



Spiritual Retreat  
Presbyterian Church in Burlington  
29 September 2012



# Walking Humbly With Our God

## Spiritual Retreat, 29 September 2012

9:00 – 9:25 a.m.	Registration Coffee & Conversation	Narthex Outside Fellowship Hall
9:30 – 10:15 a.m.	Welcome & Opening Worship Reflection on Biblical “Road Stories”	Sanctuary
10:15 – 10:25 a.m.	Placing Ourselves on the Road	Sanctuary
10:30 – 11:15 a.m.	Small Group Discussion: Sharing our Faith Journeys: Where are we along the road?	Youth Room – Group 1 Nursery – Group 2 Small Classroom – Group 3 Front Classroom – Group 4 Sanctuary – Group 5
11:20 – 11:30 a.m.	Sacred Reading: An Introduction to Lectio Devino Hearing the Word – Psalm 139	Sanctuary
11:40 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.	Pondering, Conversing, & Contemplating: Interacting With the Word – Psalm 139 Journaling Drawing (including mandalas) Sharing, discussing Silent contemplation / walking, sitting	Small Classroom Front Classroom Youth Room Atrium, Play Area, Sanctuary
12:20 – 12:30 p.m.	Bringing it Together – Morning Wrap-up & Introduction to Afternoon Activities	Sanctuary
12:30 – 1:15 p.m.	LUNCH	Outside Fellowship Hall
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Walking the Labyrinth Group 1 – 1:30 p.m. Group 2 – 1:55 p.m. Group 3 – 2:20 p.m. Group 4 – 2:45 p.m. Group 5 – 3:10 p.m.	Fellowship Hall
1:30 and 2:30 p.m.	Guided Meditation	Nursery
1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Reprise of Morning Activities: Journaling Drawing (including mandalas) Sharing, discussing Silent contemplation / walking, sitting	Small Classroom Front Classroom Youth Room Atrium, Play Area, Sanctuary
3:30 p.m.	Closing	Fellowship Hall

**Notes:** The group number on your name tag indicates your location for the morning small group discussions and your time slot for walking the labyrinth in the afternoon. There are no scheduled breaks, but additional time is built in between activities.

# Morning Worship

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Leader:** The Lord's unfailing love and mercy never cease,  
fresh as the morning and sure as the sunrise.

Come close this day to the God who loves you without measure,  
Open your eyes to see the One who sustains all life,  
Open your ears to hear the One who calls you by name,  
Open your life to respond to the One who fills all your deepest longings.

**Sung Call to Worship**      *Bless the Lord O my Soul*      Hymnal #597

**Collect for the Day** (unison)

God may we wait in patience and hope for what is emerging  
in our lives, in our world and through our faith,  
May we be willing to walk on paths unknown,  
that you have marked out with loving care,  
May we wait in trust and not fear for Your new world,  
for the justice and peace and freedom that has been promised,  
for those things hoped for and not yet seen.  
Knowing that the future is in Your hands,  
may we wait for the release and rest of Your Jubilee

**Hymn**      *Bless Now, O God, the Journey*      (Next Page)

**Scripture**      *Responsive Reading – Encounters on the Way*      (Next Page)

**Reflection**      *Signposts Along the Way*      Rod MacDonald

**The Lord's Prayer (ecumenical version)**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen

**Closing Hymn**      *Servant Song*      Softcover #2222  
(verses 1 & 2)

# Bless Now, O God, The Journey

Sylvia G. Dunstan

Hal Hopson



Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,  
Bless so - jour - ners and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way,  
Di - vine E - ter - nal Lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.  
whose hope burns through the ter - rors, whose love sus - tains the day.  
We wait for lands of pro - mise where milk and hon - ey flow.



The trail is found in de - sert and winds the moun - tain round,  
We yearn for hol - y free - dom while of - ten we are bound.  
But wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.  
To - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.  
Our cov - en - ant is writ - ten on roads as faith is found.

## Encounters on the Road – A Conversation in the Word

The Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and family to the land that I will show you. ***“I will bless those who bless you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”***”

Two disciples were going to Emmaus, talking about all the things that had happened. While they were discussing, Jesus came near and went with them, but they did not recognize him. ***When Jesus was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.***

Jacob came to a certain place and stayed there for the night. He dreamed there was a ladder reaching to heaven; and angels were ascending and descending on it.

***The Lord stood beside Jacob and said, “Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go; I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”***

As Saul approached Damascus, a light flashed around him; he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He got up, and could see nothing.

***Ananias laid his hands on Saul and said, “The Lord sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” For several days he was with the disciples; he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”***

Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mother’s house.”

***But Ruth said, “Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”***

An Ethiopian official had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. He was in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, “Go and join him.” Starting with this scripture, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him.

***Along the road, the Ethiopian said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Philip baptized him, and when they came out of the water, the Spirit snatched Philip away. The Ethiopian saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.***

The Lord said to Elijah, “Go and turn eastward, and hide yourself; you shall drink from the stream, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

***So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the stream.***

As Jesus was leaving Jericho, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus, he began to shout saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

***Jesus said, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Teacher, let me see again,” and Jesus answered, “Go, your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.***

This is the word of the Lord.

***Thanks be to God!***

# Walking Humbly With Our God

## Signposts Along the Way

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### Abraham & Sarah

Called to leave home for a new land.

❖ *We may feel new, or newly returned to faith.*

Genesis 12:1-5

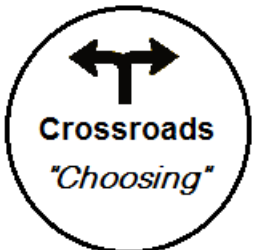


### Jacob

Wrestling with the angel of God on the way back to Canaan.

❖ *We may be bumping up against questions or doubts.*

Genesis 32:22-31



### Ruth

Should she stay in her homeland, or travel with Naomi to Judah?

❖ *We may have a choice to make about living out our faith.*

Ruth 1:1-18



### Disciples

Sent out by Jesus to spread good news and heal in Galilee.

❖ *We may be in the midst of actively serving.*

Luke 9:1-6



### Paul

"I have learned to be content with whatever I have."

"Whether we live or die we are the Lord's"

❖ *We may experience full at-one-ness with God and peace with whatever our situation may be.*

Philippians 4:11 / Romans 14:8

## Conversation Starters for Small Group Discussions

- Where did you place yourself along the road?
- Why did you pick that road sign to describe your present situation?
- How do you feel about being in this place on your journey with God?
- If there are some road signs that have not been chosen by members of the group, have you ever been in that place before? How did it feel?



# Lectio Divina

## Sacred Reading



Lectio divina (pronounced lex'- ee- oh di-vee'-nah), which means "sacred reading" is an approach to hearing and praying through the scriptures that dates to ancient times. It can be done individually or in groups and has often been practiced in religious communities. There are 4 stages or "movements" in the classic pattern of lectio divina: hearing, pondering, conversing, resting. Before entering in to the reading, it is beneficial to prepare to encounter God through a few moments of silence or some relaxation or centering technique.

### **Movement 1 - Hearing the Sacred Word (*Lectio*)**

The emphasis is on "hearing" God address you personally; the method suggests 3 readings:

- Read the passage through slowly, allowing each word to speak to you — sit silently for a few moments.
- Re-read the passage; take note of a particular word, phrase, or image that catches your attention — sit silently.
- Read again and stop at point that is calling out to you — begin the next stage ...

### **Movement 2 - Pondering the Personal Word (*Meditatio*)**

Ponder on the word, phrase, or image that touched you in the reading. Ruminates on it, that is chew on it. Repeat it to yourself. Take it in. Think on it. What is God saying to you in this moment through these words.

### **Movement 3 - Dialog With God (*Oratio*)**

"Oratio" means "speak" or "pray". Speak to God, using words, ideas, or images. It may be words of praise, blessing, or thanksgiving. Tell God what you have discovered in yourself during your experience of pondering. Express your feelings and respond to what God has said to you.

### **Movement 4 - Heavenly Rest (*Contemplatio*)**

The stage of praying or talking with God resolves into a stage of quiet rest and mental silence. Rest in God's embrace. When words are no longer necessary, stop using them. Be still, and enjoy being in God's presence.



# FOUR MODELS FOR SACRED READING

Compiled by Steve Shussett

*Prayer is a four step dance with the Lord —  
To read, to reflect, to respond, and to rest.*

~ Ruth Haley Barton

## DWELLING IN THE WORD

If using this model, read:

After hearing the text, speak to one or more of the following questions with your companions:

- What stands out in the text for you?
- How is the text challenging or inspiring?
- What grabs your imagination?

## THE AFRICAN (LAMBETH) METHOD OF DWELLING IN THE WORD

If using this model, read:

Upon the first reading of the text, identify a word or phrase that attracted you.

Upon the second reading of the text, identify where it touches your life today.

Upon the third and final reading of the text, identify a word or phrase that attracted you

- Address what you believe God want you to do or be.
- Is God inviting you to change in anyway?

## THE LATIN AMERICAN METHOD OF DWELLING IN THE WORD

If using this model, read:

After hearing the text, speak to one or more of the following questions with your companions:

- What is true about this reading?
- What bothers you in this reading?
- What will you do in coming days to make this story come alive for you in a way that is faithful to God, purposeful and helpful?
- What can we, as individuals and a community, do in a tangible way—an incarnational way?
- What might we begin, continue, or stop doing?

Take turns reflecting on the passage with your partner. Try to be concise, limiting stray thoughts and illustrations. Listen deeply to what the other person is saying. Your task is to listen without offering your own insights.

## NORVENE VEST, *GATHERED IN THE WORD*

- Upon the first reading of the text, identify a word or phrase that attracted you
- Upon the` second reading of the text, ask "How is my life touched?" Consider possibilities, and be attentive to sensory impressions. When invited by the leader, respond silently or aloud with one sentence beginning with the words "I hear..," "I see...," or "I sense..." Or you may pass.
- Upon the third reading of the text, ask "Is there an invitation here (for me)?"

Consider this as an invitation to you over the next few days, rather than longer term.

When indicated by the leader, you may speak the invitation aloud, or you may pass.

- After hearing the reading a fourth and final time, pray aloud or silently for God to help the person on your right respond to the invitation perceived.

**Psalm 139:1-18 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

1. O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
2. You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.
3. You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.
4. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD,  
you know it completely.
5. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
7. Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?
8. If I ascend to heaven, you are there.  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
9. If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
10. even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
11. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,"  
12. even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as  
bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
13. For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
15. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made  
in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
16. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.
17. How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!
18. I try to count them – they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end – I am still with you.

**Psalm 139:1-18 New English Translation (NET)**

1. O LORD, you examine me and know.
2. You know when I sit down and when I get up;  
even from far away you understand my motives.
3. You carefully observe me when I travel  
or when I lie down to rest; you are aware of everything I do.
4. Certainly my tongue does not frame a word without you,  
O LORD, being thoroughly aware of it.
5. You squeeze me in from behind and in front; you place your hand on me.
6. Your knowledge is beyond my comprehension;  
it is so far beyond me, I am unable to fathom it.
7. Where can I go to escape your spirit?  
Where can I flee to escape your presence?
8. If I were to ascend to heaven, you would be there.  
If I were to sprawl out in Sheol, there you would be.
9. If I were to fly away on the wings of the dawn,  
and settle down on the other side of the sea,  
10. even there your hand would guide me,  
your right hand would grab hold of me.
11. If I were to say, "Certainly the darkness will cover me,  
and the light will turn to night all around me,"  
12. even the darkness is not too dark for you to see, and the night  
is as bright as day; darkness and light are the same to you.
13. Certainly you made my mind and heart;  
you wove me together in my mother's womb.
14. I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing.  
You knew me thoroughly;
15. my bones were not hidden from you, when I was made in secret  
and sewed together in the depths of the earth.
16. Your eyes saw me when I was inside the womb.  
All the days ordained for me were recorded in your scroll  
before one of them came into existence.
17. How difficult it is for me to fathom your thoughts about me, O God!  
How vast is their sum total!
18. If I tried to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.  
Even if I finished counting them, I would still have to contend with you.

### Psalm 139:1-18 The Message

1. GOD, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand.
2. I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.
3. You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight.
4. You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence.
5. I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too – your reassuring presence, coming and going.
6. This is too much, too wonderful – I can't take it all in!
7. Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit? to be out of your sight?
8. If I climb to the sky, you're there!  
If I go underground, you're there!
9. If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon,
10. You'd find me in a minute – you're already there waiting!
11. Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark!  
At night I'm immersed in the light!"
12. It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you; night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you.
13. Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb.
14. I thank you, High God – you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration – what a creation!
15. You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something.
16. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.
17. Your thoughts – how rare, how beautiful!  
God, I'll never comprehend them!
18. I couldn't even begin to count them – any more than I could count the sand of the sea.  
Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you!

### Psalm 139:1-18 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

1. You have looked deep into my heart, LORD, and you know all about me.
2. You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts.
3. You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.
4. Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say,
5. and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side.
6. I can't understand all of this!  
Such wonderful knowledge is far above me.
7. Where could I go to escape from your Spirit or from your sight?
8. If I were to climb up to the highest heavens, you would be there.  
If I were to dig down to the world of the dead you would also be there.
9. Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean.
10. Even then your powerful arm would guide and protect me.
11. Or suppose I said,  
"I'll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over."
12. But you see in the dark  
because daylight and dark are all the same to you.
13. You are the one who put me together inside my mother's body,
14. and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me.  
Everything you do is marvelous! Of this I have no doubt.
15. Nothing about me is hidden from you!  
I was secretly woven together deep in the earth below,
16. but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed.  
Even before I was born,  
you had written in your book everything I would do.
17. Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding, much more than I could ever imagine.
18. I try to count your thoughts, but they outnumber the grains of sand on the beach. And when I awake, I will find you nearby.

# Journaling

*Something in the physical act of writing  
releases creativity and self understanding ...  
journaling unlocks the imagination*

*-- Anne Broyles, Journaling: a Spiritual Journey*



A journal is a record of life's journey. Journaling records responses to events over time in: thoughts, feelings, questions, hopes, and insights. A spiritual journal focuses on how these thoughts, feelings, questions, hopes, and insights relate to our faith experience. Life's journey extends outward from the present moment in both directions, past and future. Life's journey also extends inward to deeper meaning and purpose beneath the surface.

By reflecting on life through journaling, we can: be aware of God's daily presence in our lives, contemplate and weigh the meaning of scripture, attend to truths conveyed symbolically in dreams, gain insights from conversations with ourselves, others, and with God. A spiritual journal is a written record of personal reactions to spiritual matters. The key thing about writing a journal is that it's a place to spiritually share yourself with God and with yourself. You're pouring your thoughts out to God, but you're also the audience. Be honest with yourself and God when writing. You may not get that right from the start. Few of us have any idea of what it really means to be honest to God, and so we learn as we go along. Think without analyzing. Leave yourself open so the Spirit can get you to share honestly as you're writing. And don't tell yourself, "nah, that's too strange a thought". Don't censor it, just write it.

## Basic Principles:

- Just a few words or sentences are OK.
- Don't worry about punctuation, spelling, grammar, or legibility
- Don't try to copy someone else's style; just be yourself

## What kind of things go into it?

- Things you sense around you (observations)
- Places you've been and what you draw from them
- Insights you've had along the way
- Prayers you've prayed  
(formally-written, poetic, or said/screamed/sobbed toward God).
- Special things that others have written or said.
- Things you've discovered while looking back in the journal.
- Bible verses, sermon notes, or phrases that have a special meaning for you. Explore your feelings as you study the Bible.
- Experiences that have been meaningful to you should be added.
- New awareness of God's revealing himself to you should be included.

- Quotes from books that are meaningful to you.
- Any thoughts that come to your mind.
- Note any images that touch your life.
- Note especially feelings you have.
- Write how you feel about events, persons, ideas, and relationships.
- What books are you reading? Keep a list of books you read. Write phrases from these books in your journal.
- Note "anything that rings a bell in your life" in your journal.

### HOW SHOULD I BEGIN?

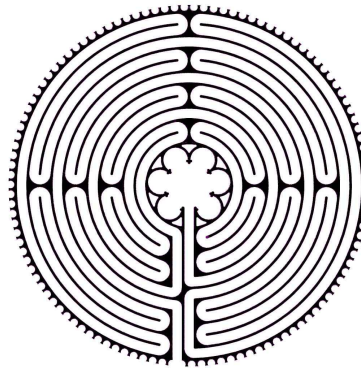
- Write fast, write everything, include everything.
- Write from your feeling, accept whatever comes to mind, and note it in your journal.
- As you begin, ask this question:  
"What is the most important thing going on in my life right now?"
- Begin with an image. "This period of my life has been like ... "
- Write all "the feelings" you have in one day.
- Dialogue with yourself. Carry on an imaginary conversation with yourself.

*A journal is like a muscle: if you use it regularly, it can carry more spiritual weight in your life.*

# The Labyrinth

*~ A Spiritual Tool ~*

*∞ ~ A Pathway to Prayer ~*



Walking the labyrinth is one way to take time to be quiet, to become centered in the moment, and to focus on prayer and our spiritual lives.

Walking in itself can be a spiritual practice. Walking integrates body mind and spirit. And walking a labyrinth is said to balance the right and left brain, bringing relaxation and calming stress. Aborigines and Native American Indians go on walk-about and vision quests. Monks have traditions of praying and meditating while walking.

For some of us and at certain times it helps to have a very special place to go and a special tool to use to find solitude and to experience God in prayer and meditation. A Labyrinth is one such place.

The Labyrinth is a pattern based on sacred geometry. In some form it has been used in many cultures over many centuries. Labyrinths and labyrinth-like patterns have been uncovered by archaeologists in a great variety of ancient and contemporary cultures. Some of the simplest and most ancient patterns have been discovered in the Mediterranean and in Celtic lands. These ancient patterns are referred to as "Classical" or "Cretan" labyrinths and are the simplest designs.

In Christian history and practice, the labyrinth is most famously associated with Chartres Cathedral in France, where an eleven -circuit labyrinth was inlaid into the floor of the sanctuary in the thirteenth century, about 1200 A.D. It was used by believers as a way of symbolically participating in a pilgrimage. In the present day, labyrinths are being used and constructed in churches of many denominations, in hospitals, wellness centers and community parks.

Labyrinths can be permanent or temporary. The labyrinth we will walk today is painted on canvas and is portable. Unlike a maze, whatever their pattern or size, all labyrinths have a meandering path that unfailingly brings you to the center and back out again in spite of being a path full of unexpected turns and changes of direction.

The rhythm of walking is conducive to prayerful contemplation. The unpredictability of the path with its twists and turns helps us to relinquish our need to feel "in control" and to acknowledge our dependence upon God. The certainty of reaching the center inspires us to trust in God. All of these things can help draw us into a place where we can allow our hearts to lay open before God.

There are just a few guidelines about walking the labyrinth to keep in mind.

- ❖ There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. All that is required is to decide to take the first step.
- ❖ The space has been prepared as a sacred place. Please enter in quiet.
- ❖ Before walking, we ask that you remove your shoes.
- ❖ Pause a few minutes before entering the labyrinth, take your time, and walk at your own pace.
- ❖ If you encounter or need to pass another person who is also walking, just step aside for a moment and then step back on the path.

### **A Short Reading List**

*Exploring the Labyrinth: A guide for Healing and Spiritual Growth*, Melissa Gayle West

*Labyrinth and the Song of Songs*, Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion

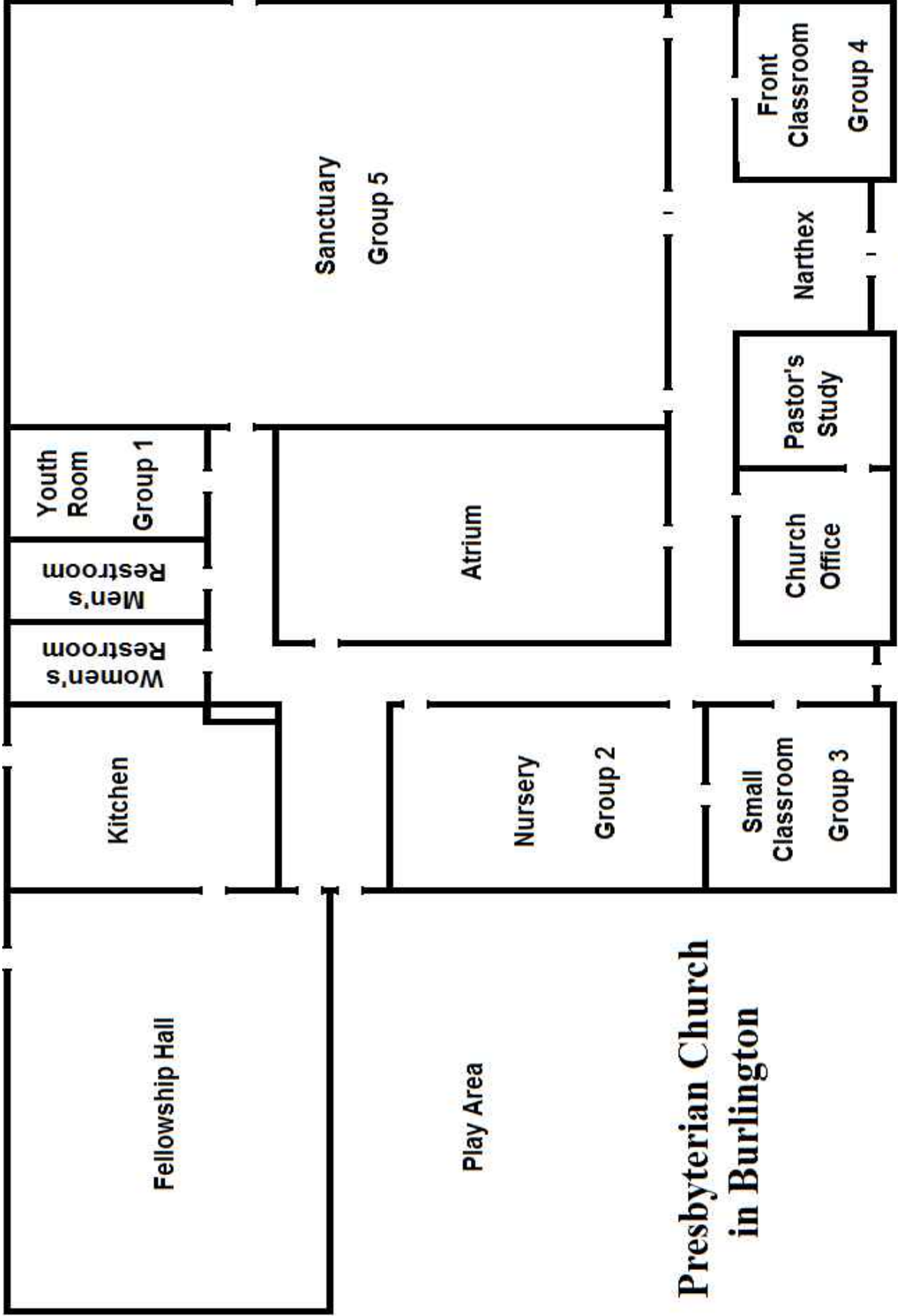
*Labyrinth for the Spirit*, Jim Buchanan

*Praying the Chartres Labyrinth*, Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion

*The Healing Labyrinth, Finding Your Path to Inner Peace*, Helen Raphael Sands

*The Sacred Companion*, Lauren Artress

*Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, Lauren Artress



# Presbyterian Church in Burlington



## Closing Liturgy

Our learning fosters a thoughtful faith,  
affirming our varied places along the Christian journey.

Our journey leads us outward,  
into community and world,

With Good News in our hearts,  
hands ready to serve,

And a commission to:  
do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

### **Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah**

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more,  
Feed me till I want no more.





Welcome and opening worship



Pondering, Conversing, & Contemplating: Drawing



Walking the labyrinth.