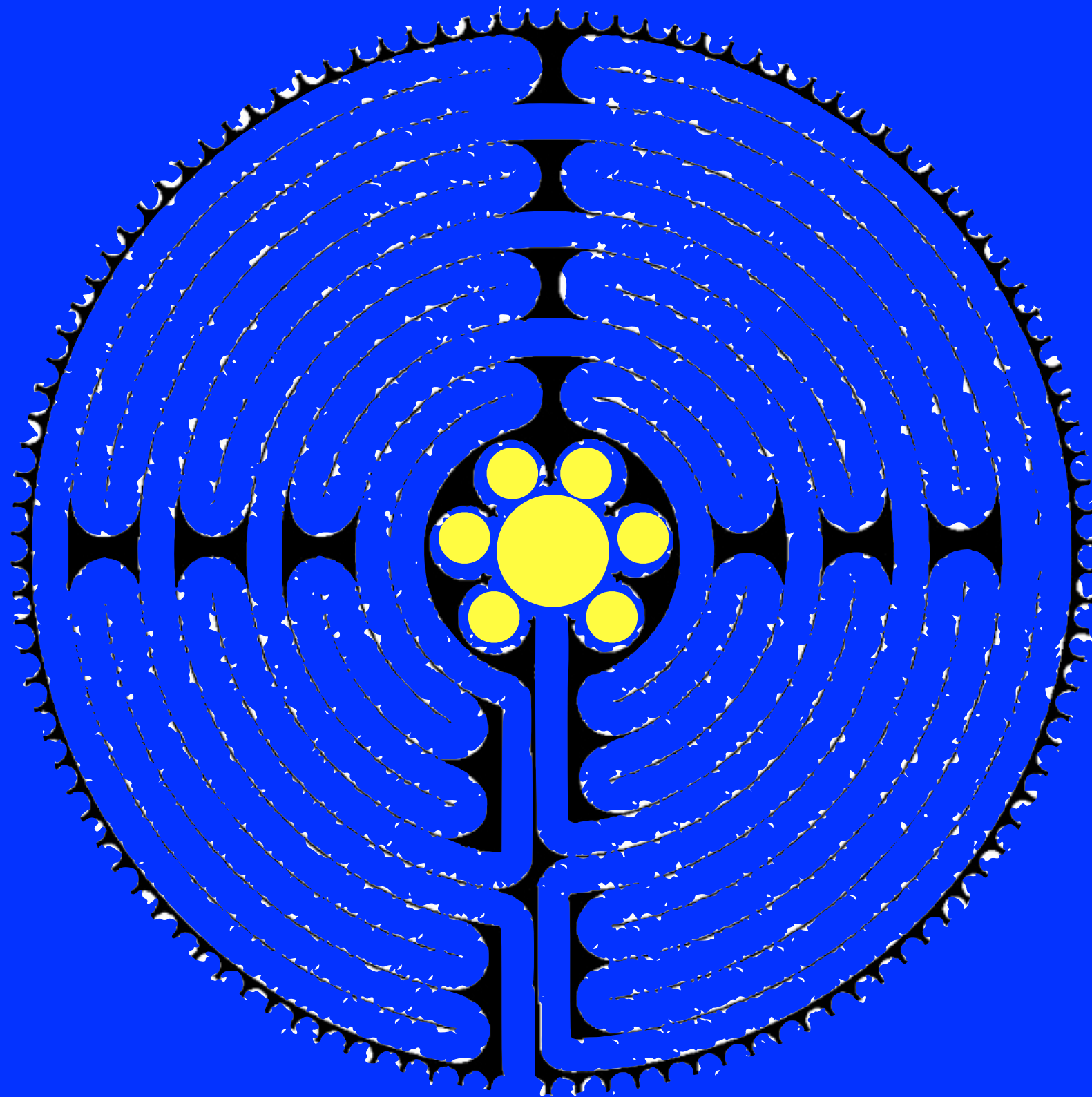


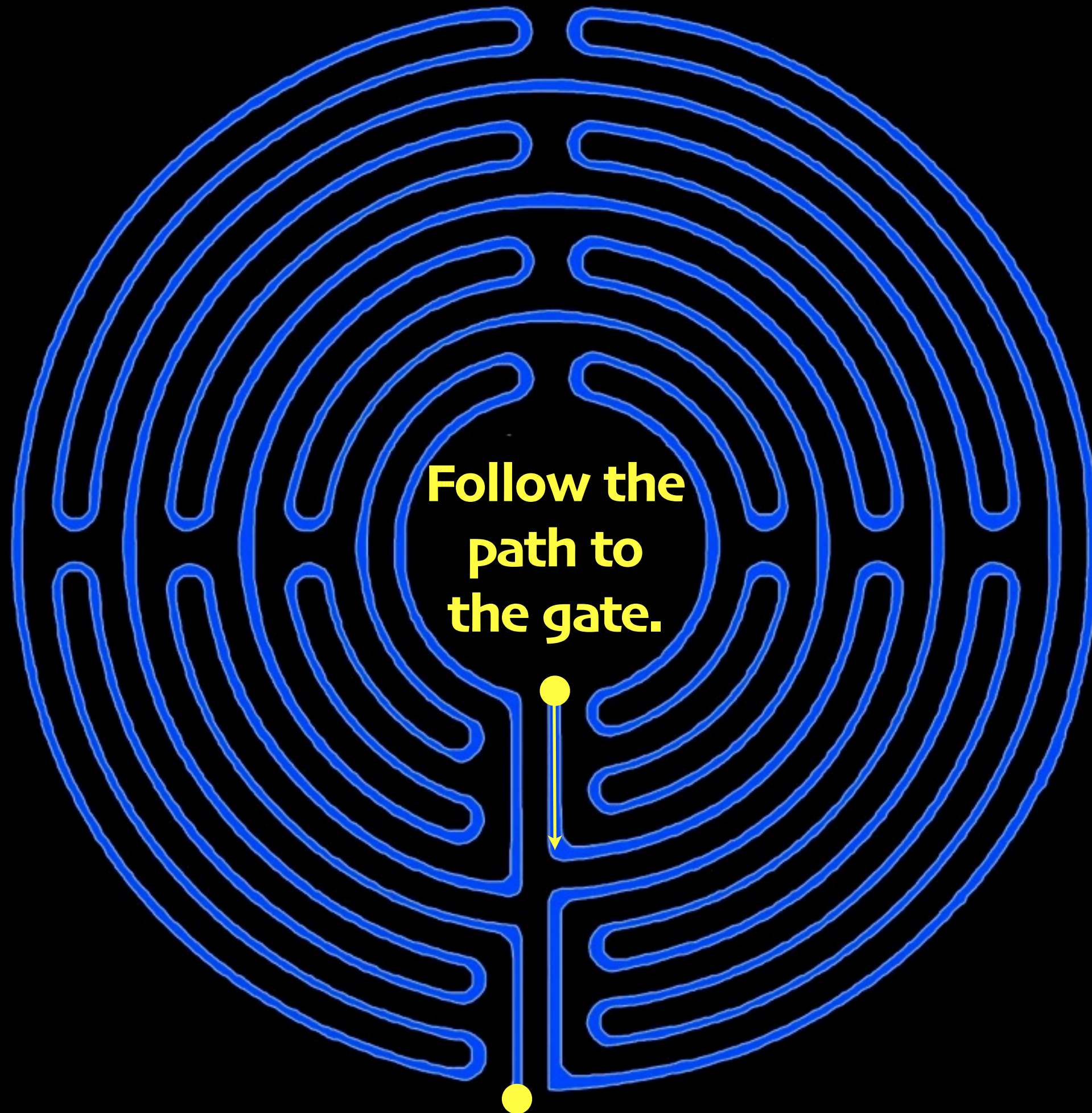
Move into the center.



**The center is a wonderful place to
rest in God's loving presence.**

There is room for many people in the center; feel free to stay there until you are ready to leave.





**Follow the
path to
the gate.**

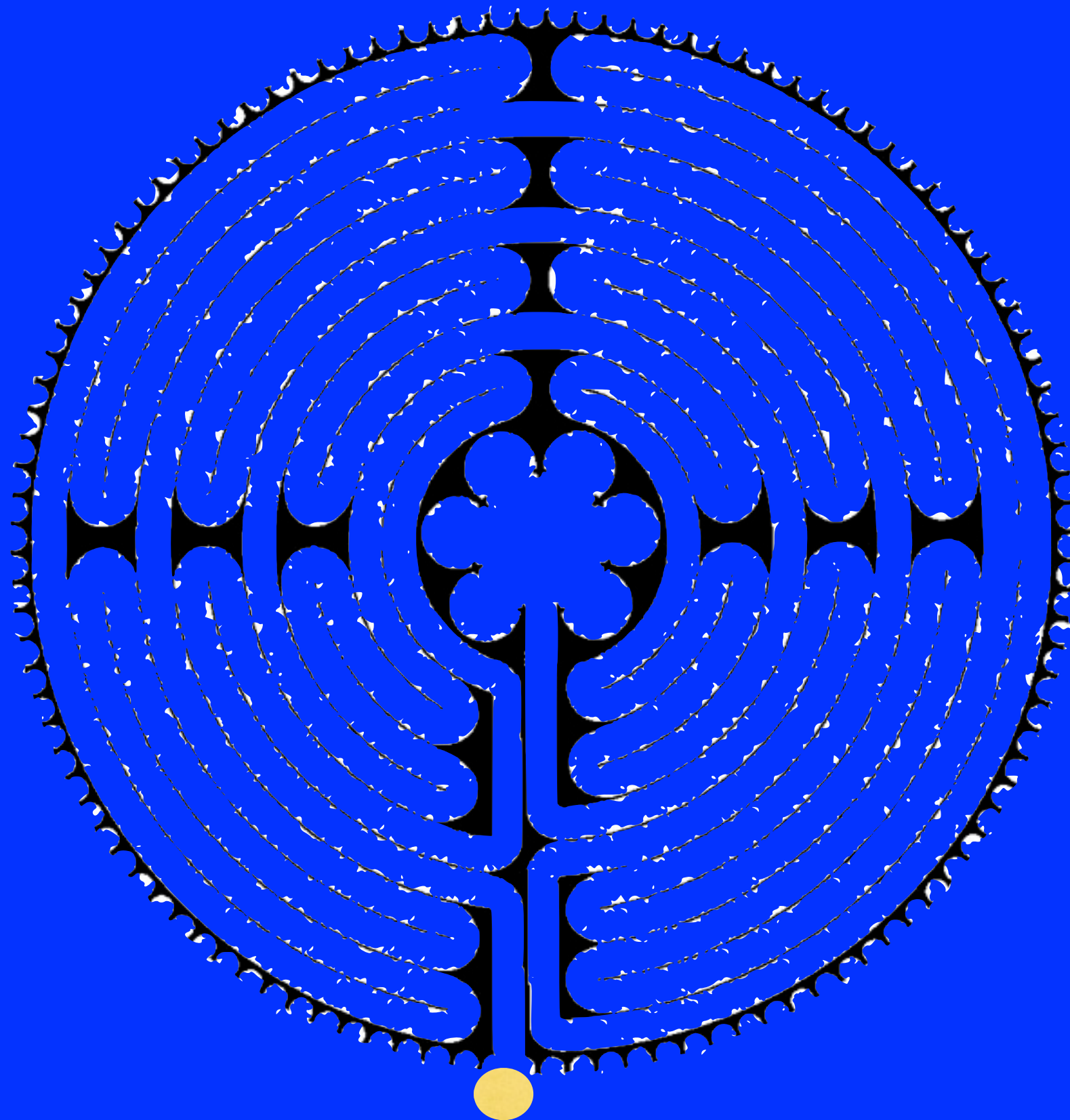
Before leaving, pause.
Take a few moments
to savor the gifts God has given.



Walking around the perimeter of a labyrinth can help to bring closure to a labyrinth experience.



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





A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a blue pen and writing in an open notebook. On the desk, there is a stack of books, including one with a pink cover and a yellow 'E' logo, and a black wallet. The desk is placed on a patterned rug with red and yellow stripes. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.

**What
images,
and/or
experiences
were important?**

**What did God
communicate?**

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A person with short dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden table. They are holding a blue pen and writing in an open, lined notebook. On the table, there is a stack of books, including one with a pink cover and a red cross, and a black wallet. The table is covered with a patterned cloth. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.

What did God
communicate?

What
images,
and/or
experiences
were important?

What are
my next
steps?



**Walking a labyrinth can feel like a long journey;
many important experiences take time to unfold.**

**You are always free to leave the labyrinth. If you want, walk off.
You can always return if/when you are ready.**





After you have walked a labyrinth once, you will be able to relax and go deeper into the experience the next time.



The more you “practice” using a labyrinth
the more natural it will become.

**When you are not walking the labyrinth,
you can witness (rather than watch)
others, and pray for them.**





Ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Journey blog by jill jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Articles by Tim: www.spiritedleader.wordpress.com



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