

Living Labyrinth welcomes you



Oyster Shell Labyrinth, Harmony Hill Retreat Center  
Union, Washington

## The Immersive Labyrinth Walk Program Guide

### Theme: *Being God's Beloved*

#### Prepare

- + Find a quiet space; set up a focal point (e.g., candle, cross, flower)
- + See end of this document for an introduction to the labyrinth and a printable labyrinth
- + Open your computer or device; click on the video link



#### Ease into this Time

- + Gaze at your focal point
- + Listen to the meditative music

Draw near to God...as God has already drawn near to you.

#### Meditative Music

I come to the garden alone  
while the dew is still on the roses.  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,  
The Son of God discloses.

*And he walks with me and he talks with me  
And he tells me I am his own.  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known.*

He speaks and the sound of His voice  
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing.  
And the melody that He gave to me  
Within my heart is ringing.

I'd stay in the garden with him  
Though the night around me is falling.  
But he bids me go.  
Through the voice of woe  
His voice to me is calling.



## Welcome and Introduction



Welcome to the immersive labyrinth walk. You are invited to walk the labyrinth as a path for prayer. In quietness, reflection, and openness to God, it is our hope for you to experience being God's beloved, connect with God's presence, and experience sparks of God's Spirit within you.

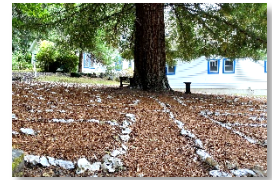
### Introduction to the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a path that can be a meaningful pause in the rhythm of your life. It welcomes you to slow down and pay attention to what is happening in the present. Each walk will be unique. You begin to get in touch with the things that you hold in your body, heart, and mind. Over time, you will find that walking the labyrinth brings depth, value, and increased awareness of who you are.

You are invited to experience the labyrinth here virtually and to discover other labyrinths in your city and throughout your travels. Both versions will allow you to experience a connection with self, God, and others, along with your place in the world.

The average person walks at the speed of three miles per hour. With that in mind, Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama describes God as the "three mile an hour God." He writes, "It is the speed we walk and therefore it is the speed the love of God walks." I find it a tremendous gift that the God of the universe doesn't race ahead of us and tell us to "keep up," nor does he push us from behind and say, "You're too slow." Rather, God meets us at our pace and assures us of His abiding presence. As you walk, know that God walks with you each step of the way. Walk, listen, and notice the movements of God's grace and love.

We are featuring The Ferrari Family Sequoia Labyrinth at Harmony Hill Retreat Center in Union, Washington, a facility that provides rest and renewal for those whose lives have been affected by cancer. The labyrinth's design is a Chartres Essence, modeled after the well-known Chartres Cathedral labyrinth in France. This well-loved path is fondly referred to as the Oyster Shell Labyrinth.



As you follow the path lined with sun bleached oyster shells, your feet sink into the pine needle sod. You feel a connection to the earth, the water, and the spirit. The stately Sequoia Redwood is a canopy of grace and protection. It greets you at the center and invites you to pause, rest and receive.



Like a good friend, the labyrinth is always open and accepting. Through music, prayers, scripture, art, and your imagination, may this immersive walk gently stir something new in you.

## Introduction to Being God's Beloved

I am here to remind you in the name of God  
that you are the Beloved Daughters and Sons of God, and that God says to you,  
“I have called you from all eternity and you are engraved from all eternity in the palms of my  
hands. You are mine. You belong to me, and I love you with an everlasting love.”

Henri J.M. Nouwen



Love is at the heart of all things that matter. To know and be known, to love and be loved, is our deepest longing. The chorus of the song, “In the Garden,” captures the Creator God’s desire for a living relationship with each of His created ones:

*And he walks with me and he talks with me  
And he tells me I am his own.  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known.*

Charles Austin Miles

Whether you are hearing this for the first time or for the hundred thousandth time, it is my hope that you never tire of hearing that God loves you. Receive this love anew as you take your first breath of the day and as you gently ease into rest at night. Listen to His voice. He calls you by name; He knows everything about you. He created you; He is for you, and you belong to Him. Let that truth sink deep, deep, deep into the depths of your soul. This is your true identity—*being God’s beloved*. Believe it and let it ring true for each day you are blessed to live, for being loved is a gift from God.

## Scriptures to Light the Way

+ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. (Psalm 139:16, *New Living Translation*)

+ I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.  
(Jeremiah 31:3, *New Living Translation*)

+ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13, *New International Version*)

+ For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16, *New Living Translation*)

May the Spirit of God reveal these truths to us as we enter this time of reflection.

## Visual Entry Points for Reflection

We will feature two pieces of art:



Watanabe, Sadao. *Holy Mother and Child*, 1984.



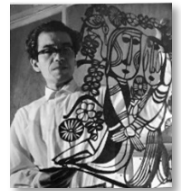
Watanabe, Sadao. *Jesus and the Children*, 1973.

Sadao Watanabe captures the beauty and power of love in the Biblical story of Mother and child. How did Jesus learn to love? He learned by receiving the tangible love of his beloved Mother Mary. This love nurtured, shaped and empowered Christ, the God of love.

Christ's love is embodied in relationships. In Watanabe's *Jesus and the Children*, Jesus welcomes each child. He tenderly cares for, protects, and blesses each of His created ones in this relationship of love.

Sadao Watanabe, 20th century printmaker, uses the Japanese Folk art tradition in stencil dying. Watanabe invites us to use direct perception - imagining ourselves in the Biblical scene and engaging in one's relationship with Christ.

We begin the inner journey of the soul by quieting our minds, opening our hearts, and engaging our body and our imagination in this guided labyrinth walk.



Watanabe Sadao  
viewing his stencil

## Centering



- + Take a deep breath, fill your lungs
- + Breathe in through your nose and gently exhale through your mouth
- + Breathe in God's unconditional love (for you)
- + Breathe out anything that hinders you from receiving God's love today

Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am  
Be still and know  
Be still  
Be

Based on Psalm 46:10, *New Living Translation*

## Enter a Time of Reflection

- + You are invited to gaze and meditate on the image
- + Notice and ponder how Jesus was loved
- + Receive God's love for you



Watanabe, Sadao. *Holy Mother and Child*, 1984.

## Prayer

We come with increased awareness of our need for God.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me:

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

## A Reading of God's Word

“Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16, *New Living Translation*)

- + Read the text aloud to yourself
- + Allow the words to sink into your soul
- + Notice words, phrases or images that seem to draw you

- + Listen, receive, and respond to the invitations of God
- + Receive God's hand of blessing on your head as His beloved child

## Visualizing the Word through Art

- + You are invited to gaze and meditate on the image
- + Enter the scene and imagine being welcomed by Jesus
- + Receive God's hand of blessing from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet



Watanabe, Sadao. *Jesus and the Children*, 1973.

## Walking the Labyrinth

**Music:** Benson, Stella, harper. "Jubilemus Exultemus," *The Healer's Way*, Volume I, 1998.

Our guide begins to walk the labyrinth. This is our cue to begin.  
We are being led through the three movements of the labyrinth:

As we enter, we begin to *release*.  
At the center, we rest and *receive*.  
We *return*, using the same path.

Walk in silence, reflection, and prayer.  
*If you want to increase the length of any segment, pause the video. Do as you desire.*

### Three Movements

- Release** At the entrance, pause and step in.  
Slow down and begin to notice.  
Let go of expectations, allow your thoughts and feelings to emerge naturally.
- Receive** At the center, pause and rest.  
Freely stand, sit, kneel, open your palms, or raise your arms.  
Remain open; just "be" and receive what is there for you.
- Return** Walk the same path out.  
Take what you have experienced with you.  
Allow the thoughts/gifts to ruminate and weave into your life.

Our friend will now step out of the labyrinth and pause. You are invited to reflect on what you experienced.  
Feel free to sit or stand. You may want to journal.



We close our virtual walk with a montage of the beauty of creation - an affirmation of what is good. May these visuals and music seal what you experienced and send you forth.

## Benediction

In the quiet of the night,  
Every star shines with the warmth of its Creator.  
Echoing His perfect light,  
All the universe is smiling,  
He is God.

From the moment of His birth,  
While the stillness of the wind salutes his coming.  
Merging heaven with the earth  
So the world can know this day that  
He is God.

*Seems so beautiful to me;  
With colors you can see,  
He'll paint your heart with golden love.  
Peace I hardly understand  
Like waves upon the sand,  
He covers me with love.*

All of life at His command,  
Every bird shall come to rest upon His shoulder.  
Trees reach up to touch His hand,  
And they tell me He is Master,  
He is God.

## Reflection



- + Reflect on your experience
- + Journal if you would like
- + Linger as long as you desire...

### **For those who want to journal**

When reflecting on your labyrinth walk, remember to shine a “soft light” on any images, memories, metaphors, or insights that arise. Refrain from trying to interpret your experience too soon. Often our shy souls hide from the bright lights of our thinking, analytical minds. Possibly the fruits of your labyrinth will not be realized until later and may be as subtle as a feeling of inner peace or a surge of creativity. Journaling is one way to deepen the meaning of your labyrinth walk. You may want to simply begin by writing about what is stirring within you.

Beloved, God bless you on your journey,  
walking to the rhythms of God's grace,  
step by step ...



Stand at the crossroads and look;  
ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your soul.

*Jeremiah 6:16, New International Version*

Dear friends,

I want to introduce you to the labyrinth as a path for reflection and prayer. Walking the labyrinth may be a new spiritual entry point for you. It is my hope that it would be an experience that increases your awareness of God, and helps you connect to yourself, to others and to your place in the world. As you walk, may you sense an awakening of the mind, an engagement with the body and a gentle nudge or spark of the spirit.

The labyrinth is thousands of years old. It has been used by countless people in numerous cultures, countries, and traditions throughout the world. Contemplative walkers from Peru to Turkey, Minoans and Native American tribes alike have found meaning walking its path.

In the 13th century, labyrinths were installed in the floors of the great cathedrals throughout France. Some scholars' research shows that early faithful pilgrims, unable to make the treacherous journey to Jerusalem for fear of their lives, made symbolic pilgrimage by circling the ancient paths within their sacred space of the church. One of the last remaining of these labyrinths can be found in Chartres Cathedral outside of Paris, France, where people eagerly visit and walk it to this day.

Today there is a resurgence of interest in labyrinths. You may come upon its path unexpectedly: in parks, hospitals, churches, university campuses, backyards or even in a clearing in the woods. Labyrinths may be permanent, made of beautiful wood inlay or stone pavers, or painted in school-yard cement. Other paths may be temporary like those created in snow or on a sandy beach. Every labyrinth walk experience is unique; each one leaves a heart print on your soul.

There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth, but there are three movements to each walk. As we enter the path, we begin to slow down and release; at the center, we rest and receive. Finally, we return using the same path, taking what we experienced with us.

Like a good friend, the labyrinth is always open and accepting. It awaits with a standing invitation:

Come and walk!

Grace and Peace,  
Carolyn Shimabukuro



## Eleven Circuit Medieval Labyrinth



Enter

*Using your finger or writing utensil... in quiet reflection... slowly “walk” the path.*

## Credits

### Labyrinth

- + The Ferrari Family Sequoia Labyrinth, “The Oyster Shell Labyrinth” (a Chartres Essence design), Harmony Hill Retreat Center, Union, Washington.

### Music and Dance

- + Newburn, Benjamin. “Music Composition.”
- + Miles, Charles Austin. “In the Garden,” 1912. Randy Wayamori, arranger and pianist, 2022.
- + Benson, Stella, harper. “Jubilemus Exultemus,” *The Healer’s Way, Volume I*, 1998.
- + Terasaki, Wes. “He is God.” Melvin Fujikawa, vocalist and guitarist, 2022.

### Word and Image

- + Quote from Koyama, Kosuke. *Three Mile an Hour God*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979.
- + Quote from Nouwen, Henri J.M. *You are the Beloved*. Convergent Books, 2017.
- + Quote from Miles, Charles Austin. *In the Garden*, 1912.
- + Pictorial montages by Chong Ahn:
  - + Bellevue Botanical Garden, Bellevue, Washington.
  - + Harmony Hill Retreat Center, Union, Washington.
- + Dr. Ken and Anne H.H. Pyle, Sadao Watanabe collection. Used with permission.
  - + *Watanabe Sadao viewing his stencil*.
  - + Watanabe, Sadao. *Holy Mother and Child*, 1984.
  - + Watanabe, Sadao. *Jesus and the Children*, 1973.
- + *New Living Translation*, Ps. 46.10, Ps. 139.16, Jer. 31.3, John 3.16, Mark 10.13-16.
- + *New International Version*, John 15.13.

### Consultants/Resources

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In partnership with the American Baptist Home Mission Societies.  
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