

How to have a labyrinth event – without a labyrinth!

By Judy Bevliacqua

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Well, here at St. Luke's we *do* have a lovely labyrinth....but it's located outside.....and it's cold.....and there are many older folks, (or visitors or children) who never walk it for other reasons: health challenges or lack of information, or general distrust or prejudice about this old---new---age thing...or they simply don't "get" what it's for! There are a lot of reasons NOT to walk a labyrinth.

So, in an effort to extravert the benefits of the labyrinth, our Guild designed a coffee--- hour last Sunday, following the service, to bring the labyrinth "indoors." We made the theme **"Our Lenten Path,"** and our priest included this theme in the morning sermon. Then we carried the conversation downstairs and provided hands---on activities for all ages to explore our Lenten Path.

We don't have room for a canvas labyrinth in our parish hall, so instead we made a large laminated, blue---print copy and hung it up. We provided colored paper and pens and templates and each person was asked to make and clothe a figure to represent themselves. A space was provided for everyone to come forward and place themselves "somewhere" on our community labyrinth! A microphone and an emcee was nearby to encourage them to share one word or phrase to describe their Lenten Journey, by finishing the sentence: "my journey and path feels_____."

We got amazing responses --- thoughtful and creative from young and old. Even the men were cutting out their little paper---dolls and placing them on the labyrinth. Of course, the children loved it!

We also had paper labyrinths to color, a display table of 3 different types of finger labyrinths to try out. And of course lots of food! Everyone got to take home a labyrinth paper---weight.

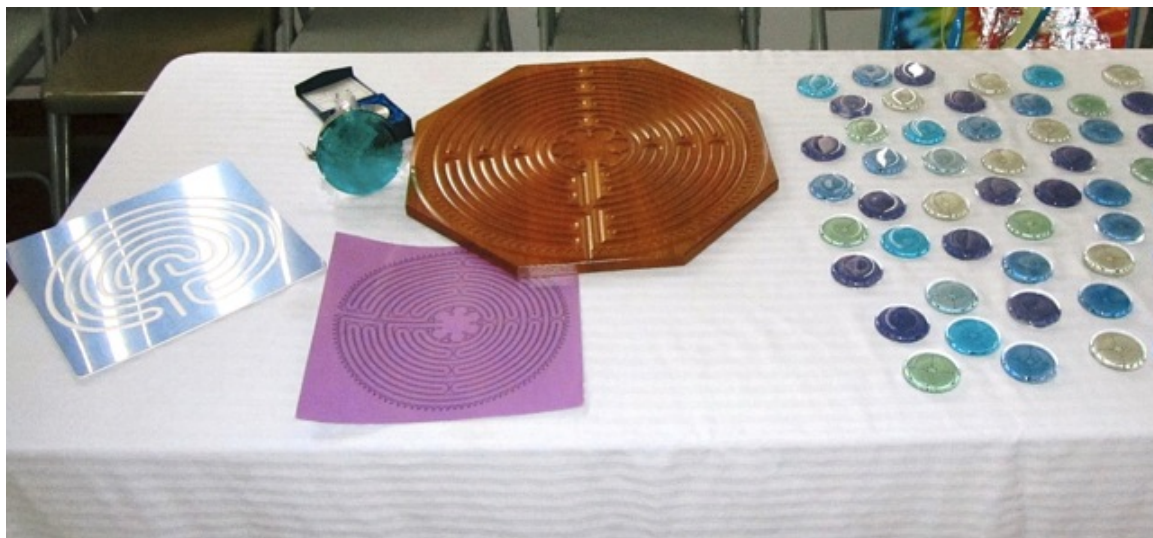
The next Sunday a photo of our paper labyrinth with all of us represented on it became our Sunday bulletin cover. To say we put some "mileage" on the labyrinth – even virtual mileage --- is an understatement. We got a lot of positive feedback, and look forward to doing this ***next*** year, with a new theme.

Following are the pictures of our Labyrinth event without a labyrinth:

materials ready.....



finger labyrinths to try.....



Food for the "journey," of course!



labyrinth paperweights for all!



creating our figures to clothe....



adding the details.....



participants interviewed about their Lenten journey.....



a very inter-generational activity!



Lots of opportunity for sharing too!



Everyone had something to share about the Lenten path!



Helping with the tape.....



Kids could hardly wait to share.....



One girl took home extra figures and a paper labyrinth to make one for her room.



Many couples came up together to share.....



All ages and stages got to be included!



We all learned something deeper about each other.....



Passionate sharing happened naturally!



And lots of laughter too!



My journey has been...."confusing!" That's a direct quote!



A mom and her boys share the labyrinth journey.....



There's room for all on the labyrinth.....



Creative cut-outs!



A sacred space being filled!



How it feels to me.....



Trying the finger labyrinths.....



Judy Bevilacqua has been the Labyrinth Guild Director at ***St. Luke the Physician Community Labyrinth Garden*** since its inception 7 years ago. She works with a wonderful guild of men and women who bring creativity and deep spirituality to the work of overseeing this sacred space. Because our outdoor Chartres labyrinth is open 24/7 to the public, we are indeed "tending the mysterious." Most of our visitors we never see, only their "footprints" are left and we love the inclusive ethos this creates for the community and our parish. Judy loves singing and gardening, the arts and cooking and the quiet hospitality that leads to deep relationships.

