

Lent 2022

All Souls Soup + Story



Photo by Lars Howlett

A Pilgrim's Path

Introduction to what's ahead

The links between the labyrinth and pilgrimage are deeply layered and the practices intertwined. Their relationship comes closer to our understanding through experience as we move our bodies within such sensory practices. The stillness of meditation and contemplation juxtaposed with the action and dynamism of our walking bodies and focused (or sometimes yearning) minds.

The sites and events in Jerusalem are foundational to our Christian faith. It was the movements of the bodies of the faithful to visit these sites as events happened and afterwards to investigate and pray. It was these early pilgrim visits and encounter with sites, events, and siblings, which led to our Triduum rituals and the liturgies for this period which we enter with Lent into Easter and beyond. These events were unprecedented and traumatic, also most wonderful and salvific, though ultimately incomprehensible with reason and witness alone.

Jesus appears to those on-the-move and to those awaiting healing and nourishment.

Labyrinths have origins outside and before Christ and our church, but the Christian labyrinth practice, though shrouded in much mystery, also was rebirthed with origins in the pilgrimage journey of Rev Artress to the Cathedral at Chartres in France. This medieval cathedral design is the one we have today in the courtyard. Rev Artress, a priest from San Francisco, re-kindled our focused engagement with this design said to represent or 'map' on a smaller scale, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. We faithful do well to experience this relationship and mapping by walking its route.

Both pilgrimage and labyrinth-walking differ from an adventure or the challenges of a maze. Labyrinths and pilgrimage aren't about 'exploring'. Rather, you know where you are headed and can receive the blessing of an opportunity to release

many tensions surrounding our lives as we know them outside of these movement based forms of worship. Places we occupy that require a different 'head-space' distracted and clouded by illusions and burdening decision making. In the labyrinth and also on pilgrimage, our attention can be focused prayerfully, but also honed and broadened with simply the principle of following the path and remaining open to receiving the signs that lead and guide us.

For many there are profound inner journeys instigated by such practices, though expectation of experience is its own distracting burden. Anatomical tensions build around expectation by its holding and carrying.

This booklet encourages reflection and provides a paradoxically simple though intricate structure for our pilgrim journey reflections and meditations through Lent, resting centrally at Easter for the events of the Triduum and then the return 'home' from the upheavals, confusion, grief, and astonishment associated with the cross, resurrection, and our sending forth.

You are encouraged to carry yourself through this period with only the expectation of reaching Jerusalem at the Labyrinth's centre, bit by bit for the events of Easter.

You might think about how movement and embodiment influence our observance, veneration, worship, and ministry. How can we best prepare ourselves physically, psychologically, and spiritually for the changes God awaits for us? Can we let go of what we know, cease striving, and sink into the processes of waiting, jubilation, challenge, sacrifice, salvation, and renewal?

How completely can we wonder at and with those who were there, the events that occurred, and allowing their experiences to speak most deeply to our own bodies' lives, deaths, and beyond?

A Pilgrim's Path

How to use this book

We invite you to use this booklet as a guide to your pilgrimage during this Lenten season. Each week we offer a new theme and each day we offer a new question for you to hold in prayer.

If you're able, consider walking one of the many labyrinths in the Bay Area listed at the back of this booklet (including our very own!) and use the daily question as a guide for your walking prayer. Or perhaps you create your own walking route in your neighborhood, or use a finger labyrinth if you're unable to walk one at this time.

Perhaps you can make a practice of walking some part of a labyrinth each day or week, or you can pray with the daily question, or if you feel called you can stick with one particular question each week.

Further Resources

Lauren Artress *Walking a Sacred Path*

Lauren Artress *The Sacred Path Companion*

Helen Raphael Sands *Labyrinth: Pathway to Meditation and Healing*

Melissa Gayle West *Exploring the Labyrinth: A Guide For Healing and Spiritual Growth*

veriditas.org

Whatever the case, we encourage you to find a way to enter the path of the labyrinth this Lent, find your center at Holy Week, and then exit the labyrinth through the season of Easter.

There are many ways to journey towards the heart of God—however you choose to engage with this booklet and the labyrinth, the most important thing is to set aside quiet time away from everyday distractions to grow in relationship with God.



Week of Ash Wednesday

Prepare

Lent is a time to reconnect and recommit to a God who constantly longs to be with us. As we enter the labyrinth and begin our Lenten journey, reflect on the following:

Daily Prompts

Wednesday:

How do I want to *be* during Lent this year?

More thoughtful and quiet? Better able to sit with people who need me? Do I need to be more compassionate toward my own fears and failings? Do I need to become more courageous about using the gifts God has given me?

Thursday:

What do I want to *do* to make Lent a more meaningful experience for myself and my family this year? In what ways do I feel called to practice, pray, fast, and/or give during this time?

Friday:

In what ways do I desire to know Jesus more intimately? What aspects of his life, suffering, and resurrection do I want to draw nearer to?

Saturday:

Where do I need God's forgiveness? Where do I need to seek forgiveness with others, and with whom?



Photo by the Rev. Phil Brochard

First Week of Lent

Listening

For the first week of Lent, we walk towards the interior of the labyrinth and as we do, we slow down to reflect on where God is speaking through our lives: in our daily interactions, in the work we do, in our relationships, in nature, in literature and in art.

a reflection by Dani Gabriel

lent poem #3

the day has not yet
peeked over the horizon.
the children sleep.
his truck has quietly
drifted from the driveway.
i've been up for hours
scheming already
about things that seem
important:
planning that next event,
getting documents signed,
a very ambitious book proposal.

and then this poem said
stop
listen to the cars and the kitchen timer,
that one unbelievably loud bird,
the hoarse wind.
this poem
whispered a story about the children
when they were smaller
and i used to watch them nap
full of gratitude for every small breath.
this poem
cancelled my plans for the day:
you will find me
at that little cafe on stockton
drinking my third latte

and drawing on napkins.
we're not getting anywhere.
not you, not me, not the rich
in their castles.
today i'm going to recklessly
call people just to say
i love you
even if it's awkward,
even if i should have another
agenda.
the possibilities
are so much greater
than the volume of my inbox.
the children are still
resting their heads on their forearms
and my breakfast is getting cold
because this poem
is rioting all over the page
ripping holes in the paper
just to say
stop.
this poem draws my eyes
to the lightening sky
reminding me that
just
this
instant
everything changed.



Photo by Emily Hansen Curran



Daily Prompts

Monday:

Take some time in prayer to replay the moments of your day. In what moments did I feel closer to God?

Tuesday:

What does my soul need? Wait patiently in silence for God's answer.

Wednesday:

Where in my life does God invite me to take a long, loving look?

Thursday:

What aspects of my life do I hide from God?

Friday:

What about my life makes God happy?

Saturday:

Review what came up in your prayer life over this past week. What graces emerged from my prayers?

What is God asking me to pay attention to during this season of Lent?

Second Week of Lent

Open Our Hearts

For the second week of Lent, we cross to the other side of the labyrinth and ask God to open our hearts so that we might receive God's grace and mercy. We recall how incessantly loved by God we are...

a reflection by Jeannie Koops

Dry Season

It is too much to bear, all moisture
drawn up, sky parched overblue—
angels incinerate themselves
with devotion. A wing has fallen
across the path, charred
edges like a limb of redwood,
flat needles etching lacework in the dirt.
This time of year bones
litter the trail—desiccated bodies
of prophets still trying
to signal the way.
Bleached arms of coyote scrub,
scattered, obscure the sign.
Clearer: claw and matted fur
in fresh scat, greasy with fat.
But the thrum of startled quail is not
a revelation.

Most days, I am struggling to make sense of
the world. Gravity, radio waves, the expanding
universe. The mysterious humans that live
with me. My obscure and circuitous path
instead of a graced narrative arc. All the
breathtaking suffering and breathtaking
beauty—it is too much to look at full-face.
These things that some people easily name as
God—I stumble, stutter because I am contrary
and difficult. But almost every day I am
watching and listening hard. I think it is the
thing I do most—trawling, sense-searching,
trying to make meaning. And some days, many
days, wilderness times, I come up dry.
Sometimes the search, or the ancillary field
notes, is enough to sustain me; sometimes not.
I have trouble praying, but I wonder if
sometimes the search is prayer.



Daily Prompts

Monday:

What most burdens my heart at this time?

Tuesday:

What do I most long for?

Wednesday:

What fears, anxieties, beliefs etc. in me get in the way of connection with God?

Thursday:

What laments do I carry for myself? For the world?

Friday:

Where in my life does God want me to trust more?

Saturday:

Review what came up in your prayer life over this past week. What graces emerged from my prayers? What is God inviting me to pay more attention to?



Photo by Emily Hansen Curran

Third Week of Lent

Waking up

For the third week of Lent, we start winding our way to the exterior of the labyrinth and again cross to the other side. In this, we turn our attention to what separates us from God. We invite Jesus to look tenderly with us at the patterns, behaviors, choices, beliefs, and attitudes that keep us isolated from the wholeness God calls us to. We mourn our estrangement from God, and in doing so, we unearth our deep longing to be close to God in the person of Jesus.

a reflection by Jennifer Akiyama

The morning of Saturday, February 20, 2021, I opened the sliding glass door to let the dog out. As my arm pulled open the door, the spring air flooded the kitchen and I suddenly had the most overwhelming scent come over me. My nose was filled with the smell of my dad coming into the house after mowing the lawn on a summer day. I could distinctly smell the mix of gasoline and fresh lawn clippings with a faint hint of his sweat all mixed together. It hung in my nose the way it would hang in the hot dry air of summer in eastern Oregon. At that moment, I was not in Kensington and it was not 2021. I was somewhere in the 1970's sitting in my parents' kitchen with my dad walking through that open sliding glass door in a sweaty, grassy, white T-shirt and work pants. And then I wasn't. I found myself staring at the lemon tree in our back patio. What reality was that? Where was I at the time, in that space? Was I in Hood River, OR or was I in Kensington CA? Was it 1974 or 2021? My answer to all of it is yes.

So where did that sensory hallucination come from? And how did I suddenly find myself in the presence of my dad? I think it came through the same portal the Spirit comes through. That portal is an open heart. For me and my dad, that continues to take a lot of hard work.

My relationship with my dad became estranged when I was sixteen. I self-exiled to California to go to college and although I still regularly visited my parents, the relationship with my dad never recovered. He

died in 2017 and since then I have worked very hard to open my heart to his spirit. I have come to a different understanding of the man who was a harsh, judgmental father. When he was sixteen years old, his father was taken away in the dead of night and he and the rest of his family were put behind barbed wire except for his oldest brother who fought in Europe for the government that rendered all this trauma upon their family. He graduated from a high school that only existed for interned Japanese Americans. He struggled in his own wilderness. I think he probably did the best he could with his relationship with me. I have tried to hold him in that light and understanding. In the years since his death, I have compelled my heart to be open and loving. His response to my openness was to come flooding through my kitchen door that Saturday morning.

My struggles during this pandemic have convinced me that time is probably the least important part of reality. Space is really the most important element of reality. The space in our hearts to hold worship, the ability to hold open a space for relationship. I don't know how much it matters when we enter that space, whether it is 9 am Sunday, some random weekday lunchtime or on a Saturday morning years after a loved one has passed on before us. What matters is that we get to that place in our hearts and minds and that we hold it open to relationships and community whenever we are able to come together next, either in this life or the next.

That is the reality I long for.



Art by Diane Haavik



Daily Prompts

Monday:

What patterns/behaviors/beliefs are keeping me shut off from God's love?

Tuesday:

When have my beliefs created distance between myself and God/others?

Wednesday:

Who am I struggling to love lately? What in me keeps me from loving this person?

Thursday:

How and where in my life do I estrange myself from God's love? Where am I in need of God's mercy?

Friday:

How does acknowledging my sins create more space to love and serve God and others more fully?

Saturday:

Review your prayer life over this past week. What emotions came up for you (shame, gratitude, peace, sadness, hope)? off from God's love? In my work?

Fourth Week of Lent

Turning Around

For the fourth week of Lent, we cross again to the other side and continue along the exterior. As we do, we reorient ourselves or turn our openness to change into what will be--not out of regret or shame, but out of true transformation and a change of heart.

a reflection by Deirdre Nurre

In my work with populations living in rural poverty, I fear for many people I encounter. When I meet folks whose security depends upon whether the FEMA trailer they live in will last one more winter, or whose diabetes will kill them before they're fifty, sometimes I'm anxious that I have nothing to offer them and no answers to really solve their questions. I want to respond to the situation with a flood of reassuring information. And there isn't any. So I feel foolish and self-conscious.

Jesus walks in step with those who are the most vulnerable, the downtrodden. Those possessed by demons. The social outcasts. The tax collectors. The Samaritans.

He does not inquire about their life story before deciding whether to help. He doesn't know their names. He's completely uninterested in how they might have

fallen from stability into disaster, from welcome guest to social outcast.

He understands pain and enfolds the injured in love. He understands anxiety and wraps the fearful in peace. He gives us the power and the opportunity to offer this healing to others. Not with answers or promises. But with wholehearted simple love and focus.

Imagine what it would feel like to say to a stranger,
You may be poor in spirit, but yours is the kingdom of heaven.

You may mourn, but you shall be comforted.

You may be meek and downtrodden, but you shall inherit the earth.

May I have the reckless bravery to carry this message to the next stranger who desperately needs it.



"Regeneration," by Stephanie Pui-Mun Law



Daily Prompts

Monday:

What new life is being born in me?

Tuesday:

Who and where am I feeling called to serve?

Wednesday:

What new commitments (or renewed commitments) do I want to make to my family, my church, my relationships, etc?

Thursday:

What gifts is God calling me to share with others, and with whom?

Friday:

How have I grown in faith over these past weeks of Lent, and where does this life-giving growth lead me now?

Saturday:

Review the last week of prayer. What have been the graces of this Lenten journey? What am I grateful for?

Fifth Week of Lent

Enter

For the fifth week of Lent, we make a turn towards the interior of the labyrinth, with the center in sight. We walk into this new space. We enter. We attend to the actions that lead us through transformation.

a reflection by Garrett Estadt

It seems we ought to have all the time in the world, but some of us (myself included) feel busier than ever. Where does the time go?

This Lenten Season I have been starting my days with a 10-minute meditation to allow God to guide me at the start of the day before I get busy doing things. I chose this Lenten spiritual practice because I have been so busy most years that I have no time for God in my busy day. Many years I have made a token sacrifice, such as giving up something like chocolate or alcohol, but I have scarcely found the time to allow God into my busy, busy, busy, overpacked, overly scheduled, overly hectic day. I've found it easier to let go of a single, symbolic vice than to let go of what really separates me from God throughout the day: my over-crammed schedule.

It hasn't been easy to let go -- many of the things in my schedule are serious commitments that I have made to myself, to other people, to my community. How do I let go of these commitments without disappointing everyone? What will happen if I let go of these responsibilities? Who will suffer if I don't take care of getting all these things done?

Some good friends of mine asked me the key question: Where has God been in my decision to take on so many responsibilities? Have I been consulting God first before taking on new commitments, or have I only been consulting myself? Where have I been taking on more work and commitment because I am afraid to say "No", because I am afraid of what people will think about me if I don't say "Yes" to everything? Where have I let my pride take control, and I've made myself incredibly busy with projects that serve mainly to inflate my sense of ego, to get accolades and the approval of others? Where has my busyness been driven by fear

about things, such as money, and I've made myself too busy for God because I don't trust that God will provide for all of my needs? Where have I made myself busy out of a sense of control and superiority, always taking on the responsibility of doing extra work because I believe nobody else could do it as well as me?

I've found that my morning meditation with God is a good time to reflect upon my motives behind all of my commitments. This year I am allowing God to guide me in the process of letting go of commitments that make me incredibly busy, but that don't serve God or my spiritual growth. In one case I may need to step back from a long-standing commitment so that others can step forward; in another area, I may need to honor my existing commitments and then pass on future commitments; in still yet another case, I may need to keep my commitment, but start asking for help from other people so that I don't get overwhelmed in carrying out what I need to do. I don't have all the answers to these questions, which is why I must allow God to guide me through careful prayer and meditation.

The result of this "clearing away" of commitments that don't honor or serve God allows me the space to take on new commitments -- to family, to church, to relationships, to community. But I find in my own life that I won't have room to make these new, loving commitments if I haven't first cleared away some of the old commitments that clutter my mind and calendar.

Lent is a time for me to clear out these old things in a process that is guided by God so that new, holy things can take root in my life.



Daily Prompts

Monday:

How have I grown in faith over these past weeks of Lent, and where does this life-giving growth lead me now?

Tuesday:

Who/Where am I feeling called to serve?

Wednesday:

What new commitments (or renewed commitments) do I want to make to my family, my church, my relationships, etc?

Thursday:

For me, this is my first step towards change.

Friday:

What new reality do I want to exist?

Saturday:

What new reality do I want to step into today?



Photo by the Rev. Phil Brochard

Holy Week

This week we arrive the center of the labyrinth and pause. Say a prayer and listen for an answer. Express gratitude. Soak in the story, be present. Accept what you have received. Believe. Wait.

a reflection by Jess Powell

“Hope” is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –
And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –
I’ve heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

–Emily Dickinson

I first heard this poem in September of 2020. I was staying with my parents for two weeks, hoping to get away from some of the smoke that had traveled to the Bay and be able to breathe a little more easily. I managed to miss the worst of the smoky days and heat wave in the Bay, but I saw pictures of orange skies, and some of that smoke made its way across the country to my parents’ small town in Pennsylvania. With parts of our world literally on fire in the midst of a global pandemic, I almost forgot about this poem.

The first line has been in the back of my head since I first heard it: Those words inspired an image of a baby bird—one whose wings

aren’t ready to fly just yet. One whose feathers are still soft, downy. Fragile. The rest of the poem feels especially striking now. This past year has certainly felt like the strangest sea I’ve been in. It has absolutely felt like a wild storm that has left me sore and tired. Through that sea of changes, hope was almost impossible to hear.

And.

This poem reminds me that no matter how wild things get, Hope never asks for anything. Hope never stops singing. Hope perches in the soul. I can choose to tune out that little bird, or I can choose to listen.

I see echoes of the Holy Spirit in this version of Hope, especially this week. This year, I hope to lean into the loss and the fear and the transformation and the exultation I imagine Jesus and his followers felt. Loss and fear are certainly familiar enough after the past year. I’m eager to see the transformation of our daily life to whatever the new normal will be—when we can see friends and family without worrying quite so much about COVID, when we can sing together again. I can’t wait to celebrate whatever return to normalcy that we’ll have in the future. For now, I’ll remember that Hope is the thing with feathers. I’ll listen for the wordless tune that never stops, and I’ll let it—and faith—carry me through.



Daily Prompts

Monday:

Where in my life is there hope in unlikely places?

Tuesday:

How am I preparing for the newness ahead?

Wednesday:

Where am I looking to God for hope?

Thursday:

How will I serve another today?

Friday:

For what do I lament today?

Saturday:

For what do I hope today?



Photo by the Rev. Phil Brochard

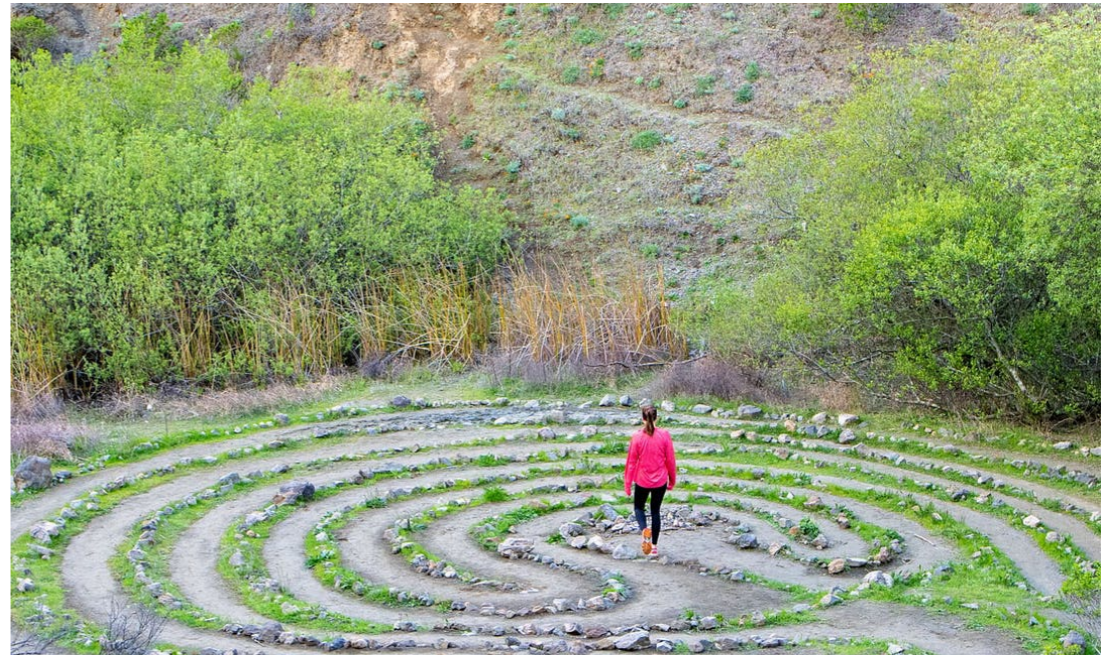
Labyrinths Around the Bay

Albany Bulb, Albany



There are actually two labyrinths out at the Bulb. Head out to find them! Open 5a-10p.

Mazzariello Labyrinth, Oakland



There are actually multiple labyrinths out at Sibley Regional Park in Oakland. Open 6a-9p.

Grace Cathedral, San Francisco



1100 California St., SF. Outdoor labyrinth open all the time. Indoor labyrinth is open during Cathedral hours.

Willard Elementary, Berkeley



This labyrinth is open for public use outside of school hours on Telegraph Ave between Stuart and Derby streets in Berkeley.

Labyrinths Around the Bay

All Souls!



Call the church office for hours.

Duboce Park, San Francisco



Also called the Scott Street Labyrinth. Located at 52-98 Scott St in San Francisco. Open all the time.

Community Congregation Church



145 Rock Hill Rd., in Tiburon. Open all the time (with views of the Bay!)

Lake Merritt, Oakland



Located at the end of Staten St at the north side of the lake. Open all the time.