

# Labyrinth Prayer: Session 5

## Labyrinth Prayer Rituals

Myanmar Institute of Theology Yangon, Myanmar 2013



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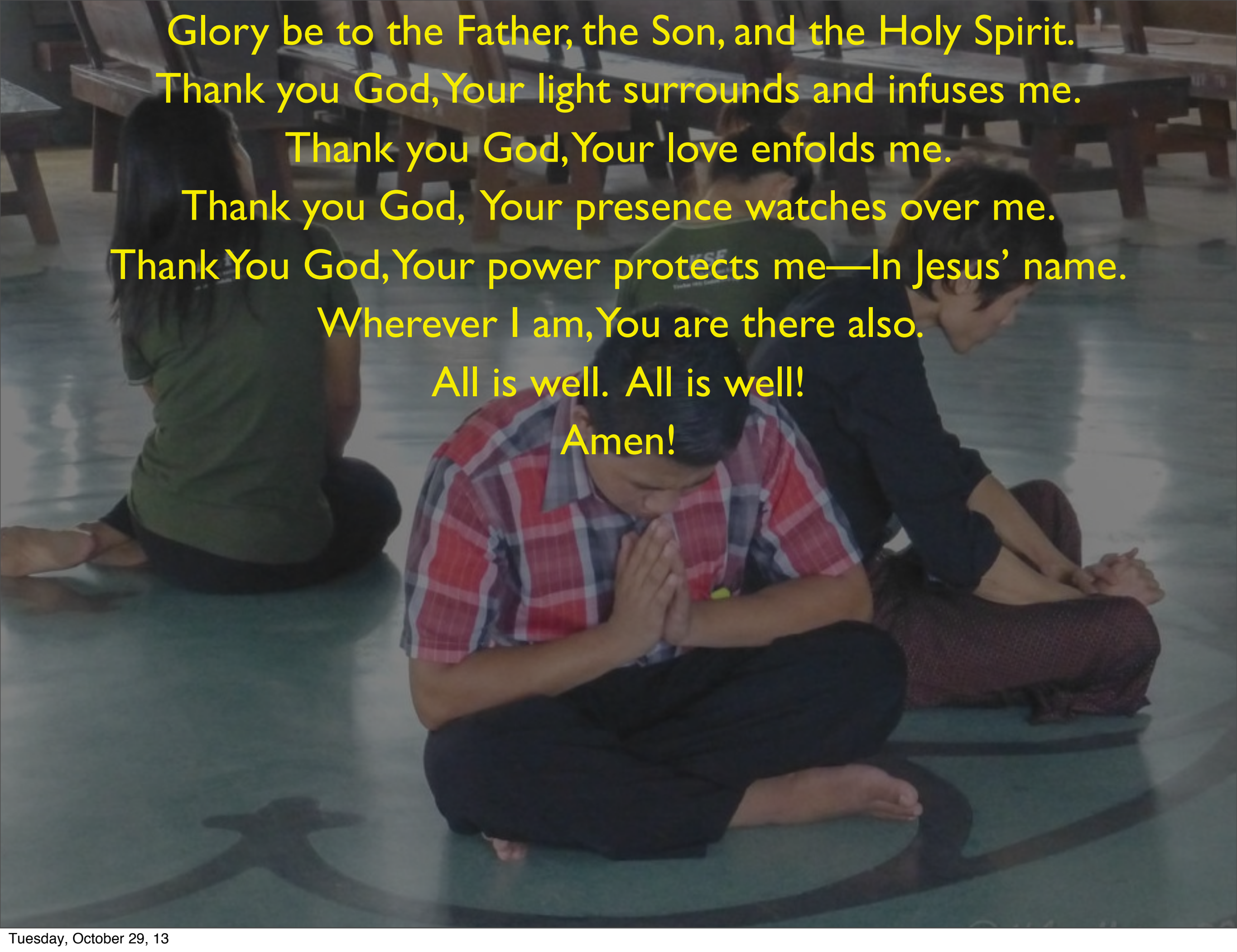
# Sanctuary Song

God, prepare me  
to be a sanctuary  
pure and holy,  
tried and true.

With thanksgiving  
I'll be a living  
sanctuary for You.

(Start on D)



A group of people are kneeling on a light-colored floor in a church, engaged in prayer. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the text overlay. In the foreground, a man in a red and white plaid shirt is kneeling with his hands clasped in prayer. To his right, a woman in a dark long-sleeved shirt and patterned pants is also kneeling with her hands clasped. To the left, another person in a green shirt is kneeling. In the background, several wooden pews are visible, and other people are kneeling in prayer. The overall atmosphere is one of solemnity and devotion.

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
Thank you God, Your light surrounds and infuses me.  
Thank you God, Your love enfolds me.  
Thank you God, Your presence watches over me.  
Thank You God, Your power protects me—In Jesus' name.  
Wherever I am, You are there also.  
All is well. All is well!  
Amen!





A ritual is a well-defined series of actions,  
or a single gesture,  
that bear symbolic meaning for an individual or group.



# How can a labyrinth walk deepen the spiritual life of participants?



The Two Main Types of Transformational Labyrinth Prayer Walks  
Meditative Labyrinth Prayer Walk  
Ritual Prayer Walk Using the Labyrinth

Chin Women's Prayer Group, Yangon Myanmar






Angeles Arrien in *The Four-Fold Way* tells us that “**Ritual is recognizing a life change, and doing something to honor and support the change.**” The word ritual come from an Indo-European root meaning “to fit together.” Change by its nature pulls things apart and loss always occurs. You cannot change and stay the same. You must let go of something to move towards the new experience. Arrien says of ritual, “In this way, **human being support the changes they are experiencing and create a way to ‘fit things together’ again.**”

Robert Johnson, PhD. *101 Ways To Use a Classical Labyrinth*. Medical Center of Central Georgia. Macon, Georgia. 2000.





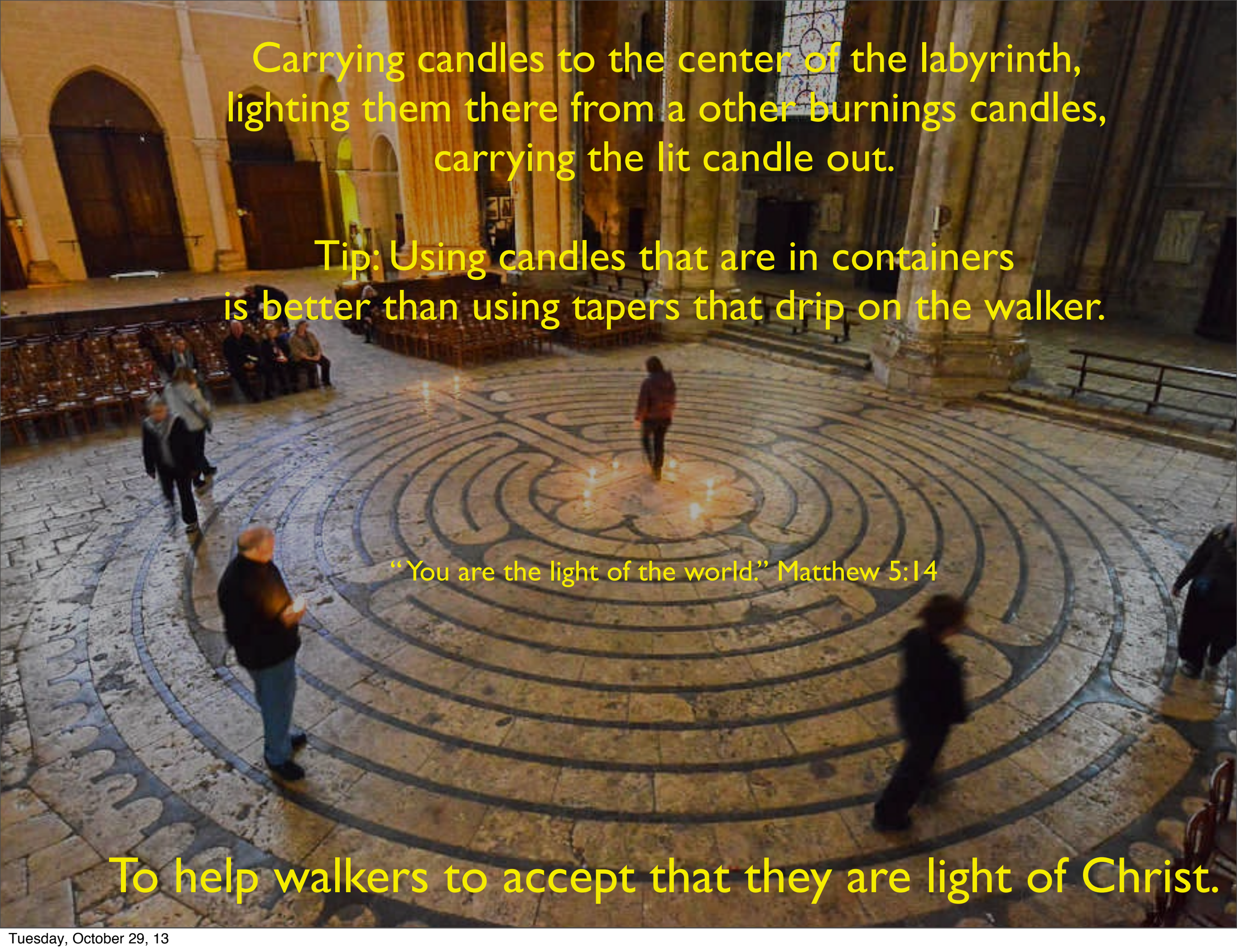
During religious ritual,  
we are formed by action more than thought.  
What we do is primary.  
We are changed not so much by an idea,  
but by the enactment of the experience.

Some Christian rituals:  
Communion  
Baptism  
Confirmation  
Marriage  
Ordination  
Funeral Services  
Prayer of laying on of hands  
Giving of tithes and offerings  
The Benediction at the end of a worship service  
Fasting  
Prayer



# Some Examples of Labyrinth Rituals



A large circular labyrinth is etched into the stone floor of a cathedral. Several people are walking through the maze, and a few lit candles are placed on the path, casting a warm glow. The cathedral's architecture features high vaulted ceilings, large columns, and arched doorways. The scene is captured from an elevated perspective, showing the intricate design of the labyrinth and the scale of the interior space.

Carrying candles to the center of the labyrinth,  
lighting them there from a other burnings candles,  
carrying the lit candle out.

Tip: Using candles that are in containers  
is better than using tapers that drip on the walker.

“You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14

To help walkers to accept that they are light of Christ.



To help walkers to experience God's forgiveness.

Have people write down a sin  
they want to confess to God.  
Before or after walking the  
labyrinth  
they can burn the paper  
showing that God has forgiven  
them.

...as far as the east is from the west, so far God removes our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12



To help walkers to draw on the truth of Scripture for strength and help.

Place a basket of Scripture cards by the entrance of the labyrinth and invite people to take one as they enter the labyrinth.

During their labyrinth walk, invite people to meditate on the verse they chose.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105



# Experiencing a Labyrinth Ritual





**Ritual: To help walkers to experience cleansing.**

**A large bowl of water is placed in the center of the labyrinth.**

**Walk into the labyrinth praying and reflecting about any cleansing that you desire or need.**

**Scripture cards on cleansing are available for your use.**

**In the center, use the water to wash any part of your body that needs cleansing (eyes, mouth, ears, hands, head(brain), etc.).**

**The walk out should be a continuation of your prayer.**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10**



Use your labyrinth prayer journal  
to reflect on your labyrinth experience.



Image painted by Lea Goode-Harris



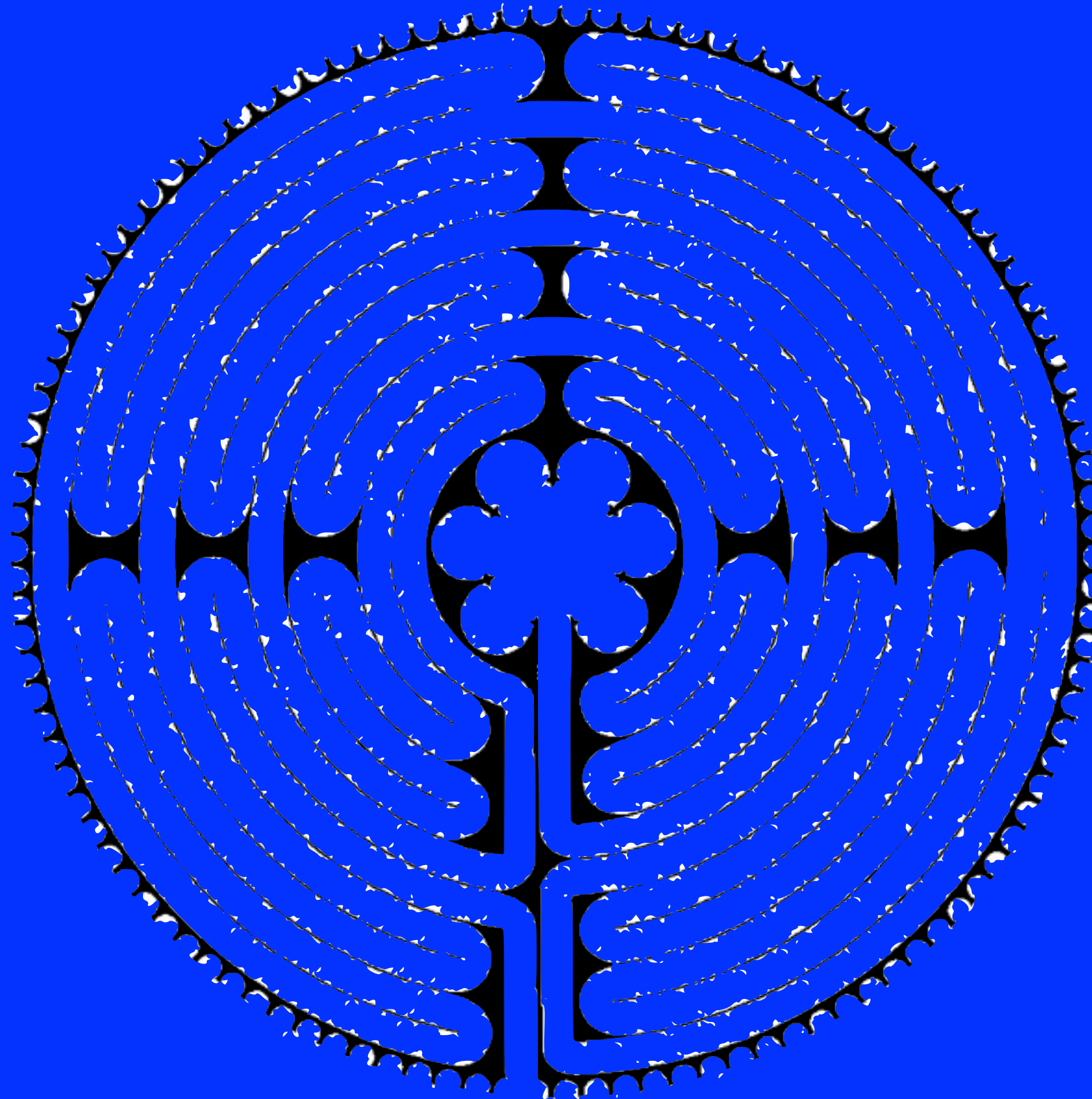
# Reflection on the Labyrinth Ritual

What part or parts of this ritual experience on the labyrinth would be most helpful for someone seeking cleansing?

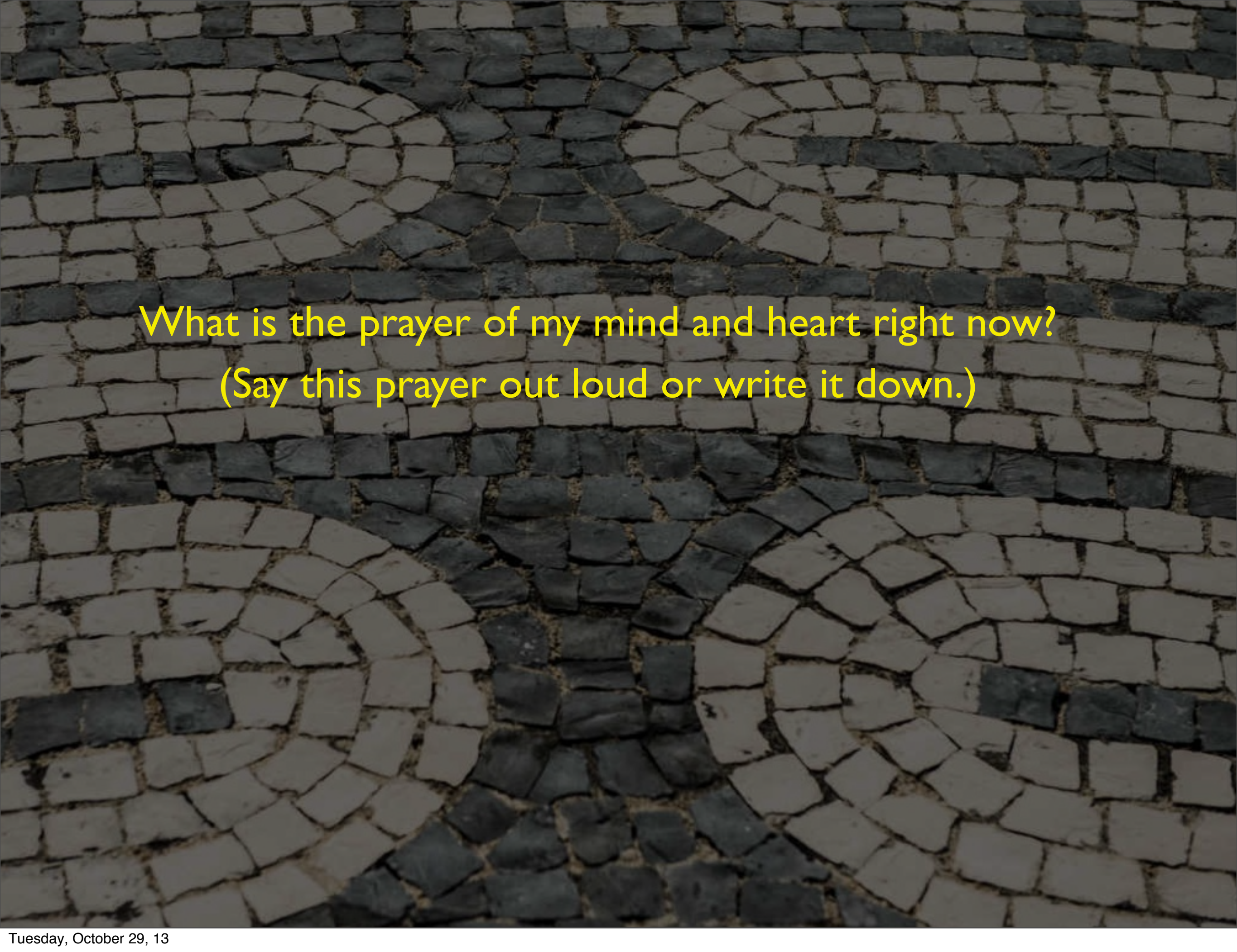
What could we add to or change about the ritual to make the experience more meaningful for walkers?



What do I want to remember about this experience?





The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a cobblestone path. The stones are dark grey and arranged in a pattern that features a central circular area surrounded by concentric rings of stones. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving the scene a moody, textured appearance.

What is the prayer of my mind and heart right now?  
(Say this prayer out loud or write it down.)





Creating a Labyrinth Ritual



## Considerations for creating labyrinth rituals:

1. Be simple; less is more.
2. Be purposeful; know what you are trying to offer to those who come. What result are you desiring?
3. Be symbolic; actions that speak without words.
4. Be multi-sensory; use different senses to cement the experience: touching, tasting, hearing, smelling, seeing.
5. Be thoughtful; it takes time to create meaningful events.
6. Be communally-minded; the entire group will experience a unified event.

With thanks to the Labyrinth Guild of New England (USA) who shared their training notes on Doing Ritual on the Labyrinth.

Thanks also to Robert Ferré and his training on leading labyrinth events.

Cingpikot Photo: Lun Man Hau





My peace I give unto you...  
Let not your heart be  
troubled, neither let it  
be afraid.  
John 14:27

Multi-sensory

Peace Garden Labyrinth  
Stillwater Presbyterian Church, Minnesota (USA)









## Considerations for leading labyrinth rituals:

1. Be invitational; help people feel welcome.
  2. Be ready to be surprised. Although we plan carefully, we can not anticipate how God will act, or how people will react.
- Rituals are transformative.

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# Creating a Labyrinth Ritual



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Prayer asking for God's guidance as we plan.





Who are we creating the ritual for?



What spiritual need will this labyrinth ritual meet?





Creative planning: What rituals might help meet this need?





Choosing one ritual and developing it.



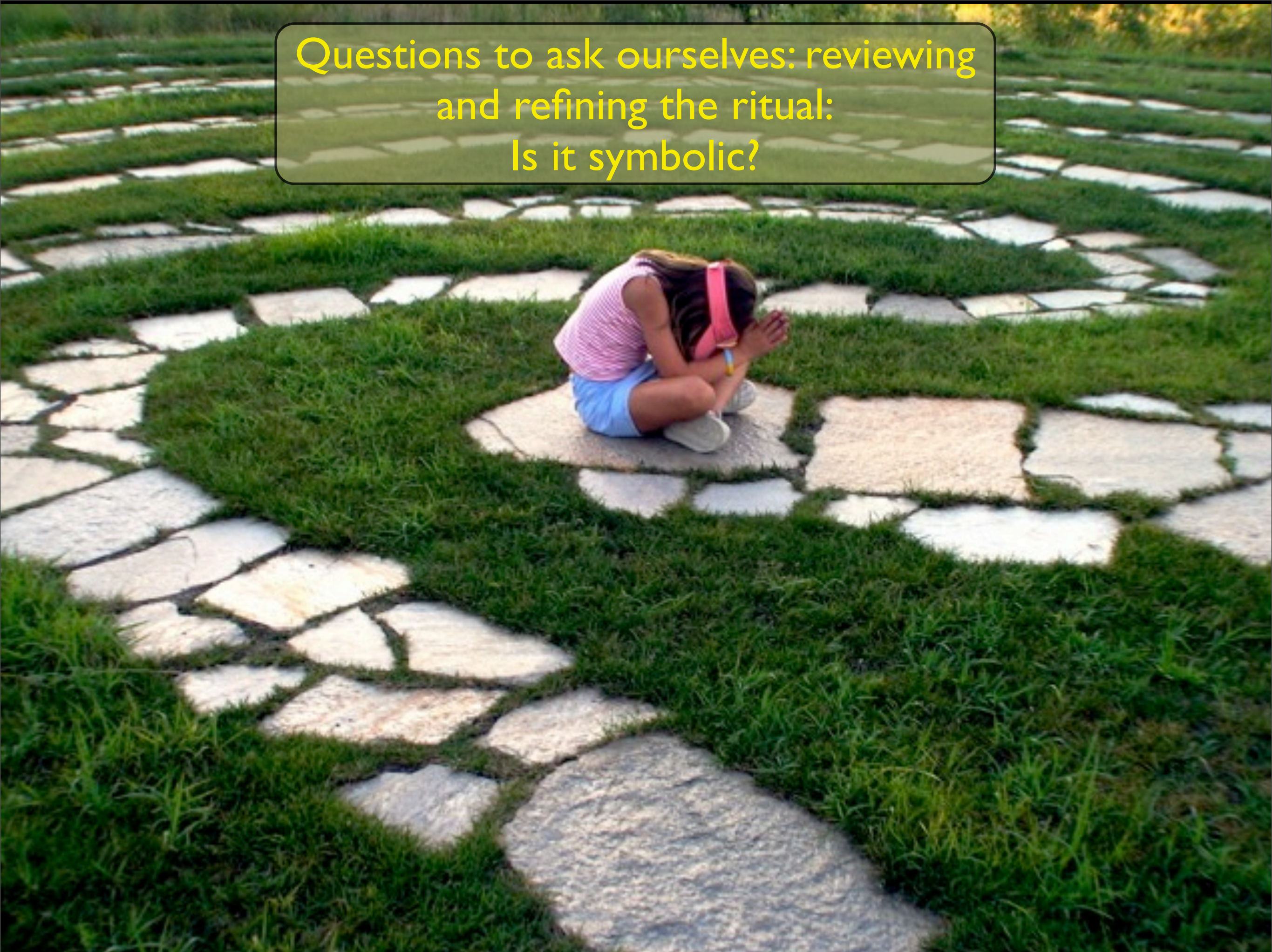


Questions to ask ourselves:  
reviewing and refining the ritual:  
Is it simple?





Questions to ask ourselves: reviewing  
and refining the ritual:  
Is it symbolic?





Question to ask ourselves:  
Reviewing and refining the ritual:  
Is it sensory?





Question to ask ourselves:  
Reviewing and refining the ritual:  
Is its purpose easy to understand?



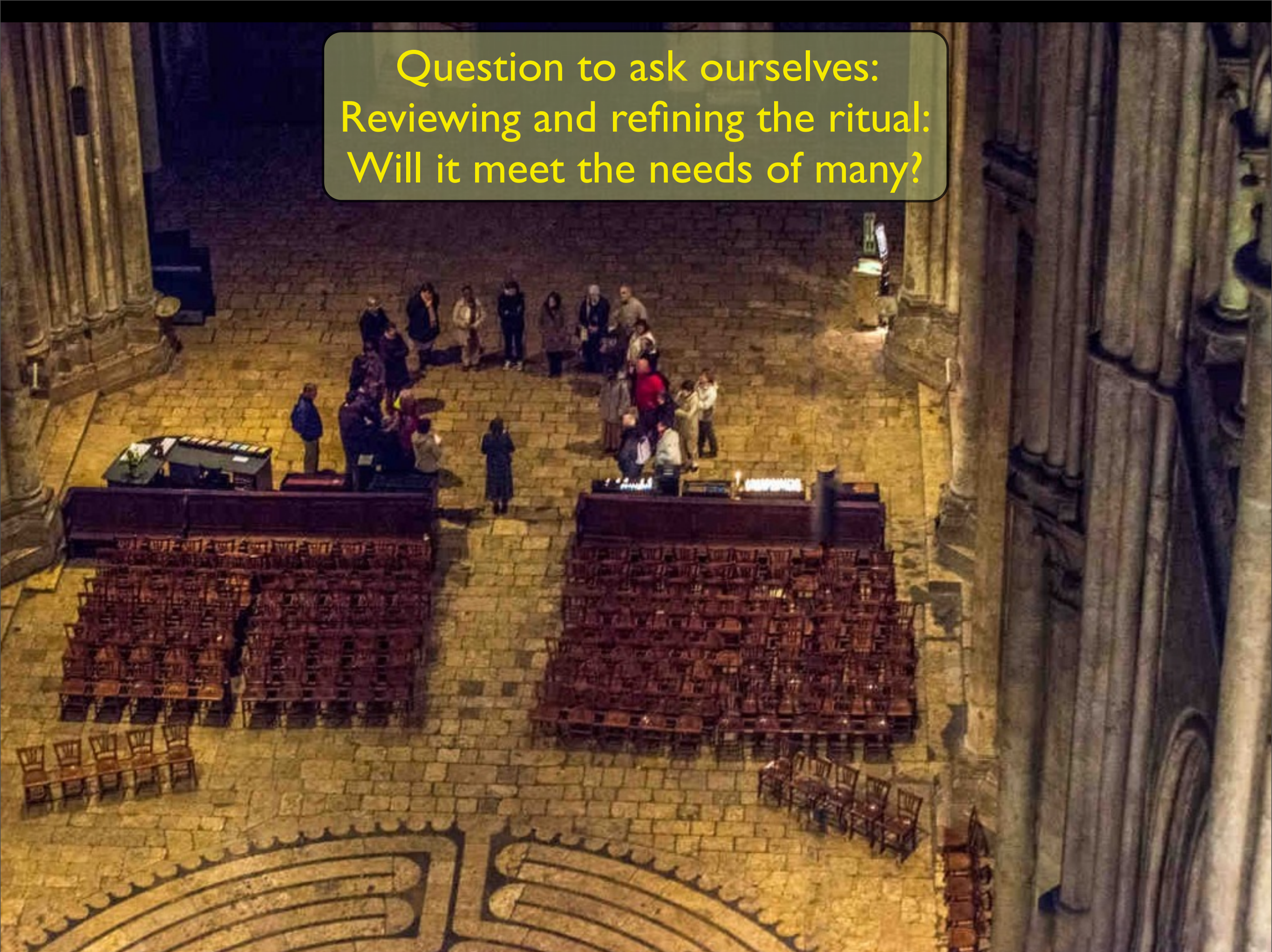


Question to ask ourselves:  
Reviewing and refining the ritual:  
Have we thought it through carefully?

I. Be communally-minded; the entire group will experience a unified e



Question to ask ourselves:  
Reviewing and refining the ritual:  
Will it meet the needs of many?





What preparations must be made for the ritual?





How will we evaluate the ritual's effectiveness?





A person wearing a purple patterned dress is walking barefoot on a floor with a green and purple labyrinth design. The labyrinth consists of a central circle with a path leading to an outer circle, with several dead ends. The person is walking on the path. The text "Testing Our Labyrinth Ritual" is overlaid in yellow on the right side of the image.

# Testing Our Labyrinth Ritual



# Evaluating the Labyrinth Ritual for Effectiveness

What part or parts of this ritual experience on the labyrinth will be most helpful to those who walk and pray?

What could we add to or change about the ritual to make the experience more meaningful for walkers?

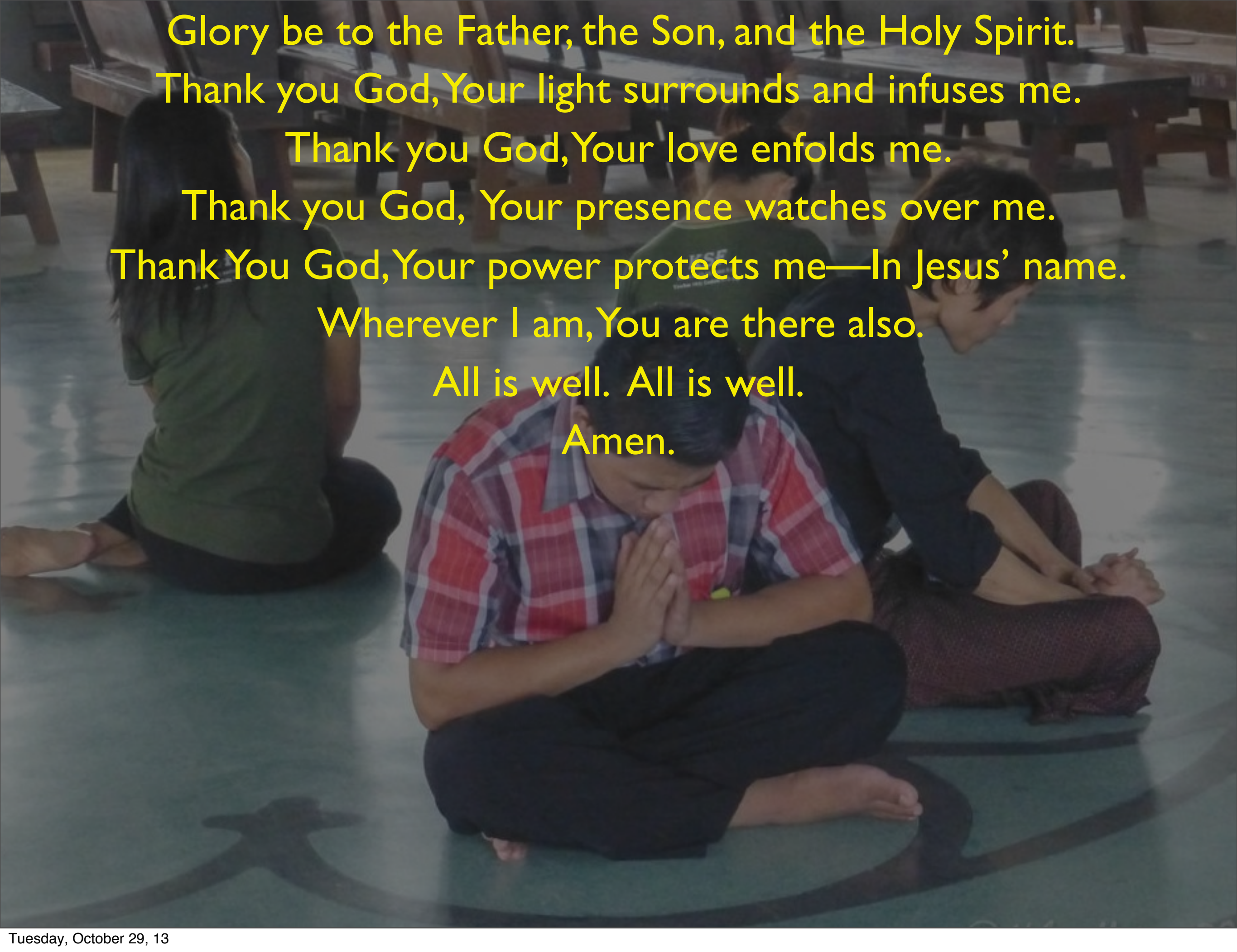


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Helen Curry. *The Way of the Labyrinth*. (NY: Penguin, 2000) Chapter 10: The Ceremonial Labyrinth (Pages 144-185).

Donna Schaper. *Labyrinths from the Inside Out*. (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2000) 81-97.



A group of people are kneeling on a light-colored floor in a church, with their hands clasped in prayer. The background shows wooden pews. The text is overlaid in yellow on a semi-transparent dark background.

Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.  
Thank you God, Your light surrounds and infuses me.  
Thank you God, Your love enfolds me.  
Thank you God, Your presence watches over me.  
Thank You God, Your power protects me—In Jesus' name.  
Wherever I am, You are there also.  
All is well. All is well.  
Amen.



Ministry website [www.fhlglobal.org](http://www.fhlglobal.org)

Labyrinth resources by jill [www.jillgeoffrion.com](http://www.jillgeoffrion.com)

Photo travel blog by jill [www.throughjillseyes.wordpress.com](http://www.throughjillseyes.wordpress.com)

Journey blog by jill [jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com](http://jillgeoffrion.wordpress.com)

