

# WALK THE WALK!

## *A Welcome To St. Paul's Labyrinth*

By Jean Austin and Pete Dillingham

St. Paul's is blessed and most fortunate to have one of only two known labyrinths on the Eastern Shore. The other is a transportable and much larger layout and belongs to the Diocese of Easton. While both are based on medieval designs, the larger of the two is an eleven circuit labyrinth circa 1220 CE and based on the one at Chartres Cathedral, just north of Paris. Our labyrinth is smaller, being a seven circuit design circa 1540 CE, and taken from the one in the Basilica di San Vitale, in Ravenna, Italy. However, size matters little; what matters is the frame of mind of the individual who will walk the circuits. As you examine the diagram, you will note that there is only one path in to the center. There are no tricks or dead ends; a labyrinth is not a maze which might give rise to anxiety. A labyrinth helps to calm fears and anxieties and opens us to new possibilities and solutions to problems we might be experiencing. The labyrinth is a symbol of our spiritual journey and the winding path becomes a mirror of where we are in our lives, touching our sorrows as well as releasing our joys.

Although there is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth and as one gains experience and confidence in walking it, individual preferences will arise. However, the following guidelines might be helpful and are offered to get started:

### 1. Before getting started—**REMEMBER**

After entering the Memorial Garden and while standing before the entrance to the labyrinth, take a few moments to reflect on where you are in life. Recall that all that you are and all that you have is a blessing from God. Take a deep breath and then ask yourself what it is that you seek during the walk: healing for self or someone else, comfort, peace or guidance on an issue of importance. Ask in a way that avoids a yes or no response.

### 2. Enter the labyrinth and began the walk to the center—**RELEASE**

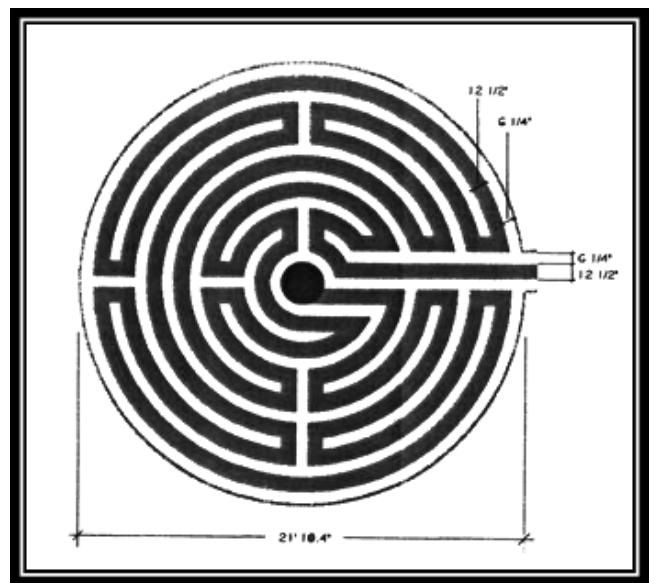
Let yourself go, relax, shed the details of the outside world and leave expectations behind.

### 3. At the center—**RECEIVE**

Pause for prayer and meditation. You may stand, kneel, or sit as long as it feels right to you.

### 4. As you retrace the return path from the center—**RESOLVE**

Bring what you have received which you might bring back out into the world. You may have found resolution to a problem; resolve to take a new step in your life feeling strengthened or rejuvenated. You may feel nothing at all. The power of the labyrinth often shows up later as a creative idea, a special insight to a challenge you're facing, or in a dream. May you depart the labyrinth with comfort, peace and a sense of healing.



The four **R's** are simply a guide. You can stop at any point along the path. You may read scripture, recite poetry, or say a prayer as you walk. For formal reading, we refer you to *The Sacred Path Companion: A guide to Walking the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform*, by the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress, Riverhead Books New York