

# 'When you pray, move your feet'



Walking a labyrinth can have a profound effect on you, as **Alison Stoker** discovers at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in Hampstead

I'm told that it can give solace and peace to those who are suffering; calm people in the midst of life transition; clear the mind, provide insight and urge action. I choose to walk the sacred labyrinth at this time in my life, as I leave my twenties and move into my thirties (the 'Saturn Return' for the astrologically minded) and everything is changing – my marital status, country of residence and, it feels, my path itself. Veriditas-trained interfaith minister Reverend Danielle Wilson acts as my guide as I tread a path that so many others throughout history have visited before me.

I arrive at the Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel in Hampstead full of expectation. I've heard tales of people having their entire lives changed by the labyrinth, of untapped gifts and deeply

buried inner truths rising to the surface. It's my first labyrinth walk and while I can't know what I'll find here, if anything, my hopes are high. The debris of my failed marriage is almost cleared. I've left journalism as a full time career in favour of teaching yoga and I am training with The Interfaith Foundation to be an interfaith minister. After years of living abroad England finally feels like home but there's no doubt that had I not landed back here in crisis less than 18 months ago I wouldn't have chosen to return. I feel as if I'm awaking, slowly, from a very deep sleep with its fair share of dreams, nightmares and underneath it all a burning desire to wake up. I'm wondering if the labyrinth might be able to give me a gentle nudge, or perhaps a vigorous shake, that I might know what it is that I have been through and how to rise out of the ashes.

Inside Rosslyn Hill Chapel Medieval music fills the space. The sun is shining through the ornate stained glass windows and the 34 foot Chartres pattern labyrinth canvas covers the floor illuminated by the bright flicker of candlelight. Interfaith minister Reverend Danielle Wilson lays out her canvas for regular monthly walks after training as a Veriditas labyrinth facilitator with Dr Lauren Artress. Artress is author of *Walking a Sacred Path* and her work to bring the use and study of labyrinths out of obscurity and into greater awareness has been significant. Danielle is quick to dispel the popular misconception that labyrinth walking is a purely Christian practice. "Labyrinths are pre-Christian, the labyrinth is one of the archetypal symbols," she explains. "Nobody really knows where or when labyrinths were first created. The