

Press Release



A 10,000 MILE ROAD TRIP WITH A DIFFERENCE ROLLS INTO TOWN!

A 24 foot diameter printed mat rolls into town this week, on a journey that aims to “spread a positive energy around the USA,” according to the road trip’s creator, British interfaith minister Clive Johnson.

As its name suggests – ‘Labyrinth Around America’ – the project involves taking a labyrinth (a path printed on a large canvas) around the states of the continental USA. Ultimately, Johnson hopes to visit every one of the 33 states that form the border of the US, stopping at as many different places as possible along the way. Johnson admits that the project at first seemed like a madness to him, but says that it was an idea that wouldn’t go away.

He explains: “the project aims to introduce both individuals and communities to the time-honoured practice of labyrinth walking, as a way of connecting people across the country, as they walk the same path.” Johnson set off from Saint Paul, Minnesota in April last year, travelling in a roughly clockwise direction through the northern midlands, into New England, and then down the east coast. Because his route is driven by “going where feels

right”, as well as by invitation, he has travelled considerably more than the 5,000 miles or so that would have brought him in a direct circular route from his origin.

“Going where I feel led has taught me about what it means to be a pilgrim,” he says. “This is so against my usual way of liking to have clear plans and itineraries!”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the labyrinth has journeyed to many and various places – ranging from remote forest clearings in Maine to the heart of the National Mall. Schools, libraries, city parks and even a prison have numbered among its many stopping points. It has often arrived in communities where a labyrinth project has just begun or is being thought about, as well as where communities have been grieving or struggling to come to terms with a recent tragedy, such as several places in Florida following the Parkland murders earlier this year.

“What’s surprised me is that the labyrinth seems not just to have an energy, but a life of its own!” Johnson observes. “It seems to have a positive affect even when people don’t walk it, just by being laid out.”

There are now thought to be more than 10,000 labyrinths in the US alone, found in settings as diverse as public parks and university campuses. “Walking a labyrinth offers a way to meditate, and to escape from the everyday for a short while,” explains Johnson. Unsurprisingly, their popularity has been growing at a time when many people feel worn out by the busyness of modern life.

“The labyrinth welcomes people of any background, faith or no faith,” says Johnson. “It makes no demands, other than you simply put one foot in front of the other and walk!”

The labyrinth will be continuing its long journey up the west coast, and eventually making landfall in the northern mountain states, before returning to its starting point in Saint Paul. “At least that’s the plan,” says Johnson. “The one thing that I can be sure of is that there will be many surprises to come, and in all truth, I’ve no knowing where this crazy journey will end!” No experience is needed for walking a labyrinth, and individuals in wheelchairs, who are blind, or have the company of a service dog will be warmly welcomed. “Just come along,” says Johnson, “And hopefully we’ll have a chance to chat too!”

More information about the project and links to Johnson’s blog can be found on the project’s website at www.labyrintharoundamerica.net.

IMAGES: www.labyrintharoundamerica.net/lbpress.html

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