

Labyrinth



To be constructed at:

Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church
354 Zions Church Road
Shoemakersville PA 19555

(610) 562-3112

Email: labyrinth@zionslutheran.org

PURPOSE

The Labyrinth is an ancient tool for reflection on one's life and one's spiritual journey enhancing prayer, contemplation, and/or personal growth. The Labyrinth introduces us to the idea of a gracious path to God, one that is horizontal instead of vertical where there is room for error and forgiveness.

HISTORY

The earliest labyrinth still in existence is on the island of Crete, and is believed to have been built around 2500 B.C. Labyrinths were a feature of many medieval cathedrals most famously in Chartres Cathedral in France dating from 1220. The labyrinth is not a maze, as it has one defined path leading to the center and back out again with no choice of paths, entrances and exits. Medieval Christians walked the labyrinth instead of taking a hazardous pilgrimage to Jerusalem to walk in the "foot steps of Christ."

HOW TO WALK THE LABYRINTH

- ÷ Take time to relax a little and become quiet and calm. Try to give your mind a rest. Just put one foot in front of the other!
- ÷ Walk slowly and in silence.
- ÷ Spend as much time as you would like in the center.
- ÷ If someone ahead of you is moving more slowly than you are, you may respectfully pass him/her by briefly moving off the path. If you would like to stop at any time, just be aware of those behind you and allow them to pass.

Focus:

÷ Take time to think about what you are doing and why you are doing it. Reflect on where you are in your life.

÷ There are several ways to think about your time in the labyrinth:

- Before you start you may want to remove your watch to remove the temptation to measure your progress.
- You may want to focus on a problem or question in your life, then let it go....or
- You may imagine the path to the center as a time of letting go of things that are separating you from God, the center as a time of illumination or special closeness with God, and the path outward as a time of enjoying union with God as God accompanies you back into the world...or
- Ask God for what you need from this time of prayer.

÷ There are three stages to walking the labyrinth:

- Purgation = the first part of the path where the details of everyday life are shed, and the mind is made open.
- Illumination = the time spent in the center of the labyrinth, quietly praying and receiving whatever wisdom is forthcoming.
- Union = occurs as the path is reworked, preparing to reenter the world and actualize the new sense of self, or knowledge gained in the labyrinth.

Reflecting on your Labyrinth experience:

÷ It is important to reflect on what has happened in you as you walked the labyrinth. Take some time to ask yourself the following questions:

- Why did I come here today?
- What did I learn about myself?
- What did I learn about what's going on in my life right now?
- Did I "find God" in the labyrinth? What was that like?

Q AND A

Why walk the Labyrinth?

It is an active way of praying. It uses our whole selves – our mind, our bodies and our spirits. The path of the labyrinth imitates the journey of our lives, brings us to the center of our being, to the heart of God. Walking the labyrinth may bring you peace, comfort, clarity, relief from stress, a sense of closeness to God, new insights, and perspectives on problems or questions in your life.

How was it started?

Trevor Fegley explored the possibility of a labyrinth as a graduation project.

Joey Dalton will take on the construction as an Eagle Scout project.

Where will it be located?



How will the labyrinth be funded?

The labyrinth will be funded through private individual donations, as well as using funds from endowments and Thrivent Action Teams. Bricks can be purchased and engraved memorializing or honoring loved ones, even pets.

How Can I make a financial contribution?

Checks can be made to “Zion’s Lutheran Church” and indicate in the memo section of the check that the contribution is for the “labyrinth” and send to the church.

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