Walking the Labyrinth at Iona Hope

Taking a labyrinth walk is a modern revival of an ancient spiritual custom. The labyrinth, a winding one-way path which leads walkers into and back out of a central space, offers a kind of body meditation which parallels the inner journey of prayer and reflection.

- **Prepare to walk.** Take some time to transition from your everyday life to the labyrinth experience. Remove your watch. Slow your breathing. Still your mind. Open yourself to possibilities.

- **Begin your journey.** Pause at the entrance to the labyrinth to take a cleansing breath and focus your attention. You may ask a question, say a prayer or recite an affirmation. Some people choose to bow or make another ritual gesture to signal the beginning of their walk.

- **Walk the inward path.** Put one foot in front of the other, and walk at a measured pace that is comfortable for you. On the way in, focus on letting go of things you want to leave behind and releasing things that stand in the way of your spiritual journey. Pause when you need to. Don't focus on the center as a goal; be present in each step of the inward path.

- **Spend time in the center.** Take as long as you wish. This part of the journey is about being present to your inmost self and to the power of the divine. You may pray, journal or simply be open to the stillness. Respect the boundaries of others with whom you share this sacred space.

- **Take the return path.** When you are ready to leave the center, begin walking back the way you came. On this part of the journey, focus on what you will bring out from the center and back into your life. As before, pause when you need to. Resist the temptation to sprint to the finish line: the return journey is as important as every other part of the labyrinth.

- **Reflect on the journey.** When you leave the labyrinth, you may pause make another gesture or say a prayer. Before leaving the area, take some time to reflect on insights you've gained, or make notes in your journal to explore further later.