

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 by . Come learn how to calm your mind, strengthen your body, and renew your spirit.

If you would like more information about Ascension, call us at 828-328-5393, email us at 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.*

Centering Prayer — *Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.*
Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

Morning Prayer — *Monday-Thursday at 9:00 a.m.*

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

September through May:

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

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

Children Sunday Schools (grades K-5 and 6-12) — *Sundays, 9:30 a.m.*

Nursery Care (infant-age 5) — *Sundays, 9:15-11:45 a.m.*

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

Wednesday Supper — *6:00 p.m. (\$8/per person)*

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

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

Ascension Book Club — *Select Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.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 is a universal symbol representing unity, wholeness, and infinity.

What's the history of Labyrinths?

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.

Labyrinths are not tied to any specific religion or culture. You do not have to be a church member or be of any specific spiritual faith to experience the benefit of walking a labyrinth.

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
- Open the heart to love
- Ground the body
- Find healing
- Gain a sense of wholeness
- Spark creativity
- Calm anxiety
- Be in the present moment
- Reduce stress

What should I wear?

Wear comfortable clothing appropriate for the weather. To get the most from your walk, you will want to enter the labyrinth with a clear mind and be open to free-flowing thoughts and feelings. This is difficult to achieve if you are focused on being too cold or hot.

Flat-soled shoes are best for comfort and stability.

How do I walk the Labyrinth?

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.