

**SEASONS OF OUR LIVES**  
MONTH FIVE – JANUARY 2024  
Track Assignments  
January 11 to February 8, 2025

**NATURE QUEST:**

Go out into nature, alone, prepared with what you need (i.e., water, appropriate clothing, journal, pen, blanket, snack, etc.). If you cannot find a favorable day during the month to be outside, consider a spot to sit indoors, next to a window, in order to observe nature. Go with an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit. Allow yourself to be guided to a place where you can sit and ‘just be’. This could be a favorite spot or perhaps somewhere you have not been before. Settle in, both with your body and your inner being. Be a quiet observer of what is happening around you – what you see, smell, feel and even taste – and notice what is taking place within you. Do not judge. Just be present, receptive, and aware. Consider staying between one and three hours. Take your time. Before you leave, give thanks for what you have received during this time.

**RESPONSE TO YOUR NATURE QUEST:**

Reflect on your time in nature. You may decide to journal right away, or you may like to take some time to be with your experience. When you are ready, creatively respond to your nature quest. Some examples include writing a poem or psalm, journaling, creating a picture or a painting, making something out of playdough or clay, creating a collage from magazine photos and/or from things you collect in nature. Be creative!

Take a photo of what you create. This can be used to share with others, with your mentor and as a memory of this year.

As you reflect on your experience, allow a Courageous Question to emerge in you.

Contact your mentor and share your response with them prior to the next webinar.

**READINGS:**

Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom (John O’Donohue).  
Chapter 6 – Death: The Horizon is in the Well

The Nest in the Stream: Lessons from Nature on Being with Pain (Michael Kearney, MD)  
Seven Stories of Nature: Story No 7 – Polaris (Uncertain Times)

**AUDIO:**

Season of Winter, Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp and Macrina Weiderkehr (Megan Vacheresse, voice)  
<https://soundcloud.com/gwen-okutsu/winter>.

**VIDEOS:**

Soul and Science - Lesson Two: Wounded Healers – 10 min (Michael Kearney)

## **MUSIC:**

*Vivaldi: The Four Seasons Violin Concerto, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra*

Winter: Allegro non molto (9.26 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPdk5GalDjo> (with words)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXOuabNg4Bk> (nature scenes, no words)

Linda Ronstadt Winter Light

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5KUSZ-ZBvI>

## **MEDITATIONS**

Breathing with Leaf - Michael Kearney (24 minutes)

Forgiveness Meditation – Richard Groves (20 minutes)

**TO FURTHER ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE: (Handouts for printing) (Joe to put on website)**

### Poems

- The Guesthouse – Rumi
- Winter Women - Patricia Monaghan

### Articles

The Four Things that Matter Most (Ira Byock, MD)

- Part 1, The Four Things, Pages 2-33
- Part 2, Forgiveness, Pages 36-49

The American Book of Living and Dying (Richard Groves and Henriette Ann Klausner):

- Spiritual Pain, Pages 37-60
- Forgiveness Exercises, Pages 227-230

### Psalms and Blessings

The Circle of Life, Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr

- A Winter Blessing

To Bless the Space Between Us, John O'Donohue

- For Light
- A Blessing for the New Year

Psalms for Praying, Nan Merrill

- Psalm 20
- Psalm 32
- Psalm 145

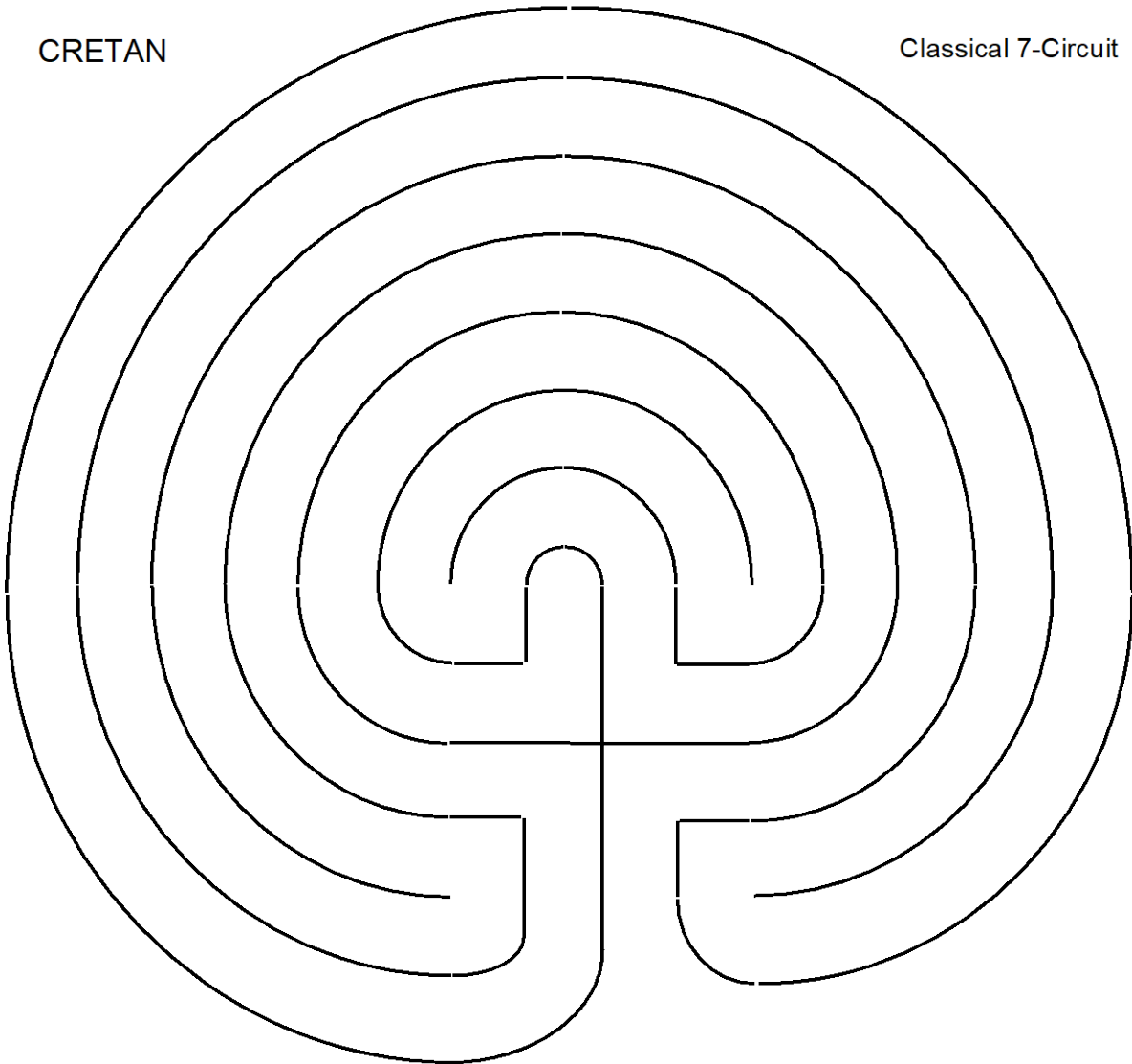
## Activities

### Finger Labyrinths

- Cretan
- Chartres

CRETAN

Classical 7-Circuit

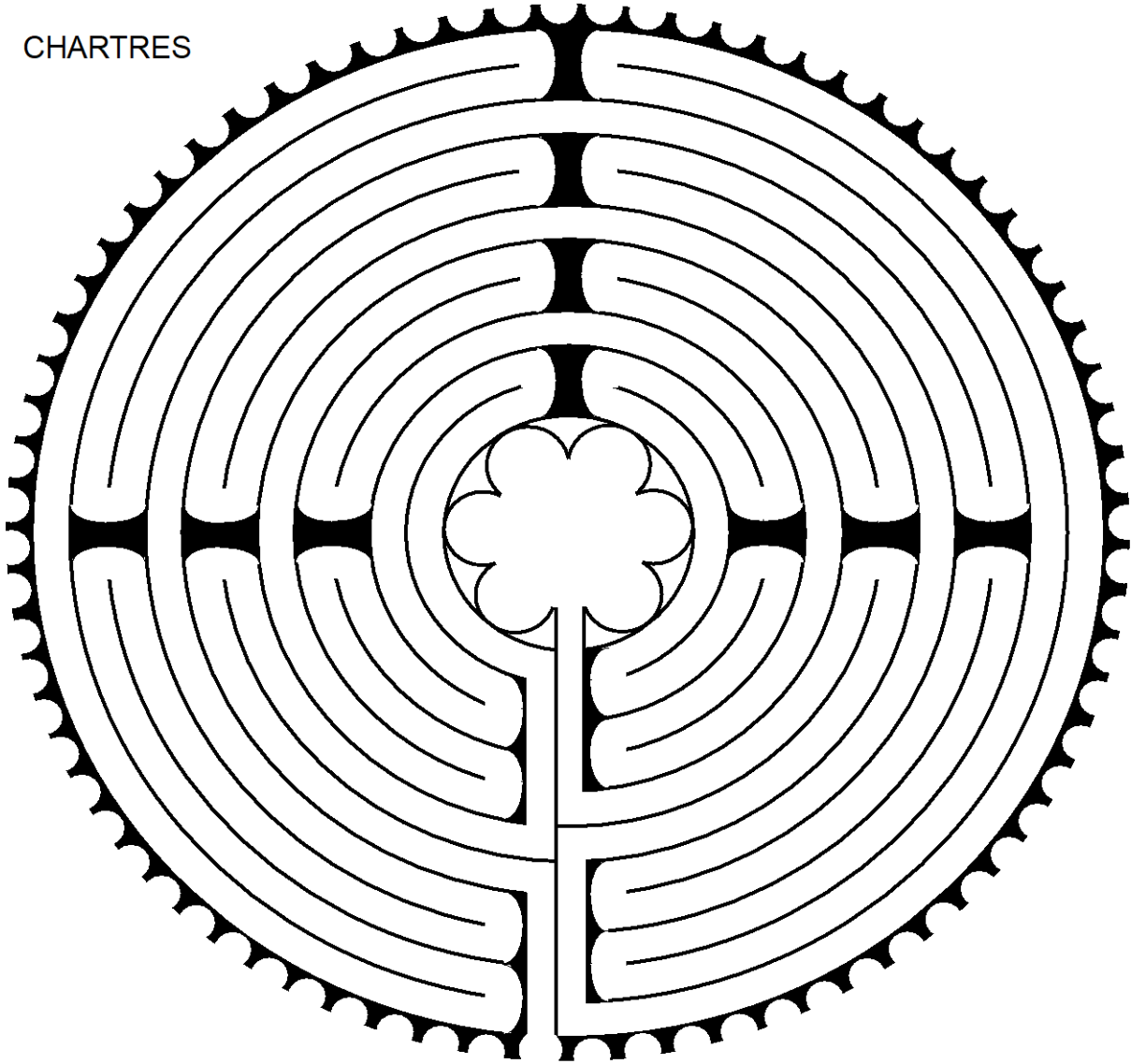


Color in the labyrinth above using crayons, colored pencils etc. Use as many colors as possible; this will make it easier for your eyes to follow your "walking" finger. Choose a walking finger and breathe smoothly. As you trace the path (from the outside opening at the bottom to the center, move at whatever pace feels right for you. As you do so, you may opt to:

- a. Quiet your mind
- b. Pray for yourself or someone else
- c. Keep a question in mind and feel the question using your emotions

At the center, pause and take several slow deep breathers (keeping your finger inside the center or place your hands comfortably on your lap). Here, many believe you are the closest to the center of your spirit and greater insight is available. When ready to leave the center, or feel satisfied (like after eating a good meal) retrace the path back out to the entrance (which now becomes the exit point). Upon leaving the labyrinth, be grateful and thankful for the opportunity to bring divine strength and insight back with you into your daily life.

## CHARTRES



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