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A Garden of Peace

Walking a Labyrinth: an Age Old Ritual

By Danica Low, Fall 2016

Pastor Tim Tate says, "The Labyrinth has been a vehicle through which God speaks to me in powerful ways. Along the journey, there are things that enter my heart and mind which help to touch the deepest parts of my soul."

Pastor Tim Tate leads the Warrenton United Methodist Church, located behind the Warrenton Pizza Hut. Its Labyrinth – or peaceful place – is nestled behind the east side of the building. Pastor Tate has a view from his office.

Imagine a beautiful garden. With a gazebo inside. Bushes, trees, flowers of all varieties and textures. As you fix your gaze to your feet, you notice something unusual. There are stepping stones carefully placed, hundreds of them. In fact, stepping stones cover the basin of the entire sanctuary space.

The stones are positioned in a circular path, taking you from your first step into the garden, around the perimeter, and eventually, through a spiral pathway, to the very center of the basin floor. It is all one level, but visually, you almost could have missed the depth it pulls you – mentally, spiritually – towards.

Prayer. Meditation. Quiet time. Soul searching. The art of hearing one's own voice. Or the art of channeling another's voice – a greater power. This is the age-old practice of introspection, rumination, reflection. We also may know it as contemplation, gaining perspective, insight.

Pastor Tate shares, "While walking the Labyrinth, I've discovered insights about myself, felt the promptings of the (Holy) Spirit, and been blessed with a vision for leading. It is a comfort that as I sit at my desk, and I look out at the Labyrinth, I see a place where so many are touched and shaped for the journey of life."

A Labyrinth is a man-made structure that perpetuates these moments and gives a person a place to guide their thoughts. For the religious or spiritual, a Labyrinth is a place of prayer. For others, it is a place to connect. To break through the noise we allow into our mental space.

On a good weather day, you might hear a bird singing, or the gentle rustle of leaves as the wind blows. It brings the Labyrinth walker in towards themselves, or towards the One they worship; towards their Maker. On another day, one might walk the Labyrinth in the rain, focusing their thoughts on a desire to tune out worldly noise.

Associate Pastor, Jiyeon Kim has a message for the Fauquier community, "You may find the center of your life on the path of peace. You are invited to come and walk the Labyrinth where your soul may find its way..."