

# *Walking the Labyrinth at First & Central*

Welcome to the Labyrinth at First & Central. The labyrinth is a very old tool for contemplation and ceremony that is used in many spiritual traditions. Many people find that walking the labyrinth helps us to quiet our minds, to reconnect with the Divine, and to bring our inner prayerful intentions outward into our physical conscious awareness. We hope that you, too, will find this to be a useful practice for your spiritual journey. Here are some guidelines for walking the labyrinth.

## **Preparing Yourself**

- Place your belongings at one of the chairs that line the sides of the labyrinth.
- Take time to be still. Is there a specific intention for your meditation today?
- Try to bring your attention to the present moment and seek to be receptive.
- When you are ready to begin your walk, **please remove your shoes and walk in socks.** Walking without shoes allows us to be more aware of the connection we make each time our foot meets the path. As a practical matter, it also protects the canvas, and wearing socks is more sanitary than bare feet or stockings. (Socks are available to borrow.)

## **Walking the Labyrinth**

- Enter the labyrinth at its only entry. There is only one path; you will walk it into the center and follow it out again when you are ready to return. There are four stages to the journey: standing on the threshold, walking in, being in the center, and walking out. Each stage, even if only momentary, is important, so a “short cut” really is not effective.
- Let your body and the labyrinth set your pace. If someone has entered just before you, allow him or her to get some distance into the labyrinth before you begin. (The small gold fabric star indicates an appropriate distance.)
- It is fine to pass someone whom you overtake or meet on the other’s way out of the labyrinth. Simply pass one another respectfully, and keep your eyes on your path so that you keep your place.
- You may pause at any time by stepping onto one of the solid purple sections.
- When you reach the center, the rosette, you may wish to spend time there. You may sit or stand or move around—whatever you choose. Others may be in the center with you at the same time.
- When you are ready, exit the rosette by the same path on which you entered and follow it back out of the labyrinth, retracing your steps.
- One walk is usually enough for one meditative session. However, if you feel that you need to do something more to complete the experience, you may want to walk the lunations around the perimeter of the labyrinth. Ending the journey with this circular movement helps to bring a sense of completion. If you need even more time, and you

would not be usurping someone else's turn to enter the labyrinth, you may choose to walk the labyrinth again.

### **While You Are Walking**

- There are as many ways to walk the labyrinth as there are people, and each experience is different. You may want to try some of the following ideas.
  - Quiet your mind and choose to let all thoughts go when they present themselves.
  - Meditate on a particular word, idea, or prayer-petition as you walk.
  - Read or ponder a particular portion of scripture or other writing as you walk.
  - Just walk! Let the walking be the work. Mindful walking is a powerful meditation.
- Be attentive to yourself. Pay attention to the interactions of your body and the labyrinth, as well as to other feelings. Notice images or thoughts that occur, but don't judge your experience. Just allow the experience, and pay attention. Listen. Listen to yourself. Listen for the Spirit. *Listen!*

### **When You Finish Your Walk**

- Return to the chair where you left your things.
- Feel free to sit as long as you like, to reflect on your experience and perhaps to write down any insights that you want to capture while the experience is still fresh.
- When the time feels right, put on your shoes and leave quietly. If you borrowed a pair of socks, please leave them in the designated basket.
- If you would like to share your experience, or ask any questions or offer suggestions, we have a "Comments" sheet for that purpose on the information table.

We invite you to make the labyrinth a regular part of your spiritual practice. Our hours are:

Wednesdays, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

\*On the rare occasion that a schedule change is necessary, the rescheduled date will be posted in advance.

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