

## Walking the Labyrinth: A Community Common Prayer Service



Labyrinths have a history that can be traced back over 4000 years. One of the most famous labyrinths is the one laid around 1220 A.D. in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in Chartres, France, about 80 km southwest of Paris.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church located at 335 Locust Street in downtown Johnstown has a Chartres-style thirty-foot diameter 11-circuit labyrinth laid in the stone pavers of the courtyard in front of the entrance to our parish hall and adjacent to the Memorial Garden. This labyrinth was installed in the late 1990's.

St. Mark's is offering a special Community Common Prayer Service based on the spiritual experience of walking the labyrinth.

Unlike a maze which has puzzling dead ends, the labyrinth is a continuous winding path enabling a walking meditation that can be utilized by anyone. The labyrinth symbolizes our spiritual journey through life and can help us to find healing peace and connection with the Divine.

The walk along the winding path begins with "purgation" or release of the daily stressors that preoccupy us and separate us from the Divine. Each problem is considered and then set free.

When the center of the labyrinth is reached, if one is open and receptive, "illumination" or transformation may occur. This is a place for prayer or meditation, a time of discernment and hopefully insight into our difficulties.

As the winding path is retraced from the center, "union" or renewal takes place. One may experience feelings of wholeness, healing, or joy resulting from unity with the Divine.

Walking the labyrinth is unique to each individual and the experience may be different from one time to the next. What is constant is the sacredness of this holy space.

The service is free. All are welcome.

For additional information, contact The Reverend Nancy L. Threadgill at the church office (814) 535-6797 or [revnancy-stmarks@atlanticbbn.net](mailto:revnancy-stmarks@atlanticbbn.net).