**Prayer Labyrinth**

**What is a Prayer Labyrinth?**

When you look at our Prayer Labyrinth, you may first think you are seeing a maze and though the two words are used interchangeably, mazes and labyrinths are not the same. A maze is a puzzle to be solved. A labyrinth, on the other hand, is unicursal, with only one path to the center, and the same path out.

The prayer labyrinth is a winding path that leads unerringly to the center where you are invited to stay and pray. When you are ready, turn around and walk the same winding path out again. As you complete your prayer walk and walk back out to the edge you may feel a new sense of empowerment to love God and love your neighbor.

The prayer labyrinth can help calm the mind, relax the body, reduce stress, and provide space that helps guide your mind and heart in prayer. Function follows form; this form, the prayer labyrinth, leads your mind to new places in prayer. The path is a metaphor for a journey with God in which you can trust God every step of the way.

**History of the Prayer Labyrinth**

Labyrinths have a rich history. They have been known for over 4,000 years and have appeared in almost every religious tradition. This design is found at different periods of history in such far flung places as India, Norway, Ireland, England, and even in America.

Christian churches used the labyrinth for prayer and meditation as early as 350 CE. The labyrinth has recently been rediscovered as a tool for prayer and meditation.

**Suggestions for Your Walk**

* Relax. Take a moment to reflect on your life. If you are trying to solve a problem, focus on your question and let it guide you in prayer as you walk the Prayer Labyrinth.
* Quiet your mind. When thoughts or feelings suddenly surface in your awareness, you may choose to let them go. You might feel like crying, or you might feel as though you are surrounded by peace.
* Repeat a meaningful phrase and let is become a prayer for you. It might be, “Christ, have mercy on Me. Lord, have mercy on me.” or “Come, Holy Spirit. Come into my life.”
* Try reading scripture or a printed prayer during your walk. Read out loud if you are alone on the path, or read to yourself if there are others on the prayer path with you.
* As you pray, be honest with God. Express your real feelings with God; express joy, anger, pain, or gratitude. Ask for healing.
* Be open to God. Be aware of catching glimpses of the divine. A transformation might take place inside you. Welcome it.
* Pace yourself. Pay attention to your breathing. If you are holding your breath, let it out. Breathe slowly and smoothly. Should you pass another walker, step around quietly and respectfully. This is not a competitive race. Keep your own pace.