

## *Your life is a sacred journey.*

*And it is about to change, growth, discovery, movement, transformation, continuously expanding your vision of what is possible, stretching your soul, learning to see clearly and deeply, listening to your intuition, taking courageous challenges every step along the way.*



## *You are on the path.*

*Exactly where you are meant to be right now...and from here, you can only go forward, shaping your life story in to a magnificent tale of triumph, of healing, of courage, of beauty, wisdom, power, dignity, and love...*

— Caroline Joy Adams

## Walking Suggestions

### Focus

Pause and wait at the entrance point.  
Become quiet and centered.  
Be conscious of your first step onto the labyrinth.

### Experience

Observe the process. Be attentive to thoughts, feelings and body. Pray...listen to our experience. At the center, focus for several moments, leaving when you are ready. Be attentive on the way out.

### Exit

Turn and face the entrance, acknowledge your experience with a closing Thanks...Amen... Blessed Be.

### Reflect and Share

Use journaling or drawing to reflect on your experience, or share it with another person. Your experience can guide and encourage another person.

### Walk Often!



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### Worship Services

Sunday Mornings  
8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.  
Childcare provided

*Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.*  
The People of the United Methodist Church®



## Welcome to the Labyrinth

*A Path of Healing and Spiritual Growth*

**The Labyrinth Walk at Bow Mills UMC**



## Welcome to the Labyrinth!

*“Whoever you are, walking the labyrinth has something to offer you.*

*If a creative or work project is challenging you, walking can get your creative juices flowing.*

*When you are struggling with grief or anger or a physical challenge or illness, walking the labyrinth can point the way to healing and wholeness.*

*If you're wanting a way to meditate or pray that engages your body as well as your soul, the labyrinth can be such a way.*

*When you just want a reflective time away from a busy life, the labyrinth can offer time out.*

*The labyrinth as you will learn, holds up a mirror, reflecting back to us not only the light of our finest selves but whatever restrains us from shining forth.”*

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

## What is a Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It is a purposeful pattern found across time and cultures painted in ancient caves, carved on rocks, woven in baskets and blankets. It is found in medieval castles, villas and cathedrals.

Today it is found in hospitals and nursing homes; in city parks, gardens backyards, beaches, and open fields; in churches, schools and prisons.

## Labyrinth Design

The design of a labyrinth is a single meandering path leading from the entrance point to the center. The way in is the way out. Unlike a maze, there are no dead-ends, blind alleys or tricks. By setting one foot in front of the other, you will always be led on its winding path to the center. All that is required to make the journey to the center is the first step. The many labyrinth designs evolved from the imagery of the circle and spiral known for over 4,000 years.

The most well known designs are the Cretan and Classic Greek 7-path Labyrinth of the Minoan culture, dated from 1500 BC, and the 11-path Chartres Labyrinth from the design on the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France, dating from the 13th century.

## Symbol & Metaphor

The labyrinth is both symbol and metaphor of our life's journey with its many twists and turns, changes and transitions. The single path to the center shows us that no time is ever wasted, that every step leads us closer to our goal. Walking the labyrinth is a gift we give ourselves, often leading to insight, discovery, peace, healing, happiness, connectedness and well-being. It is more about the journey rather than the destination, about being rather than doing.

## Walking a Labyrinth

There is no right way to walk a labyrinth. You have only to enter and follow the path in and out again. Each walk will be different, even after many experiences on the labyrinth. “Thinking” is not required, simply focus on the path, finding your own pace and pausing along the way if you choose. Reduced mental activity and heightened awareness makes the labyrinth ideal for walking meditation or prayer, integrating body, mind, psyche and spirit into one harmonious whole.

## The Three-Fold Path

People often experience three stages in a labyrinth walk. In the Christian tradition these are known as Purgation, Illumination, and Union. While transcending any particular religious tradition, the labyrinth experience often reveal these three stages but one path.

### Releasing (Purgation)

From the entrance to the center is the path of shedding or letting go, a release of worries and concerns, a relaxation of body, slowed breathing and respiration as you move into a meditative receptive state.

### Receiving (Illumination)

The center is the place of illumination, of self-understanding; the place of wisdom, clarity and creativity; of at-one-ment and at-one-ness. It is the place of Compassion, the nothing and the all, of unconditional love and Divine Connection. Spend as much time in the center as you need.

### Integration (Union)

The path out is becoming grounded and integrated. We are empowered and energized to make what has been received manifest in the world.