

The story behind this gift:

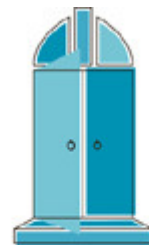
Bill Carter, who was Property Manager at St. John's about 10 years ago, envisioned a permanent labyrinth in our courtyard. He had experienced walking a canvas labyrinth at his previous parish in North Carolina, and he was happy that St. John's also had such a labyrinth. But its use was limited to special occasions, when it could be rolled out in the auditorium.

But a permanent labyrinth would be available every day and night, and the courtyard seemed like an ideal location, because it would be open to parishioners and our Lancaster neighbors. Bill imagined a gathering to which we would invite the neighbors and at which we would introduce them to the labyrinth and invite them to come back any time. He spoke to others about his dream, too.

Bill's wife, Debbie, who was not nearly so visionary, privately doubted that his dream would be fulfilled any time soon. Then, as now, the courtyard's surface was broken and uneven, and a lot of prep work would need to be done, including removal of the surface concrete and brick, as well as the existing base, repositioning of the drains, and laying a base of crushed gravel. Other building projects were more critical, and it just wasn't going to be feasible any time soon, so Bill's dream was set aside.

After Bill's death, Debbie received a lump-sum insurance settlement. Because she and Bill had developed the habit of tithing, and the insurance was meant to replace his income, she felt called to give a tithe from that settlement. She asked herself to what special purpose her gift could be directed, and soon the answer became obvious: ***a courtyard labyrinth!***

Several years have passed, during which the courtyard and labyrinth plans have been incorporated into a larger building initiative. The money for the labyrinth kit was placed into a restricted fund, which has been supplemented by some grants from foundations, to cover costs of preparation of the space for the installation. Debbie, their children, and the grandchildren that Bill never knew, are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to help with the installation of the labyrinth of Bill's dream, as well as attending a dedication to which the whole neighborhood will be invited.



HONORING OUR PAST
Welcoming Our Future

A Permanent Outdoor Labyrinth for St. John's and Our Neighbors



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As part of the courtyard refurbishment, St. John's will install a permanent labyrinth, made of pavers, in the courtyard. This labyrinth will be open to both parishioners and the Lancaster community, for contemplation and spiritual healing.

“Walking the labyrinth offers an ancient solution to our modern day stresses, answering the need for quiet contemplation while moving gracefully, peacefully around a series of turns which mirror the turns in our lives. Labyrinths have been used across cultures and time, traceable to thousands of years B.C.; it is clear that humans have long used variations of this sacred circling path for healing and meditative purposes.

“This metaphor for life's journey, for one's pilgrimage to the true self God is creating within, is experienced through the basic physical, mental, and spiritual movements of releasing stresses, receiving blessing and returning back to our lives with fresh resolve. The practice of this sacred walk, like all prayer practice, clears the space needed for God to speak into our lives, and the addition of a beautiful outdoor setting allows for the heart to open and experience the messages and metaphor from nature and all God's creation.”

From Carmel Stabley, Veriditas Labyrinth Facilitator

The Labyrinth Company, based in Connecticut, produces “labyrinth kits” with pre-cut brick pavers. Once the gravel base is prepared, the pavers can be laid according to the included templates, so the installation might include one or more sessions during which volunteers can assist with the project.

The finished labyrinth will be fully ADA handicap rated.

St. John's labyrinth will be a scaled-down version of the labyrinth of the cathedral in Chartres, France. Here is a photo of one such implementation:



St. John's labyrinth is a memorial gift from the family of Bill Carter, former Property Manager at St. John's. The story behind this gift is on the back page of this pamphlet.