

Introducing Labyrinth Prayer

The Spirit-Led Leader Retreat & Training, Cambodia 2016





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

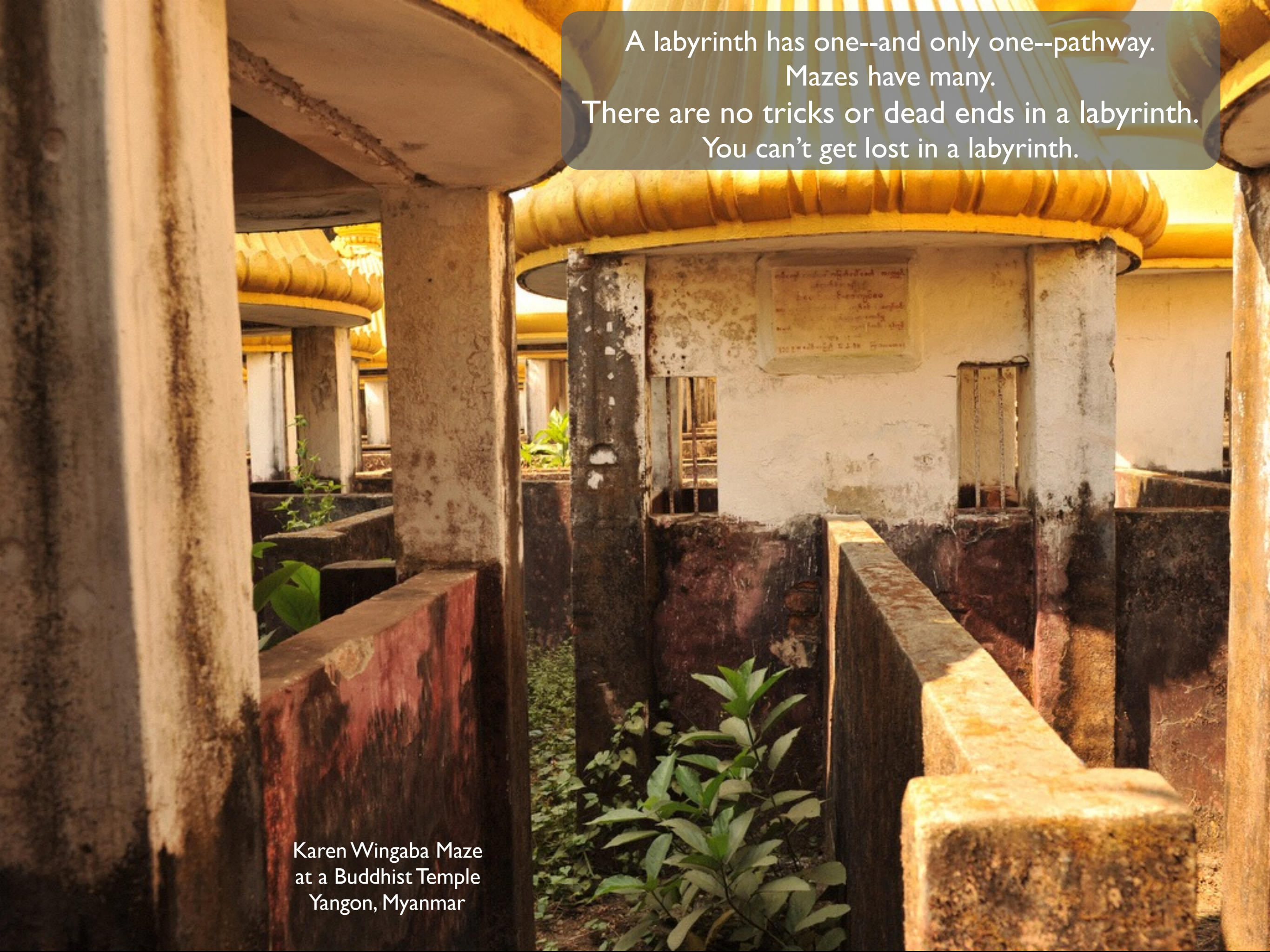
A low-angle, close-up shot of a person's legs from the knees down, wearing blue denim jeans. The person is walking barefoot on a red carpet with white lines. The background shows a church interior with a wooden ceiling, a blue altar cloth, and several wooden chairs. The text "Taking a prayer walk with God" is overlaid in white at the bottom left.

Taking a prayer walk with God



Labyrinths are designs that consist of a single, winding path that begins at the periphery and leads to a central space.

The way out is on the same path, but in the opposite direction.



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

Karen Wingaba Maze
at a Buddhist Temple
Yangon, Myanmar

We are interested in labyrinths with one path that leads to the center.



Unity Labyrinth, Sun City, Arizona (USA)

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

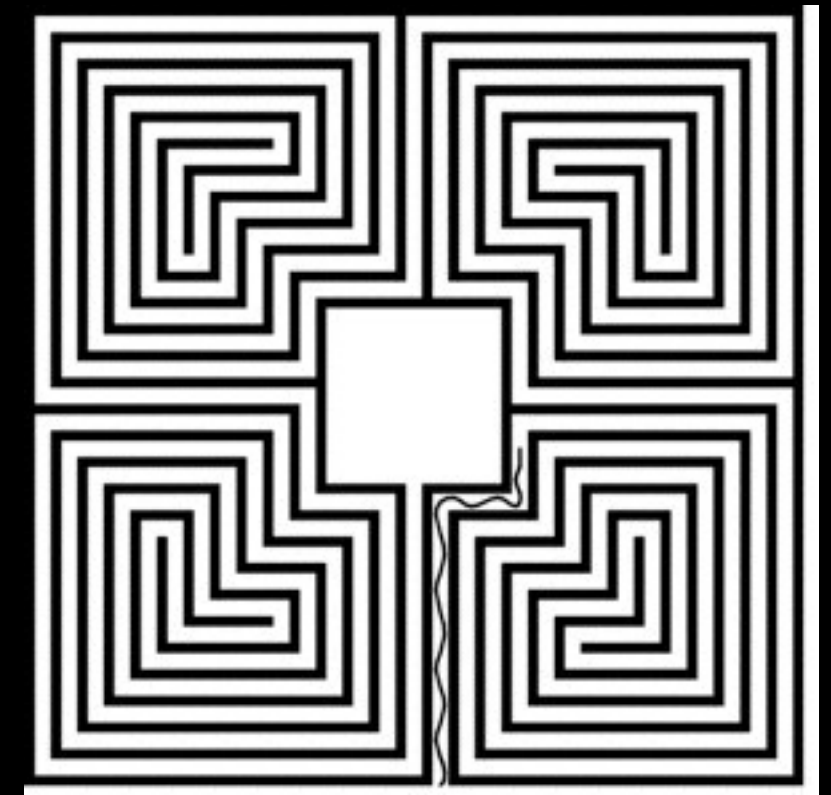
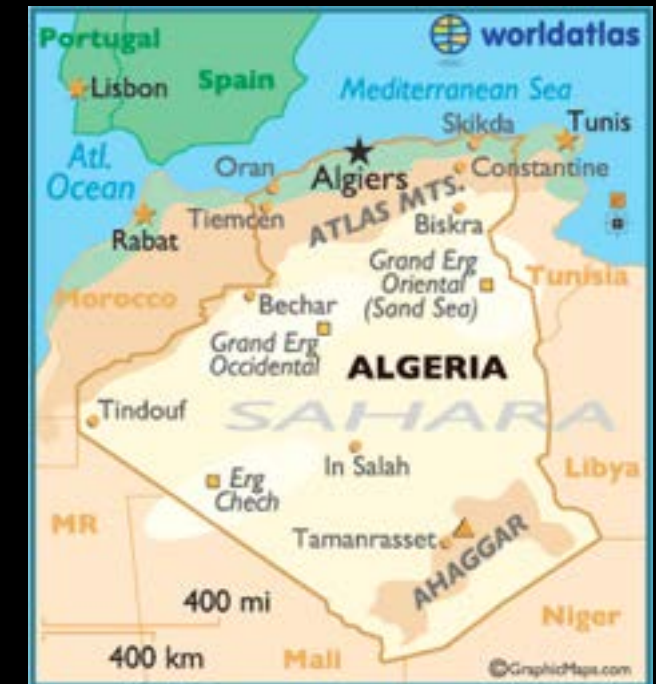
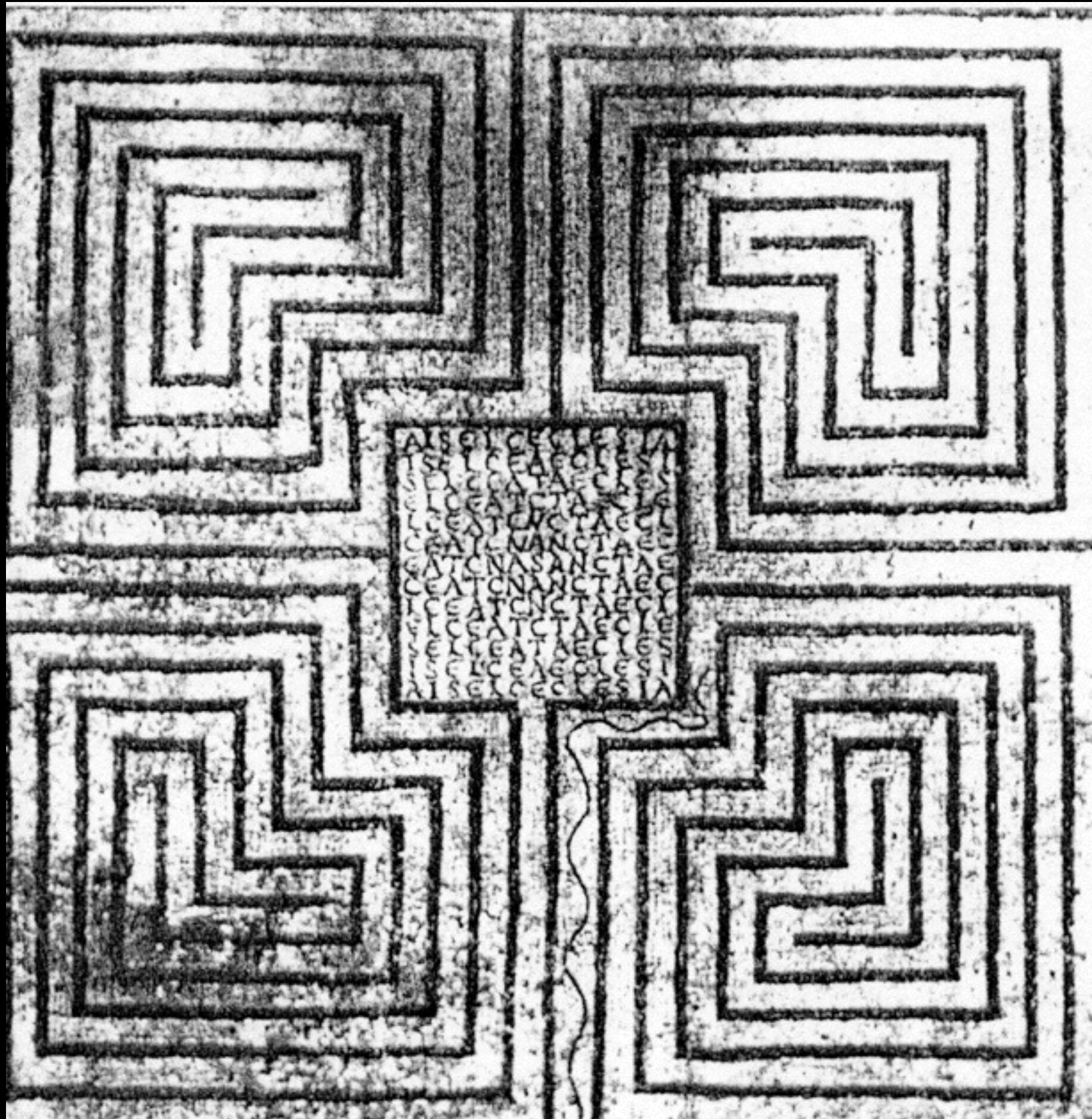
Historical labyrinths exist all over the world.
The oldest is approximately 4,000 years old.
It is found in Goa, India.



Goa, India 2,000-2500 BCE
Pansaimol Labyrinth

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

Christians began using labyrinths as early as 324 A.D.



From a church in El Asnam (Orléansville), Algeria (Africa)

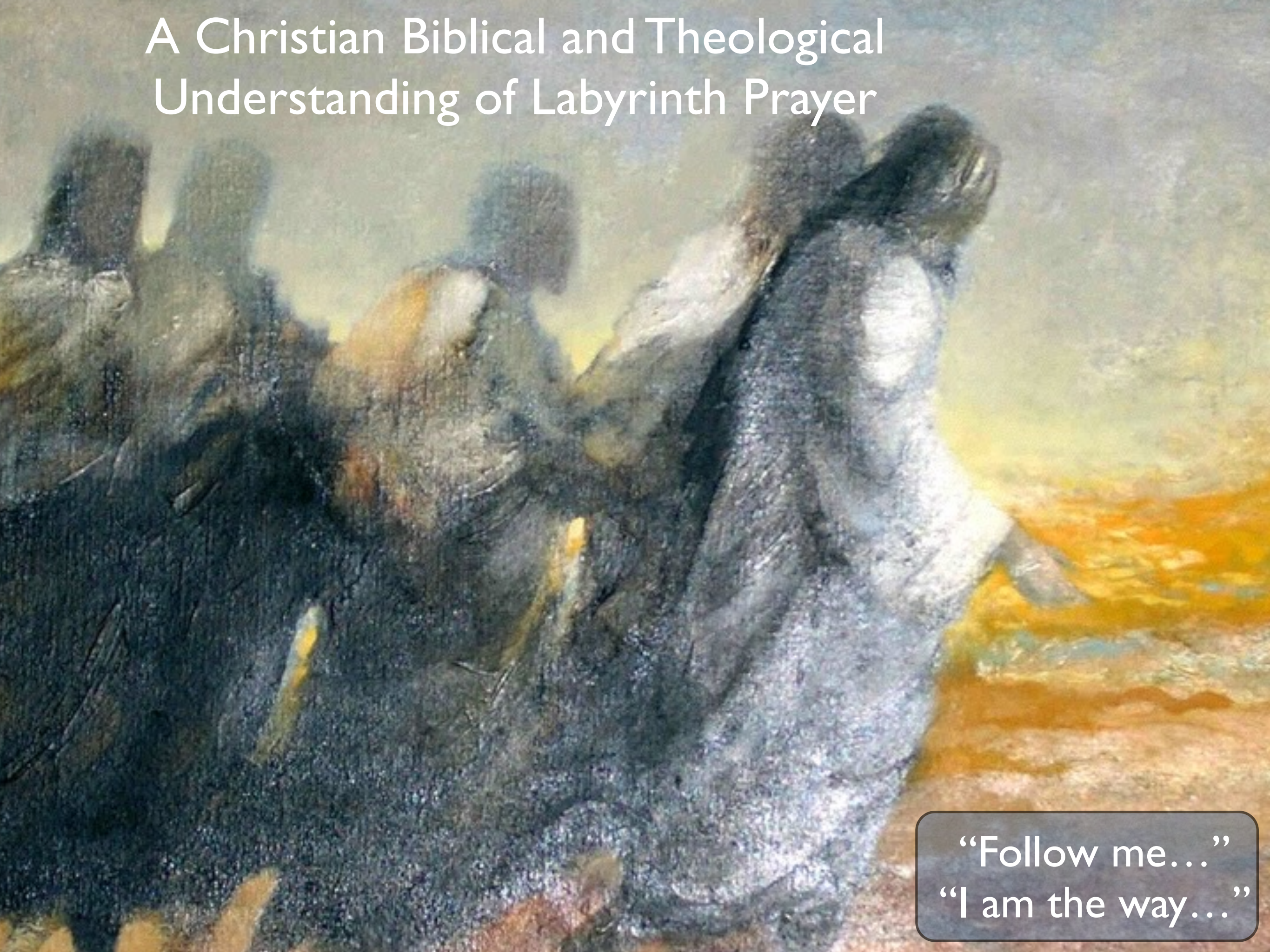


Labyrinths are used by Christians for ministry at churches, retreat centers, schools, hospitals, and prisons.

There are 5,000 labyrinths in 80 countries that are currently listed on the world-wide labyrinth locator at www.labyrinthlocator.com



A Christian Biblical and Theological Understanding of Labyrinth Prayer



“Follow me...”
“I am the way...”

Symbols help us to grasp
and remember
what is most important.

This is true of the
symbol of the labyrinth.



Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, California (USA)

A cross is
embedded
in the
symbol of
this
labyrinth.





In the Bible God's People Are Often On Journeys

Abraham as a pilgrim: Genesis 12

Theme of exile as pilgrimage: Exodus

The shepherds visit Jesus: Luke 2:8-20

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

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

Jesus "on the way" with his disciples--to the villages of Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27), to Capernaum (Mark 9:33), Jerusalem (Luke 17:11, Matthew 20:16), etc.

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



“Follow Me.”

Jesus

Matt. 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38 | 6:24, 19:21; Mark 1:17,
2:14, 8:34, 10:21; Luke 5:27, 9:23 | 9:59, 14:27, 18:22;
John 1:43, 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19, 21:22

As we follow the path of a
labyrinth, we learn (anew) to trust
God to lead us where we need to go.

Praying on a Labyrinth: Step by Step

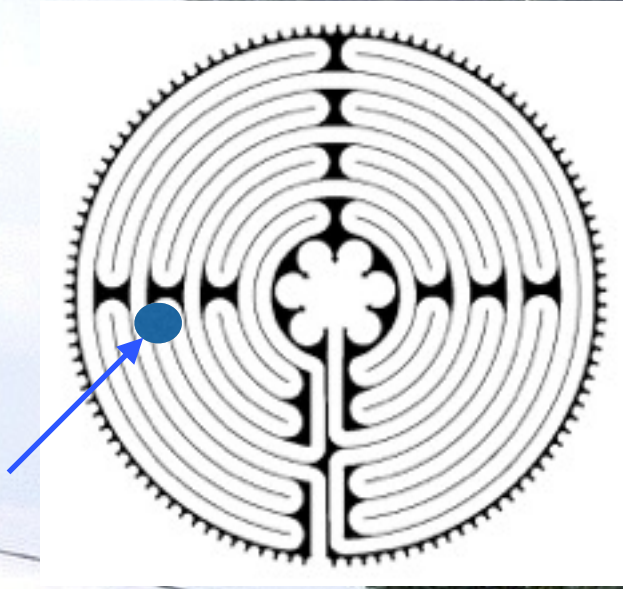


Before entering:
Prepare yourself for your walk.





Move into 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.
Walk at a pace that is comfortable for you.



Follow the path,
it leads to the center.
This is a journey; it takes time.
There is no hurry.

When walking on a labyrinth you can move around another person, or let someone “pass” you.

This is a two-way path. Do what seems natural when you meet someone going the “opposite” way.





Pay special attention as you turn.

A photograph of a group of people in a room with a wooden ceiling and red carpet. In the foreground, several men are kneeling on the carpet, some with their hands clasped in prayer. In the background, a group of people is standing and talking. The room has large windows with white curtains. The text "In the center:" is overlaid on the image.

In the center:

Rest with God.
Listen.
Offer thanks.
Stay as long as you want.




Christ in the center of a fresco labyrinth
Alatri, Italy 12th century (restored)





There is room in the center for many people. Don't hurry to leave.

A photograph showing two women from behind as they walk along a dirt path. The path is marked with yellow string in a series of connected loops. The woman on the left is wearing a red t-shirt and a dark patterned sarong. The woman on the right is wearing a blue jacket over a patterned sarong. They are walking towards a dense green hedge, with mountains visible in the background under a clear sky.

When you are ready,
take the same path back to the doorway
—but in the opposite direction.

Falam, Chin Hills, Myanmar



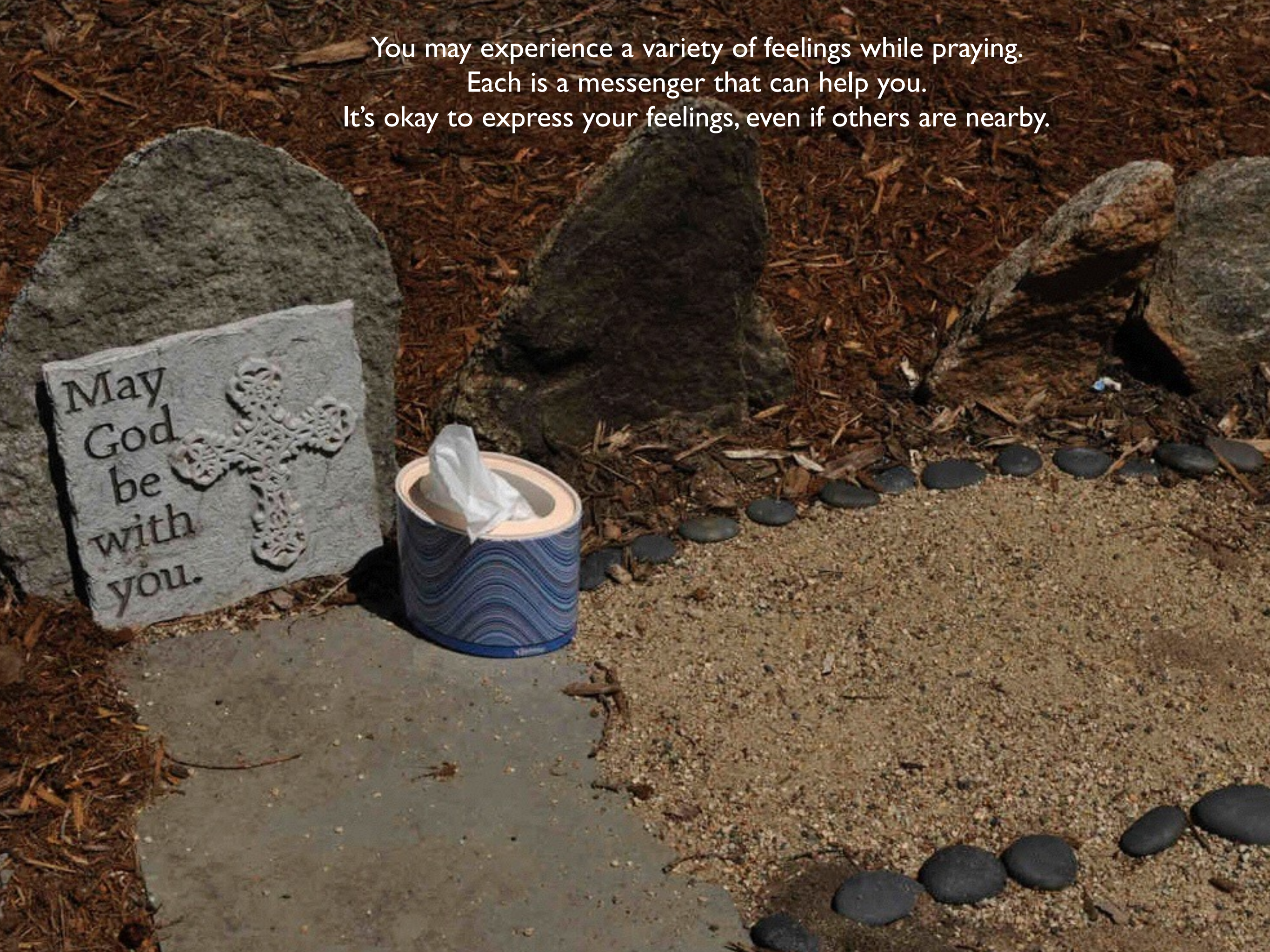
You can get turned around,
but it's not a problem.

You will always arrive either at
the center
or at the gate.



You are always free to leave a labyrinth.

You may experience a variety of feelings while praying.
Each is a messenger that can help you.
It's okay to express your feelings, even if others are nearby.





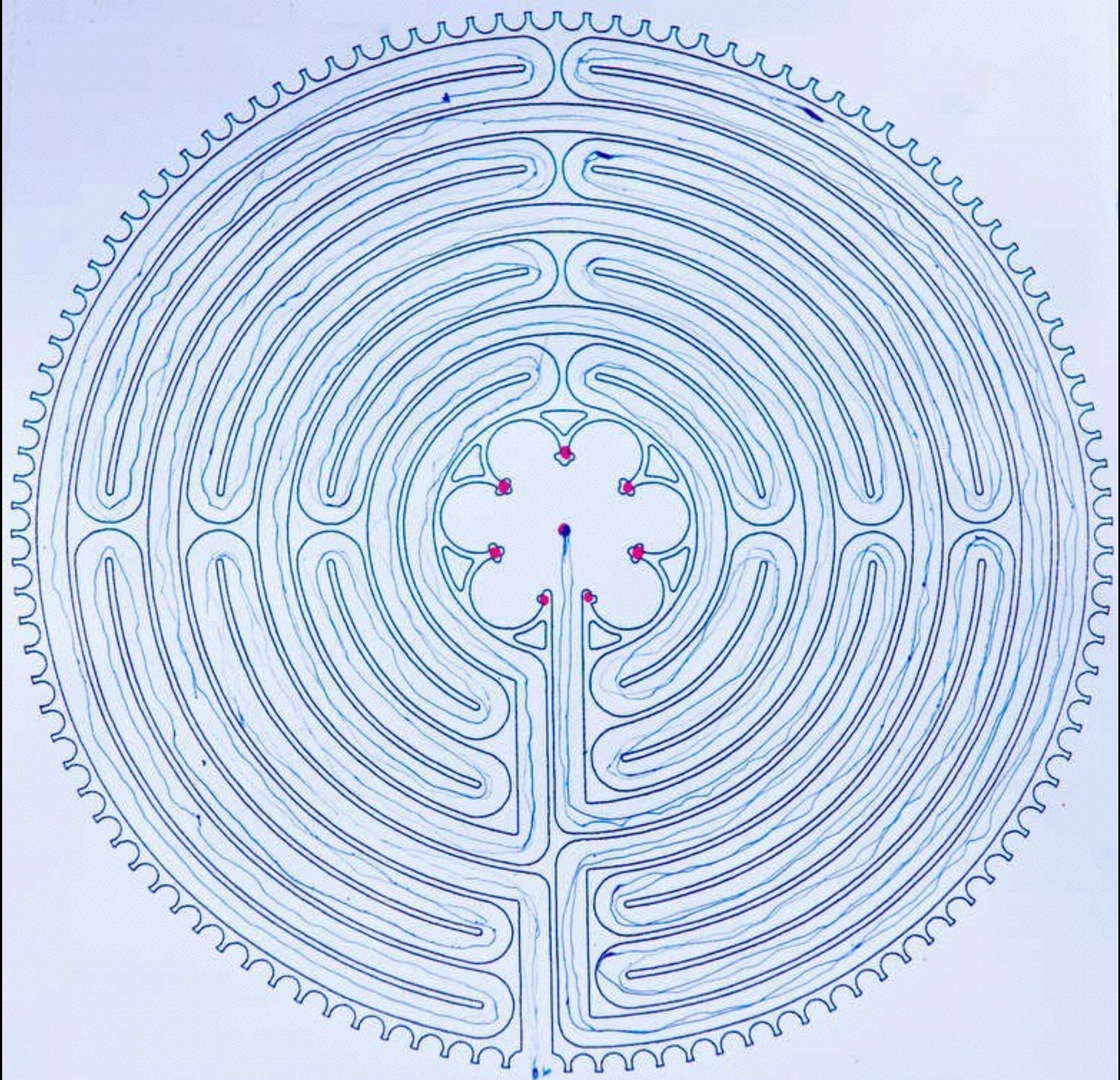
Incorporate everything that happens
on the labyrinth in your prayer.
God can use a labyrinth walk can teach you
about your life.




Prepare yourself to leave
the labyrinth prayer walk.
Thank God
for what you have received.



You can use a labyrinth design to pray with your hand and/or eyes.



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 notebook. On the table, there is a stack of books, including one with a pink cover and a yellow 'E' logo, and a black wallet. The table is covered with a patterned cloth. The background shows a blue and white patterned surface.

Take time to reflect on your prayer experience. Writing or drawing a picture can help you understand more about what God is communicating.



Our Labyrinth Prayer:

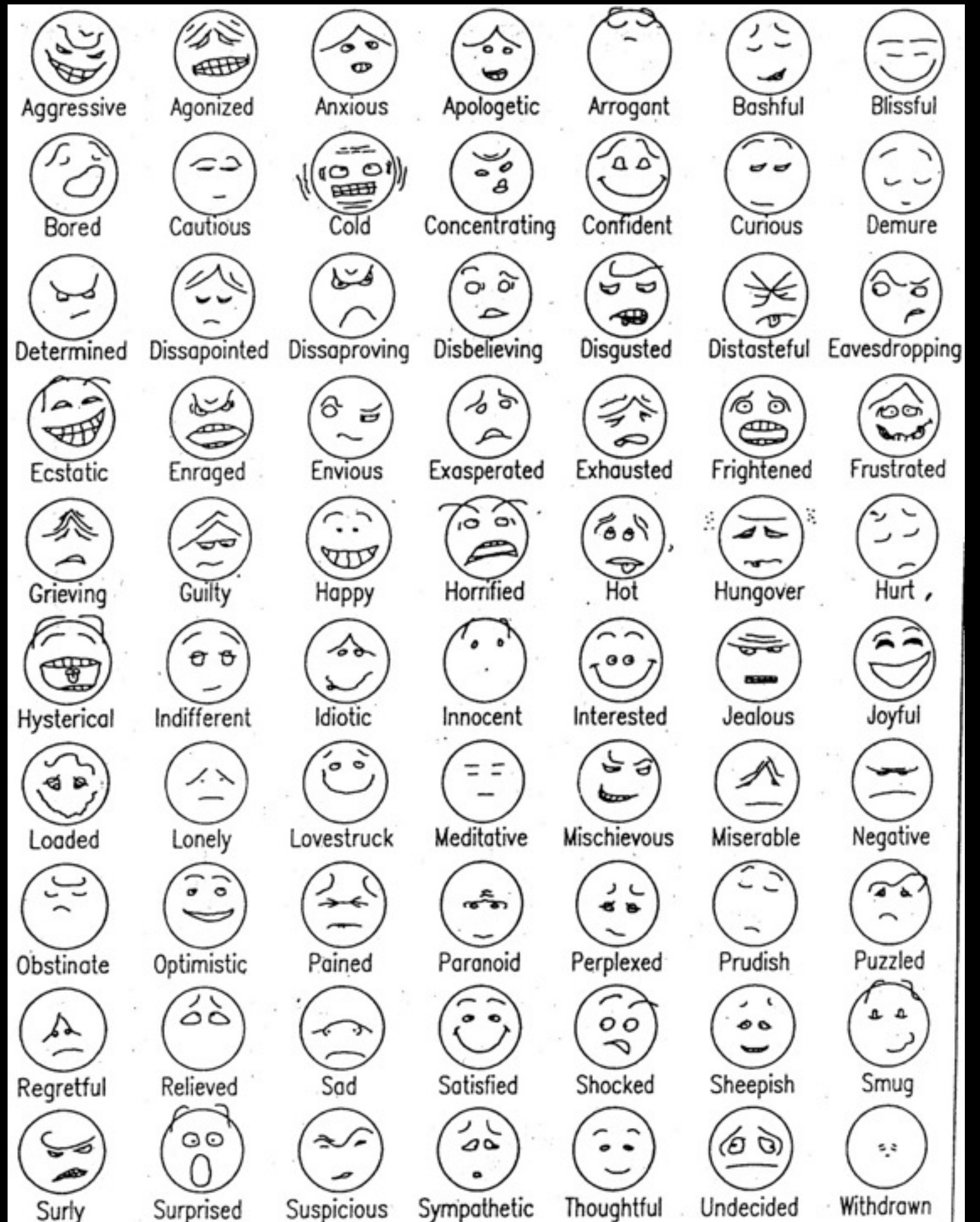
“Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”

What do You want to say to me?
What do You want me to see?
To feel? To know?

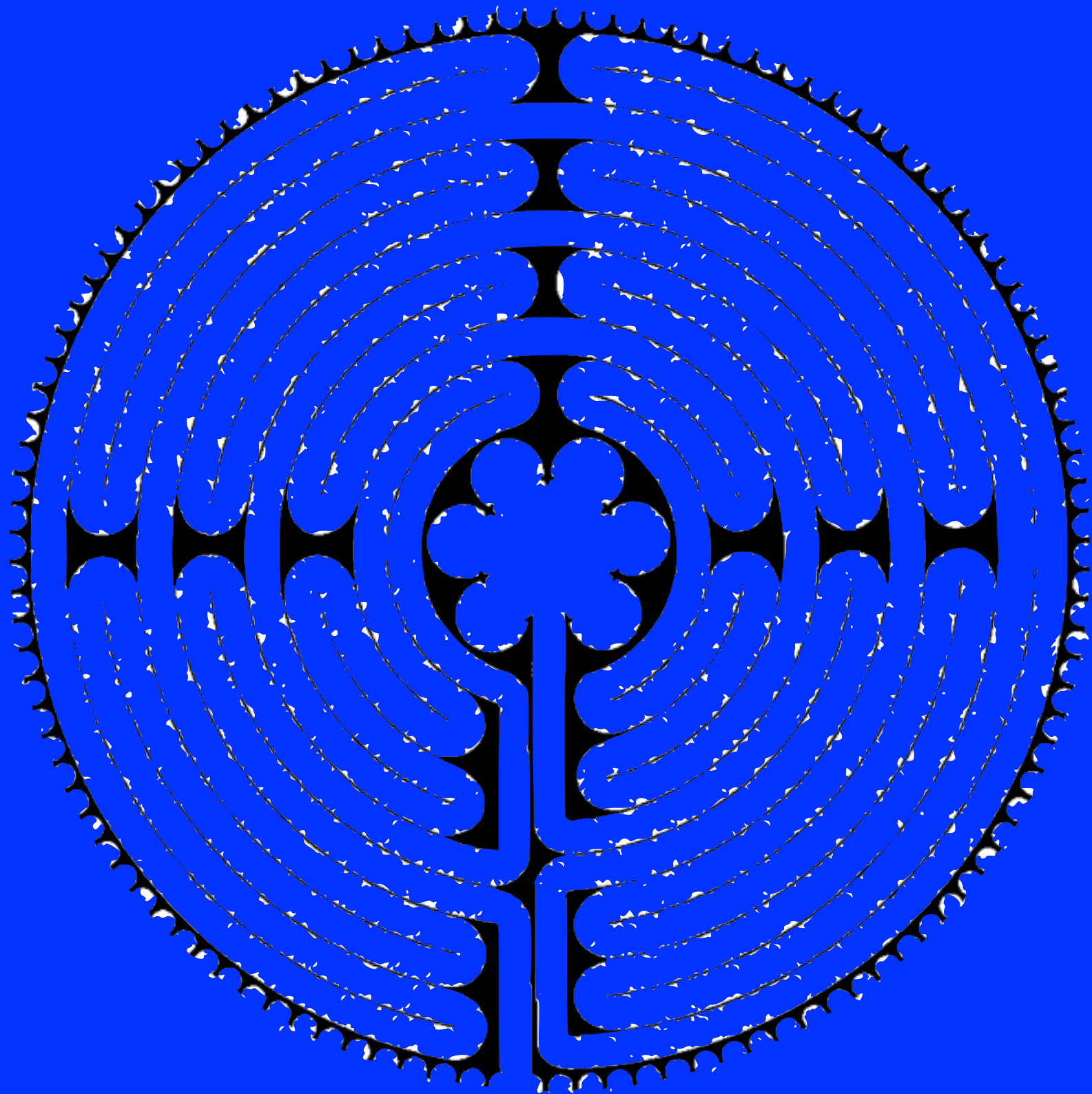
God may give you an image,
a word,
a song,
a Scripture,
a desire...

Now the LORD came... calling, “Samuel! Samuel!”
And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”
1 Samuel 3:10

Right now
I am feeling...



I experienced...



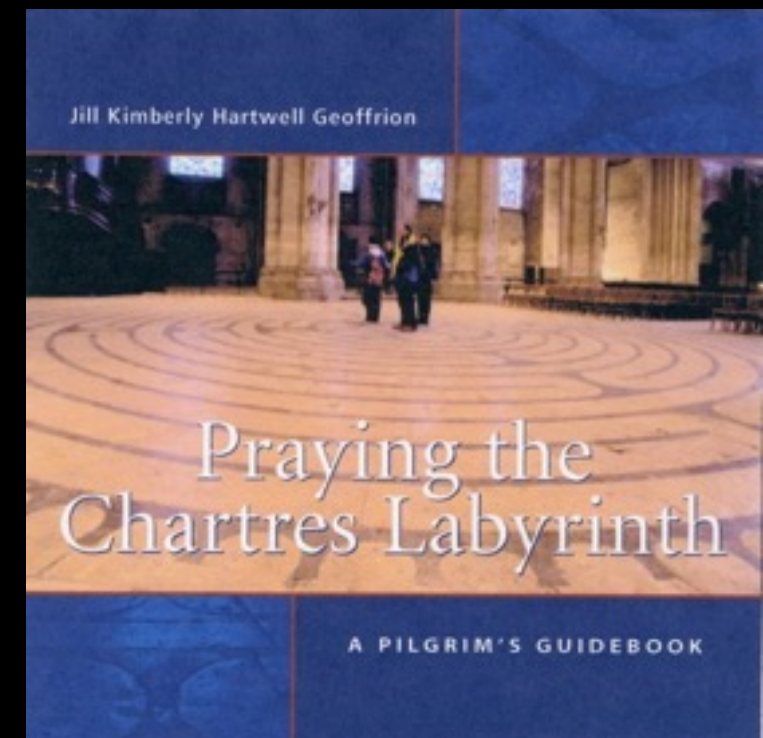
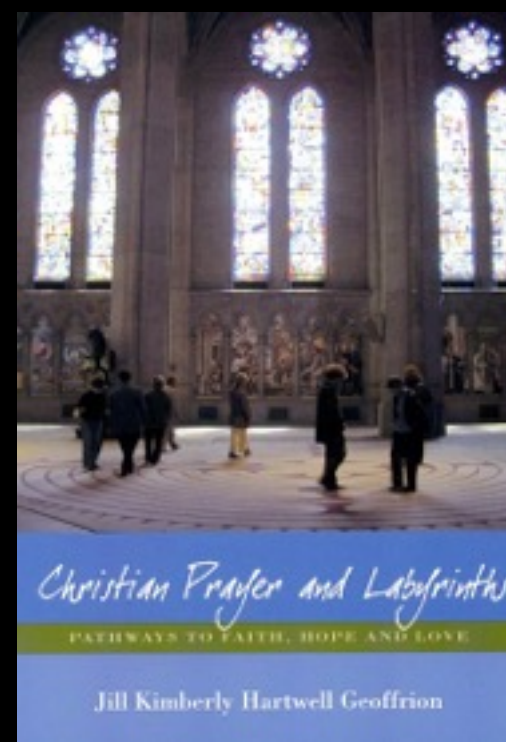
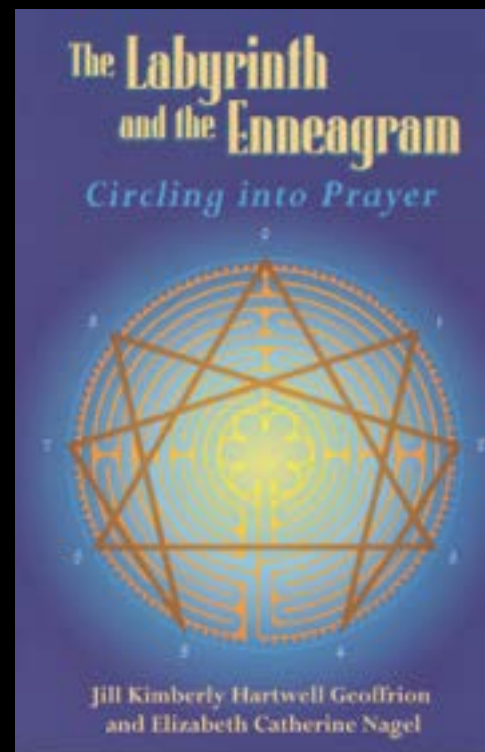
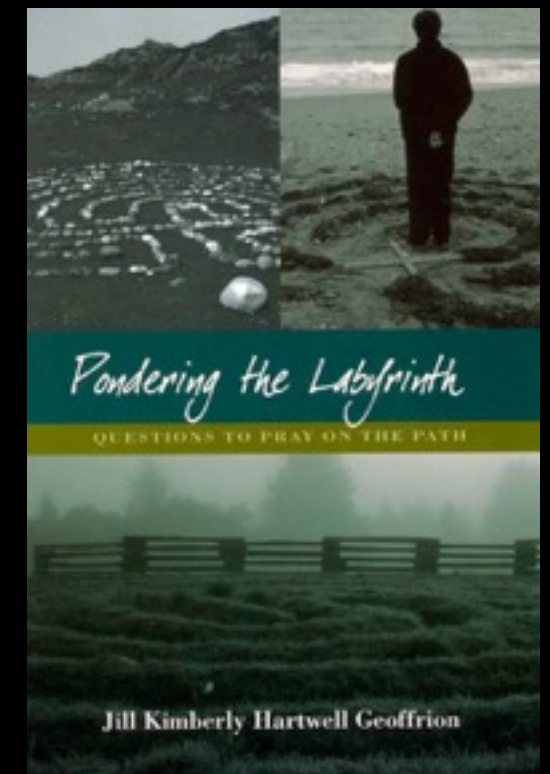
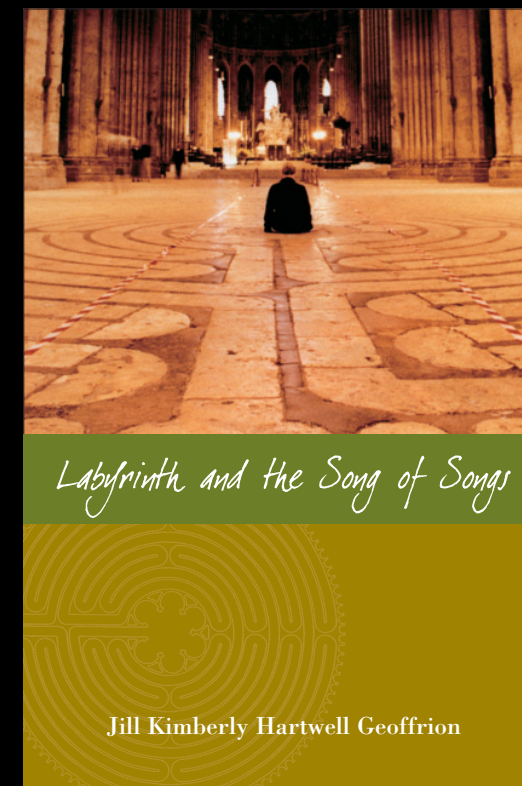
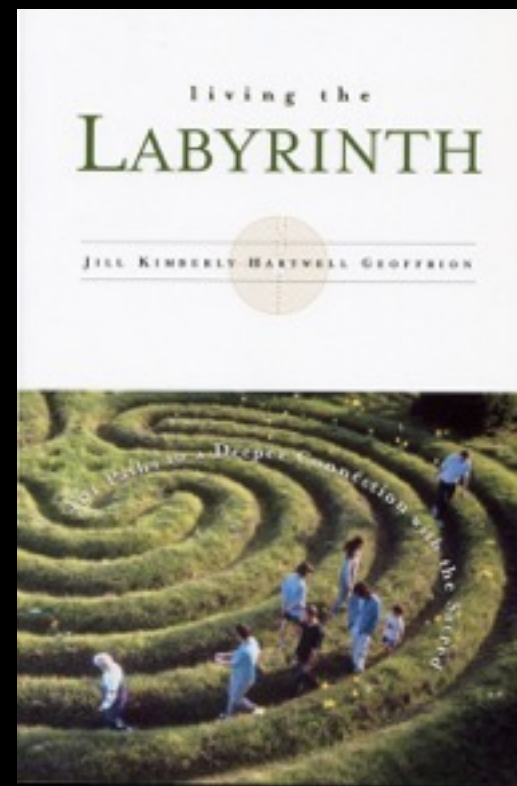
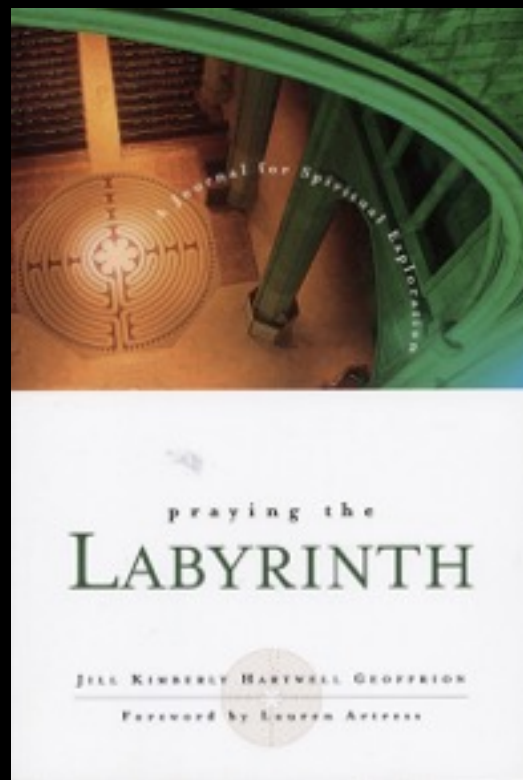


I want to remember...



Right now, after my
labyrinth
experience,
the prayer of my
heart and mind is...

“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



Ministry website www.fhlglobal.org

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Prayer blog by jill: praywithjillgeoffrion.wordpress.com

Photo blog by jill throughjillseyes.wordpress.com

Articles by Tim: www.spiritledleader.wordpress.com

Jill's email: jill@jillgeoffrion.com