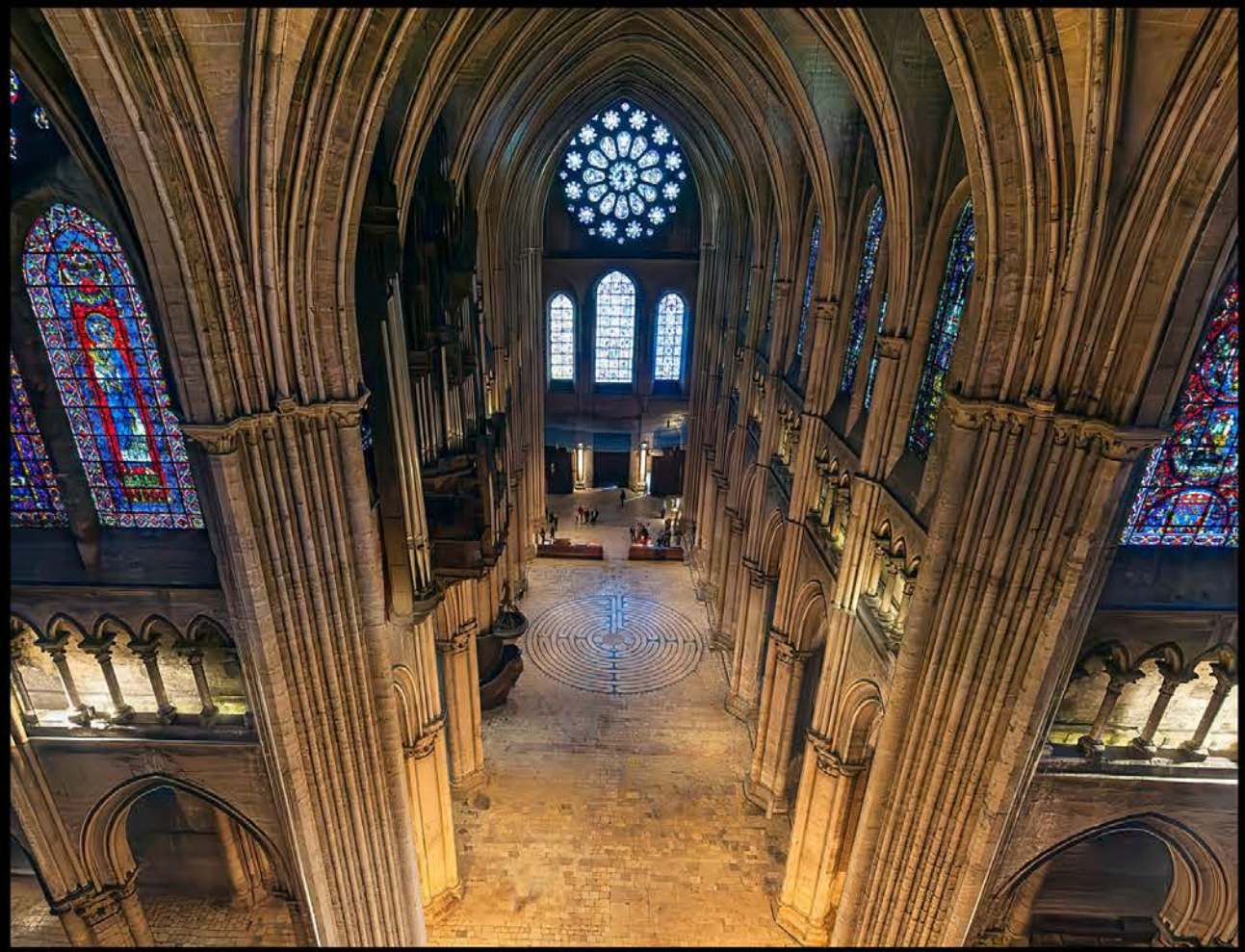


Walking A Path Towards Peace

The Chartres Labyrinth

Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion



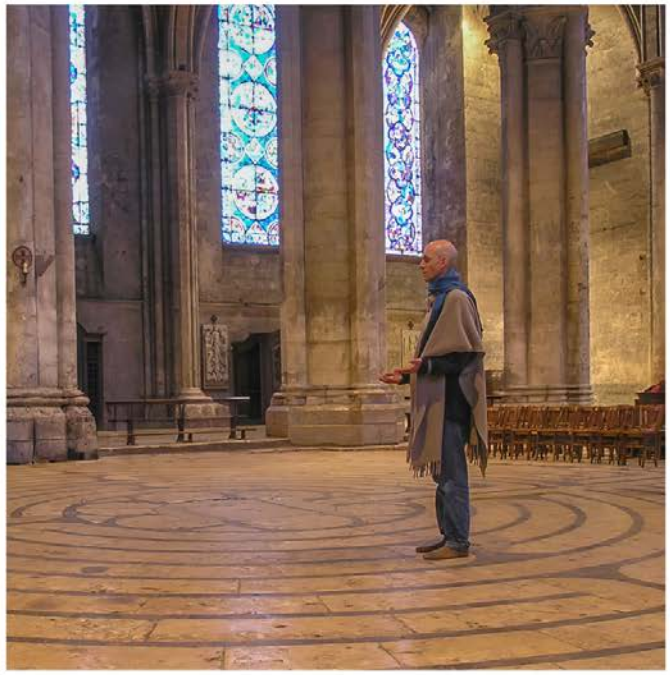
Walking A Path Towards Peace

The Chartres Labyrinth

A Photographic Exhibition

Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion





The Chartres Labyrinth: Walking Towards Peace is a photographic exhibition that gathers images from a life of sustained attention to this sacred pattern and to those who walk it. Sponsored by the American Friends of Chartres, the exhibition is part of the organization's 20th anniversary celebrations.

Photographs made in and around Chartres Cathedral are joined by six large-scale photographic banners from The Chartres Labyrinth Around the World, a five-month outdoor photographic exhibition presented in Chartres, France, in 2025. Together, they invite visitors to encounter the labyrinth as architecture, prayer, community, devotion, and human journey.

The photographs in this exhibition move from the exterior of the cathedral to its luminous interior, from vaulted nave to stained glass, candlelight, and the winding path of the labyrinth itself. For me, photography is a form of ministry and contemplation. The camera helps me notice what is easily missed: the sheen of worn stone, the glow of a candle at the labyrinth's edge, the radiant blues of ancient glass, the vulnerability of a person kneeling, the tenderness of two people holding one another at the center. These images are not only records of a place. They are invitations to enter a practice.

In a fractured world, labyrinths offer a single path spacious enough for many people, many questions, and many prayers. Walking towards peace and working for peace is a lifelong journey. Labyrinth experience teaches this. We enter, we turn, we center, we turn again, and we walk back out.

These photographs are invitations to slow down, to look again, and to consider the paths you are walking, both alone and in community. Let them become thresholds: places to remember what matters, deepen prayer, widen compassion, and receive the peace we are called to carry forward.

The Chartres labyrinth has become a global symbol of prayerful walking, healing, reconciliation, and transformation. More than three thousand labyrinths inspired by this medieval pattern now appear in churches, hospitals, retreat centers, schools, prisons, gardens, and public spaces around the world.

The Rev. Jill K. H. Geoffrion, Ph.D., D.D.
Photographer, Author, & Chartres Cathedral Guide
www.jillgeoffrion.com & friendsofchartres.org



Memorial Labyrinth
2015
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
Large-format photographic tarp, 9.5 × 8 feet
This image extends the meaning of the Chartres pattern beyond the cathedral, showing how labyrinths can become places of remembrance, communal grief, and healing. Dedicated to twenty-two Boston College alumni who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, the labyrinth offers a contemplative path through loss toward peace. The image was displayed on one of eighteen large-scale tarps included in the plein-air exhibition Chartres Labyrinths Around the World, displayed in Chartres, France, from April through August 2025.

The Chartres Cathedral
2021
Chartres, France
Canvas print, 30 × 40 inches
Chartres Cathedral, built in the early thirteenth century and now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, shelters the medieval labyrinth that has drawn generations into prayer, pilgrimage, healing, and peace. Rising from the highest point of the city, the cathedral offers a powerful point of orientation, both physical and spiritual. Its presence invites viewers to approach with awe, curiosity, and wonder.

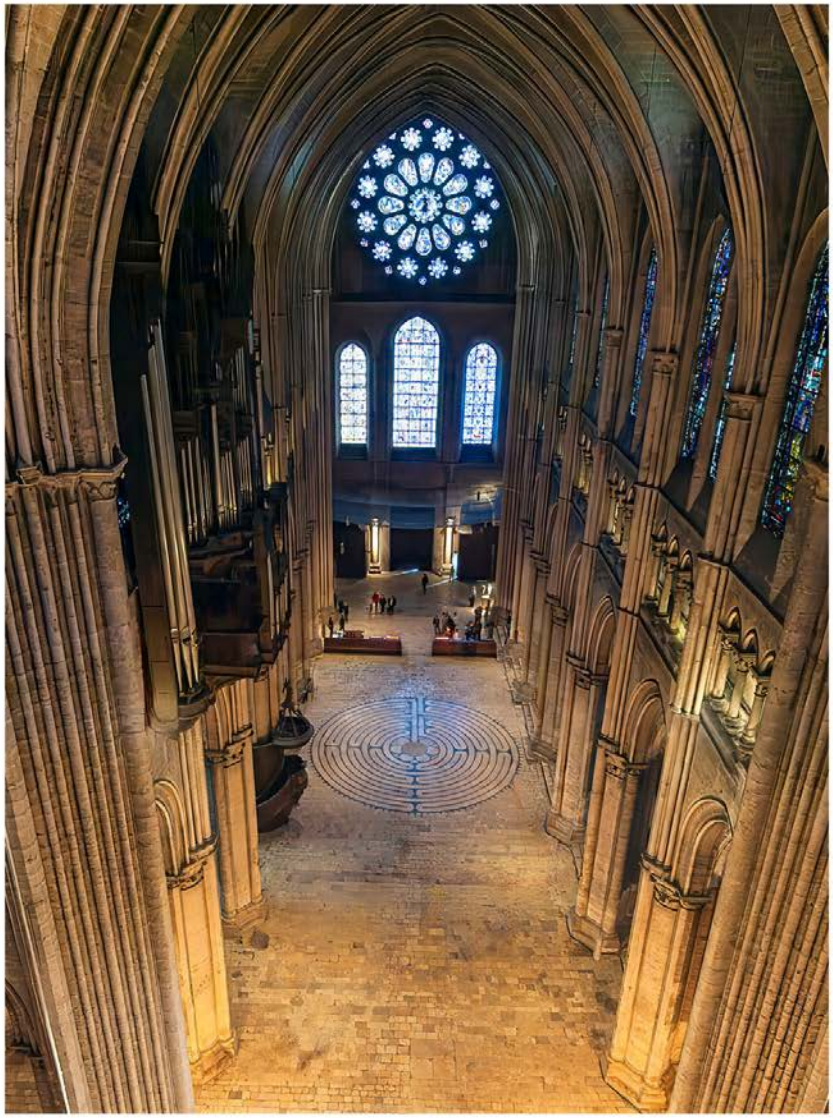




The Western Façade
2015
Chartres, France
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
The western façade of Chartres Cathedral rises as an invitation, its sculpted portals, towers, and weathered stone bearing the memory of centuries of passage and prayer. At the threshold, the cathedral asks visitors to slow down, look up, and become receptive. Passing through the western doors is not simply an entrance into a building, but a movement into deeper attention, where stone, quiet, and light begin to still the mind and open the heart.

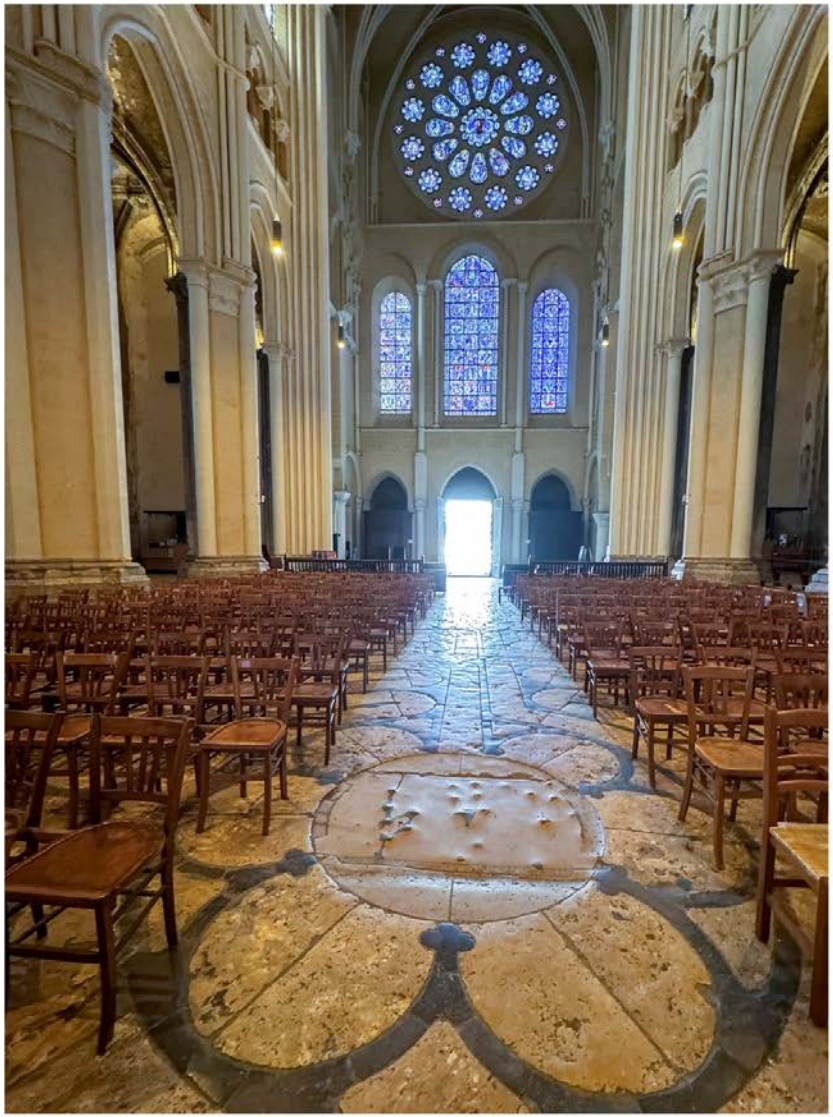
Standing In the Center
2021
The nave of Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
In the quiet of early morning, two people stand where the labyrinth lies beneath the chairs of the nave. From the beginning of Lent until All Saints' Day, November 1, the chairs are removed each Friday, and the labyrinth is open for walking from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During the rest of the week, only parts of the pattern in the center aisle and around the perimeter remain visible. For those who pause to notice, the labyrinth still invites stillness, prayer, and trust that peace can begin even when the full path is covered.

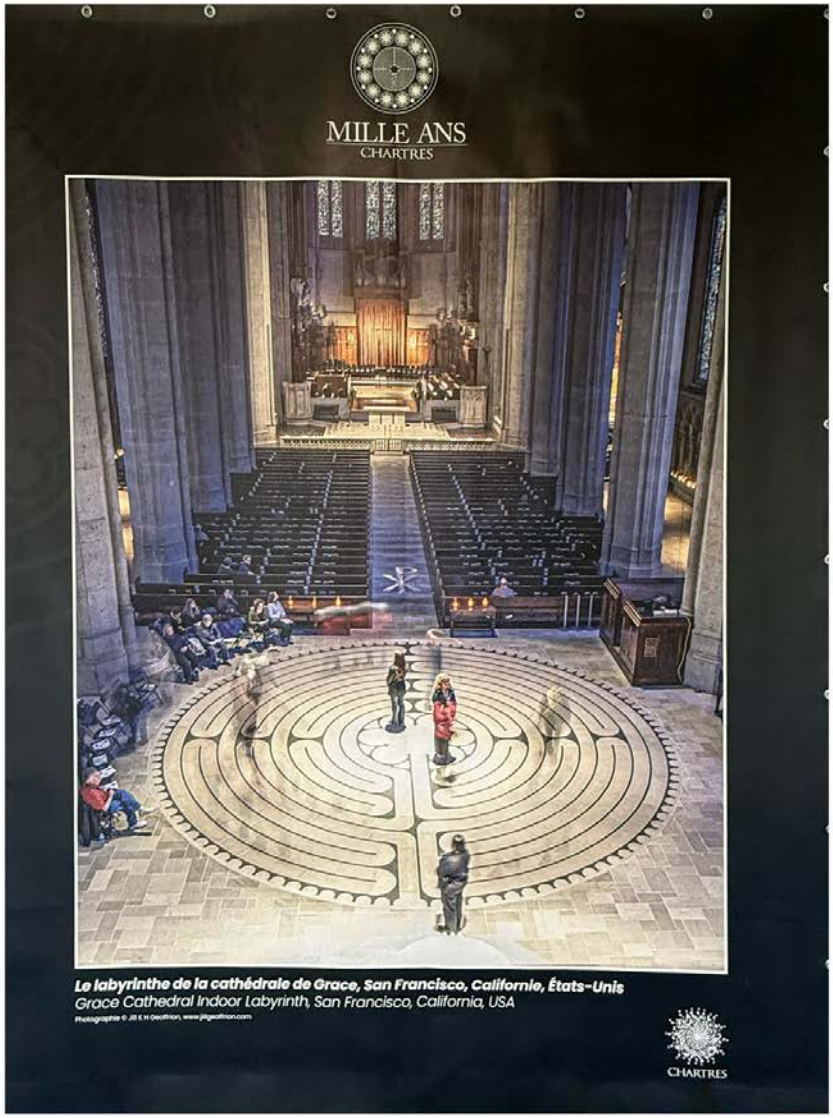




Looking West Across the Labyrinth
2009
Nave of Chartres Cathedral, viewed from the East
Canvas print, 40 × 30 inches
Seen from above, the labyrinth reveals its remarkable placement within the nave, spanning its full width across the third and fourth bays. Located near the western doors, it becomes a place of passage, welcoming those who enter into a slower and more contemplative way of moving. From this high view, the grounded and luminous path situated within the great stone vessel of the cathedral, beckons viewers to reflect on the relationship between human steps and sacred space, between the journey inward and the vastness that holds it.

Before the Labyrinth Is Uncovered
2024
Labyrinth and nave, Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
A typical Friday at Chartres begins with hundreds of chairs covering the labyrinth until they are moved before 10:30 a.m. to welcome those who have come to walk this beloved "mother" labyrinth. In 2026, the cathedral's hospitality team welcomed more than 15,000 labyrinth walkers, each arriving with their own hopes, prayers, questions, and needs. This image reflects the quiet expectancy before the path is opened, inviting viewers to imagine the peace that begins when space is made for walking, listening, and receiving.





The Grace Cathedral Labyrinth
2008
San Francisco, California
Large-format photographic tarp, 6.5 × 8 feet
The labyrinths at Grace Cathedral have played an important role in sharing the Chartres pattern with walkers around the world. Located in the heart of San Francisco, these indoor and outdoor labyrinths have welcomed, encouraged, and inspired countless people as they have sought peace, perspective, and insight. As one of the outdoor tarps in the Chartres 2025 plein-air exhibition, this image honors the way a medieval design continues to travel, taking root in new places and inviting new communities to discover its path.

Nativity: The Birth of Jesus
2014
West lancet stained -glass window (1145), Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 36 × 36 inches
Notre-Dame de Chartres, Our Lady of Chartres, is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Visible from the labyrinth when looking west, this twelfth-century stained-glass scene holds before walkers the story of birth, courage, and God's entrance into human life. As people move along the labyrinth's path, the Nativity invites reflection on peace as something born among us, carried with love, and brought into the world step by step.

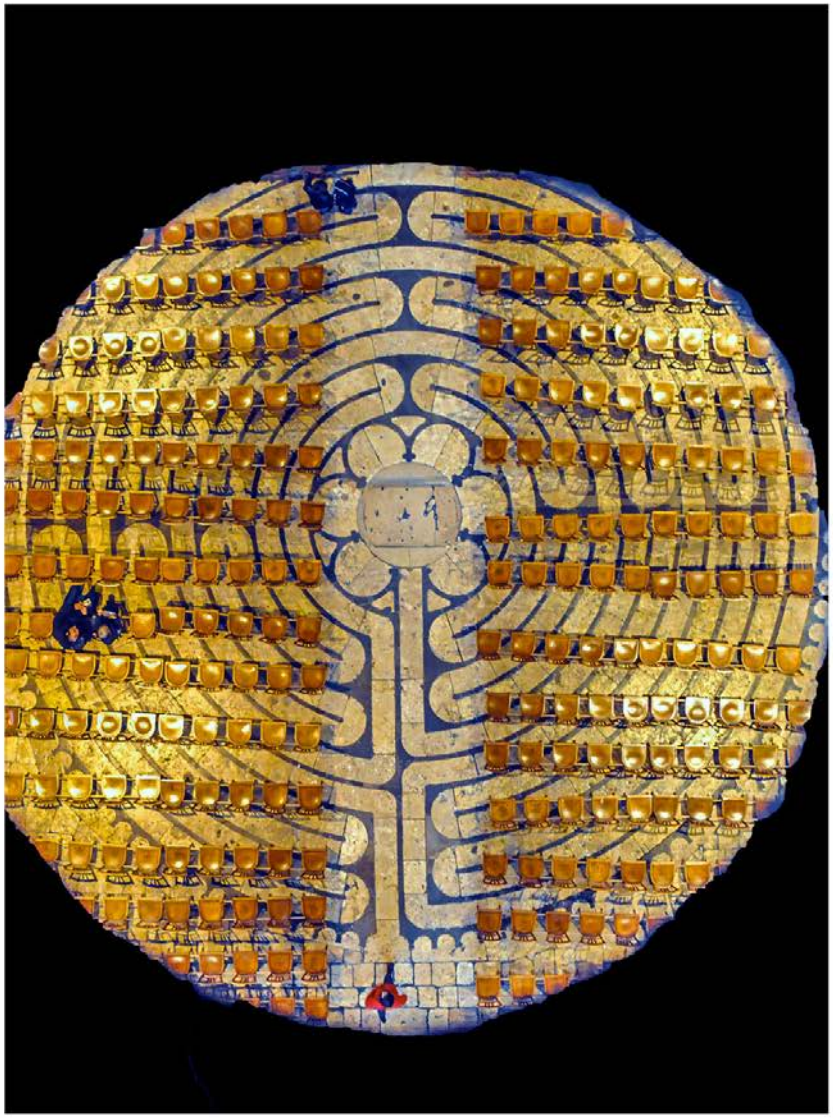




Entrance and Pathway

2021
Labyrinth, nave of Chartres Cathedral
Metal Print, 8 x 10 inches
The only choice one needs to make in a labyrinth is whether to enter. Once the threshold is crossed in Chartres, the path leads steadily toward the center, moving through twenty-eight one hyndred and eighty degree turns and winding in and out of four sections before opening into the central flower. The same path leads back out, though the return often feels different.

The Labyrinth from the Nave Ceiling
2012
Keystone piercing the ceiling, Nave, Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
Photographed through a 22-inch keystone that pierces the ceiling of the nave, this image offers a rare view down onto the Chartres labyrinth, glimpsed through the chairs that cover it most of the time. Because the keystone is not precisely aligned with the center of the labyrinth, the view is slightly shifted, creating an unusual perspective that still reveals the wholeness and clarity of the ancient pattern. Seen from this height, the labyrinth appears as both an architectural design and a path of prayer. For those who cannot walk it, the chairs themselves can become places of stillness, meditation, and inward pilgrimage.





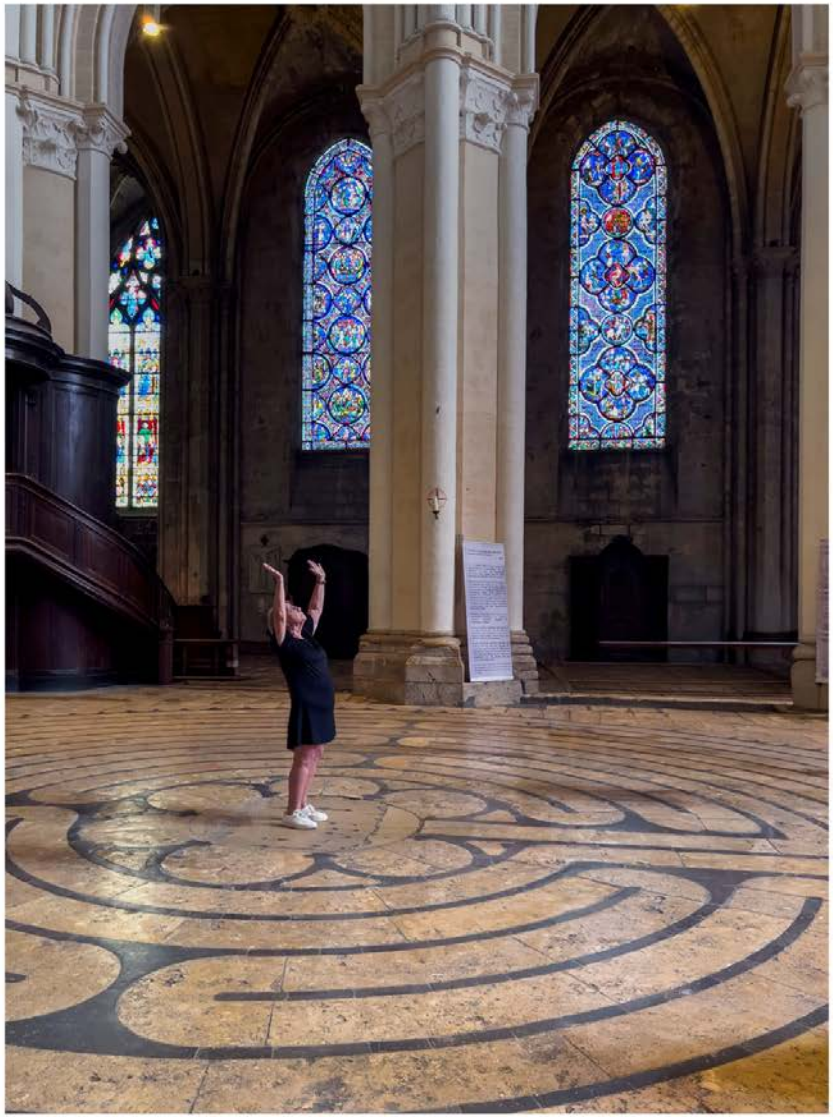
Opening
2021
Center of the labyrinth, Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
Standing in the center of the labyrinth, the walker, like many who come, opens her arms in embodied prayer, a gesture of welcome, release, and receiving. After the many turns of the path, the center offers a place to pause, breathe, listen, and gather what has unfolded. This image invites viewers to imagine peace as something that can be known within us as we open ourselves and make space for sacred help.

Alpha and Omega
2016
Upper window, south nave, Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches

The same stone marks both the entrance and the exit of the Chartres labyrinth, inviting reflection on time, return, and God's presence from beginning to end. In the second bay of the nave, just before the labyrinth begins, images of Christ as the Alpha and the Omega appear on both sides, echoing "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13; see also Revelation 1:8 and 21:6). At Chartres, placement carries meaning. This window invites viewers to understand the labyrinth within a larger sacred world of stone, glass, Scripture, prayer, and theological imagination.

This stained-glass window is among the many restored through the generosity of the American Friends of Chartres.





When the Path Opens Upward
2023
Labyrinth, nave of Chartres Cathedral.
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
The experience of walking the Chartres labyrinth involves the whole body and all the senses, shaped by the stone beneath one's feet, the colored light from the windows, and the soaring architecture of the cathedral. While walkers often attend closely to the path below, it is also helpful to look up, allowing beauty, story, and sacred space to become companions on the way. Peace may come through a wider awareness of being held in a place where the prayers of centuries of pilgrims provide a strong foundation from which to reach toward heaven.

A Pilgrim Leaves Jerusalem
2014
Good Samaritan window, south ambulatory, Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
The Good Samaritan window at Chartres illustrates Jesus's parable from Luke 10:25–37 and is a rare medieval example that portrays the wounded traveler as a pilgrim, identified by the Latin inscription PEREGRINVS near the bottom of the image. Visible from the entrance of the labyrinth, the window connects walking with pilgrimage themes of leaving home, risking the road, receiving mercy, and becoming a neighbor to others. Pilgrimage imagery such as this surrounds the labyrinth, inviting walkers to understand their steps as part of a larger sacred journey.





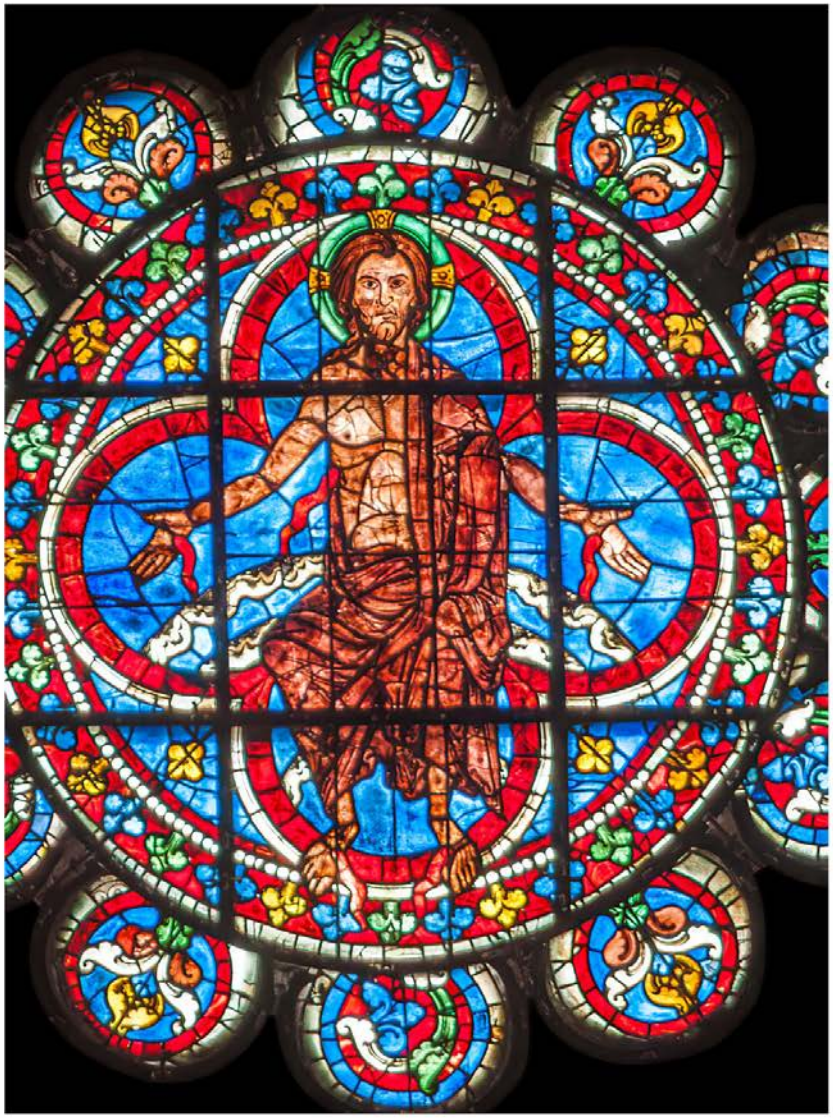
Pilgrim Jesus on the road to Emmaus
2014
West Lancet Window (1145), Chartres Cathedral
Metal Print, 8 x 10 inches

The evening of Jesus's resurrection, the risen Christ joined two pilgrims walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, though they did not recognize him at first (Luke 24:13–35). Looking back, they asked, "Were not our hearts burning within us?" (Luke 24:32).

High above the labyrinth in the west, this pilgrimage image reminds those who walk the path that attention to thoughts and emotions along the way can open new horizons of faith. Like the pilgrims to Emmaus, walkers may discover that they are accompanied and supported in ways that exceed their expectations and understanding.

The Center of the West Rose

2013
West rose window (1215), Chartres Cathedral
Canvas Print, 24 x 30 inches
A common myth says that if the west wall of Chartres Cathedral were laid down onto the nave, the rose window would fall directly over the labyrinth; in fact, it would miss by about ten feet. Yet there is still a deep relationship between the center of the labyrinth and the center of the rose, shaped by shared geometry, number symbolism, and the spiritual language of the cathedral. In the rose, the risen Christ sits with open arms of welcome. His wounds are still visible, reminding walkers that the path toward peace is held by One who, like them, knows suffering and bears it with love.



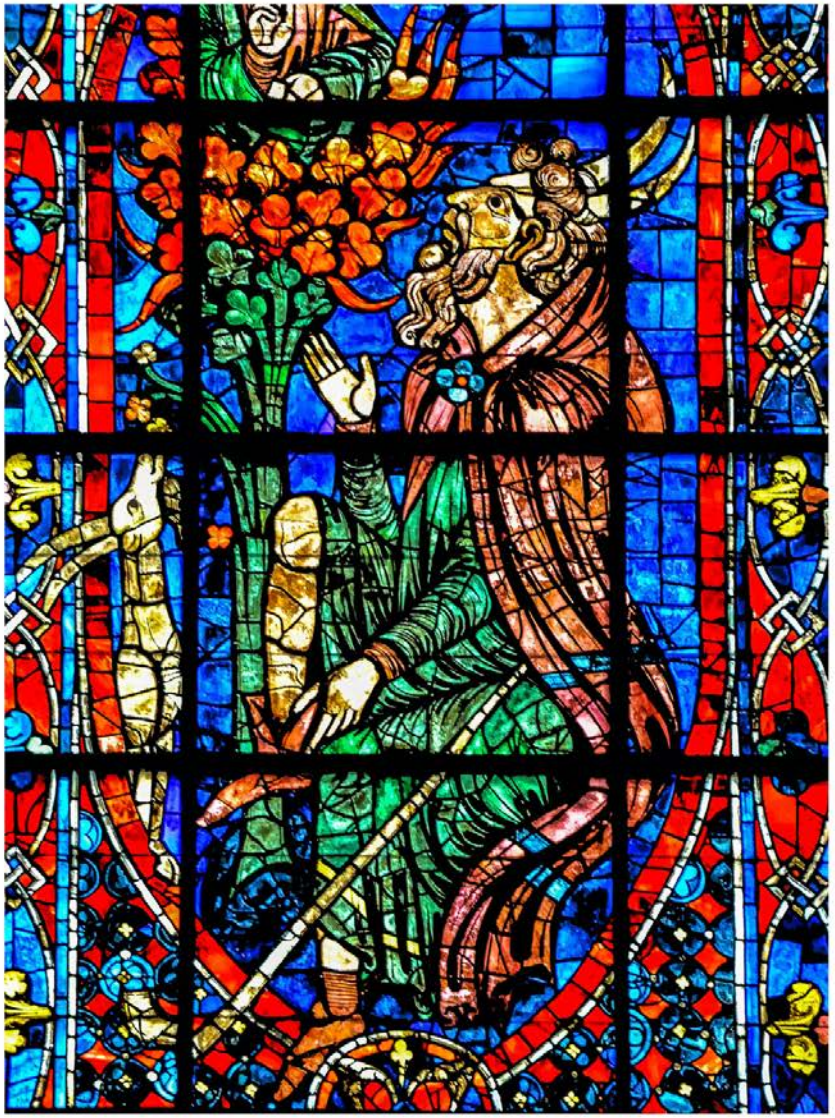


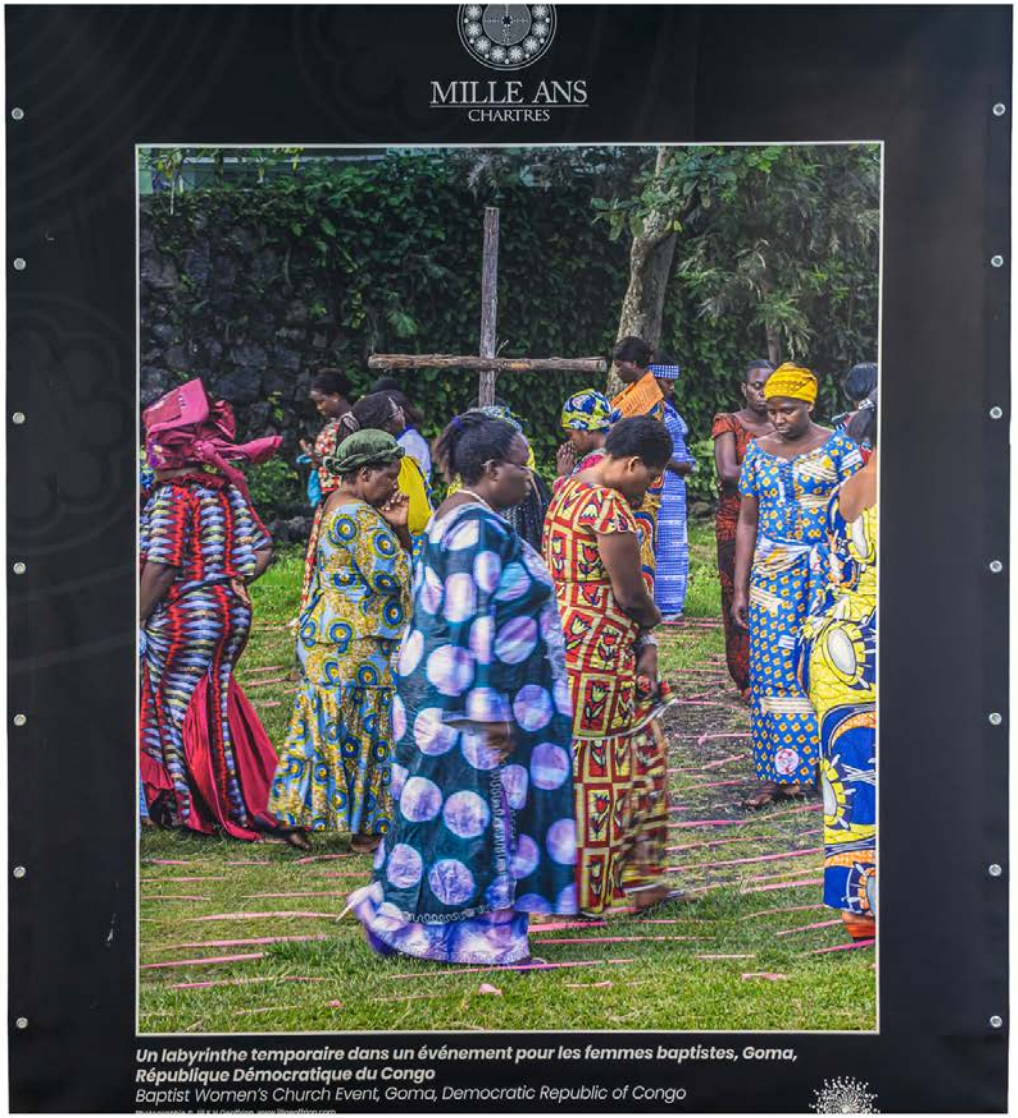
Tracing the Chartres Labyrinth
2018
Centre Œcuménique et Artistique Retreat Center, Chartres, France
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
During a retreat in Chartres, European participants prepared for an evening walk on the cathedral labyrinth by first praying with a photograph of it. Following the path with a finger invited attention, connection, memory, and reflection to move gently through the body. This practice reminds us that the Chartres labyrinth can be experienced with depth and meaning even by those who cannot travel to it.

Holy Ground

2009
Upper choir stained-glass (1210-25), Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
In this window, visible far to the east from the threshold stone of the Chartres labyrinth, Moses removes his shoes before the burning bush and hears God's words: "The place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). Seen in relation to the labyrinth, the image invites walkers to approach the path with reverence, openness, and trust that ordinary ground can become a place of Divine encounter.

(In medieval imagery, Moses is sometimes shown with horns because the Hebrew word qeren, meaning "rays" or "radiance," was rendered in the Latin Vulgate as "horns.")





Women Church Leaders Praying
2012
Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo
Large-format photographic tarp, 6.5 × 8 feet
During a week-long seminar, Congolese women leaders from the Communauté Baptiste au Centre de l'Afrique gathered in prayer on a temporary labyrinth in Goma. The Chartres-style labyrinth became a shared place of courage, healing, and spiritual strength in a community marked by deep suffering and fervent hope. At the women's request, a cross was added to the center of the labyrinth, grounding the practice in their own Christian faith and context.

St. James with Pilgrim Shells
2021
Place: Upper south nave window, Bay 4, Chartres Cathedral
Canvas Print, 24 x 30 inches

St. James stands as one of Christianity's great pilgrim saints, recognizable here by the shells surrounding hm. Seen in relationship to the labyrinth below, his image links the outer journey of pilgrimage with the inner journey of prayer. His place high in the nave invites those walking the labyrinth to lift their eyes and remember that the path beneath their feet belongs to an ancient and larger tradition of sacred travel.

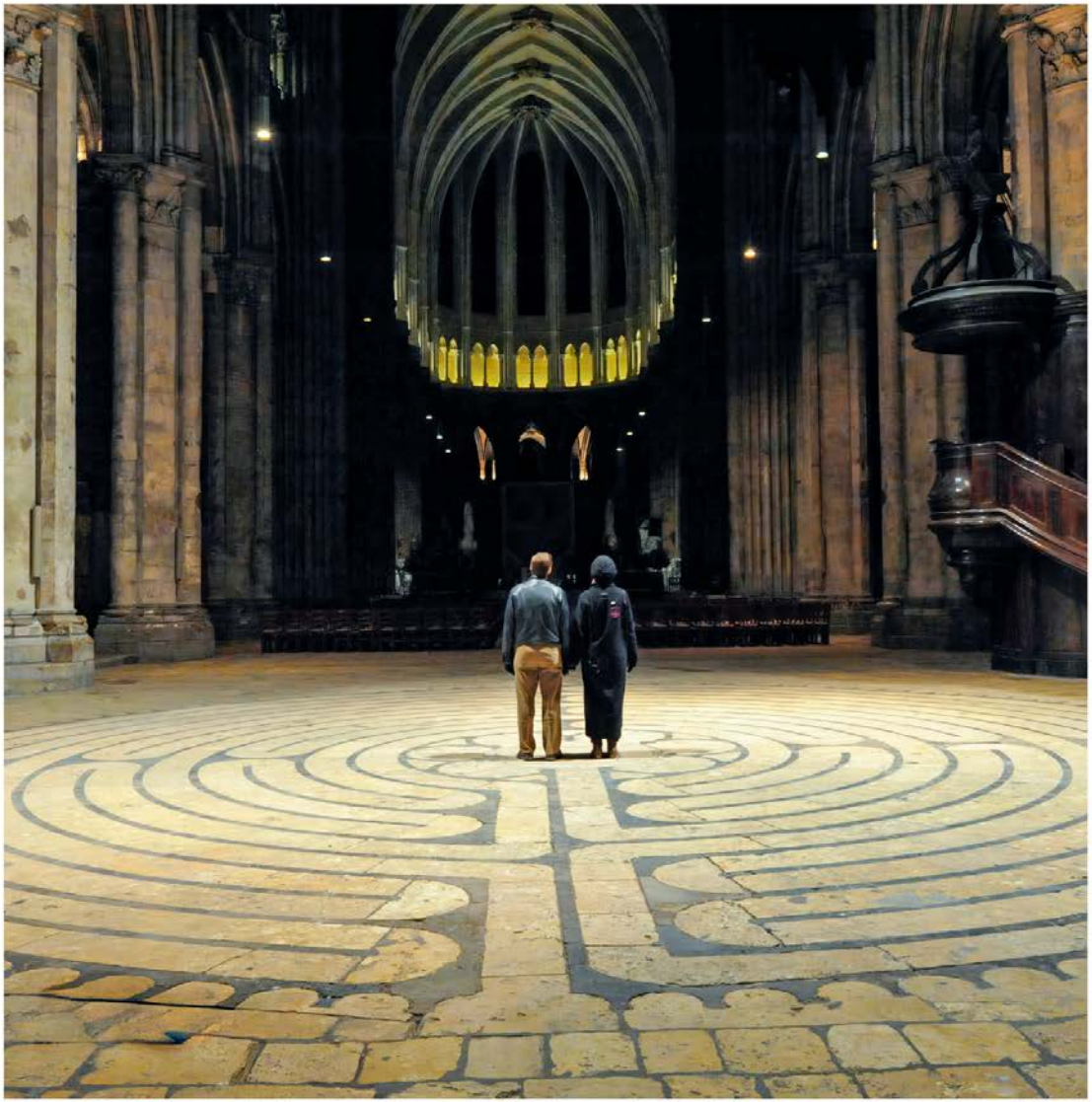


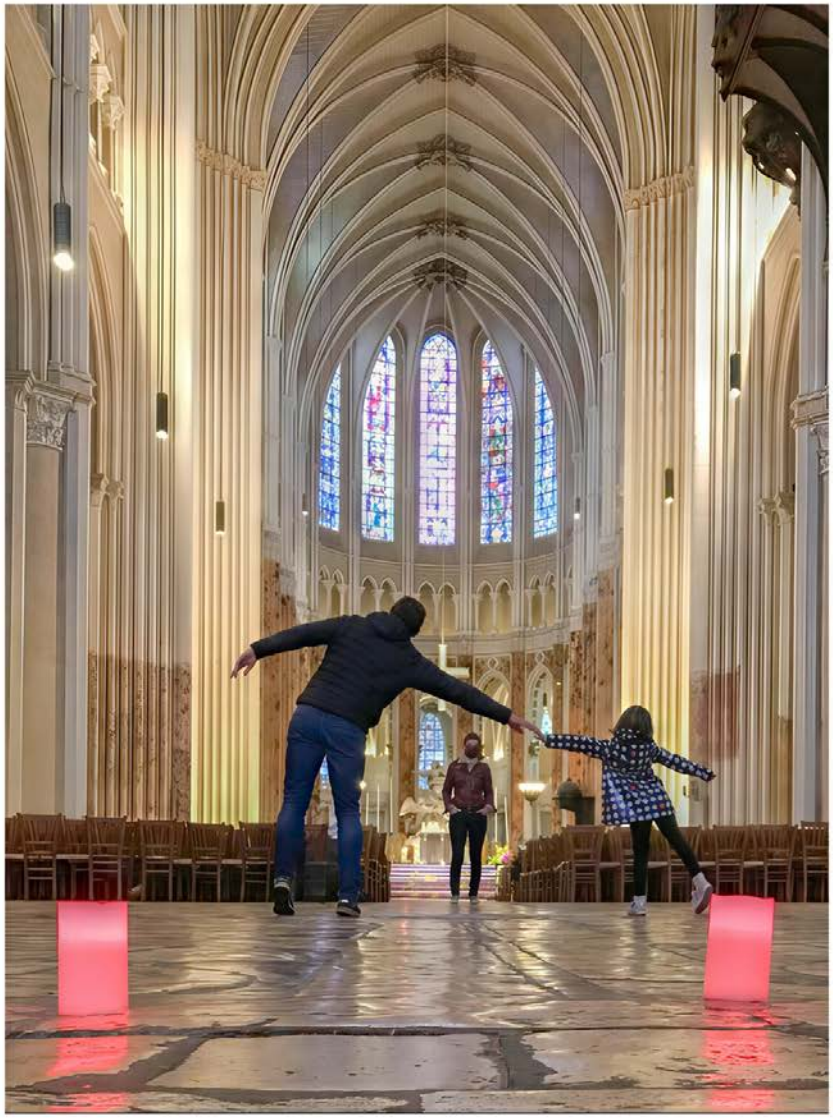


Offering at the Center

2010
Center of the labyrinth, nave of Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
A pilgrim bends in quiet reverence at the center of the Chartres labyrinth, where candles and flowers mark a place of prayer, remembrance, and offering. The image honors the many ways people encounter the labyrinth: by walking its winding path, by pausing in silence, by bowing in humility, and by joining their experience to the countless hopes, sorrows, and prayers of those who have come before.

Standing Together in the Labyrinth
2010
Nave of Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
While photographing the Chartres labyrinth after hours on a cold, dark February night, I set my camera on timed release before walking the path with my husband. Here, in the center, we shared a quiet time of prayer for people and concerns close to our hearts. I treasure photographing labyrinths around the world, but even more, I love walking them--alone, with those I love, and in community with people I know and those I have yet to meet.

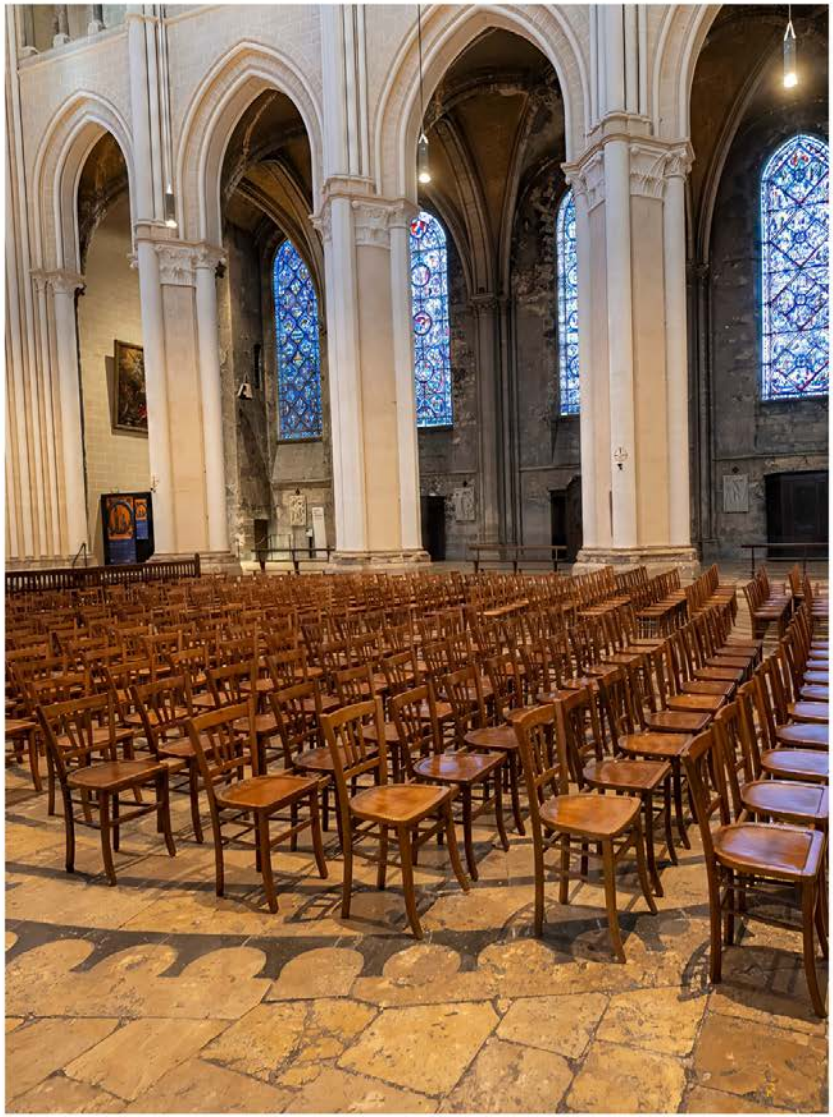




Father and Daughter:
A Labyrinth Moment
2021
Nave, Chartres Cathedral
Metal Print, 8 x 10 inches
Fridays in Chartres can include moments of joy, play, and tenderness on the labyrinth. As a member of the labyrinth hospitality team, I have witnessed many emotions on this path: grief, relief, wonder, gratitude, longing, and delight. Here, a father and daughter stretch their arms wide, turning the sacred floor into a place of shared trust and connection. Their movement reminds us that peace can be found not only in stillness, but also in love, play, and the joy of being together.

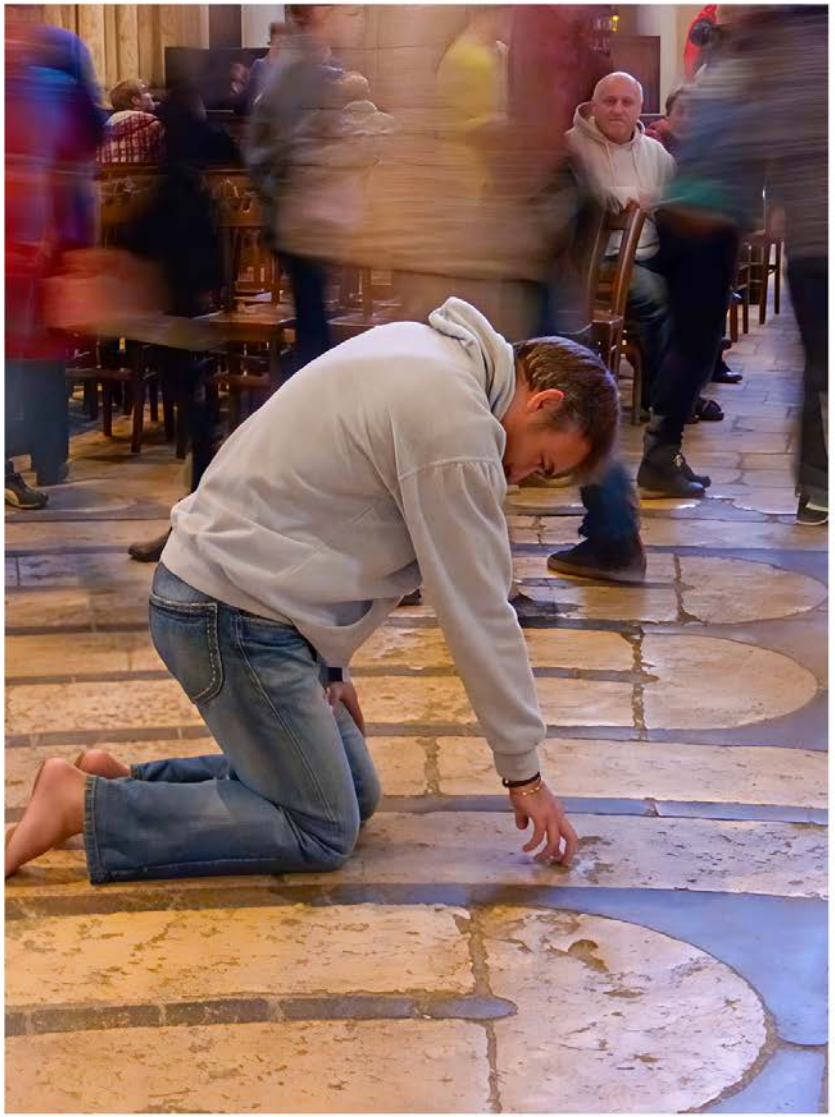
Easter Dance on the Labyrinth
2017
Nave of Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
On Easter Evening, the Bishop of Chartres, in collaboration with the Chemin Neuf Community, celebrated a liturgy of Resurrection with Scripture, song, candlelight, and dance on the labyrinth. Though different from the labyrinth dances of clergy recorded in medieval documents, this movement carried the same Easter joy: Christ's triumph over the grave and the promise of life stronger than death. At the close of the liturgy, parishioners were invited to walk the labyrinth, joining their own steps to the prayer, music, and light of the celebration.





A Covered Labyrinth Peeks Out
2025
Nave looking to the north, Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 24 × 30 inches
Rows of chairs cover most of the Chartres labyrinth, leaving only fragments of its pattern visible beneath them. Added centuries after the cathedral's medieval construction, the chairs are now part of the labyrinth's daily context, shaping how visitors encounter it. The visible outer arcs invite viewers to notice what remains present, available, and quietly guiding, even while the labyrinth waits to be uncovered for walking on Fridays.

"Walking" on One's Knees
2013
Labyrinth, nave of Chartres Cathedral
Canvas print, 36 × 36 inches
Moving through the entire labyrinth on his knees, this man embodied unusual devotion, humility, and physical commitment. His slow progress invited viewers to consider prayer as something lived through the whole body, not only through thoughts or words. On the ancient, hard limestone pavement, each movement forward can become an intentional act of faith, endurance, and seeking.





A Large Circle of Welcome
2023
The nave of the Chartres Cathedral
Metal Print, 8 x 10 inches
On many Fridays in Chartres, the parish hospitality team welcomes 500-800 people to walk the labyrinth. The morning begins with everyone gathered around the outer edge for a four-part pilgrim ritual of groundedness, release, openness, and gratitude, followed by prayer for all who will come that day. For the next six hours, people enter the path one by one, walking individually and yet in community. The ancient pattern comes alive, gathering strangers into a gentle image of human life: each person making a separate journey while held within a larger circle of welcome.

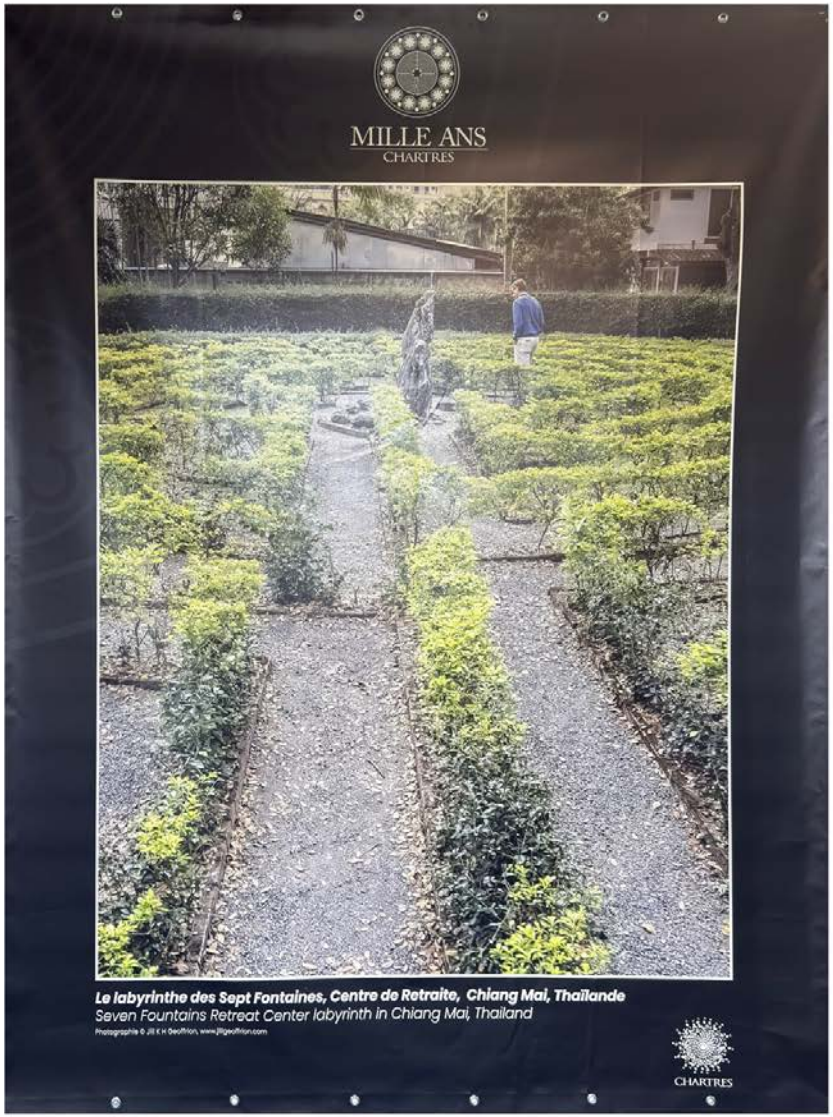
Walking Together
2023
Labyrinth looking east, Nave of Chartres Cathedral
Metal Print, 8 x 10 inches
Labyrinth walkers move across the limestone path as morning light fills the nave and draws the eye toward the luminous windows beyond. Their movement suggests a quiet practice of patience and presence. The image emphasizes the communal dimension of the Friday labyrinth experience.





Walking on Water
2014
Aukland, New Zealand
Large-format photographic tarp, 6.5 x 8 feet
Created at St. Columba Anglican Church in Auckland, this labyrinth adapts the eleven-circuit Chartres pattern into a site-specific form, using oceanic colors and a South Pacific setting to reinterpret the medieval design through the landscape and culture of New Zealand. The image shows how the Chartres labyrinth travels across geography and tradition, becoming both recognizable and newly contextualized wherever it is walked.

Seven Fountains Labyrinth
2024
Jesuit Spirituality Center, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Large-format photographic tarp, 6.5 x 8 feet
Set among old trees and singing birds, this boxwood shrub labyrinth offers a quiet refuge within the busy city of Chiang Mai. At its center, a great rock recalls the psalmist's prayer: "God is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer" (Psalm 18:2), inviting walkers to trust and find a steady place to stand. Here, the Chartres pattern takes root in Thai soil, becoming a path of slowing down, walking meditation, and encouragement for all who enter.

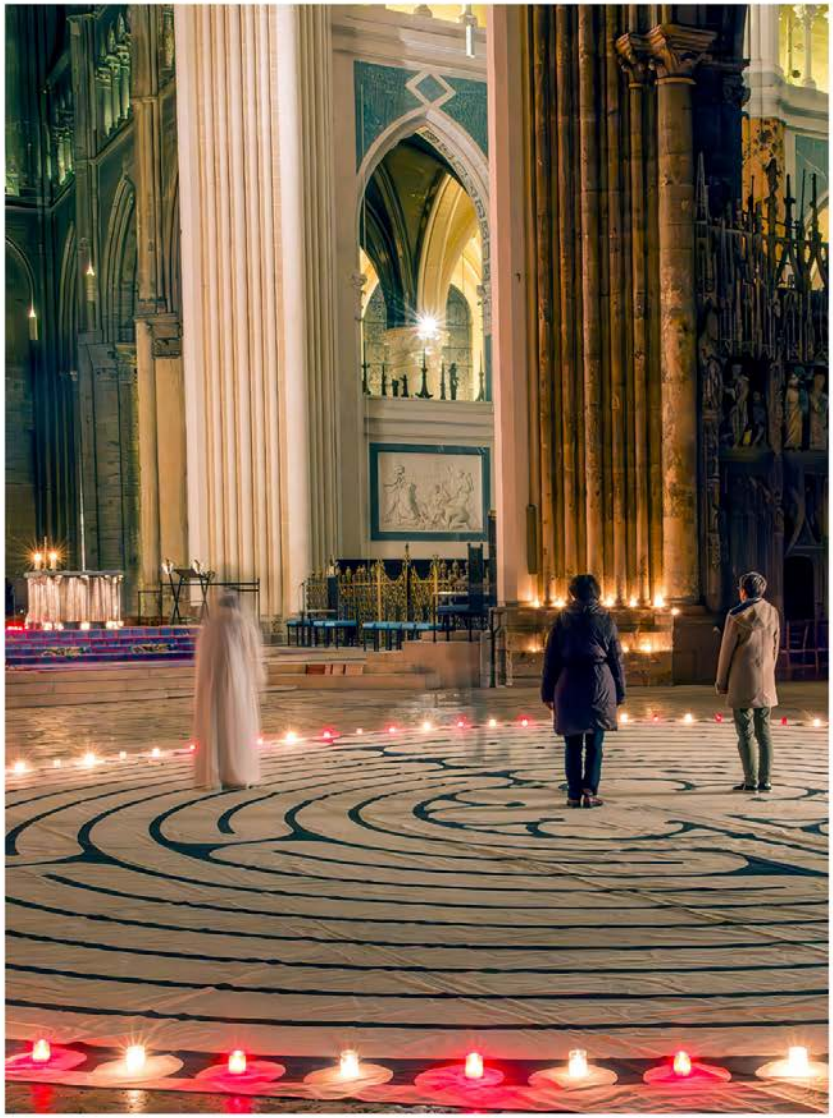




Friday Open Walk
2023
Labyrinth, Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
On Fridays during the walking season, the chairs are removed and the Chartres labyrinth is opened to all who come. Walkers share the path, moving together while each embodies her or his own prayers, questions, gratitude, or longing. The quiet movement of visiting nuns, residents, and pilgrims from distant places reveals the labyrinth as a living place of welcome, where many journeys can unfold together on one path. In a time when patience and respect can feel scarce, the labyrinth offers a simple practice of sharing space and moving together.

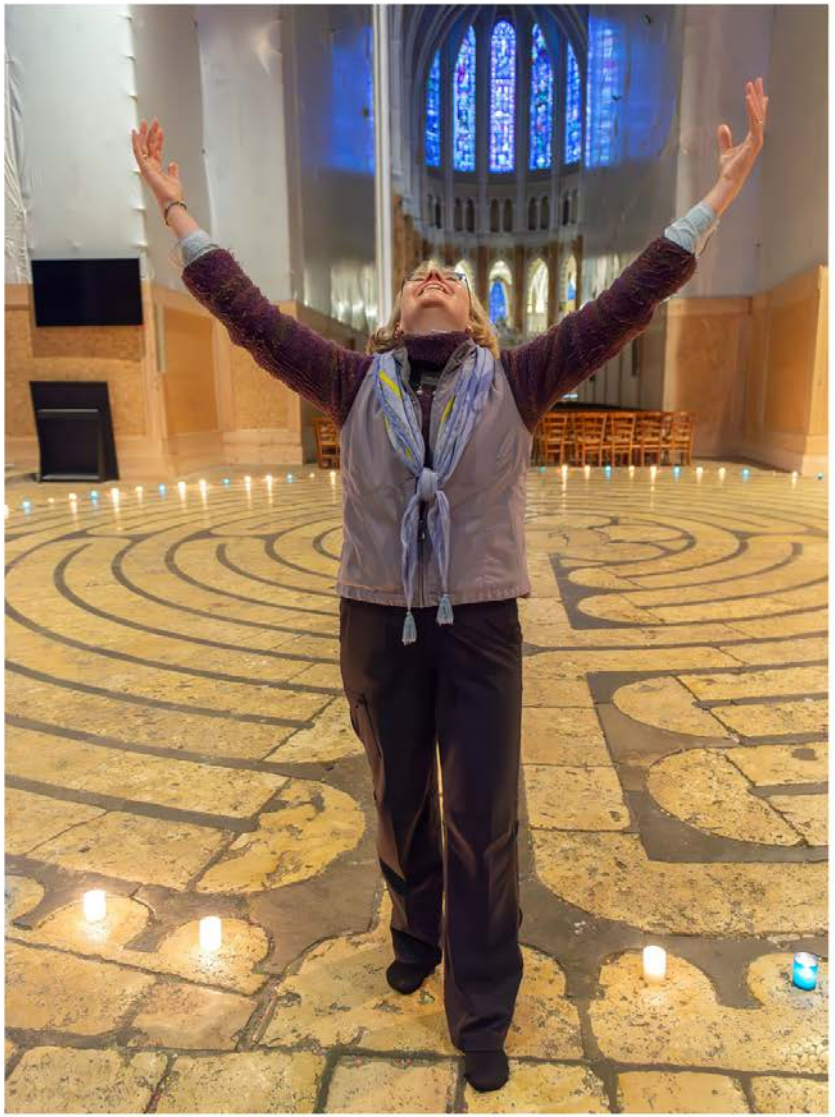
Walking Alone, Walking Together
2022
Center of the Labyrinth, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France
Metal print, 8 x 10 inches
In Chartres, it is rare to have the labyrinth to oneself. The cathedral is often filled with visitors, pilgrims, people waiting to walk, and those simply passing through. Each person who enters the labyrinth walks a personal path, yet no one walks entirely alone. In the openness of the center flower, two people pause in a quiet embrace, showing how a public space can hold tender and private moments. Their stillness reminds us that the journey toward wholeness, trust, and peace is deeply personal, and may also be gently shared.

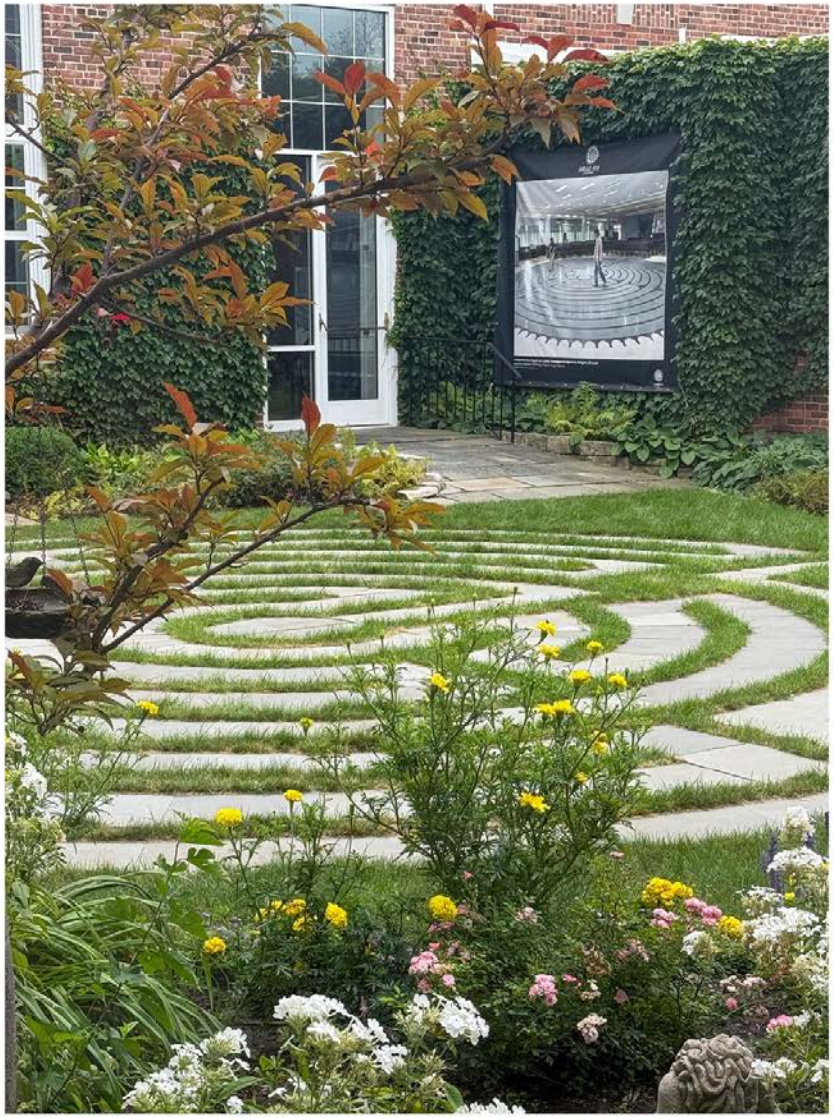




From Stone to Canvas
2016
South Transept, Chartres Cathedral
Canvas Print, 24 x 36 inches
During the restoration of the nave, parts of the stone labyrinth were covered by scaffolds. The desire to walk it was occasionally met by the after-hours installation of a canvas replica in the south nave, near the crossing and the altar where candlelight traced the outer edge and made the temporary path feel quietly alive. Offered as one of several prayer stations for retreatants spending an evening in the cathedral, the illuminated labyrinth became a place to slow down, listen, and follow the path in a new form.

Emerging in Joy
2015
Threshold of the labyrinth, nave of Chartres Cathedral
Metal print, 8 × 10 inches
Having completed the walk, this woman exits the Chartres labyrinth with arms raised in joy, gratitude, and release. The image captures the transition from inward journey to renewed presence in daily life. Her gesture suggests that the labyrinth's gifts are not only found at the center, but also in the freedom, hope, and peace carried forward after leaving the path.





The Jadestone Labyrinth:
A Path of Connection
2014
Myanmar Institute of Theology, Yangon, Myanmar
Large-format photographic tarp, 9.5 × 8 feet
Burmese scholars first encountered the labyrinth while studying in the United States. They had the vision of creating a labyrinth in their seminary community in Yangon. Designed for the chapel at Myanmar Institute of Theology, this Chartres-style labyrinth has been used for teaching, pastoral care, personal reflection, ecumenical gatherings, and community worship. In a time when many who have or continue to walk this path are suffering through conflict, displacement, and exile, the labyrinth provides a deep connection with others who walk around the world.





Hanging the Exhibit



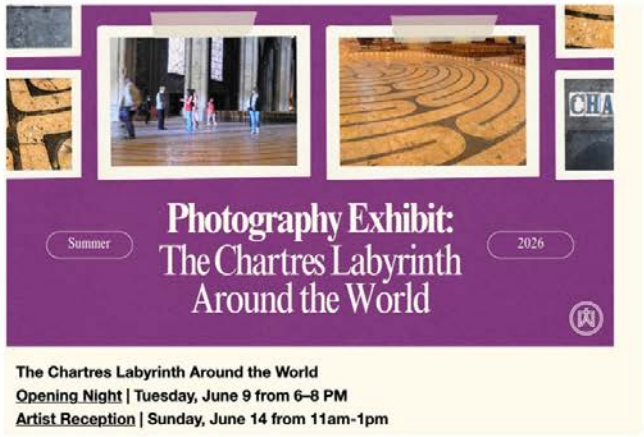
Exhibitionopening by the American Friends of Chartres at the Wayzata Community Church in Minnesota





Whenever the church opened its doors, the exhibition welcomed all who entered.







Throughout the exhibition, visitors were invited to participate in a variety of events, including artist-led tours, labyrinth walks, and special presentations.

The mission of American Friends of Chartres is to raise awareness in the United States of Chartres Cathedral and its unique history, sculpture, stained glass, and architecture and their conservation needs. AFC raises funds to finance restoration of the magnificent stained-glass windows as well as sculptures and seeks to establish educational exchange programs in the field of historic glass, to strengthen ties between the American and French cultural communities, and to enhance relations between the United States and France.

Friendsofchartres.org

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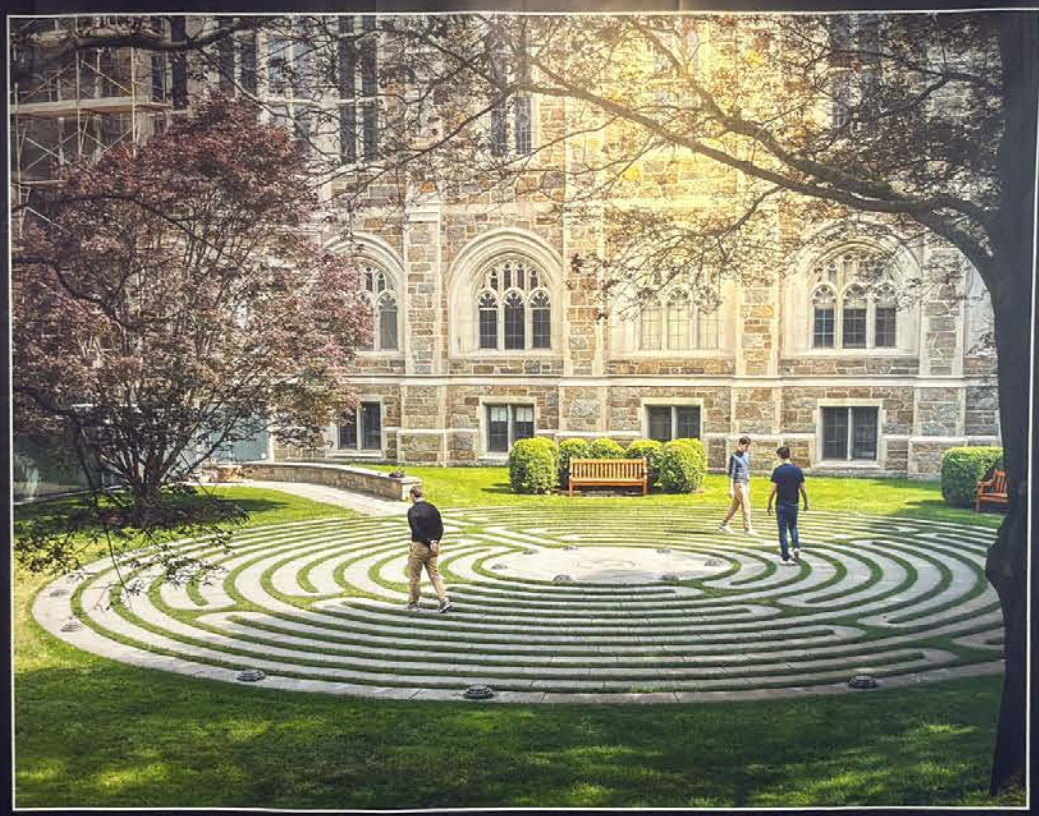






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Le labyrinthe commémoratif de Boston College pour les 22 anciens diplômés disparus le 11 septembre 2001, Newton, Massachusetts, États-Unis

Boston College Memorial Labyrinth for 22 alumni lost on 9/11, Newton, Massachusetts, USA

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