



Registered Charity No 251394

Through March we are on a Journey



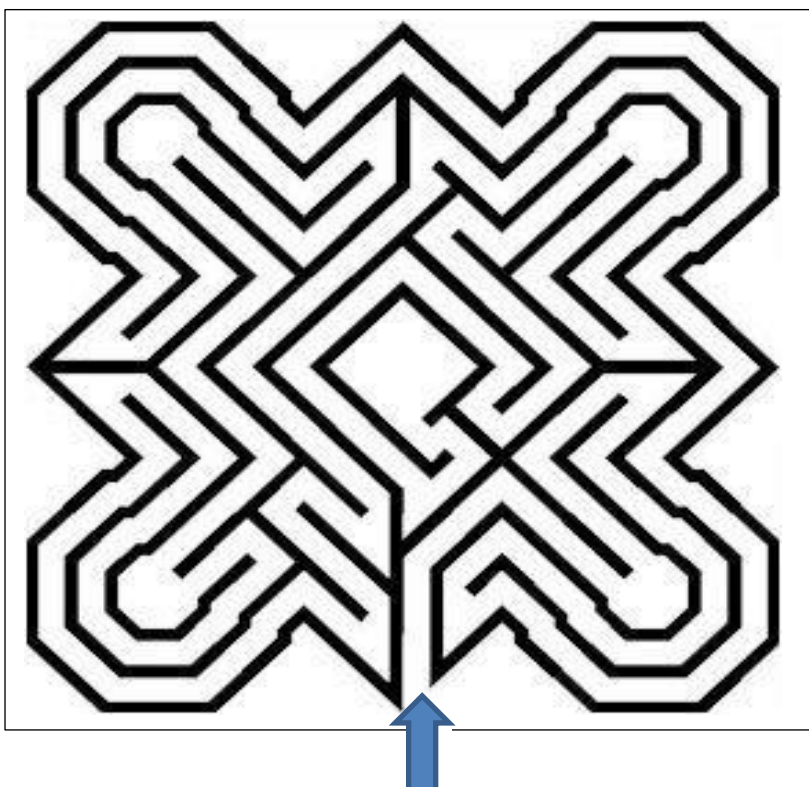
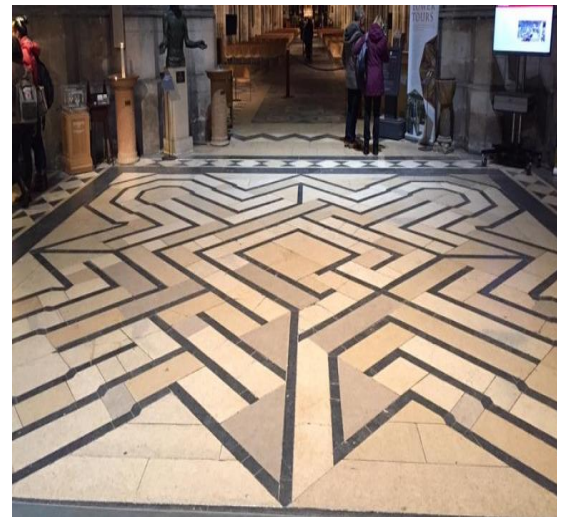
March 2023



..... and we began that journey on 22nd February, (Ash Wednesday) to travel to Easter Day, April 9th, and it takes about six weeks, the time called LENT. Some of us will have decided to give up some sort of luxury, or to take on a special task, such as reading more of the Bible, saying prayers each day, or contributing to a charity. We do this to mark the time when we learn of Jesus spending time in the wilderness, preparing to take on the work of His Father God, knowing that he would come into conflict with some people. In medieval times the church encouraged people to take a journey to a special holy place. This was called going on pilgrimage and the journey would be long and hard, travelled on foot by all except the most wealthy. The idea was that they should spend the time on the journey thinking about their life and their relationship with God.

For centuries Ely Cathedral has been the Mother Church of the Diocese of Ely, a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world.

It was also a practice to walk LABYRINTHS, twisting paths to be used for contemplation as you walked them. If you visit Ely Cathedral, as you step through the main door you will see a pattern on the floor at your feet. This is a copy of an ancient labyrinth thought to have been there in the past. Pilgrims entering the church would end their pilgrimage by walking this, in bare feet or even on their knees, giving thanks for a safe arrival (travelling in those days was difficult and dangerous) and thinking about what they had come to seek help for from God.

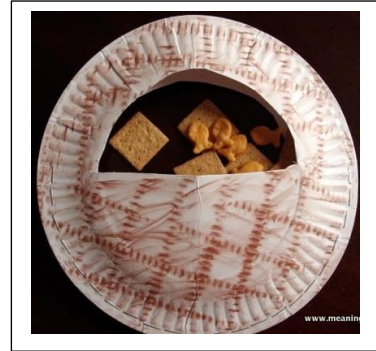


On the left is a drawing of that Ely labyrinth. Take a pen and trace the pathway to the centre. The blue arrow points to the starting point. Take your time and think about what you are doing. Notice that there are no dead ends that cause you to turn back. The path twists and turns but always goes on and when you reach the centre, you then retrace your steps to get out. On this path there is nothing to stop you travelling on, just as we can have a clear path to God if we follow Jesus.

As we travel through this Lenten period, we should think about some of the things we learn about Jesus.

We might have learnt about some of the wonderful things, miracles, that Jesus performed. One was the time when he fed 5,000 people with just five small loaves and two fish. It happened when Jesus had been talking to the crowds of people all day. Towards evening the disciples began to worry that the people should be sent home for their suppers. But Jesus said "You should feed them". Without any idea of how they could do that, one of them, Andrew found a boy with five loaves of bread and two fish, his meal. The boy gives up his food to the disciples and Jesus. Jesus then takes the meal, blesses it, and begins to break it into pieces. The breaking did not cease. It kept multiplying until everyone in the crowd was full. And even then, there were twelve baskets full of leftovers. As the boy handed over his meal, he probably wondered what difference such a small amount of food could make among the large crowd. Jesus showed that He takes anything offered and uses it to accomplish His purpose. We shouldn't be discouraged if we think we have nothing to offer Jesus. Learn from the boy in John Chapter 6:1-13

Make a Loaves & Fishes Basket to remind you of what Jesus is able to achieve. You will need either two paper plates or two circles of card. To cut the centre out to form the handle, put the two plates together and then cut out half of the centre circle (perhaps fold the plates in half to make it easier to cut). Colour them in to look like a woven basket, then staple round the bottom portion. Draw five of the loaves and two fish, then colour and cut them out and put them in your basket.



Preparing for Palm Sunday which will be on April 2nd.

This is when we remember Jesus arriving in Jerusalem riding on a donkey and the crowds welcomed him waving branches from the palm trees. They were very excited and expecting something to happen, but not what did actually happen.

Spend some of this time leading to Palm Sunday to pray for our world. Using the illustration, draw out a palm leaf and colour it in green. Copy the words on each section as shown, then use one each day as a pointer for a prayer. There are seven so could be one for each day of the week. You could end with the prayer below.



Thank you, God that you always listen to my prayers. Often, I don't know what is ahead of me, but like Jesus as he journeyed to Jerusalem, may I always know that you are with me.

Amen

