

THE LABYRINTH AT THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

On Sunday, November 21, 2010, *The Feast of Christ the King*, The Church of the Redeemer dedicated a new labyrinth in loving memory of parishioner Deborah Carolyn Howell. The labyrinth is a gracious gift to members of the parish community and to neighbors – near and far, young and old – who will walk its path for generations to come. The labyrinth, along with the recently completed Columbarium & Memorial Wall that surround it, is sacred space.

In the midst of the chaos and clamor of modern life, walking the labyrinth is a centering and grounding experience, just as it has been for thousands of years. Many have noted that, as the rhythm and order of following the path occupy the logical left-brain, the mind is quieted and inner stillness emerges. Anxiety, stress, busyness; problems to be solved and decisions to be made recede. Space opens for the mind to rest, or to quietly lift up a concern, a hope, a prayer, trusting in the gentle work of the Holy Spirit. Perspectives shift; transformation begins.

Many have heard of “mazes”, but a labyrinth is not a maze. The two are often confused and *confusion* is the difference! The words *maze* and *amaze* are derived from the same Middle English root. A maze has more than one path, and, at many points, requires the walker to choose which path to take. Mazes are designed to cause confusion, which can be fun, bewildering, frustrating, even frightening, as some of the paths end in cul-de-sacs and it can be hard to find one’s way back to the path that leads to the center of the maze, or out again.

A labyrinth, by way of contrast, has only one path. That path may meander, bringing the walker close to the center only to sweep him or her out to the perimeter again at the next turn, but it leads inexorably to the center, and back out. Walking the labyrinth may bring about amazement, but amazement based on the labyrinth’s calming and clarifying effect, rather than confusion.

The labyrinth design familiar to most people in the West is based on the early Thirteenth Century labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, in France. It is approximately 42 feet in diameter, with 11 rounds, or circuits, that wander, in a structured fashion, among the circle’s four quadrants. The center of the labyrinth, often called the “rosette”, is circular, with six petals. Redeemer’s labyrinth, based on this design, is 27 feet in diameter, with seven circuits.

The labyrinth at The Church of the Redeemer is open to ALL: parishioners, non-parishioners, friends of the parish, neighbors, visitors, people of all ages and beliefs. Come walk the labyrinth. Experience the spirit, beauty, and peace of this sacred space.



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