

# Sacred space

Meridian Park rededicates its labyrinth, patterned on one at Chartres Cathedral in France.



[TIMES PHOTO: DANA HAYNES - The Rev. Sally Bowman, an Anglican, left, and Bishop Suzanne Thiel, a Roman Catholic, led a portion of the interfaith celebration.](#)

In a rededication ceremony, the idea is to get back to where you started. To reimagine the beginning of something.

Sort of like walking a labyrinth.

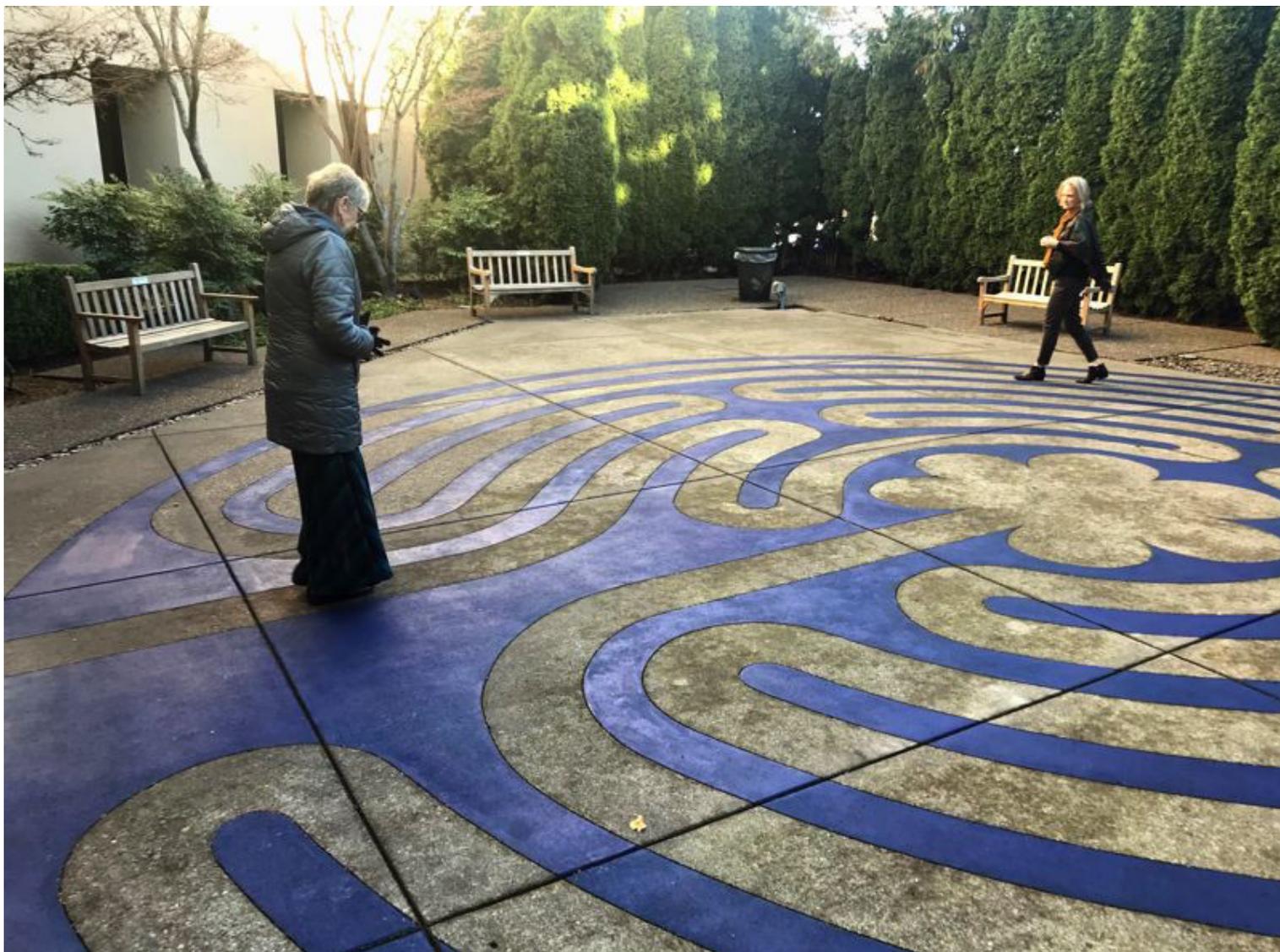
On Tuesday, Dec. 4, Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center in Tualatin rededicated the labyrinth painted in a quiet and green alcove near the north entrance. The labyrinth and its garden were first dedicated in 2004, with funds provided by Dorothy and Robert Poznanski. Robert has died, but Dorothy Poznanski was there last week, along with about 30 people, to

rededicate the space.

A labyrinth isn't a maze, as Anne Richardson, chaplain at Meridian Park, was quick to point out. Mazes are designed to get lost. A labyrinth is a two-dimensional painting of a spiraling pathway. The idea is to walk the path from the "entrance" to the center, and back again, and to get...

Well, that depends on the walker.

"I like to walk labyrinths as a spiritual endeavor," said Donna Vande Kieft. She walks the path slowly, each step methodical.



[TIMES PHOTO: DANA HAYNES - Walkers Donna Vande Kieft, left, and Debbie Burchfiel slowly walk the labyrinth near the north entrance of Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center.](#)

"For me, it's walking meditation. You can walk a labyrinth any way you want. For me, it's just letting go. Getting to the center is like receiving..." Vande Kieft paused, trying to put into words the right concept. "... whatever it is you've asked for, I suppose."

Calm. A sense of purpose. A prayer in motion.

Maybe just a moment of tranquility in the chaotic day in the life of an urban hospital.

The Meridian Park labyrinth is modeled on the one at the Cathedral of Chartres, southwest of Paris. That one, set in the stone floor of the nave, probably dates back to the 13 century. Pilgrims, then and now, travel from far away to walk its winding path.



Debbie Burchfiel walked the Meridian Park labyrinth last week for the first time. "I helped paint it, but I never got around to walking it," she said.

Among the dignitaries on hand for the rededication were the Rev. José Garcia, manager of spiritual care at Meridian Park; retired chaplain Rev. Carolynne Fairweather; current chaplain Anne Richardson; the Rev. Sally Bowman, an Anglican; Bishop Suzanne Thiel of the Roman Catholic Womenpriest Movement; and Rabbi Barry Cohen of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.



TIMES PHOTO:  
DANA HAYNES -  
People of faith raise their right hands as the Rev. Sally Bowman, an Anglican priest, said a prayer for the labyrinth.

The event fell within the dates of Hanukkah this year, and Cohen said that made his participation even better. "This is my job," he said, waving toward the labyrinth. "One of my roles within the interfaith community is to help create sacred spaces. Just like this."

Dorothy Poznanski said the idea of the labyrinth came about when her granddaughter worked for a publishing house in Germany, and would send her books. One book focused on labyrinths from around the world. That got Dorothy and her late husband thinking about making the donation to Meridian Park.

"Carolynne (Fairweather) and I put our heads together and, well, I suppose we made pests of ourselves," Poznanski said.

"One of my favorite memories of this place was coming here one morning and seeing a doctor walk the labyrinth," she added. "I asked him why, and he said he walked it every morning before seeing patients. And I thought: Well, that's just perfect."