

Historical Perspective

The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. Labyrinth designs were found on pottery, tablets, and tiles date as far back as 4000 years. Many patterns are based on spirals from nature. In Native American culture it is called the Medicine Wheel and Man in the Maze. The Celts described it as the Never-Ending Circle. It is also called the Kabala in mystical Judaism. One feature they all share is that they have one path which winds in a circuitous way to the center. Labyrinths are currently being used world-wide as a way to quiet the mind, find balance, and encourage meditation, insight and celebration. They are open to all people as a non-denominational, cross-cultural tool of well-being. They can be found in medical centers, parks, churches, schools, prisons, memorial parks and retreat centers as well as in people's backyards.

An Ancient Prayer Form ...

The seven-circuit labyrinth is an ancient prayer form, rooted firmly in the Christian tradition of pilgrimage. In the Middle Ages few people were able to read, so their religious experiences came through other senses. People walked to holy places, many in search of physical or spiritual healing. Those unable to travel to the Holy Land participated through visits to churches and walking the labyrinth engraved in the floor of churches designated as pilgrimage cathedrals. Walking the labyrinth in these cathedrals marked the ritual ending of the journey across the countryside. In the tradition of the pilgrimage, the path of the labyrinth is called the "Road to Jerusalem."

A Single Path ...

Unlike the maze, which is a puzzle with many paths to choose from, the labyrinth is a singular road to the center and back. Following the curved path in a prayerful stance, can accompany an inward journey—letting go of barriers and busyness that stand between us and God. The middle of the labyrinth invites us to center in God, reflecting on God's presence, truth, and love in our lives.

Aldersgate Community Labyrinth...

The Aldersgate Community Labyrinth was dedicated Nov. 27, with a service of prayer, including the placement of more than a hundred prayers written by the congregation underneath the center stone.

The completion of the labyrinth was accomplished after four years of prayer and planning with the hard work and commitment of the Labyrinth Ministry Task Force, headed by Don Kjelleren. Our beautiful, outdoor seven-circuit sacred path to prayer, meditation, and healing is not only for the benefit of our congregation, but for everyone in the community.

A cross marks the entrance and exit from the labyrinth. And it is the centrality of the cross of Jesus that marks the journey through the Christian life. As we enter the labyrinth, we are invited to leave behind those things which separate us from God and keep us from living lives centered in the Holy. At the center, we are invited to focus on God's presence. We return on the same path into the world to share God's peace and love. You are invited to walk the labyrinth anytime. Walking the labyrinth is a way to pray with the whole body, and it will enrich your prayer life.