

OUR LABYRINTH IS OPEN TO ALL. WALK. PRAY. REST.

By Venita King Birky, Prayer Ministries at Beth-El Mennonite Church

After two years of planning, and thanks to our “Village” at Beth-El Mennonite Church in Colorado Springs, our Prayer Labyrinth is ready to be walked! Many hands helped make this.

This vision began with my reading the book “Sensible Shoes” by Sharon Garlough Brown, which is a realistic fiction story of the spiritual journeys of 4 women who meet at a retreat. There is one scene where each walk a labyrinth with totally different experiences, which caught my interest. (I have walked labyrinths and have found them to be more interesting and grounding than I first expected.) The thought occurred to me that our church grounds have plenty of room for a labyrinth. The wonderings continued, the vision grew and did not go away.

I started by going to look at other outdoor labyrinths around town. Merv joined me and it turned out to be kind of a fun project together. We checked out size, materials, patterns, etc.

Mike Martin was consulted many times about materials and process for our Labyrinth since he had offered to help. He is part of Rocky Top, a landscaping company that has many kinds of gravel and rock.

There were many steps to making this. Marking the path was the most difficult because the measurements needed to be exact. The circle is approximately 43 ft in diameter, around a tree. Paths are lined with edgers and the 33” walking paths are filled with Colorado granite gravel. The walking paths pattern is a shortened version of a Chartres Labyrinth. Benches are added in the middle for resting. Eventually, the vision is to put xeriscape plantings, grasses, rocks around the perimeter.

The actual construction of the Labyrinth took parts of three days. The first day was marking the path and laying the edgers by four volunteers. This was heavy and exacting work. Day two brought 12 persons to fill wheelbarrows with gravel, carry to the site, dump and even it out. Again, hard and heavy work! Another evening was spent putting mulch around the perimeter.

A Labyrinth may be used for various purposes: Prayer, Meditation, Centering, Contemplation, etc. A Labyrinth is NOT a maze. There is one winding path to the center, and back out again. Labyrinths have been used for centuries in France, England, and North Africa as a religious practice.

For many, in walking a Labyrinth, one intentionally slows down to give God prayerful attention. The journey to the center is opportunity to seek guidance, release burdens, identify fears, confess sins. The center is intended as a resting place to be held in God’s embrace. In the outward journey, the Spirit is sought to release, strengthen, empower. This is sometimes called “Walking a Sacred Path.” This is, in short, a Prayer Walk.

Thank You to Terry & Millie Troyer for creating and installing the Labyrinth sign.

Thank You to Amy & Ken Linfield for donating and delivering the bench alongside the Labyrinth.

-VENITA BIRKY



Additional Labyrinth Photos



Setting the edgers was exacting work.



Wheelbarrows and muscles required for the path.



Plaque in front of Labyrinth by Terry Troyer

