



LABYRINTH HISTORY AND USE AT HOLY SPIRIT

Sponsored by the Stewardship Mission Team
December 2023

History of a Labyrinth

- Ancient patterns found all over the world
- Date back some 4000 years or more
- Many types of labyrinths share a single overall design
- Their origin is mysterious
- Their uses are as varied as their patterns are

What Is a Labyrinth?

➤ **A Unicursal Labyrinth**

A single continuous path that leads from a beginning point to a center and back out again and presents no navigational challenge

➤ **A Maze**

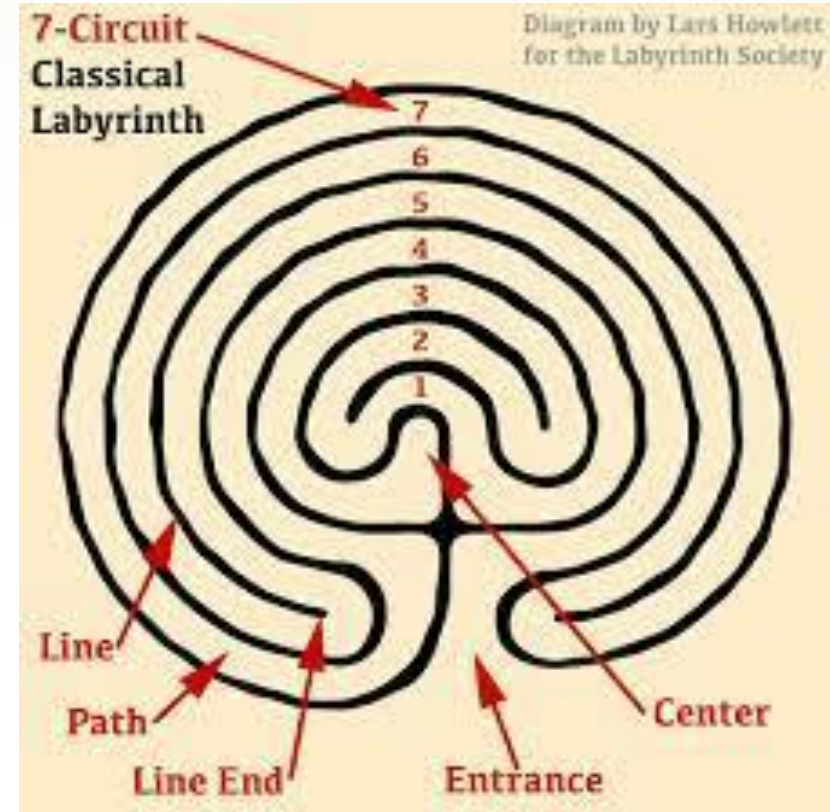
A complex branching multicursal puzzle with choices of paths and directions and an opportunity to get frustrated or lost

Where Did Labyrinths Start?

- No particular start known
- An archetype in the human mind
- Found in archaic petroglyphs
- Found in Amerindian basket - weaving designs
- Paintings and drawings all over the world
- Earliest reported labyrinth – in a two story building in Egypt – described by Greek historian Herodotus
- The name comes from Cretan structure in the myth of Ariadne, Theseus and the Minotaur
- Ancient Cretan coins
- Middle Ages – formed on colored paving stones in floors of cathedral naves all over Europe

What Do Labyrinths Look Like?

- Labyrinths are named by type
- Further identified by their number of circuits



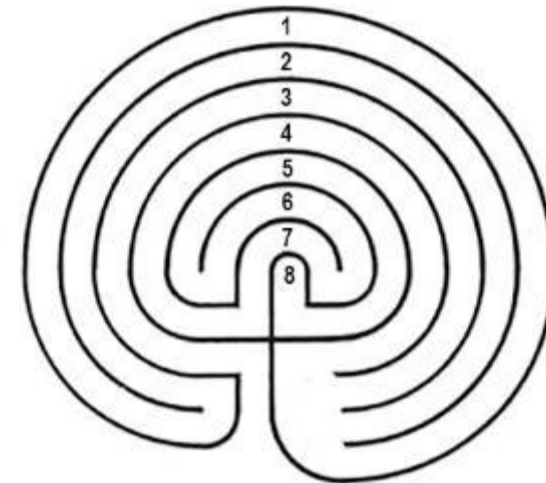
Right-Handed or Left-Handed Labyrinths

- Left or right-handed labyrinths are determined by the direction of the first turn after entering the labyrinth
- Two-thirds of the ancient Classical or Cretan labyrinths were right-handed
- Two-thirds of the modern Classics are left-handed
- Neither is better than the other – it is totally up to personal preference

Right-Handed



Left-Handed



The Two Best-Known Labyrinth Types are

① *Seven-circuit Cretan pattern*



The Two Best-Known Labyrinth Types are

- 2 *Eleven-circuit Chartres pattern, which is on the floor of the cathedral at Chartres, France (and used by many churches today)*

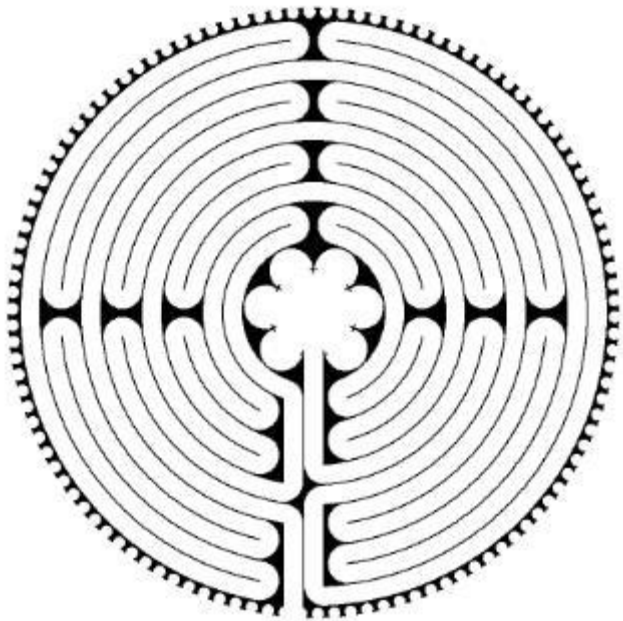
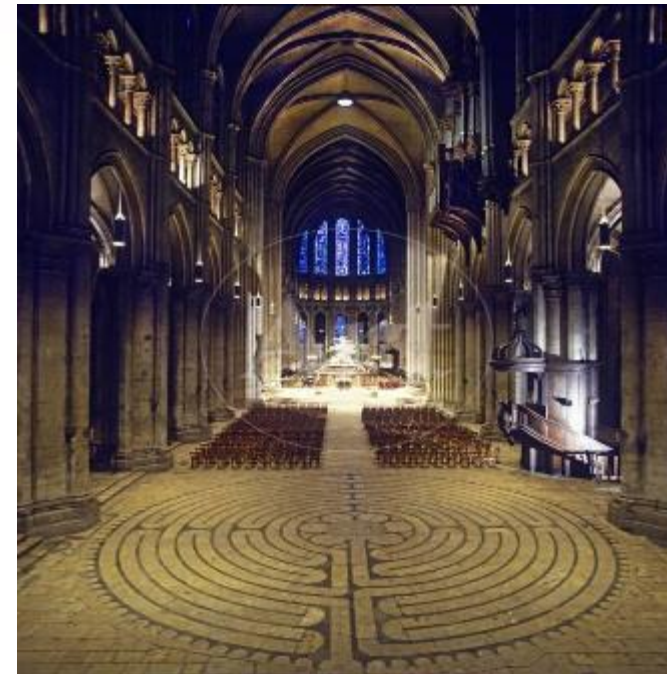


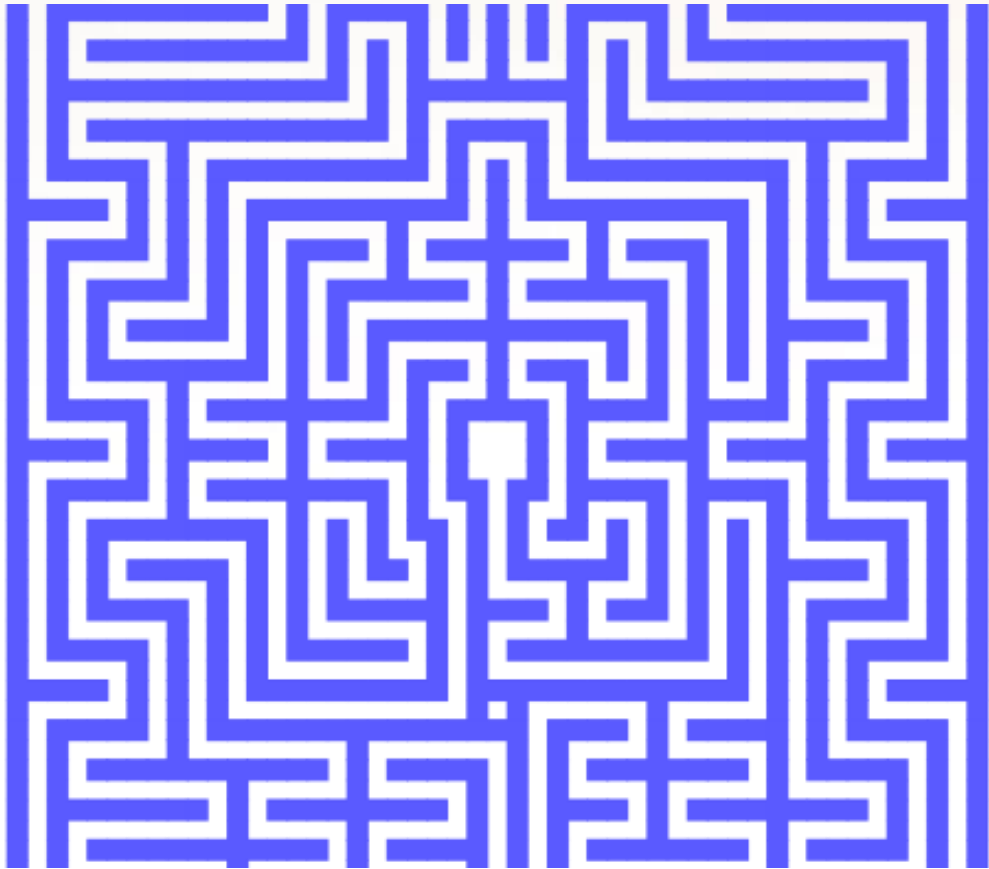
Figure 2. The medieval Chartres labyrinth design

Medieval Chartres Labyrinth



Chartres Cathedral, France

Some of The Many and Varied Patterns of Labyrinths



Monastery Church in France – Circa 1500



St. Lambertus, Germany, following the Roman paradigm

Some of The Many and Varied Patterns of Labyrinths



Floor of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco



*Silver coin from Knossos - classical 7 circuit cretan
Design to represent the labyrinth, 400 BC*

Some of The Many and Varied Patterns of Labyrinths



Central Park, Maple Grove, MN



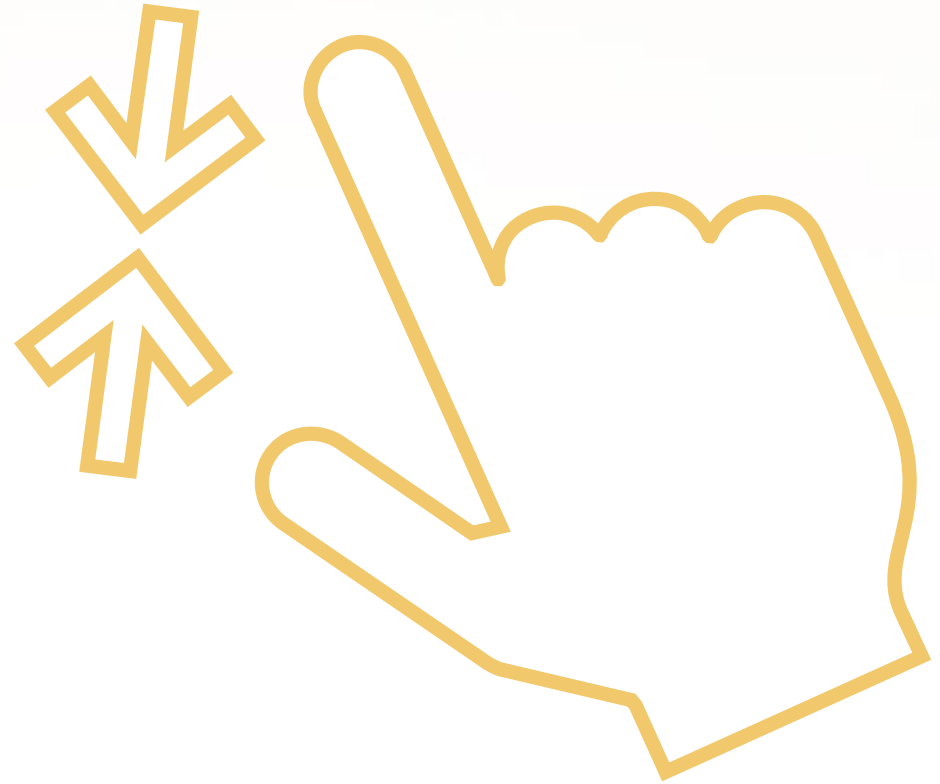
Franciscan retreats - 7 circuit Chartres

What are Finger Labyrinths?

Exactly what you would expect – labyrinths you trace with your finger!

Types

- Wooden
- Hand-held plastic with a stylus
- Paper



Wooden Labyrinths



18" chartres 11 circuit



12" Cretan finger – 7 circuit

Hand Held Plastic with Stylus



6" plastic Chartres and 4 "plastic Cretan

Paper Labyrinths



Roman Design



Ely Design

Why Walk a Labyrinth?

- In Ancient times – a cathedral labyrinth was a substitute for going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem
- A spiritual tool -prayer, walking meditation, site of rituals and ceremony, choreographed dance
- Personal, psychological or spiritual transformation
- Enhance right brain activity
- Community building
- A way to relax, renew your spirit
- Negotiate a new behavior
- Give thanks, express joy for blessings
- Express sorrow or grief
- Seek answers to questions long asked
- Find healing, creativity, mindfulness, sense of wholeness

.... And so much more!

How Might You Feel When You Walk a Labyrinth?

- Each labyrinth experience is different
- Walking a labyrinth is a very personal endeavor
- You may feel nothing or have a powerful reaction
- It is important to follow the pace your body chooses

How are Labyrinths Used for Kids and Teens?

- Successfully used in schools, childcare centers, playgrounds, camps and other programs
- Labyrinth activities support math, language, history, art and physical education
- Welcome new students, help kids grieve losses, resolve conflicts
- Fundraise, celebrate graduations, host community events
- Help students to calm down, make transitions and focus

Labyrinths and Young Children

- They enjoy playing on the labyrinth –dance, run, skip, cartwheel
- Consider creating a time when this is invited
- However, it is important to teach them how to use the labyrinth as a quiet prayer tool and to respect others who are doing so

***As you can see, for as many types of labyrinths there are,
there are as many uses for the labyrinth!***

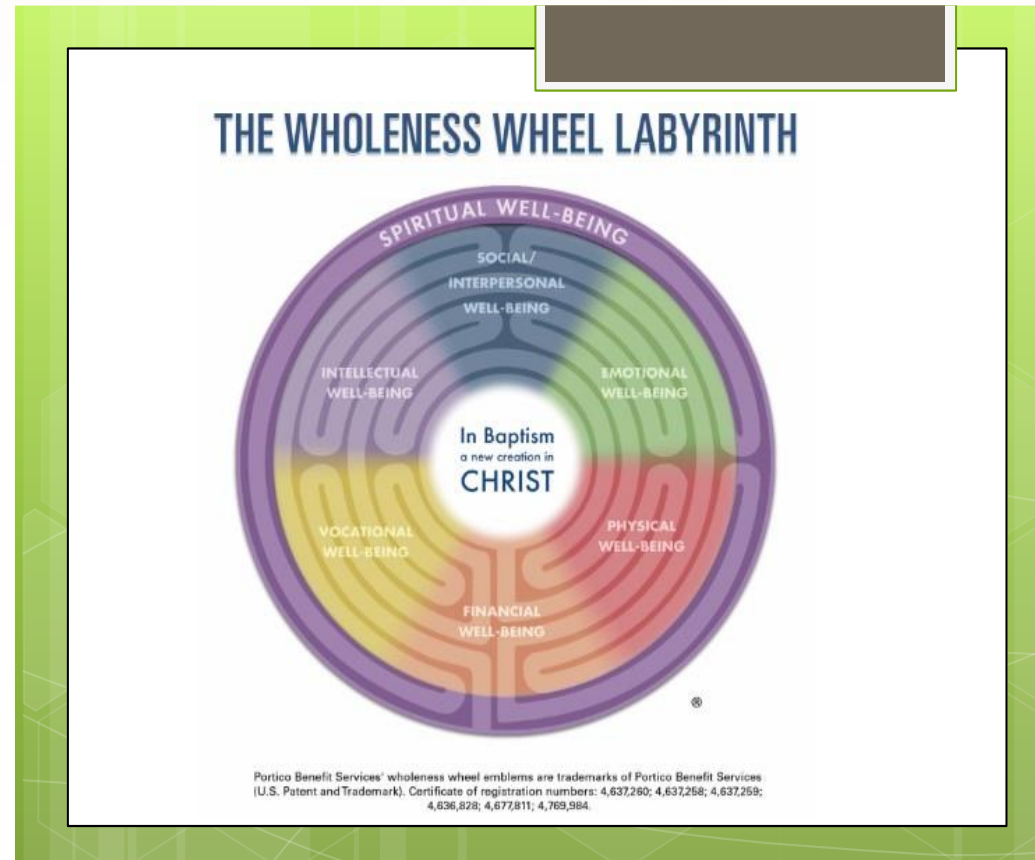
History of the Labyrinth Use at LCHS

Several events or themes were used as we introduced the concept of the Labyrinth at LCHS

- **March 2017:** Call to Live Well - finger labyrinth
- **November 2017:** Introduction to the walking Labyrinth guest speaker brought Classical Chartres labyrinth
- **June 2018:** Using the Labyrinth Locator on-line <https://labyrinthlocator.com/>
- **December 2018:** Blue Christmas
- **September 2019:** We built a Pumpkin labyrinth in the upper field – build it, walk it, share it

Wholeness Wheel Finger Labyrinth

A finger labyrinth you trace with your finger



Labyrinth Locator

On-line tool you can use as you travel in the summer months

By plugging in the zip code at your location, you can find a labyrinth in your area and walk it as part of your summer adventures and bring back photos of it to post on the Stewardship Bulletin Board



*St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, 150 Elm Street Emmaus, PA 18049
Classical Seven Circuit Labyrinth*

<https://labyrinthlocator.com/>

Blue Christmas Labyrinth

We know that for some, the Christmas holidays are not always a time of joy, so the labyrinth offered an opportunity to provide calm, peace and serenity, grieve losses, provide hope and healing



Pumpkin Labyrinth

In the upper field with real pumpkins!!

It was available to church members, family, friends and neighbors anytime during the daylight hours for 3 weeks at the end of September!

As we concluded our labyrinth, we gave away the pumpkins to kids and families at the church's Trunk or Treat event!



Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit's Labyrinth Today

Sponsored by the Stewardship Mission Team

Type: canvas Heart of Chartres labyrinth 5 circuit design

Size: 12 foot x 12 foot in diameter

Style: 5 circuits derived from the 5 inner circuits of the Chartres pattern



Where Can We Use It?

Smaller spaces in our church such as:

- Fellowship Center
- All Saints Room
- Room 117-119
- Speary Café
- New Church Narthex
- New Church Sanctuary

Who Can Use It?

Anyone who represents a group in the congregation wishing to use the labyrinth for an event or activity for their group

Examples of possible uses:

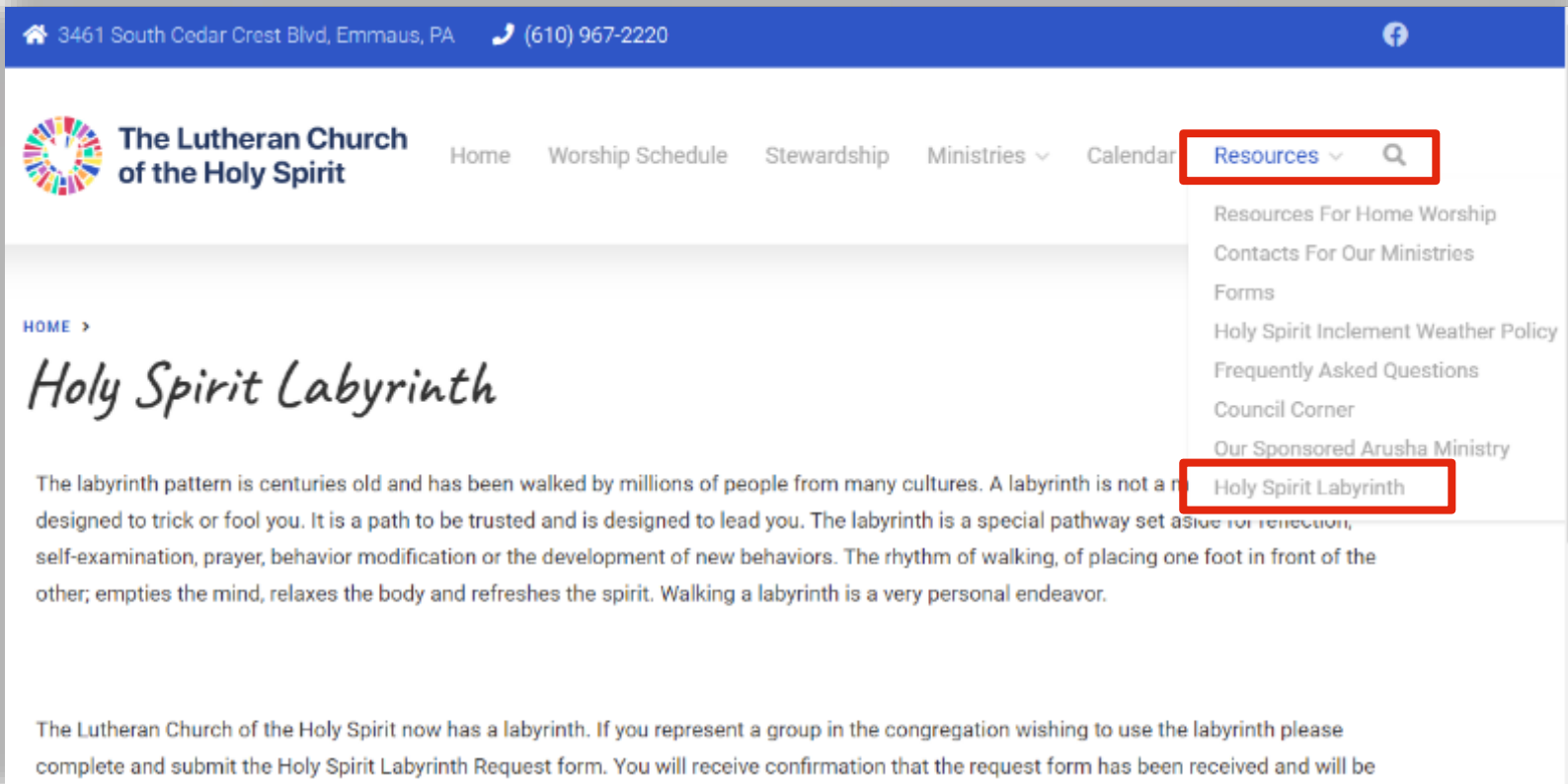
Catechism classes, adult faith formation, women's retreat, men's retreat, adult group activities, mission teams, other liturgical events such as lent or advent, taize prayer sessions, events with youth and families

Use to offer prayer, meditation, to kick off a program or to give thanks for a successful event, etc.

How Do You Request The Use of the Labyrinth?

Here is the page link for the website >> [Resources](#) >> [Holy Spirit Labyrinth](#)

<https://lchsemmaus.org/holy-spirit-labyrinth/>



The screenshot shows the website for The Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit. The top navigation bar includes the church's name, address (3461 South Cedar Crest Blvd, Emmaus, PA), phone number ((610) 967-2220), and a Facebook icon. The main navigation menu includes Home, Worship Schedule, Stewardship, Ministries, Calendar, Resources, and a search icon. The Resources dropdown menu is open, showing options like Resources For Home Worship, Contacts For Our Ministries, Forms, Holy Spirit Inclement Weather Policy, Frequently Asked Questions, Council Corner, Our Sponsored Arusha Ministry, and Holy Spirit Labyrinth. The Holy Spirit Labyrinth page content is visible, featuring a heading "Holy Spirit Labyrinth" and a paragraph explaining the labyrinth pattern and its purpose. A second paragraph at the bottom of the page provides instructions on how to request the use of the labyrinth.

3461 South Cedar Crest Blvd, Emmaus, PA (610) 967-2220

The Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit

Home Worship Schedule Stewardship Ministries Calendar Resources

Resources For Home Worship
Contacts For Our Ministries
Forms
Holy Spirit Inclement Weather Policy
Frequently Asked Questions
Council Corner
Our Sponsored Arusha Ministry
Holy Spirit Labyrinth

HOME >

Holy Spirit Labyrinth

The labyrinth pattern is centuries old and has been walked by millions of people from many cultures. A labyrinth is not a maze designed to trick or fool you. It is a path to be trusted and is designed to lead you. The labyrinth is a special pathway set aside for reflection, self-examination, prayer, behavior modification or the development of new behaviors. The rhythm of walking, of placing one foot in front of the other; empties the mind, relaxes the body and refreshes the spirit. Walking a labyrinth is a very personal endeavor.

The Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit now has a labyrinth. If you represent a group in the congregation wishing to use the labyrinth please complete and submit the Holy Spirit Labyrinth Request form. You will receive confirmation that the request form has been received and will be

Request to Borrow the Labyrinth Kit

[HOME](#) >

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[Click here to Request To Borrow The Labyrinth Kit](#)

[Click here to report on your use of Labyrinth](#)

The labyrinth is sponsored by the Stewardship Mission Team.

<https://lchsemmaus.org/holy-spirit-labyrinth-request/>

What is the Labyrinth Suitcase?

It is exactly that – a suitcase on wheels that includes the 12 foot x 12 foot Heart of Chartres Labyrinth and everything you will need to set up your Labyrinth experience

- Prayer rug to designate the entrance
- Instructions for facilitators
- Shoe covers for labyrinth walkers
- Tea lights to provide soothing low lit atmosphere
- Finger labyrinth handouts to take home
- CD player and discs for soothing background
- Small box/ basket with slips of paper and pencils to leave a prayer request
- Another box/basket for prayer requests
- Instructions for use and care of the labyrinth



Preparation for Walking the Labyrinth Handout



- **Booties over socks and shoes – no bare feet**
- **No food or drinks on the labyrinth**
- **Generally, no more than 2 or 3 on the labyrinth at one time**

The Labyrinth can be walked in 4 stages:

***Remember** – before walking the labyrinth*

***Release** – walking into the labyrinth*

***Receive** – standing in the center*

***Return** – walking out of the labyrinth*

What Happens After You Borrow the Labyrinth?

- **Fold up the labyrinth**
- **Return all supplies to the labyrinth suitcase**
- **Return the Labyrinth suitcase to the designated location**
- **Fill out the Labyrinth use report on-line and submit**

<https://lchsemmaus.org/holy-spirit-labyrinth-use-report/>

This form will give you the opportunity to let us know:

- **Supplies that need to be replaced**
- **Issues, concerns or suggestions regarding use of the Labyrinth**

SHARE YOUR LABYRINTH EXPERIENCE!

We hope this talk has helped you to learn know more about the Labyrinth and the possibilities for using the Labyrinth in our congregation's activities.

We look forward to filling your requests to borrow the Labyrinth and enjoy the many ways a Labyrinth experience can benefit you and your group at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit.