

To pray contemplatively in the labyrinth, simply let go of everything and walk with God in silence. Let go of your thoughts, the things you have to do, the concerns you have, and so forth. Just walk with God, trusting in God to lead you along the way.

When you get to the center, say a prayer of thanks to God for guiding you along the way. Then, return to the silence as you continue your walk outward. Again, at the end say a prayer of thanks to God for leading you not only in the labyrinth, but in your life.

### **A Prayer of Letting Go**

Use the labyrinth to let go of your burdens, sins, and struggles. As you walk the labyrinth, reflect on your life and your struggles.

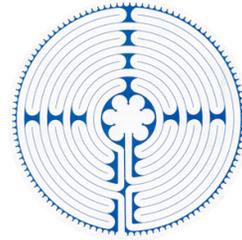
Open yourself up to God and ask God to reveal burdens, sins, and struggles of which you need to let go. As they come to your mind, say to God, "Lord, I give this to you. Let it be transformed in your grace."

As you continue your walk, continue to give more & more over to God.

### **Meditation**

Use the time in labyrinth simply to reflect on events of your life. Use it as a time to think about matters that are bothering you or burdening you. Use it as a time to sort out what you should or should not do. Don't forget to include God in on this. If the meditation time is used well, God will give you guidance as you walk.

This time of meditation can either be focused or unfocused. If it is focused, come to



the labyrinth with a particular matter to reflect upon. Use the time to focus on this particular issue, and resist the wanderings of your mind. If the meditation is unfocused, then let your mind go and reflect on whatever comes up in your thoughts. Do not worry about whether the matters of your reflection are weighty or not. Sometimes God just wants our minds to spiritually wander.

### **A Prayer**

The following is a prayer written by Howard Thurman that you can read as you prepare to walk the labyrinth.

Lord, open unto me.  
Open unto me~  
    light for my darkness  
Open unto me~  
    Courage for my fear.  
Open unto me~  
    Hope for my despair.  
Open unto me~  
    Peace for my turmoil.  
Open unto me~  
    Joy for my sorrow.  
Open unto me~  
    Strength for my weakness.  
Open unto me~  
    Wisdom for my confusion  
Open unto me~  
    Forgiveness for my sins.  
Open unto me~  
    Love for my hates.  
Open unto me~  
    Thy Self for my self.  
Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

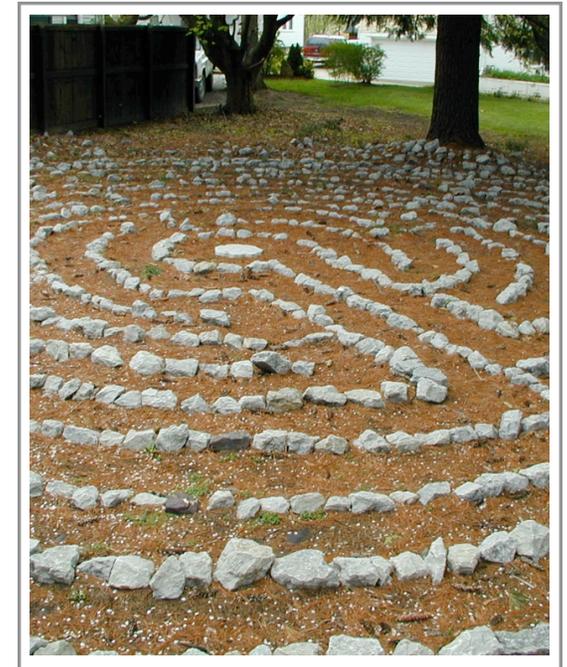
---

# WALKING THE LABYRINTH

---

CALVIN  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

---



**Calvin Presbyterian Church**

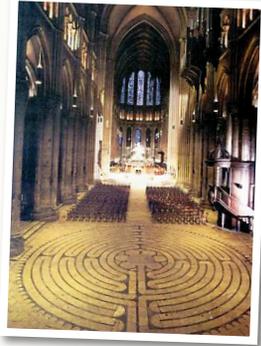
*Lovingly nurturing every journey with Christ in prayer, praise, and action*

[www.calvinchurchzelle.org](http://www.calvinchurchzelle.org)

---

# USING THE LABYRINTH FOR PRAYER

Welcome to the Calvin Presbyterian Church labyrinth. The labyrinth is an ancient resource to help people center their lives and become open to God's presence and voice. The original labyrinths predate Christianity, but the earliest Christians adapted them to be used for prayer. Christian labyrinths take many forms, and one was even found on a wall in the ruins of Pompey.



Our labyrinth is based on the one laid into the floor of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Chartres Cathedral in France, which you see in the photo above. It is filled with Christian symbols. The pattern is based on 12 concentric circles, which stand for the 12 disciples and the 12 tribes of Israel. The labrys, or turnarounds, form the shape of a cross. There are two sets of three turnarounds (symbolizing the Trinity) and two sets of four turnarounds (symbolizing the four corners of the earth). The exterior circle itself stands for God's unending love. The center is a rose, the symbol of both the Holy Spirit and Mary. Finally, the path itself represents the Christian journey. It's twists and turns are like life itself, symbolizing the fact that while we may be on God's path, we never are sure what the next turn may hold.

Walking the Labyrinth is an ancient Christian practice that helps us pray, meditate, reflect, and rediscover God. It is symbolic of our spiritual journey toward God. You will find that as you include it into your prayer life, God will touch you in interesting and inspiring ways. There are many ways to use the labyrinth for prayer. The following are several suggestions for you to use. You also may want to create your own ways of praying, meditating, and seeking God through the labyrinth.

## Walking Prayer

As you enter the labyrinth, begin by asking God to guide and listen to you. Next, offer God your confessions: *how you have pushed God away, failed to serve God in your life, failed to love others, and failed to take better care of yourself.* Be gentle with yourself. The idea is not to turn your confession into a period of self-criticism. Give all of this over to God, and then ask for God to forgive and cleanse you. Accept God's love and move on in your prayer.



Pray about the concerns of your life. Give them over to God as you walk. Then pray for those who need God's grace, healing, and light. Pray for Calvin Church. Pray for our community, the nation, and for world concerns. If you aren't sure what to pray for, ask God to lead you. Things will pop into your head.

Continue praying as you walk. If you reach the center in the middle of your prayer, you can stop and stand in silence, or continue praying. If you run out of things to pray, continue walking in silence. Turn around and continue praying as you follow the same path out. When you leave the labyrinth, thank God for being with you.

## Hesychastic Prayer

This ancient style of praying is from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. "Hesychast" is the Greek word for "Jesus Christ." This form of prayer prays with your breath. Silently pray "Jesus Christ" as you breath inward, and "have mercy on me" as you breath outward.

You can substitute other biblical or meaningful phrases, if you want. For instance, you can use the words of Psalm 103 by praying with your inward breath, "Bless the Lord," and with your outward breath "O my soul." Or you can substitute your own phrase such as: "Holy Lord, heal me," "Jesus, give me your life," "God, Lead me in your way," or anything else that touches your soul.

## Contemplative Prayer

Another ancient form of prayer used in the labyrinth is contemplative prayer. This is a silent prayer in which we don't speak or listen. Instead, we simply rest with God.