

Triple Spiral Labyrinth

By Rev. Kathleen McKern Verigin

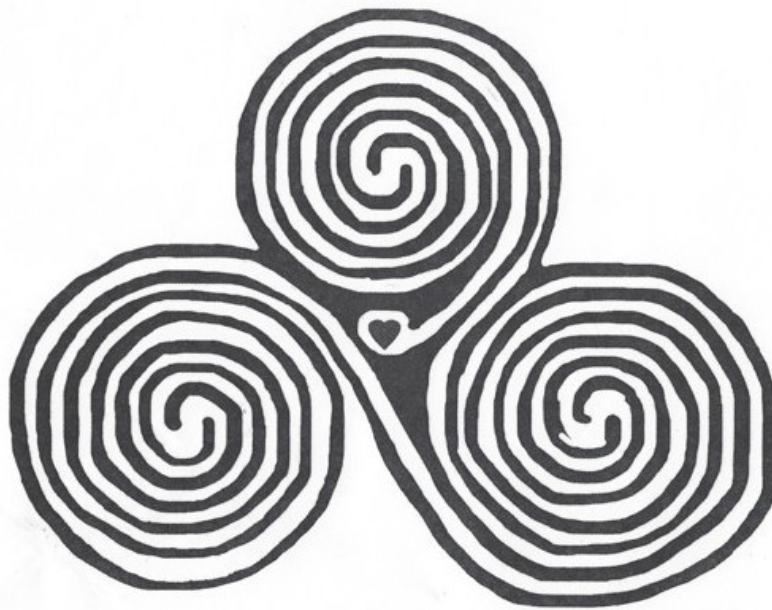
It is said that the Divine always matches the dream and the dreamer. When the two consciously align, the outcome, the third aspect, is Divine Manifestation. That is the blueprint for the creation of the Triple Spiral Labyrinth.



My first encounter with the triple spiral was in late October 1998. It was the first of what would be many travels to Ireland. That year, on the one-year anniversary of my mother's death—Mary Kathleen Connolly McKern—I stood before the entrance to Newgrange. It's a 5,000+ year old ritual site north of Dublin, in the lush Boyne Valley, where the Winter Solstice sun penetrates the tomb for twenty minutes over the five days around Solstice. Standing guard below the small window is a massive kerbstone onto which is etched a triple spiral. It was instantly alive in me. I felt my essence travel the spirals, one into the other, and back again, and again and again. I was changed, forever, in those few moments with the triple spiral. I left behind the notion of duality, knowing that there is always a third option. I am each spiral, standing alone, yet also all three spirals at once, in absolute wholeness. At the center of the triple spiral is a virtual hearth, the seat of my soul.

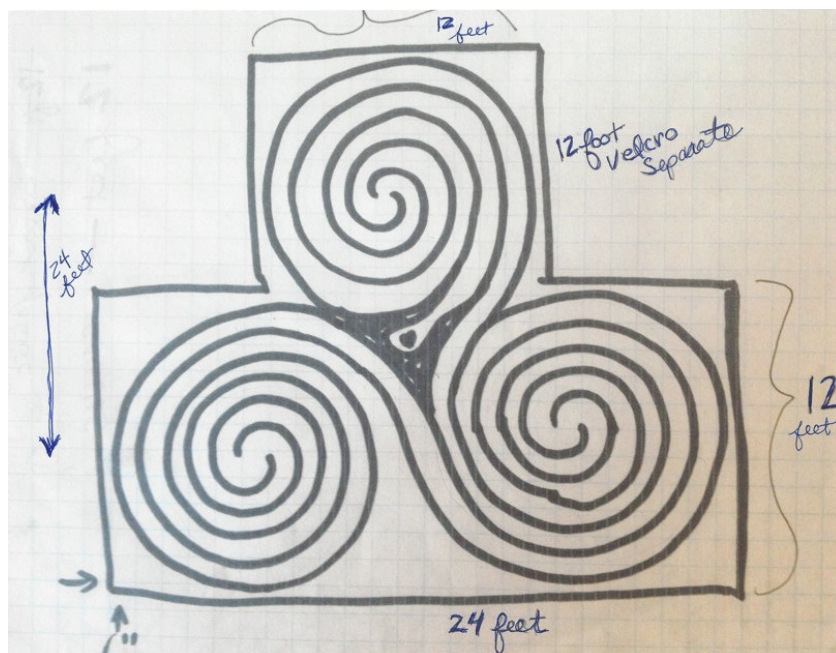
At the request of many, I started organizing and leading sacred site tours to Ireland. Each visit to Newgrange was similar—again roaming about the triple spiral with my mind’s eye, with no beginning and no ending, just eternal flow. Lisa Steckley was part of my first tour group. She is trained by Lauren Artress with Veriditas as a labyrinth facilitator.

<http://www.veriditas.org> Lisa showed me a drawing she had made inspired by the triple spiral at Newgrange, only this one was symmetrical. “Can you imagine the triple spiral as a labyrinth?” she asked. My reply, “Absolutely!”



“The Newgrange triple spiral seemed very important. As I played with the spirals I realized that they could be locked together to create a single path to a center which is followed in and out. As such and because of the unicursive pattern, it generally fits today’s definition of a labyrinth. The first walkable path with this pattern that a friend and I did was on the beach. It was very easy to draw the design in the sand, changing the orientation as we wanted. I believe this is an archetypal pattern that is to be shared and evolved by all of us. I am very excited that Kathleen has adopted this labyrinth into her work.” Lisa Steckley

Lisa and a colleague transferred the design onto heavy paper in sections that were then put together to create a portable, walkable pattern. The first walk was in March 2002 as part of a day-long workshop on the Triple Spiral offered through Abundant Life Center, an independent New Thought church in Vancouver, Washington where I was, at the time, serving a senior minister. Each person who walked it, myself included, came away in absolute awe. This labyrinth walk was different than any other. It felt more expansive and more inclusive. It went beyond roaming in, arriving, and then roaming out. With this labyrinth, we traveled that path three times, eventually arriving at the center, what we have come to call the “Nest of Belonging.”



Although the labyrinth was deemed a success, sadly it sat tucked away for many years in Lisa’s garage. Neither of us had the time or energy to get the triple spiral labyrinth onto canvas. Until now. Soon after I returned from Ireland in May 2014, I got an email from Lisa saying she wanted to gift me the labyrinth. It was mine to do with what I will. I knew in that moment that it was time to birth it. Gestation was complete. Manifestation was at hand. However, I hadn’t a clue how to begin.

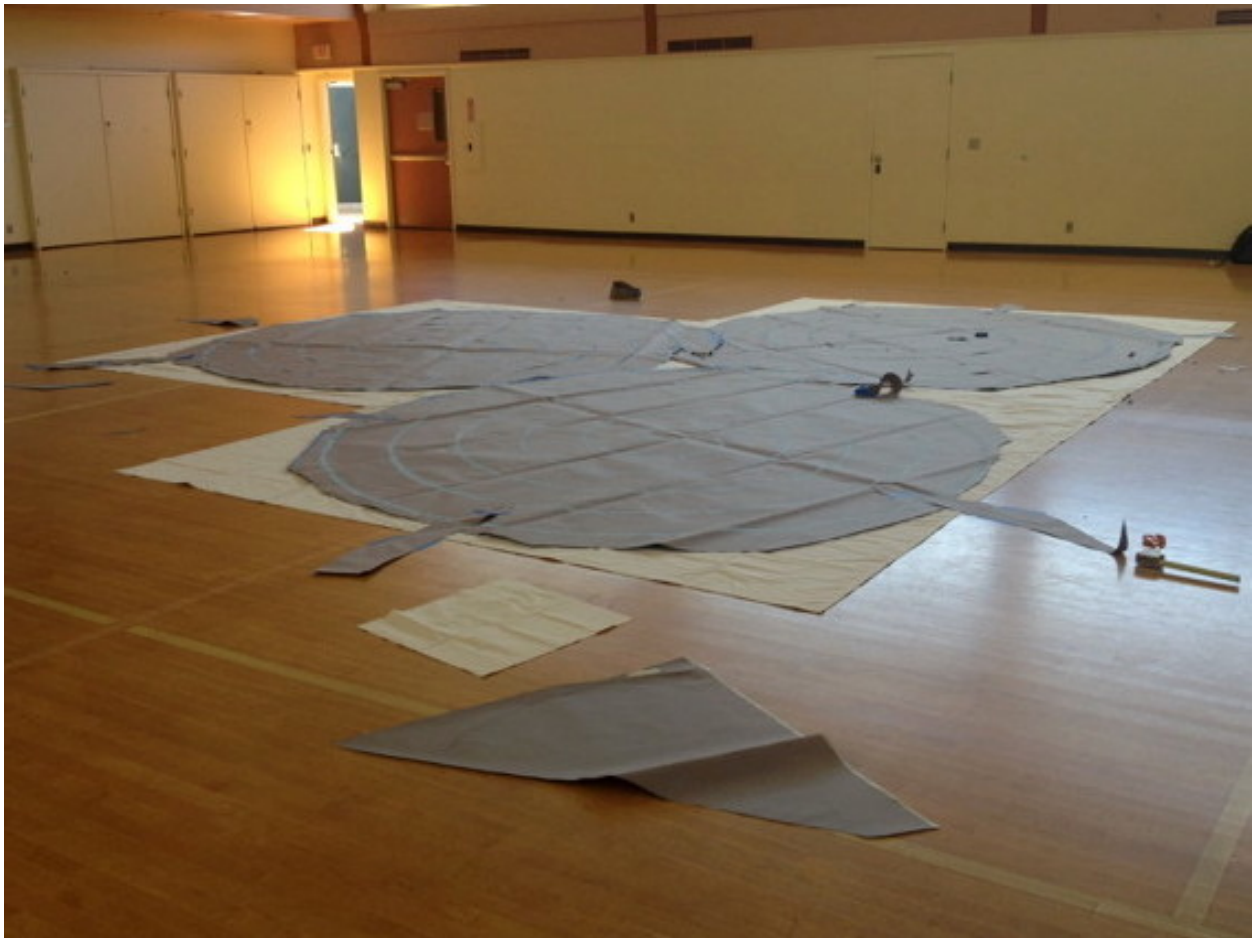
Thanks to the internet, I began to communicate with labyrinth creators around the country. All were intrigued by the triple spiral concept, but I wanted to work with someone closer to my home in Portland, Oregon. Into the search engine I typed: Labyrinth creators in Oregon. Several groups and names popped up, quickly followed by me sending emails to each. I was delighted by the swift and helpful responses. Eventually I began communicating with D.C. Donohue living in Corvallis, Oregon.

“Remarkably, working on Kathleen’s Triple Spiral Labyrinth reminded me to breathe deeply. There is something about the pattern that makes me think of the expansion of an inhalation and the contraction of an exhalation. Since the path from outside to inside is long, the breathing in and the breathing out has to be

slow, deliberate, and sustained in order to touch and return from the center. This is the kind of breathing you do when you're patting a baby to sleep because babies know when you're present enough for them to be safe at the frightening threshold between awake and asleep. They know when you're hoping they'll just nod off quickly so you can rush off to other things. Babies are wise that way. But they're also very small, so it's best to breathe deeply when you're with them. To be fully present.

The other thing I learned from Kathleen's Labyrinth--something that I never sensed so clearly as I worked with many other labyrinth patterns--is that the 'inside' of the labyrinth is precisely the same in substance and in nature as the 'outside' of the labyrinth—it's all Spirit. The lines in the pattern are more or less unimportant--they are only there so that I may know how to navigate. From this awareness, it's a lightning leap for me to understand that everything inside and outside of my self is also precisely the same in substance and in nature --all Spirit--and that the apparent boundary of my skin and bones and ego is relatively unimportant--it only provides me with a form in which to navigate.

These lessons, of the breath and of connectedness, are for me the big lessons of Kathleen's Labyrinth.” – D.C. Donohue



Drawing on the canvas.

D.C. delivered the canvas to me on August 28th. The following Saturday, on a very hot evening, my husband and I painted the labyrinth, using latex enamel wall paint. A local church loaned us the use of a big meeting room. Doug, on his knees and using a sponge, applied the mauve base coat. When the first spiral was complete, about an hour later, I dabbed over it a lighter and wide teal colored coat. My method was to lean over or squat. I still treasure the moment when Doug said, "Oh, no, I just dribbled." My reply: "Good, the first mistake is the best, reminding us of the perfection of imperfection." The church allowed us to leave the labyrinth open to dry overnight. We were back at 8 a.m. the next day to gently fold her into a Rubber Maid container.



The premiere walking of the Triple Spiral Labyrinth was held at my non-profit ministry's annual fundraiser: Anam Cara Connections, "Spiral into Autumn," September 13, 2014, held at New Thought Center for Spiritual Living in Lake Oswego, Oregon.

Anam Cara Connections will host open labyrinth walks at the four seasons, starting with Winter Solstice 2014. All will be held downstairs at New Thought Center for Spiritual Living in Lake Oswego, Oregon. The window for walking will be two hours, with a guided meditation at the half way point. <http://www.newthoughtcsl.org/>



My original dream is still gestating. And, that is, to see the Triple Spiral Labyrinth placed on the land in Ireland, in a field below Newgrange. Over 220,000 people visit the ritual site every year. Imagine if each person could see and then walk the Triple Spiral, thus ushering in a universal movement of Oneness?

About the Author

Rev. Kathleen McKern Verigin is the founder and director for Anam Cara Connections. She is a licensed and ordained New Thought minister, with a passion for Celtic spirituality. By degree, Rev. Kathleen is an educator and communicator. Through life experience she is an EMMY Award-winning television writer/producer, author, publicist, inspirational speaker, spiritual counselor and mentor, and guide for sacred site tours of Ireland.

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Anam Cara Connections cultivates connections between soul friends seeking a deeper experience of the Self, the Other, and Community.

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