

UUFCA Labyrinth Project

Proposal to the Board

August 1, 2018

The Labyrinth Project requests \$5000 from the Building Fund for Phase 2. Funds would be used for:

- additional plants for enhancing the surrounding area, restoring the fire road, screening to create a more sacred space, and softening the labyrinth itself
- compensating project manager Andy Dwyer for his work advising, planting, maintaining, and weeding, as well as training volunteers in Phase 2
- other projects to be determined by a Labyrinth Project Planning group comprised of representatives from various teams and projects with design decisions to be made by the Aesthetics Team in consultation with others (see details in Phase 2 section that follows)



The following pages provide background of the UUFCA labyrinth and project, including its history, the formation of the Labyrinth Project team, past and potential project phases.

UUFCO Labyrinth Project

July 2018

Background

Labyrinths have existed for thousands of years across the world and have recently reemerged in our culture. There is a rich history of walking labyrinths in many spiritual traditions. They have long served as a means for contemplation and meditation.

The desire for a labyrinth at UUFCO emerged in the early congregation-wide visioning process for our New Home. In 2012, then Rev. Heather Starr led a labyrinth retreat. The Design Committee explored possibilities with the architects, including embedding a design in the floor of the gathering space or sanctuary, as a simpler version of the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral. It was decided to forego a labyrinth during initial construction and create one outside once there had been enough time to settle into our space and determine how it might fit in. Though some local churches have canvas labyrinths that they use on occasion, there was a desire for a permanent one on our land, one that would be open to the community.

During building construction, it was decided to save the dirt leftover from preparing the site to create a flat area for a future labyrinth there. The original work on the labyrinth was initiated soon after the move to the New Home with a core group including Eileen Andrewson (designer of the labyrinth), David Foote (coordinator of installation), Chandra Smith, Yvonne Lyles, and Dale Clark. The group found the large center stone on our land and it was moved to where it is now. Eileen, David, Chandra, and Yvonne led a service about labyrinths in July 2015, and encouraged members and friends to bring stones on Sundays and place them in a wheelbarrow at the entrance and join in laying them to create the labyrinth on August 2, followed by a dedication ceremony. As David wrote at the time: "This is truly a communal labyrinth...not a professionally designed or engineered feat...it is our organic creation that will continually evolve."

Though walked by many congregants and neighbors, not much happened after the initial volunteer construction to fill out the labyrinth or settle it into its surroundings, though even now stones for the labyrinth continue to appear at the building entrance. The need to landscape and restore the area and plant the berm created for screening was recognized, but all involved at the time were still overcommitted to other UUFCO projects in our new building.

Labyrinth Project — Phase 1

In spring 2017, Virginia Sponsler stepped forward with ideas on how the labyrinth and surrounding area could be restored with native vegetation as part of our stewardship for the land, and how the labyrinth could be used in the future for UUFCCO programs. Dale Clark encouraged her to head up the Labyrinth Project herself. A proposal was made to the Board for \$5000 for the first phase of the project.

Andy Dwyer of Old Growth Nursery was contracted to be the consulting landscape person, to help with initial installation and maintenance, and to work with Virginia who was serving as the Labyrinth Project Coordinator. Andy had worked as an intern with Wintercreek Nursery when they were installing the original landscape on the grounds of the new building. He is a graduate of OSU, has his own native plant nursery and specializes in restoration and native plant projects. He is very committed to native landscaping and restoration of the land and feels a connection to the UUFCCO property. He works for several UUFCCO members on their home landscape projects.

In fall 2017, Andy reshaped the dirt pile intended for screening on the west side of the labyrinth into a berm suggesting the Three Sisters. Tom and Virginia Sponsler worked with him as volunteers to get the berm planted to prevent erosion. The concept was to have the planting on the berm blend seamlessly down the back side into the surrounding native landscape and for the front side to have some interesting plants as well as grasses blending into the circle of planting around the labyrinth.

Between September 2017 and May 2018 starter plants were purchased from Old Growth native nursery, Duncan Brown donated a large number of plants from his property, and Tom and Virginia worked with Andy to salvage native grasses and bushes from Northwest Crossing new building sites before they were skimmed by bulldozers. Altogether over 100 native plants were planted. Logs left over from original building site preparation were placed strategically to encourage bikers and walkers to avoid the area where the baby plants were taking hold. A wood directional sign was donated and installed on the trail that goes from the terrace and play area down the hill past the picnic table to the labyrinth.

The congregation has been encouraged to get involved. There have been three organized Labyrinth Team work parties for planting and weeding. These were announced through the ACE and Fresh Sheet. At two of the work parties several other UUFCCO volunteers joined Andy, Tom, and Virginia. Andy directed us as to the plan for the day, worked with us, and provided tools and water. Tom and Virginia provided food for all, and at various times Andy brought food treats for the volunteers. In addition to the work parties, Tom and Virginia worked with Andy an additional 20 hours as volunteers weeding, planting, scavenging

plants. On contracted time, Andy cleared more of the surrounding labyrinth area and areas leading out to the road.

The announcement about the All Congregation Work Party scheduled on June 29, 2018, included an invitation to work in the labyrinth area. Andy was at the work party to work with volunteers so they could pick up at the point the Labyrinth Team work party had left off on June 13. There were several new volunteers who had not previously worked the labyrinth.

Ellen Atkins contacted Virginia about the possibility of having a memorial garden area in the labyrinth area. She was referred to Rev. Scott and the Aesthetics Committee to propose this idea. A small group has been formed to consider and develop a proposal for such a project. The possibility of a memorial grove to the east side of the labyrinth has been mentioned as a possibility. Nativity Lutheran has incorporated a memorial area into their labyrinth area and holds celebrations of life there.

Labyrinth Project — Phase 2

The Labyrinth Project is now on the ministerial side of the organizational chart, falling under Jenn's oversight. Funding the Labyrinth Project with another block grant from the Building Fund will allow the continuation of Andy Dwyer's involvement as Project Manager working with Virginia continuing as Labyrinth Project Coordinator. We will develop an ongoing Labyrinth Team of volunteers responsible for maintenance. If a Memorial Garden is designed and installed in the labyrinth area of the property, these two projects could work closely together to design and maintain these areas.

A designated group of Labyrinth Team volunteers (Worker Bees) will be formed from the volunteers who have worked on the project this year and new congregants who are interested in committing time and energy. These volunteers will work with Andy, Tom and Virginia Sponsler to do four seasonal work parties. Labyrinth Team volunteers will be aware of current plans and could work on the labyrinth anytime on their own, in addition to the organized work days.

At All Congregational Grounds Work Days, Andy or a representative from the Labyrinth Team will be there to help direct non-regular labyrinth volunteers on tasks. We have found it is not efficient to have volunteers randomly decide what is the best use of maintenance volunteer time in that area.

Several times a year a Labyrinth Team meeting will be organized by Virginia as Project Coordinator and we will all meet with Andy for a shared meal at the Sponsler's house. We

can use these group opportunities to get to know each other, share ideas, and celebrate our progress.

As Labyrinth Project Coordinator, Virginia will be the person to represent the Labyrinth Project when coordinating with Sunday Service Committee, RE, Aesthetics Team, Grounds, Library, Memorial Garden Project, Meditation Group, Congregational Life, and others, as these programs and committees make future decisions about use of the labyrinth in their own programming.

A Labyrinth Project Planning Group made up of a representative from various teams or projects such as the Aesthetics Team, Grounds, Memorial Garden, Meditation Group and any other relevant groups will meet to decide specific next steps in design and programming in order to allocate the funds for the various sub-parts of the project. Possible projects include continuing to restore and plant out the sides of the old fire road leading to Skyline Ranch Road, planting more trees for screening between the labyrinth and Skyline Ranch Road and the labyrinth and Perlette Lane, working on installation of a memorial garden, possible installation of a deer fence around the labyrinth, design and installation of an arch type entrance to the labyrinth, and/or providing a sign with information about labyrinths. Once it is decided what's next, the Labyrinth Project will organize and carry out completion of the next phases.

The Labyrinth Project Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with the congregation through the ACE or Newsletter, Breeze, and Congregational Life, and be responsible for communicating with the Labyrinth Volunteer Team about schedules, meetings, and events.

Possible ways to integrate the Labyrinth Project into the life of the congregation include participating in services such as Earth Day, offering a segment in the Children's RE; having a Sunday when people bring native plants from their gardens and we have a planting time after service; having a native plant sale through children's' RE to raise funds for the labyrinth; having an offering by the meditation group at UUFCCO where others are invited to participate in a walking and meditation at the labyrinth. There are many possibilities ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Sponsler
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