

Way of Love

Lent as a Pilgrimage

March 1, 2020

A pilgrimage requires taking time separate from everyday demands. We can see Lent as an opportunity to deepen our spiritual lives. In Lent we step back and consider the ways we need to repent, to turn around--to be converted.

Opening prayer

Lord, we your peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" following the Way of Jesus, the Way of Love. Amen.

(adapted from Isaiah 2:3a)

Lenten Pilgrimage Desire

What are you seeking on this Lenten pilgrimage?

How is God calling you to be this Lent?

Labyrinth Creation

One idea that we are presenting to you today is to look at the 40 days of Lent as a pilgrimage. **A pilgrimage is a journey undertaken with a spiritual intention.** The Way of Love is a journey toward a Jesus-centered life. To think of your Lenten journey as a pilgrimage is one way to follow the Way of Love.

Before you set off on your pilgrimage you need to decide what your intention will be. You can set one intention that you will focus on throughout the entire season of Lent or you can choose a new intention each day or week. Ask yourself, "what am I seeking?" Peace? Balance? Reconciliation? Look at the Way of Love practices to see where you feel called to grow.

Once you set your intention, your next step is to decide what your pilgrimage will look like. What deliberate action will you take? Like any pilgrimage, your journey will require you to take time away from everyday life. Will you carve out 15 minutes each day? An hour? Where will the setting be? A comfortable chair? Do you prefer to be in a natural setting?

To carry the idea of a pilgrimage further, we invite you to use a labyrinth as a touchstone to put you in contact with your spiritual center. **A labyrinth is a meditation tool that has been used for centuries.** Reverend Dr. Lauren Artress describes a labyrinth as a metaphor for the spiritual journey.

"A labyrinth is a path of prayer, a walking meditation that can become a mirror of the soul. A labyrinth is not a maze. A maze is designed for you to lose your way. A labyrinth is designed for you to find your way."

While there are a few walkable labyrinths in the area, they are not always easy to get to.

Today, we are going to show you a labyrinth that is printed on a sheet of paper that you can lay in front of you while you trace the path with your finger. This is an effective way to quiet your mind and get in touch with your spiritual center. Those of you who are familiar with centering prayer may find that praying with a labyrinth provides a similar experience. In fact, some people find a labyrinth prayer easier than centering prayer because your mind is focused on staying on the path and is therefore less prone to wandering thoughts; calmness and focus are easier to come by. Finally, if you are a highly kinesthetic person, you may benefit from prayer that engages your body as well as your mind and spirit.

When you look at a printed labyrinth, you'll see that it's in the form of a circle with one entrance along the edge. There is one path that meanders around the circle, approaching the center and then moving away from it, then moving closer again. It's a metaphor for the journey of life and God is intimately involved in all of it. Tracing the path with your finger quiets the mind and helps you focus. The borders along the path provide guidance and keep you grounded as you approach your spiritual center. You learn to trust the path because you don't need to worry about getting lost.

How to pray in a finger labyrinth:

1. Start with a prayer to set your mind on God. He will be joining you on your journey. Consider one of the prayers in your Lenten bag.
2. Set your intention. What do you want to receive from this pilgrimage?
3. Starting at the entrance, follow the path with your finger. Move at a pace that feels natural and pay attention to how you feel. Without judgement, notice what is happening in your mind and heart. Do you feel impatient? Worried? Grateful?
4. When you get to the center of the labyrinth, pause and close your eyes. You don't have to think about anything. Stay at the center until you feel ready to leave.
5. Follow the path back out. Once again, notice the spiritual lessons along the way. Trust that God is with you on your journey.
6. Say a prayer of thanks and take time to reflect on your experience.

It's important to know that the healing or insights you are seeking may not be noticeable right away. They may show up in unexpected ways at a later time. We are on a spiritual journey throughout our life and we are being guided where we need to go.

Lent Goodie Bag - your tools for your Lenten Pilgrimage
Items and symbols to remind you of your journey

Closing

Lent prayer for the Journey

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Resource List

Book: The Power of Love: Sermons, reflections, and wisdom to uplift and inspire
by Bishop Michael Curry

Book: Living the Way of Love: A 40 Day Devotional
by Mary Bea Sullivan

Book: Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice, by Rev.
Dr. Lauren Artress

Book: Exploring the Labyrinth: A Guide for Healing and Spiritual Growth, by Melissa Gayle
West

Book: Praying the Labyrinth: A journal for Spiritual Exploration, by Jill Kimberly Hartwell
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Website: <https://episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love>

Website: Lent Calendar:

https://episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/wol_lenten_calendar_2020.pdf

Website: <https://www.bcponline.org/>

Website: Examen - Way of Love:

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/7a46aa8913a7c1f85ffe68a83/files/75362847-6652-4b4f-a471-eaf1066b5916/HWoL_2020_Examen.pdf

Website to find walkable labyrinths: www.labyrinthlocator.com

Article: www.mcgrathblog.nd.edu "How to Pray with a Labyrinth, a Walking Meditation"

Podcast: <https://wayoflove.episcopalchurch.org/>

App: <https://www.churchpublishing.org/products/electroniccommonprayerecp20>

App: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/lectio-divina-journal/id1439948542>

App: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/reimagining-the-examen/id1065042173>