



# Walking the Labyrinth at St. Columba's

Welcome to St. Columba's Labyrinth! You are about to step on to an ancient archetypal path that is thousands of years old. Labyrinths first became identified with Christianity around 350 A.D. Our labyrinth is a replica of the one built about 800 years ago in Chartres Cathedral, France.

Following the footsteps of Christians of medieval times, the labyrinth is used today as a form of walking prayer or meditation. According to Veriditas, an organization that promotes labyrinths world-wide, they are used to “quiet the mind, recover balance in life and encourage meditation, insight, self-reflection, stress reduction and to discover innovation and celebration. They are open to people as an interfaith, cross-cultural blueprint for well-being. The practice of labyrinth walking integrates the body with the mind & mind with the spirit.”

## Following the Labyrinth Path

The labyrinth is a metaphor for the spiritual journey. It is a sacred pattern that leads the seeker on a path to its center. It is not a maze; there are no dead-ends. A single path goes to the center and back out again.

**There is no “required way” to walk the labyrinth.** However, as a guide, we can break the walk into these stages:

- Remember: At the entrance to the labyrinth, pause and take a few deep breaths. Focus on being open to your own experience during the walk. For some walks, you may want to set a specific intention, pose a question or offer a prayer.
- Release: As you walk toward the center, allow your thoughts to fall away. Give yourself permission just to be. Open your heart and allow your mind to quiet.
- Receive: The center of the labyrinth is a place for reflection and prayer. Open to the Divine Presence and receive whatever is there for you. Sit, stand, or kneel as you are comfortable. Stay as long as you like, keeping an awareness of others on the walk.
- Return: Follow the same path back out of the labyrinth. Take into the world what you received, even if you are not aware of it immediately. As you exit, offer an expression of gratitude for the gifts received.

**There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth.** Each labyrinth walk is different.

Have no expectations. Experience your experience.

## Guidelines for Your Walk

- Please remove your shoes and walk in socks (no bare feet). If you are not wearing socks, use a pair provided and place them in the basket provided after your walk. [Note: This helps preserve the labyrinth.]
- Silence your cell phones, and please keep your valuables with you when you walk.
- Walk at your own natural pace. Listen to your body. Feel free to move slowly or quickly; to dance, to twirl!
- If you are walking more quickly than a person in front of you, just gently pass the person.
- As you walk in or out of the labyrinth, you may meet other walkers on the same path, going in the opposite direction. Just move slightly to the side and around anyone you meet.
- Sit quietly for a short time after your walk for reflection or journaling.

## We welcome your feedback!

Leave any suggestions or comments in the basket by the Great Hall entrance.

Adapted from Veriditas (2013)