

About Church of the Ascension

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension, located at 726 1st Ave NW in Hickory, NC, is an inclusive, welcoming community rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The mission of our community is to love with the heart of Christ and act as the body of Christ in our church, community, and world.

Our congregation is comprised of people from various backgrounds, and in different stages of their faith journeys. Wherever you might be in your journey, you will find Church of the Ascension to be a place where you can grow your faith and relationship with God.

In addition to our regular worship services, we offer a wide range of classes, forums, and personal-growth programs that explore topics to help integrate spirituality to a higher degree in our daily lives. Come learn how to calm your mind, strengthen your body, and renew your spirit.

If you would like more information about Ascension, call 828-328-5393, email office@ascensionhickory.org, or visit our website at ascensionhickory.org. We're also on Facebook (Episcopal Church of the Ascension Hickory), Instagram (@ascensionhickory), and YouTube (Church of the Ascension - Hickory).

WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICES

Holy Eucharist — *Sundays at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.*

Healing and Eucharist Service — *Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.*

September through May:

Breakfast — *Sundays, 8:45-9:30 a.m. (by donation)*

Adult Forums — *Sundays, 9:30-10:15 a.m.*

Children Sunday Schools (ages 4-5th grade) — *Sundays, 9:30 a.m.*

Nursery Care (infant-age 3) — *Sundays, 9:30-11:45 a.m.*

Children's Chapel — *Sundays during 10:30 a.m. worship*

Ascension Virtual Book Club — *Select Mondays, 7:00-8:00 p.m.*

Reading with the Rector — *Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m.*

Soul Sauntering Walks — *Wednesdays at 7:00 & 8:00 a.m.*

Supper — *Wednesdays, 6:00 p.m. (\$10/person; \$27/family)*

Youth Group (grades 6-12) — *Wednesdays, 6:15-7:00 p.m.*

Adult Study Group — *Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m.*

Soul Sauntering Camping Trips — *Various dates and destinations*



THE LABYRINTH

at

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension Hickory, N.C.



REMEMBER RELEASE RECEIVE RETURN

What is a Labyrinth?

A labyrinth is made up of a single, winding path that leads to the center of a circle. The path is meant to symbolize our life journey. It is not a maze with trick turns and dead ends intending to confuse. The labyrinth's path is in full view, and the same path is used to enter and exit. The circular pattern represents unity, wholeness, and infinity.

The earliest description of labyrinth walking appeared in Egypt more than 4,000 years ago! Labyrinth designs have been found on ancient Indian and Spanish petroglyphs; Greek pottery; medieval cathedral floors; Minoan Crete coins and frescos; Egyptian amulets and seals; and basketry from the American Hopi, Navajo, and Pima tribes.

Why walk a Labyrinth?

Labyrinth walking is an ancient form of active meditation used for centering, clarification, prayer, and contemplation to reduce stress, quiet the mind, and open the heart. A Labyrinth offers a blueprint where the psyche meets spirit and can help you break free of thoughts and behaviors for a level of focus difficult to find in a busy lifestyle.

You should walk a labyrinth regularly to:

- Find peace and serenity
- Find answers or seek guidance
- Connect with the Earth
- Deepen your Holy connection
- Focus your intentions
- Clear or quiet the mind
- Ground the body
- Find healing
- Gain a sense of wholeness
- Spark creativity
- Calm anxiety or reduce stress
- Be in the present moment

Labyrinth Map



How do I maximize my experience?

REMEMBER (Allow space to open your mind to be enlightened.)

1. Pause at the entrance. Become quiet and centered to prepare the mind, body, and spirit for the experience.
2. Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself and acknowledge the purpose for your walk, and to become in tune with your breathing rhythm.
3. Silently enter the labyrinth with respect and intention. *If someone is in front of you, give them several minutes to proceed before you enter.*

RELEASE (A time to let go of everyday thoughts and be quiet.)

1. Walk purposefully at your own natural pace. *The curved stones indicate where the path turns; but remember, there is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth.*
2. As you walk, pay attention to your breathing and thoughts, listen to the sounds around you, and notice the scenery. Notice what you are sensing, or memories that come as you walk. This is the releasing part of your journey. Be open and receptive to the unexpected.
3. Pause when needed to reflect, quiet the mind, or release those things causing you pain. *Be mindful of leaving space for others.*
4. Take notice of how the path winds close to the center and then near the edge. Acknowledge this as a metaphor for your personal spiritual journey; sometimes you will be closer to the Holy spirit, and sometimes further away. Walk toward the center with reverence and openness.

RECEIVE (A place to pause, reflect, and receive insights.)

1. In the center, be still and linger. Take a deep breath and receive what God and the universe has for you.
2. Leave the center when it feels appropriate.

RETURN (A chance to consider what it might mean for your daily living.)

1. Walk at a comfortable pace along the same path you entered, remaining attentive on the way out. Take time to consider what you take from this experience.
2. Upon exiting the labyrinth, turn and face the entrance. Give an acknowledgement of ending, such as "Amen" or a bow, nod or other gesture.
3. This can be a productive time to sit quietly near the labyrinth to draw, journal, or enjoy the relative stillness.
4. As you move back into the world, look for signs or invitations to do the work in the world that is yours to do. Share your peace, joy, and love with others.