

REDISCOVERING THE LABYRINTH



The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress

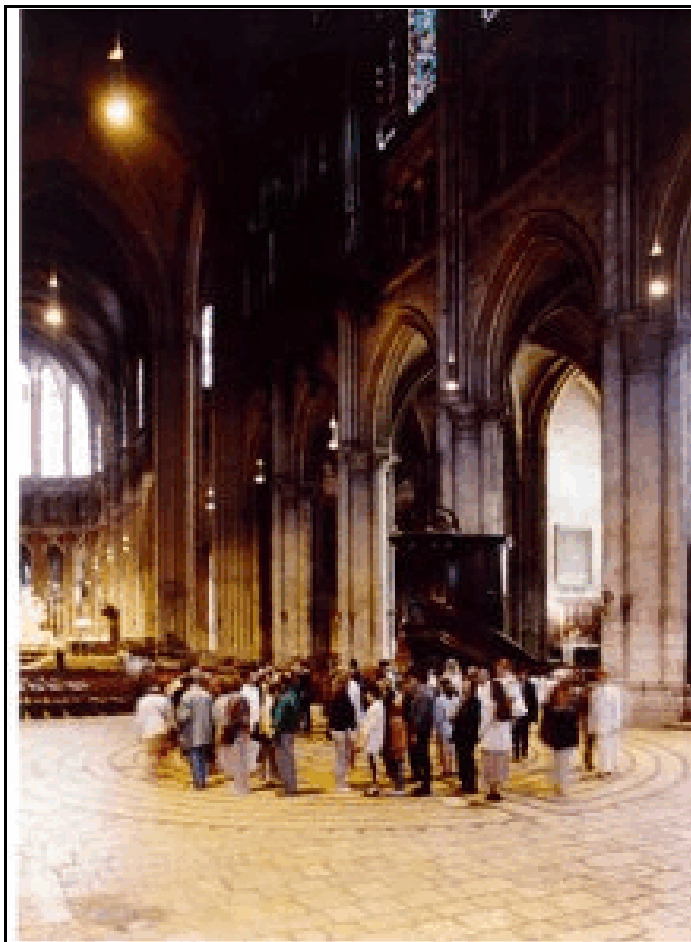


Today, hundreds of churches have labyrinths, thanks largely to the pioneering work of the Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress. It was she who brought labyrinths to Grace Cathedral (Episcopal) in San Francisco, where she subsequently founded Veriditas, The Worldwide Labyrinth Project. Her book, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool* is the

leading resource on using labyrinths within a religious setting.

Labyrinth as Pilgrimage

Walking the labyrinth is a form of pilgrimage – a pattern with a purpose. The path leads us not just to the center of the labyrinth, but also within ourselves, to our own center. It is there, beyond the confines of our rational mind, beneath the level of personalities, politics, and surface appearances, that we may encounter the authentic self, insight, revelation, creativity or revelation. Pilgrimage is an outer journey with an inner purpose. To this end, the labyrinth is well suited. Photo top right: Modern day pilgrims walking the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral, France.



Public Labyrinths

Increasingly, labyrinths are being built in public spaces. This makes them available to those without a specific church or religious affiliation.



To the right is the concrete labyrinth at the University of Redlands in California. Left is the Cathedral Labyrinth and Sacred Garden in New Harmony, Indiana. Made of granite, it is a full-scale copy of the Chartres labyrinth, and one of the most beautiful labyrinths in the United States. The park that surrounds the labyrinth is based on the proportions of the nave of Chartres Cathedral and was built specifically for the labyrinth.



Adjacent to the labyrinth is a fountain, where one can wash one's feet before or after walking the labyrinth. The labyrinth – and many other important public spaces in New Harmony – were created through the vision and resources of Mrs. Jane Blaffer Owen.

LABYRINTHS AT RETREAT CENTERS

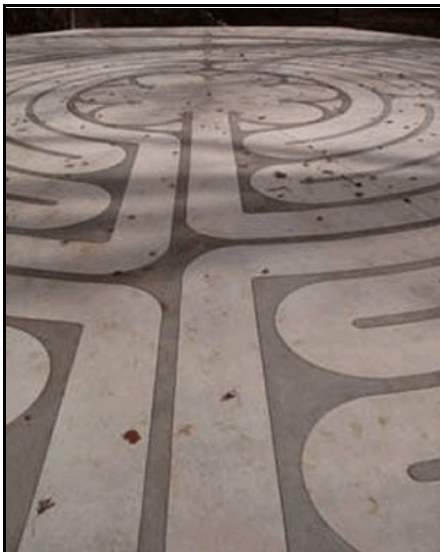


Mercy Center

The Mercy Center in St. Louis, Missouri, sponsors frequent labyrinth walks, designed to enhance one's spiritual awareness and direction. A tree has been planted in the center of their labyrinth (right), a sure sign that it will be there for the long term. Memorial plaques are being added around the perimeter. It is a well loved and maintained labyrinth. The paths consist of rubber mulch, made from recycled tires. They are soft, dramatic in color, and won't bio-degrade as wood mulch does.



Kanuga Conference and Retreat Center



For more than 75 years, Kanuga Conference and Retreat Center in Henderson, NC, has continued to grow in size, scope, and diversity. In 2002, Labyrinth Enterprises built an all-concrete labyrinth (left) which further extends the variety of facilities available to participants attending the many conferences and retreats. Concrete is a cost effective and low maintenance material often preferred by institutions.

Thompson Center

As with the Mercy Center labyrinth, this labyrinth (right, also in St. Louis) was built by volunteers, under the guidance of Robert Ferré, director of Labyrinth Enterprises. The paths were cut out with a sod cutter and replaced by compacted stone base.



Harmony Hill

In Union, Washington, Harmony Hill utilizes a portable fabric labyrinth of the Santa Rosa design (see left). Created by Lea Goode-Harris, Ph.D., the Santa Rosa features an altar space, the circle between the entrance paths. For more information about the Santa Rosa labyrinth, see www.srfoundation.com.

LABYRINTHS IN HOSPITALS



Meditation has been shown to have many healthful benefits, such as reducing stress and promoting well-being. Hospitals, cancer centers, hospices and clinics benefit from offering labyrinths for walking meditation. More than 100 such facilities currently have labyrinths, with the number increasing rapidly. Recently, in speaking to a group of architects who specialize in healthcare facilities, Robert Ferré made the point that from now forward, any progressive plan for such a new medical facility should certainly include a labyrinth.

California Pacific Medical Center

Through the efforts of Victoria Stone, one of the first hospitals to obtain a labyrinth was California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco (right). Although a bit tentative at first, they are now convinced of its efficacy. Besides being walked by patients and visitors, board members walk the labyrinth before holding their meetings. Surgeons also walk the labyrinth, prior to performing surgery, as it helps to calm them. It is expected that research will show labyrinth walking helps patients to recover faster with fewer complications. While science and technology have made great strides in outer, physical healing, the labyrinth deals with inner healing and personal transformation.



St. Luke's Hospital, St. Louis, MO

St. Luke's posts a schedule detailing which days each month the labyrinth is open for walking. This portable canvas labyrinth (left) is the classical Cretan seven-circuit design.

Labyrinth-Enterprises has on its website a list of hospitals with labyrinths. While some of the labyrinths are indoors, such as this one, most are located outside and are permanent installations.

Wings Cancer Foundation, Memphis, TN

Located at West Clinic, Wings offers a wide range of support services to patients undergoing chemotherapy, free of charge. In fact, it is an exemplary program. (For details see their website at www.wingscancerfoundation.org.) After completing treatment, patients walk the labyrinth and then ring a bell, located in an adjacent tower sculpture. As the labyrinth represents our path through life, this ritual represents a return to that path



MAKING LABYRINTHS



What Does It Cost?

The cost of a labyrinth can vary from zero to hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the material of which it is made. Labyrinths made from stones and mulch can be made easily by almost anyone, whereas a concrete or terrazzo labyrinth requires the services of professional craftspeople. In most cases, the lower the cost, the higher the maintenance. Thus, institutions usually prefer labyrinths made of hard surfaces, such as pavers or concrete. Labyrinths of this type cost in the range of twenty-five to fifty thousand dollars and up, not counting landscaping or amenities.

Labyrinth Enterprises

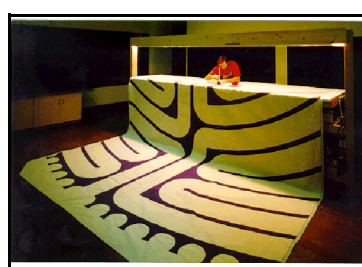
Services available from Labyrinth Enterprises include consulting and design, sales and rental of portable fabric labyrinths, and installation of permanent on-site labyrinths. Available via mail order are a selection of books, manuals, posters and tapes. Many of the labyrinths shown in these display panels (and hundreds of others) were made by Labyrinth Enterprises, which offers a free book, *Planning for Labyrinths*, to architects and labyrinth committees.



Painting on grass.



Painting on concrete.



Painting on canvas.



Masking tape on concrete.



Scoring concrete.



Pavers (with Marty Kermeen).



Concrete pavers.



Turf labyrinth..



Bricks set into the grass.



All-concrete labyrinth.



Piling stones.

Labyrinth Enterprises
128 Slocum Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119

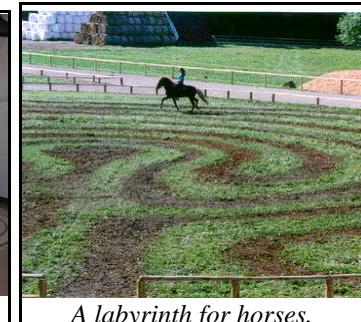
(800) 873-9873



Indoors, painted on wood.



Indoors, stained concrete floor.



A labyrinth for horses.