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# Northfield church installs new labyrinth for meditation

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Those seeking refuge from the stress of modern day living can find peace and serenity at Northfield's The Episcopal Church of St. James the Less, where a new labyrinth meditation circle will calm and soothe the soul.

The labyrinth is located at the southwest exterior side of the church and is open to the public, reflecting the church's open door policy.

"The church is about healing and wholeness for our parishioners, for our neighbors and for the world at large. We want to be a parish that is inclusive of the community; we strive to operate under Jesus' words to love with the heart, mind, soul and strength," The Rev. Lisa Senuta said.

Senuta went on to explain how the labyrinth embraces the many different ways the parish focuses not only on the word of the gospel, but on human wellness too.

"We are all impacted by the busyness of every day living. As a mother of two children myself, I know life can get hectic and stressful. Each and every one of us needs a time for silence, a time to reflect and a time to be still. We can all make better decisions when we've had time to slow down and rest," Senuta said. "I'm also aware that meditation can sound intimidating. Many people say, 'I can't sit still long enough to meditate.' We are now telling them that

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*Lisa Senuta — St. James the Less rector on the new labyrinth.*

they don't have to. They can walk the labyrinth and embrace the healing powers of nature, allowing themselves to actively calm the mind."

Senuta said there is no wrong way to approach the labyrinth.

"This is about taking the time to let the good, bad, useful and useless thoughts freely come in and out of the mind," she added. "It's a time to begin to learn to detach from what no longer serves and a chance to attach to the good that comes to mind."

The commitment to provide safety and comfort for all is apparent in many other ways at the parish, too. For example, along with the labyrinth, a beautiful and bountiful garden sits to the south.

There, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce and a variety of flowers grow. Many of the plots are tended by parishioners who donate the harvest to the Northfield Township Food Pantry. Other plots are occupied by nearby neighbors who may not belong to the parish but enjoy the social and emotional joys gardening brings.

The parish hosts a variety of workshops cen-

tering around marriage, Christian meditation, managing technology and organization. They also host several unique music-based services, including a Beatles cover band in the spring.

On Oct. 20, the church will host a Soul Mass at 10 a.m., celebrating with the many uplifting Motown music favorites. The hope is these offerings will take out any intimidation that may come with stepping foot into a church.

"We are very intentional about being a place where anyone can feel welcomed at any time. I hope for people to see our community as one with open doors," Senuta said. "I feel the addition of the labyrinth is reflective of that belief. I believe that if we provide quiet spaces for stillness and reflection, we can all connect to ourselves and one another more effectively — a benefit to all society."

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Parishioner Colleen Schipfer walks around the new labyrinth at The Episcopal Church of St. James the Less in Northfield. PHOTO SUBMITTED

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