

The Mustard Seed.

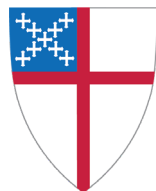
A newsletter from Holy Faith Church

Fall 2018



"If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, nothing will be impossible for you." – Matthew 17:20

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Labyrinths: Journey for the Soul

In 2014, Holy Faith parishioners Suzanne Buchalski, Roxane Chan, Paula Leonard, and Debbie Wollard stenciled a labyrinth onto the pavement of our back parking lot. Four years of exposure to the elements took their toll, that by this summer the labyrinth was barely visible.

Big thanks go to Molly Hilton and Elaine Osterbur for repainting the path, making it usable again.



Molly Hilton



Elaine Osterbur



Laying out HFC's labyrinth in 2014.



Labyrinth after repainting in 2018.

What is a labyrinth?

A labyrinth is a spiral path designed to encourage prayer and meditation as one slowly and quietly follows the course, releasing the mind from daily pressures. The pattern has one point of entry and a single route that winds in a circuitous path toward the center. From the center point, the same path will take one back to the entry point.

Labyrinths in Religion

Labyrinths can be traced to the earliest antiquity — painted on ancient pottery, in woven products, or carved into wood. In the Middle Ages, they became a central feature in many European churches with several still existing today. The most famous of the labyrinths is at Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France, built around 1200. For Christians in the Middle Ages, walking a labyrinth served as a substitute for an actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

When walked as a pilgrimage, the labyrinth walk represented a journey to become closer to God. When used for repentance, pilgrims would walk on their knees.

Grace Cathedral (Episcopal) in San Francisco became a site of renewal for labyrinth walking. In the early 1990s, Grace was searching for a way to respond to the AIDS epidemic. Grace opened its labyrinth to visitors seeking ways to pray through grief and trauma.

Today, churches with labyrinths encourage people to walk as a way of

giving attention to the voice of God. Hospitals, schools, rehabilitation centers, parks, and other places of healing have also installed labyrinths for meditation.

How to Walk a Labyrinth

Our Christian life can be described as a journey with God, bringing us closer in our relationship with God and with others. A prayer walk provides a metaphor model of our Christian life, as we face many turns we did not expect in our search for a quiet center.

There is no right or wrong way to walk a prayer labyrinth.



(Nancy Rhodes spoke to the Parish Leadership Team at their September meeting about creative ways we might use the labyrinth to build bridges between our parish and members of the community.)

“The labyrinth can bring us together with people who don’t relate to the Church as an institution.”
– Nancy Rhodes, Trained Labyrinth Facilitator

The only rule is to respect the prayer walk and others who may be there. Simply begin, focusing on a quiet mind and open heart that allows God to accompany you. The following are some simple suggestions that may assist you:

1. Please enter and remain in silence throughout the walk.
2. Upon reaching the center, you may want to pause and experience God’s presence and/or offer a prayer.

Find A Local Labyrinth

<https://labyrinthlocator.com/>

Here are a few of the labyrinths open to the public near Saline:

1. **Matthaei Botanical Gardens**
1800 North Dixboro, Ann Arbor.
Made of low-growing grasses and limestone.
2. **Roxane Chan’s Labyrinth**
359 Crestway Court, Saline.
Located in her side yard and made of grass and paving stones. Open without an appointment to individuals and small groups. More than 5 people, please call first.
3. **First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor**
4100 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor, Located at the back of the property and made of grass.



Matthaei Botanical Gardens Labyrinth, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Labyrinth Web Sites for Additional Information

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| www. iSpiritual.com | www.veriditas.org |
| www.paxworks.com | www.labyrinthsociety.org |
| www.wellfedspirit.org | http://wwwll.veriditas.labyrinthsociety.org |
| www.pathsofpeace.com | www.labyrinthos.net |

The Health Benefits of Walking a Labyrinth: A Conversation with Roxane Chan

Roxane Chan, an associate professor in the College of Nursing at Michigan State University, helped lay Holy Faith's original labyrinth in 2014. She chatted with Pastor Andrea about the proven health benefits of labyrinth-walking. In addition to her credentials in western medicine (she holds a PhD in nursing), Roxane also trained at the University of California's Center for Mindfulness to teach Mindfulness and Self-Compassion.

So tell me what's your personal interest in labyrinths, and why did you want to help bring one to Holy Faith?

Before **moving** to Saline, I was a parish nurse at Christ Church, Cranbrook, for three years. I had been interested in the mind-body connection. So it was not long before Pastor Ian [Reed Twiss] left, in 2014, that we were running all these classes. The point of the classes was to teach people different ways to bring a mindful awareness of themselves and God into their daily lives.

The classes presented different prayer practices such as making and using prayer beads, prayer flags, peace poles and making our own stations of the cross, that kind of thing. We were thrilled when many local artists joined in making some of the stations of the cross, and we were able to introduce the artists to Holy Faith.

We were exploring anything in the outside world that inspired a prayerful place inside. The mind-body connection encompasses prayer forms that include art, dance, music, journaling, anything that allows you to bring your whole self to what you're doing through one of these expressions. Not everyone feels comfortable learning how to be mindful by sitting in meditation. So our intent was to introduce different ways of developing mindfulness that incorporated the body. A labyrinth was one of those ways.

Who was the "we" running the classes?

Debbie Wollard, Suzanne Buchalski, and Bridget Baisch.

Know someone at Holy Faith whose story should be told? Someone whose ministry in the outside world deserves to be celebrated? Is there someone you wish to interview? If so, submit the transcript of your interview (with the person's permission) to Office Manager Laurie Tikkanen for inclusion in a future newsletter: office@holy-faith-church.org

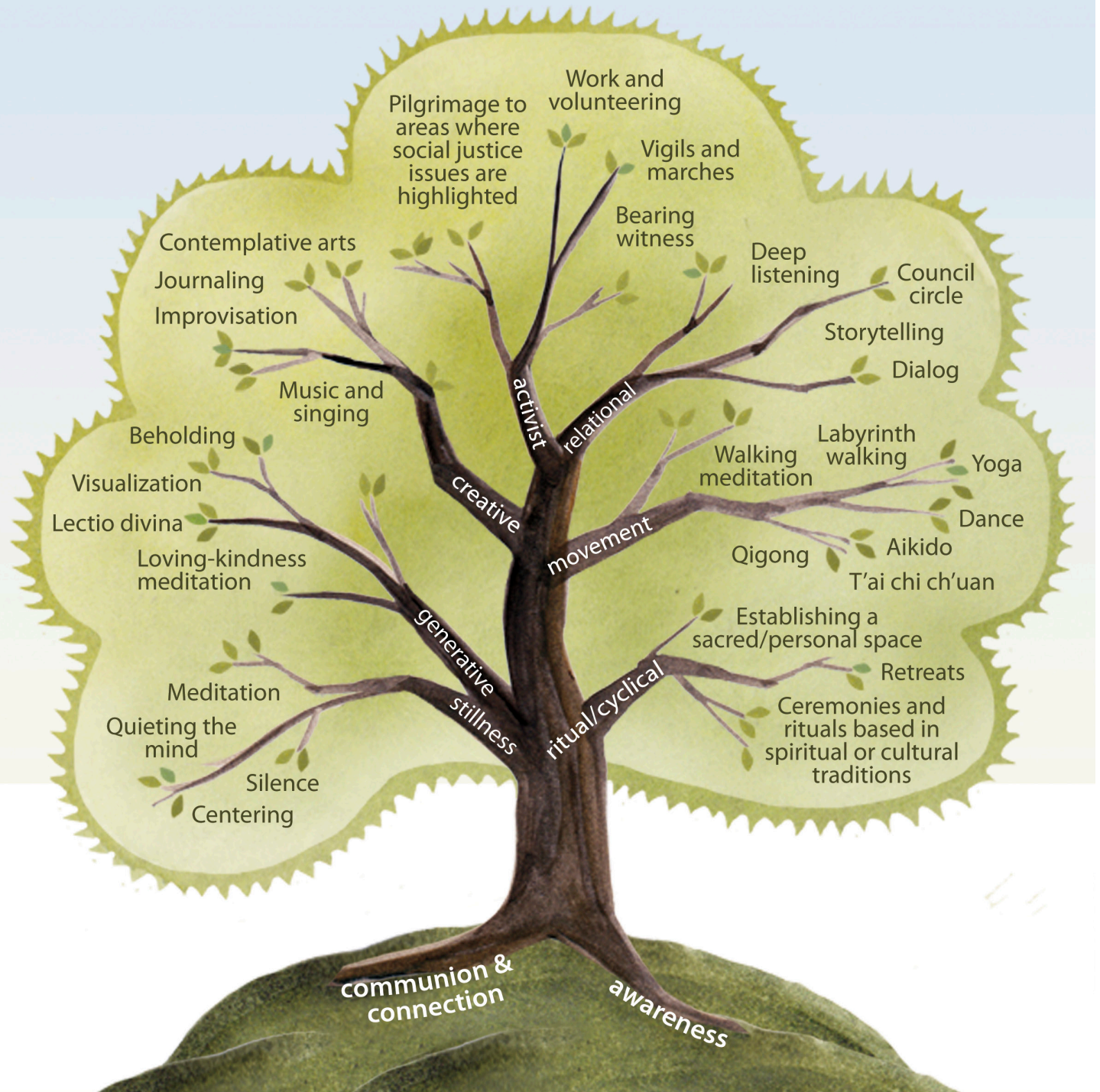


Roxane Chan, PhD, RN, AHN-BC, LMT

Holy Faith's labyrinth is wheelchair accessible. There are five labyrinths, I think, in Saline, but this is the only one that's accessible.

During my dissertation, I worked with patients in the University of Michigan's pulmonary rehabilitation program and researched how to best teach mindfulness practices to people with chronic lung disease like COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Because some of these patients used wheel chairs, I was able to see how "walking" a labyrinth could be accomplished while being pushed in a wheel chair. That is what inspired our team to create the only accessible labyrinth in the area, because people using wheelchairs can benefit from a labyrinth too.

The Tree of Contemplative Practices



The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society
www.contemplativemind.org

“Not everyone feels comfortable learning how to be mindful by sitting in meditation. So our intent was to introduce different ways of developing mindfulness that incorporated the body. A labyrinth was one of those ways.” – Roxane Chan

You mentioned proven health benefits from walking [or wheeling] the labyrinth.

Any mindfulness practice helps your physiological functioning. It will also help you emotionally and spiritually, of course. There have been multiple studies, for example, about praying with prayer beads. No matter what the faith tradition, praying with prayer beads changes breathing patterns, which in turn changes how your heart beats, which changes how your immune system functions. The changes in the immune system help to decrease inflammation in your body and improve your ability to fight off infections and helps prevent cancer from metastasizing. If you have a high functioning immune system, you might live well and for a very long time with a chronic disease, because you will have fewer exacerbation (flare-ups) of your chronic disease symptoms.

There are many ways to help people access these important physiological, emotional and cognitive changes. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has collected information based on up to date research and created a tree to describe all the ways one can improve their mindfulness and mind/body connection. Walking a labyrinth is just one way. The good news about labyrinth walking is that you do not need any training, you can't do it incorrectly. You just follow your feet. You don't need to do anything but walk. A labyrinth is the least complicated way to facilitate mindfulness.

So how do you practice mindfulness?

I take joy and delight in having varied practices. I'm not a fan of "it's 8 am, and I am supposed to sit still now for 15 minutes." So I spontaneously practice. How's that? I'm a big believer in doing small things throughout the day to cultivate mindfulness. I've been an Episcopalian all my life, but I still use my rosary beads and say the rosary.

I think I know what you mean, though instead of "mindfulness," I might say I was trying to cultivate an awareness of God's presence throughout the day, in the midst of all my activities.

I've trained myself to talk to the secular world. But that's how I understand it too: re-centering myself in God.

Oh, more about practice. Practicing mindfulness 2-3 times a week allows you to get there (to mindfulness) faster when you really need it (in a crisis, or even a few minutes before the crisis). My initial research was with COPD patients to help them become aware of the bodily sensations they'd experience before becoming breathless.

You might have a personal mindfulness practice at home, but how do you access it when you're out and about? Walking the labyrinth can be one of those ways. The Holy Faith labyrinth can be walked in fifteen minutes or less. You can walk it and then return to the workaday world.

Can you tell me about the bell at the entrance? Though I've walked labyrinths, I've never seen one with a bell until coming to Holy Faith.

Okay, well you've just pulled into the parking lot from wherever you were and whatever you were doing. The bell is a signal to yourself that you're going to step into this sacred space. It's like setting an intention, or marking the time. And then you may ring the bell when you finish, before returning to the workaday world. The labyrinth is a little slice of prayer when you don't expect it, and when you really need it.

Thanks, Roxane!



This Fall, Invite a Friend to Come and See.

COME AND SEE. That's what Jesus always said to people who asked what he and his message were all about. There is no better time than right now to **invite a friend or neighbor** to come and see Holy Faith Church.

Up and Coming: Fall 2018

October

God's Work: Our Hands is a theme we'll explore as we consider our financial gifts to Holy Faith Church. Check your mailbox this month for an invitation from Pastor Andrea and the Parish Leadership Team to make your pledge for 2019.

Also coming in October, November, and December:

October
7

The Blessing of the Animals in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, 10:00 am.
Bring contained pets (on leashes or in carriers) to Holy Faith to receive God's blessing. Pets are invited to stay throughout the service.

October
26-27

Diocesan Convention, in the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan.
Tish Dersnah, Talle Jolliffe, Molly Hilton, Deacon Don, and Pastor Andrea will represent Holy Faith.

October
14

Plastic Pollution Solution Begins!
Bring your soft plastics (shopping sacs, product wrappings, bubble packaging, Ziploc bags, and more) to HFC for recycling. HFC is teaming up with the 7 other ELCA churches in Washtenaw County, and with Ann Arbor Recycling, to provide this recycling opportunity.

October
28

501st Anniversary of the Reformation
Pastor Barry Osterbur presides for the 501st Anniversary of the Reformation

October
20

Clean-Up Day with Saline Cooperative Preschool, 9:00 am - Noon.
Enjoy fall weather, camaraderie, coffee, and donuts as we rake leaves, pick up sticks, and take care of other projects around the church to keep our grounds and building as welcoming as possible.

November
4

Feast of All Saints.
During the month of October, please submit names of friends / loved ones who have died this past year who you would like remembered and prayed for on this Sunday. Please send names to Office Manager, Laurie Tikkanen, office@holy-faith-church.org

October
21

Bread for the World Sunday.
Bread for the World is a Christian lobbying organization with the motto, *Have Faith. End Hunger.* Every year in October, they invite churches to pray and to write letters to Congress urging our nation's leaders to provide help and opportunity to people struggling with hunger. Parishioner Georgine Steude has introduced this ministry opportunity to us. To observe the day, we will participate in a letter-writing campaign to lawmakers, and we'll also welcome a guest preacher, the Rev. Elizabeth Friedman, Pastor of UM's Lord of Light Campus Ministry.

December
1

Community Open House and Creche Display.
HFC will again host a community open house when we will display nativity scenes from all over the world in our social hall. If you have a nativity scene (or 2, or 3) which you're willing to lend through December 2nd, please label with your name and include additional information you wish to share (where the set was made, materials used, or what its significance is to you). You may start bringing nativities now through Wednesday, November 28.



Footprints

Author Unknown

One night a man had a dream.

He dreamed he was walking with the Lord and across the sky flashed scenes from his life.

For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints, one belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

“Lord, You said that once I decided to follow You, You’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints.

I don’t understand why when I needed You most, You would leave me.”

The Lord replied, “My son, My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”