

A Circle of Light

By Nancy Ayer

It was The Day of the Dead, known also as All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day and Halloween. This was a day when the sacred and the profane met in the center of a labyrinth.



The windows of a church hall on the edge of a rocky shore in Eastsound, WA were shrouded with black paper upon which were drawn chalk skeletons, ghosts, bats, and witches. The large hall of Emmanuel Episcopal Parish was dark save a circle of orange lights surrounding a classical 7 circuit



Chartres-style canvas labyrinth. Candle glow peeked out from a myriad of



pumpkin faces carved in a "Pumpkin Challenge" the night before.



The labyrinth was open to the public for an adult contemplative walk from 4-5 and then available for Trick or Treaters of all ages from 5 to 6:30.



Approximately 100 costumed children and their parents walked and skidded through the purple circuits for two hours. Jack 'o lantern soup and soul bread was served afterward.



A Little Miracle Upon the Path:

Instead of giving out treats to the many costumed children who arrived, we gave each child a wrist bracelet - we called them "circles of light". Our intention behind this was to send the message how special each one is and to encourage them to take

their circle of light out into the world (plus it served as a safety aid as they walked about in the dark). When one young boy found himself in the center of the labyrinth he stood for awhile, then placed his circle of light over his head, turning round and round. Profound wisdom flows freely from children. I shall forever hold this image in my mind's eye.



After this weekend I was inspired to write the following:



The Labyrinth this Time of Year:
The Day of the Dead, All Souls' Day, Halloween
by
Nancy S. Ayer

This is the time of year when Nature prepares for hibernation - just as she always has. She will shed what she no longer needs, but which served her well at one time.

This is the time of year when the tree prepares to humble itself – to stand naked and silent against the winter cold. It is brave and fears not. It knows instinctively its own magnificence, which is sure to follow its faded beauty and sacrificial loss.

This is the time of year for us to look closely and become aware of just how in sync with Mother Nature we really are. This is a time of year for us to still our minds.

This is the time of year to discover the labyrinth and how it can hold, support and enfold as only a mother can.

This is the time of year that affords us the chance to reflect, to remember, to mourn those who went before us, and to let go as we walk the labyrinth's twisting path. When we reach the center it can be like stepping into our own center, our own stillness and source of our personal strength.

This is the time of year when, if we allow it, the labyrinth will provide a safe haven for us to look within. If we peer closely we may realize an old belief system or out dated behavior or thought pattern that may no longer work for us. This is the time to release into the energy of the labyrinth that which is worn. This is the time of year to free ourselves and allow the labyrinth to enfold us against the winter winds of loss or fear of change.

This is the time of year for us to step into the labyrinth, not only to reflect, but to feel and notice our bodies. They, like the labyrinth, speak to us.

This is the time of year to realize just how thin the veil is between life and death, between the old and the new, between those living and those who have passed on, between the past and the present, between what was and what can be. This is the time of year to discover yet accept ourselves just as we are. This is the time of year to realize what it means to be fully human.

This is the time to prepare to gift our beautiful selves with the fresh chance for new possible possibilities. So as the light fades and the leaves drop, this is the time of year to walk the labyrinth. If not now – when?

About the Author

An island person, Nancy lives on land with strong connections to the ancient. She and her husband divide their time between St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands, where they restored an 18th century sugar plantation. On the property of her second home, located on Orcas Island, WA, a 14,000 year old bison skull and bones were discovered. Sensing a strong message, Nancy often writes about her life in two worlds, both literal and metaphorical. Nancy is a Veriditas Certified Labyrinth Facilitator. She enjoys teaching labyrinth workshops to all ages. She also speaks on the connection between the soul, the labyrinth, and ancient mythology.

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