

Former skeptic hosts New Year's Day labyrinth walk



(https://pcdn.columbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/966054_new_year_labyrinth_03_64)

Cindy Haverkrate walks Eunice Schroeder's portable labyrinth on New Year's Day 2015 at First Presbyterian Church in Vancouver. (The Columbian file)

By **Scott Hewitt** ([author/shewitt](#)), Columbian

Arts & Features Reporter

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If You Go

- **What:** New Year's Day open labyrinth walk.
- **When:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 1 (come and go anytime).
- **Where:** Lower level at First Presbyterian Church, 4300 Main St., Vancouver.
- **Cost:** Free, but donations gratefully accepted.
- **Learn More:** <http://sacredjourneyministries.com> (<http://sacredjourneyministries.com/wp/>).

Clark County Labyrinths

The first time Eunice Schroeder walked a labyrinth, she was skeptical and nervous.

"My life is already messed up and I feel lost," she thought. "Why would I want to compound that by walking a maze?"

But the second time, when she found peace at the center, Schroeder burst into sobs. "I cried buckets of tears. I didn't know why," she said — but the surprising power of the experience pointed her toward a whole new direction in life. Schroeder decided to study religion in graduate school, and when it was time to choose a topic for her doctoral dissertation, she went with the long history and recent resurgence of labyrinths.

"The symbol itself goes back thousands and thousands of years. No one knows for sure just how far back," she said. "They found labyrinths carved on cave walls. It's a very ancient symbol but it wasn't until the Middle Ages that you see walking labyrinths. Right around 1200 A.D. there was a big surge of church labyrinth building," including the huge one at Chartres Cathedral, which remains the largest in France and the inspiration for a current trend of spiritual labyrinth walking that Schroeder has helped push along.

Schroeder purchased a giant, portable labyrinth and spent years hosting walking events all over the Pacific Northwest, she said, but that's slowed recently. She still hosts an annual, open New Year's Day labyrinth walk at First Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, where the next one is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 1. During that window, visitors are welcome to come and go and take the walk as they please.

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