

Nov. 17, 2019

[Local](#)[Sports](#)[Business](#)[Life](#)[Opinion](#)[Obituaries](#)[Homes](#)[Jobs](#)[More](#)

53°

Ridgefield church's labyrinth open to all who are on a path to peace

Trending

By [Scott Hewitt](#), Columbian Arts & Features Reporter

Published: November 16, 2019, 6:05am

Share:



Fae Jackson, left, and Penny Hammac first hatched the idea of building a labyrinth on the grounds of the Southridge Community of Christ church near the Clark County Fairgrounds. "It's a beautiful, peaceful experience," said Hammac. "It's a form of prayer or meditation, except you get to move. I'm not very good at just sitting there." (Photos by Amanda Cowan/The Columbian) [Photo Gallery](#)

RIDGEFIELD — Fae Jackson's heart was set on walking the world-famous, 800-year-old stone labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France, but then life took an unexpected turn. When she arrived on All Saints Day, the labyrinth was closed to prayerful pedestrian traffic. She was welcome to marvel at it, but not to follow its winding path around the medieval cathedral floor.

Jackson is something of an authority on twists and turns. She's the mastermind of a new outdoor labyrinth that was recently unveiled at the Southridge Community of Christ church, 400 N.E. 179th St., near the Clark County Fairgrounds. The labyrinth is open to all to visit and walk, anytime, she said.

"It's a mystical way to free your mind and your heart," Jackson said.

"We like to think of our lives as timelines that are nice and straight, but are they really like that? Not very often," said Vancouver labyrinth scholar and ambassador Eunice Schroeder. That's why walking a labyrinth can be such a profound experience, Schroeder said. "It's a powerful metaphor for life. There's something very mystical about the labyrinth pattern that really works. It's not just going for a walk. In one setting you can experience your entire life," she said.

“It’s a beautiful, peaceful experience,” said Peggy Hammac, another member of the Southridge church. “It’s a form of prayer or meditation, except you get to move. I’m not very good at just sitting there.”

LABYRINTHS IN CLARK COUNTY

All are outdoors and accessible to the public, but check with the facility about open hours and other visitor details.

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 12513 S.E. Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver. Phone 360-254-9243.

First Congregational Church of Christ, 1220 N.E. 68th St., Vancouver. Phone 360-693-1476.

Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center, third-floor rooftop healing garden, 2211 N.E. 139th St., Vancouver. Phone 360-487-1000.

Southridge Community of Christ, 400 N.E. 179th St., Ridgefield. Phone 360-573-5659.

Jackson and Hammac started pursuing the idea of installing an accessible outdoor labyrinth at Southridge several years ago. Their vision became Jackson’s husband’s labor of love. Dan Jackson is an accountant, not a builder, he laughed — but he had the know-how and the connections to get this unusual construction job done.

But first came two years of waiting for permission and money — some of it raised by the congregation via its trademark homemade pie sales, Dan Jackson said. His initial budget request was \$30,000 at a time when the church was cutting back on expenses, he said. “I thought it would be a hard sell, but it wasn’t,” he said —

especially after the idea of paver bricks was jettisoned in favor of concrete, which is less expensive and easier to work with.

It's also less hazardous underfoot than pavers. "We have a lot of people with walkers in our church," he said.

A site was selected behind the church that's accessible via a walkway from the parking lot. Friendly local businesses offered great deals on labor, equipment, landscaping and four stone benches. An eight-man crew helped Jackson pour, stamp and stain the concrete. The final product is 42 feet in diameter with an 18-inch-wide walkway. That's a little wider than normal, Dan Jackson said, to better accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. (Wheelchairs still don't fit neatly inside the labyrinth passageway, but that doesn't matter — just follow along.) To facilitate drainage, the center of the circle — where two big stones serve as benches — is three inches higher than the outside edge.

The labyrinth was dedicated in September. It's always open for business, and illuminated overnight.

"I really like the idea that it's open to anyone at any time," Fae Jackson said. "You don't need to be a member of the church. Anytime you feel the need for a moment of peace and solitude, you're welcome here." Or, she added, peace and togetherness; groups are just as welcome as solitary walkers.

A labyrinth is not a maze and not meant to trick or confound you, she stressed: "You just follow the path and let yourself go. It's a different experience at different times, depending on what you bring to it."

Nobody is tracking visitors to this labyrinth, but a few thank-you cards have arrived from folks who have given it a try, Fae Jackson said, and she's contemplating a guest book. Schroeder, who hosts the annual New Year's Day Labyrinth Walk at Vancouver's First Presbyterian church with her own portable, canvas labyrinth, has posted the Southridge labyrinth on an online database called the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator (<https://labyrinthlocator.com>).

Dan Jackson hopes that listing will draw labyrinth lovers and the labyrinth-curious right off I-5, which is just yards away. “We’re hoping we’ll see some people stopping off,” he said.

The labyrinth at Southridge is the fourth public, accessible labyrinth in Clark County, according to Schroeder (see box).

“They are spreading. There’s a huge interest in them,” she said. “More and more people are looking for spirituality as an adjunct or even outside of religion. Labyrinths have a spiritual history that’s much more ancient than any one denomination.”

Share:



T A G S

[Ridgefield & Fairgrounds](#)

Receive latest stories and
local news in your email:

Email address...

GO

By signing up you are agreeing to our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



Scott Hewitt

Columbian Arts &
Features Reporter

@ ScottHewitt
 (360) 735-4525
 scott.hewitt@columbi...

Featured Agent



**HARIS
HADZISELIMOVIC**

360-302-5099

Keller Williams Realty

[View Listings](#)

\$1,000,000

BRUSH PRAIRIE, WA

Listing courtesy of Hartwell Saunders

\$539,900

WOODLAND, WA

Listing courtesy of Mary Meeker



RELATED STORIES

[Kansas City to
vote on
removing
King's name
from street](#)

November 5, 2019

[Ridgefield
schools mark
50 years with
weeklong
Cispus camp](#)

November 3, 2019

[Evergreen's
Monda,
Ridgefield's
Knight a
perfect fit for
football](#)

October 31, 2019

Comments

Please take a second to review our community guidelines

www.columbian.com Comment Policy

Please read our [Comment Policy](#) before commenting.



What do you think?

0 Responses

Upvote

Downvote

0 Comments

www.columbian.com

 Login ▾

 Recommend

 Tweet

 Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON WWW.COLUMBIAN.COM

Takeaways from Day 2 of House impeachment public hearings

1 comment • 2 days ago



Melanie Kenoyer — This article forgot to mention that Ambassador Yovanovitch was so impressive in her testimony,

In Our View: Old questions shouldn't define new bridge effort

2 comments • 13 hours ago



Jeffrey Gibbons — "If the questions change, so do the assumptions and the solutions. Learning from the past can be

Letter: Herrera Beutler follows through

7 comments • 2 days ago



Dave Van Curen — Apple pie and ice cream anyone? JHB supporters are trumpeting her legislation that no one

Herrera Beutler stands by impeachment criticism in town hall call

9 comments • a day ago



Jeffrey Gibbons — I read what JHB says above about the impeachment investigation and I shake my head. As a

 Subscribe  Add Disqus to your site Add Disqus Add

 Disqus' Privacy Policy Privacy Policy Privacy

NEWS

[Local](#)
[Sports](#)
[Business](#)
[Life](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Death Notices](#)
[Vital Statistics](#)

HELP

[Contact Us](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[Delivery Issues](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Send us a News Tip or Photo](#)
[Send a Letter to the Editor](#)
[Delivery Opportunities](#)
[Archives](#)

MORE

[Submit an Event](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Real Estate](#)
[Blogs](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[ePaper](#)
[Community Partnerships](#)
[Web Design & SEO](#)



Subscribe

Search...



Copyright © 2019 [The Colombian](#). All rights reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [user agreement](#).

[Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Service](#) [Community Guidelines](#)
[Columbian Publishing Co.](#) [Printing Services](#) [Careers](#)

You have **4** free articles this month. Get unlimited access for **\$9.99/month**.

Subscribe now

