



Labyrinth Network Northwest News

Special Report
TLS Gathering 2015
Waycross Conference Center, Indiana
By Jodi Lorimer

Tom Vetter has composed a very thorough and descriptive report on many of the events of this year's Gathering. I was going to write one but he did a MUCH better job! The weather was perfect, the presentations fascinating and creative and the mood was wonderfully friendly.

Next year the Gathering will be held in Houston, Texas, not so far for us in the northwest. The theme will be "Diverse Journeys on a Common Path; Building Community Through the Labyrinth." Hosted by local Houston artist, Reginald Adams, it promises to be a very different and fascinating experience, located in an urban landscape and emphasizing diversity in all its wonderful variety.

Reginald has created a program called "Sacred Spaces" in which teens of all races and religions in the Houston area visit each other's places of worship, talk and learn about each other's lives and traditions. Together, they built a labyrinth on the site of an old African American church from the original bricks. It stands as a testament to the power of the labyrinth to bring people together. You can find out more about him here:

<http://www.urbanartcommission.org/artists/reginald-adams/>

Please look at the information posted on the TLS website and put it on your calendar to attend:

<http://labyrinthociety.org/annual-gathering>

It's going to be amazing and you won't want to miss this one! At a time when divisions along racial, social and religious lines seem to be overwhelming, the labyrinth is emerging as an oasis and focus of tolerance, peace and reconciliation. While you're at the newly updated TLS website, wander around to some of the other pages and see all of the events and developments that have been made to promote the building and use of labyrinths around the world. Hope to see you in Houston in 2016!

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Gathering Reflection: Why Do We Gather?

By Tom Vetter

Reflecting on the Waycross "Branching Out" Gathering, Tom Vetter asked:

WHY DO WE GATHER?

We Gather Together
to Meet, to Talk, to Dance,
to Walk, to Plan, to Play,
to Create, to Pray, to Relax, to Reflect,
to Sell, to Buy, to Donate, to Bid,
to Teach, to Learn, to Laugh,
to Love, to Help, to Heal,
to Celebrate, to Meditate,
to Share Meals,
to Share the Path.

A Gathering is like walking a Labyrinth together. We are welcome as we are, and our involvement with the Labyrinth and the Labyrinth community does not homogenize us or erase our individuality. Rather, it encourages, supports, and celebrates our unique expressions of ourselves! It welcomes our diversity and reveals our shared Center. This is why the Labyrinth is a tool for peace, for healing, and for unity. To support this mission is why we gather.



Photo: Lars Howlett

The 2015 TLS Gathering, with the theme “Branching Out,” took place at Waycross Conference Center amidst the peace and solitude of the meadows and the forests south of Indianapolis, Indiana. It began before it began with a meeting of TLS Board members, who arrived two days early to conduct organizational business and to engage in strategic planning. On Friday morning before the Gathering, Lisa Moriarty conducted a workshop on “Creating Personal Prayer Labyrinths.” In the afternoon, Carol Maurer offered a “Soul Collage” workshop. The creative efforts of many resulted in multiple painted, raked, and chalk-drawn labyrinths appearing on the grounds, while the windows of the Conference Center were graced with Hallie Sawyers’ colorful and stunning translucent labyrinth art. A beautifully meaningful Opening Ceremony was hosted by the Energy Keepers, which encouraged reflection and included a group labyrinth walk of John Ridder’s newly-created “Branches Labyrinth.”

The Gathering featured insightful and inspiring presentations by our three keynote speakers. On Friday evening, Maia Scott opened our eyes with her multifaceted presentation, “Seeing the

Journey Ahead with New Eyes: Living Through the Lens of the Labyrinth.” She playfully incited us to Insight as she invited our participation in several experiments, giving us the opportunity to see the labyrinth from multiple perspectives with the fresh eyes and imagination of a visionary. She even showed us how to translate the rhythms of the labyrinth into poetry!



Following Maia's instructions to trace the labyrinth path with a body part.
Photo: Lars Howlett

On Saturday morning, Ellen Bintz-Meuch called us to action with her message, “Transformative Uses of the Labyrinth: Where the Branches Grow.” Ellen shared how she successfully incorporated the labyrinth into her quest for social justice, helping to heal the trauma of the incarcerated and to lead them toward wholeness. She showed how her passionate work with “Global Healing Response,” which she founded in 2005, has promoted healing, comfort, and peace throughout the world when disaster strikes by mobilizing a unified response from the labyrinth community, reminding us to “never underestimate the power of unified healing energy and the labyrinth.”

On Sunday morning, Robert Ferre took us on his lesson-filled and often humorous life journey with his presentation, “Two Decades on the Path: Where Labyrinths Have Led Me.” Robert’s twenty year career as a labyrinth artist began when Lauren Artress, founder of Veriditas, decided that painting one canvas labyrinth was enough for her, but she needed more of them to supply the growing demand. Robert saw this as an opportunity and accepted the challenge of taking this on as his mission. He learned what he needed to learn and did what he needed to do, experimenting with techniques and inventing tools as he attained mastery of his craft. He shared his labyrinth/life path with many others, experiencing fun and friendship, love and loss, healing and renewal; his assimilated life-lessons have given him perspective and made him wise. We were all blessed to experience Robert’s Wisdom, Ellen’s Compassion, and Maia’s Vision



Robert Ferré shows an image of early days with Jeff Saward.
Photo: Lars Howlett]

The Gathering also gave the attendees the opportunity to choose from and experience a wonderful assortment of workshops, poster presentations, mini -sessions, a panel discussion offering perspectives on using the labyrinth to manage transitions, and many other life-affirming and creative activities, including an active marketplace and our annual TLS silent auction (which funds Gathering scholarships). We concluded with a beautifully inspiring Closing Ceremony lead by Ellen Bintz-Meuch, including a group Global Healing Response labyrinth walk. After the official ending of the Gathering, David Nickel hosted a local Art Studio tour on Sunday afternoon, and John Ridder and Dhyana Raynor led an all-day Labyrinth Tour Monday morning.

We are grateful to everyone who worked tirelessly to organize the amazing Waycross Gathering, including local Gathering host, John Ridder, TLS Gathering Liaison, Stephen Shibley, and the numerous TLS volunteers who graciously contributed their time and energy. May the positive energy of the 2015 Gathering live on and flow to our next highly-anticipated 2016 TLS Gathering in Houston, Texas, with the theme “Diverse Journeys on a Common Path.” See you there!



Photo: Hallie Sawyers