

Epworth United Methodist Church Pilgrimage to Israel
October 7-16, 2023

October 7

Fly to Israel

Day 1: October 8, 2023 – Getting Started

Welcome to the modern, cosmopolitan city of Tel Aviv, which kickstarts your Travel with Faith journey through Israel and Jordan. On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel to rest before your unforgettable encounter with many of the world's holiest sites and in-depth insights into the history and culture of Israel. This evening, meet your Travel Director and fellow pilgrims for a Welcome Reception.

Meal(s): Dinner

Overnight:

Day 2: October 9, 2023 - Journey to Sea of Galilee

Today's sightseeing will whisk you back in time to the Old Testament and the old port of Jaffa, where Jonah set sail before he was swallowed by a whale. Today you'll see first-hand how the port remains a busy hub for local fishermen and marketplace where vendors enthusiastically sell their gourmet delicacies you may get to sample yourself perhaps.



One of your favorite Bible stories still fresh in your memory, you'll continue to Caesarea, an ancient port built by Herod the Great in the 1st century BC.



Admire what remains of Herod's grandiose building works, reminding yourself that these very ancient stones were stacked to create a city worthy of Caesar more than two thousand years ago. You'll travel to the *Muhraqa* on Mount Carmel where you'll learn how this 17th-century monastery marks the place where the prophet Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal. Your final stop today is at UNESCO-listed Megiddo, where it is said in the Book of Revelation that the Battle of Armageddon will take place. While this may be the site of the Final Battle, you'll learn how the place you're standing has seen many more battles throughout the ages.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

Day 3: October 10, 2023 - Explore Around the Sea of Galilee

Sail on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus walked on water, then see the ancient Jesus Boat imagining the ancient vessel or one like it would have carried Jesus and his disciples across Galilee's waters.



Visit the Magdala Project, site of excavations of 1st Century Jewish fishing village where synagogues from the time of Jesus have been discovered. Continue to Capernaum, one of Israel's most sacred Christian pilgrimage sites, to visit the Byzantine-period synagogue marking the spot where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Bread of Life.



Continue to Tabgha to see the site where Jesus proved that all things are possible with God and famously fed the five thousand with only five loaves of bread and two fish. Then, visit the Church of Multiplication with its 4th-century mosaic floor, showing the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Proceed to the Mount of Beatitudes for deep moments of contemplation, where Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount. Return to your hotel on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, stopping en route at *Yardenit*, the Baptismal site. You'll want to revisit all those incredible memories you've made today with your fellow pilgrims over dinner at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

DAY 4: October 11, 2023 - On to Nazareth and Jerusalem

Travel to Cana, the place where Jesus manifested his glory and turned water into wine at a wedding feast. You'll head next to Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation, whose cupola overlooks the cave in which Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to share the blessing that she would conceive and give birth to the Son of God.



This is one of the holiest sites you'll visit during your pilgrimage through Israel and you'll quietly contemplate Mary's consent to 'let it be done'. View Gideon's Spring and learn how Gideon tested his army so he could decide who would join him in battle against the Midianites. Then marvel at *Beit She'an*, one of the world's best-preserved Roman cities with the Roman theater, cardo and baths still visible for visitors to explore to this day.



Drive to Jerusalem later, perhaps seeking out one of the rooftop bars for a nightcap with new friends and to view the glittering skyline, or get an early night's rest as tomorrow you'll dive into history on the ancient streets of Bethlehem.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

Day 5: October 12, 2023 - Discover Jerusalem

This morning's sightseeing tour of Jerusalem's Old City on foot will leave an unforgettable impression on you as you follow in the footsteps of the prophets, disciples and kings. Ascend the Mount of Olives, then stroll through the Garden of Gethsemane, spending some time in quiet contemplation of the agony of Jesus on the night of his arrest before his crucifixion.



Our guide leads us into the Jewish Quarter, where we view the Western Wall where religious Jews cede their prayer notes to the wall's many crevices that have been the backdrop to important events throughout the centuries.



You'll view the Dome of the Rock located on Temple Mount, learning how the importance of this sacred for both Muslims and Jews. Connect with the city's ancient spiritual past yourself and walk the Station of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, with every step taking the winding path that Jesus was forced to by Roman soldiers on the way to his crucifixion.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

Day 6: October 13, 2023 - Venture to Bethlehem

Today's trip to the Church of the Visitation at Ein Karem reminds us of the visit paid by the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Here you'll see the 42 ceramic tablets bearing the verses of the Magnificat in as many different languages. Arriving later in Bethlehem, you'll feel moved by being in the birthplace of Jesus and King David. Here you'll meet a Local Specialist for a visit to the Church of the Nativity, built over the cave thought to be the spot where Jesus was born. After leaving Bethlehem, we will visit Herodion, the partially man-made hill built by King Herod, containing the remains of one of his palaces and the site where his tomb was discovered.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

Day 7: OCTOBER 14, 2023 - Garden Tomb Communion

After breakfast, drive to the Israel Museum to see the Dead Sea Scrolls and the scale model of Jerusalem as it was during the second Temple period, learning what the city would have looked like at

the height of its heyday and the eve of the great revolt of the Jews against the Romans. You will then have time to visit other exhibits in this world-class museum.



Your group will be dropped off at the Garden Tomb for a communion arranged separately. You then have free time to return to the Old City to explore it and shop on your own. Return to hotel for dinner

Meals: Breakfast, Hotel Dinner

Overnight:

Day 8: OCTOBER 15, 2023 - Off to Admire the Masada Fortress and the Dead Sea

This morning we travel across the Judean wilderness like John the Baptist once did to preach the Word of God. Arriving in Jericho later, you can almost imagine the roar of trumpets and triumphant shouts that led Joshua's army to victory by the grace of God. See the Qumran Caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, then continue to the striking clifftop fortress of Masada.



Ride by cable car to the ancient fortress where the Zealots made their last stand against the Romans before plunging to their deaths. Explore the excavations of Herod's Palace with some free time later today to float in the Dead Sea, unlike any other swimming experience you've ever had. You'll absorb its healing energy as you enjoy first-hand the effortless feeling of floating and bobbing in its warm waters.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight:

Day 9: OCTOBER 16, 2023 - Farewell Israel

Our epic journey through the sacred lands of Israel has come to an end. All that's left to say is a fond farewell to fellow pilgrims as you prepare for your journey home. Your one group transfer will drop you off at the Tel Aviv airport for your flight back to the States.

Meals: Breakfast

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

Monday October 16

After breakfast, transfer to Ben Gurion Airport. Fly to Cairo. Arrive at Cairo international airport. Entry Visa on arrival. Transfer to hotel. Dinner at hotel.

Overnight: Ramses Hilton Cairo (B/D)

Tuesday October 17

After breakfast, full day tour including visit to the Pyramids, Sphinx, enter one of the Pyramids, camel ride.



Lunch at local restaurant. Visit Egyptian Museum, National Museum of Egyptian Civilization including Mummies room. Return to hotel for dinner. Overnight: Ramses Hilton (B/L/D)

Wednesday October 18

After breakfast, transfer to Cairo airport for flight to Aswan. (Optional morning air excursion to Abu Simbel with a private guide). Transfer from Aswan Airport to ship for cruise on Nile. Begin Cruise. (B/L/D)

Thursday October 19

Cruise on Nile, touring Aswan, Kom Ombo and Edfu. Overnight: Blue Shadow (B/L/D)



Friday October 20

Cruise on Nile, touring Edfu and Luxor. Overnight: Blue Shadow (B/L/D)

Saturday October 21

Disembark and transfer to Luxor Airport. Fly to Cairo. Transfer to hotel.
Overnight: Cairo Holiday Inn (B/D)

Sunday October 22

After breakfast, transfer to Cairo Airport for flight home.