The Labyrinth at Saint Mary's:

The beautiful and inspirational labyrinth at Saint Mary's was the result of a parishioner's generosity and desire to have a special place in memory of her parents. In her own words, here is the history of our labyrinth and some suggested guidelines for walking the path.

"How did the labyrinth at St. Mary's come about? In the late 1990's, there was a 90-foot wide, twelve-circuit Chartres labyrinth painted on the front lawn. Parishioners and passers-by walked it regularly. Unfortunately, it had to be repainted whenever the grass was cut and meditating with cars and people going by on South Greeley Avenue was not easy.

In 2002, the newly-formed Spiritual Nurture Commission re-visited the idea and painted the smaller seven-circuit Cretan labyrinth in front of our outside altar. This one lasted a few summers and was easier to maintain. I was on the Commission and thought it would be a wonderful addition to our church to have a permanent labyrinth, so I funded its construction and dedicated it in memory of my parents, Mary and Leonard Chan. They were wonderful role models and lived ethical and spiritual lives, following Christian values.

In 2005, with the help of a church member and landscape designer who donated her vision and expertise, the labyrinth was re-positioned to its current location, beside the memorial garden. Another parishioner drew the template on the ground. That December, the topsoil was laid over the pattern and our landscape designer directed the placement of the river rocks and the mulch for the path. She placed it so that when one came to the center of the labyrinth, the church came into view.

Personally, I often start off the walk not really knowing how to "clear my mind". However, as I start to move slowly along the path, I just let in whatever "comes to mind". Sometimes the thoughts are of mundane things. Other times, the thoughts become a prayer. At the center, I look at the sundial for a while and ready myself for the return walk. If I take my time, I feel a tingling in my fingertips at the end of the walk, similar to what the Chinese call "chi" or energy. This will not happen if I hurry through the walk. Each person's experience will be different, but all will find the experience calming if not spiritual."

Welcome to the Labyrinth

You are about to step into an ancient archetypal path that is hundreds of years old. The pattern has been walked by millions of people of all cultures for many reasons. The labyrinth is a sacred place set aside for you to reflect, look within, pray, and/or negotiate new behavior. The rhythm of walking, placing one foot in front of the other, empties the mind, relaxes the body and refreshes the spirit. Follow the pace your body wants to go.

The Labyrinth can be walked in Four Stages

If you encounter other people walking the same path, simply allow them to pass.
You walk the labyrinth with your body and rest your mind.

- **Remember: Before walking the labyrinth**
  Take time in gratitude - be thankful for your life. Bless the people in your life. If there's a specific event or situation troubling you, bring it to mind and form a healing question if possible.
- **Release: Walking into the labyrinth**
  This is the time to quiet the mind, let go of the mind chatter and release your troubles. Open your heart to feel whatever it might feel. Become aware of your breathing. Take slow breaths. Relax and move at your own pace.
- **Receive: Standing or Sitting in the Center**
  This is a place of reflection. Pause and stay as long as you like. Open yourself to your higher power. Listen to that small inner voice. In the safety of the labyrinth have a heart-to heart talk with yourself.
- **Return: Walking out of the labyrinth**
  When you are ready, begin walking out the same path you followed in. Walking out, integration of your experience happens. Experience the sense of well-being, healing, excitement, calm or peace. Each labyrinth experience is different. You may feel nothing or have a powerful reaction. Whatever, listen to your heart and take all the time you need.

Our labyrinth is available for anyone who wishes to walk the path. Let your feet still your mind. Enjoy.