



Faith Commons Mission	
Monday, October 9 - Wednesday, October 18, 2023	
Guide Name	Number
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DAY 1: Arrival - Monday, October 9	
Hours	Activity
	Welcome to the Holy Land! Arrive at TLV international airport in the afternoon/early evening and transfer to your accommodations at the nearby village of Wahat al Salam - Neve Shalom ("Oasis of Peace"). Group transfer will depart following the arrival of passengers on a flight landing at ~2:40pm. Meet your driver in the Arrivals Hall who is holding a MEJDI sign. Otherwise, please meet your pre-arranged private transfer driver in the Arrivals Hall who is waiting for you with a MEJDI sign, or take a public taxi to the hotel.
17:30	Meet in the hotel lobby for introductions, and orientation with your two guides - one Jewish Israeli (Yael) and one Palestinian (Emili) - and a group dinner.
Hotel:	Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam Guest House
Meals:	Dinner included

Day 2: Crossroads of Civilization - Tuesday, Oct. 10	
Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am.
8:30	Get to know this ancient land by exploring its vast coastal plain, a historical crossroads between continents of the East and West. Walk through the Ben Shemen Forest , consider a Maccabean legend, pass a Roman burial ground, and discuss how many of these relics fall under the supervision of a powerful landholding organization.
10:30	The remarkable Lod Mosaic has returned home from a decade long world tour. See the complete 1,700 year old floorscape and learn about the initiative to establish its museum at the heart of a diverse "peripheral" neighborhood within Israel's center. Walk the remains of a once vibrant Old Town nearby to review this area's difficult history and discuss prospects for revitalization.
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13:00	Enjoy lunch at a celebrated local restaurant in one of Ramla's old stone storefronts.

15:00	Visit the Rossing Center's "grassroots, interfaith, and intercultural hub" in the mixed Arab-Jewish city of Ramla. Hear about their unique educational mission and community service. Meet organizational leadership including Vivia Rabia, Dr. Sarah Bernstein and John Munayer.
17:00	Return to your accommodations and have a short time to relax before dinner.
18:30	Group dinner at the hotel dining room.
Hotel:	<i>Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam Guest House</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included</i>

Day 3: The Pinnacle - Wednesday, Oct. 11

Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am.
8:00	Make your way to Jerusalem, stopping en route for framing within both historical and modern contexts. Consider life in the area during Canaanite times, imagine cutting willows in the nearby fields for Second Temple ceremony and discuss the significance of Emmaus in the New Testament.
10:00	Enter Jerusalem and take in the view from atop the Mt. of Olives , looking west over Old City spires and rooftop domes. Continue to the Garden of Gethsemane below.
12:00	Stand at the birthplace of the Abrahamic traditions on the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary ; consider the significance of this hallowed ground both for persons of faith and as a source of tension between prevailing national narratives.
1:30	Find lunch on your own in the one of the Old City's four quarters.
14:30	Stop at the Davidson Center to see the southern wall excavations , then look out from the City of David complex towards Al Aqsa and a surrounding Palestinian neighborhood. Learn about the ongoing archaeological project here and meet a representative from Emek Shaveh , an Israeli NGO guarding against the politicization of archeology both at this site and around the country.
17:00	Depart Jerusalem for Wahat al Salam - Neve Shalom.
19:00	Enjoy dinner at the hotel and time to relax in the evening.
Hotel:	<i>Neve Shalom - Wahat al Salam Guest House</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast & Dinner included</i>

Day 4: Recent Developments, Distant Past - Thursday, Oct. 12

Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, check out, and head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am
9:00	Meet a representative from a leading civil society organization to discuss the protest movement of recent months and cooperation between the city's different communities.
10:30	Take a walking tour in Jaffa and Tel Aviv to explore the stunning development of an ancient port into one of the leading tech-powered cities in the world.
13:00	Stop for lunch on your own at the Carmel Market .
14:30	Head north, stopping at Tel Megiddo for a peak into some 20 layers of civilizations previously established here. Discuss the significance of this area within Christian theology and what tradition has to say about a possible end of days.
18:00	Check into your hotel in the Galilee and settle in.

19:00	Enjoy a dinner and time for group reflections.
Hotel:	<i>Nof Tavor Hotel, Galilee</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast & Dinner included</i>

Day 5: Spiritual Elements - Friday, Oct. 13

Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am.
9:00	Reach the hilltop city of Tzfat (Safed) for an introduction to Jewish mysticism and journey back in time to 16th century synagogues teeming with spiritual energy. Remember the teachings of sages and browse the galleries of artisans inspired by the Kabbalah. Jump ahead to the pre-state era to discuss the evolution of a town that was the birthplace of a future Palestinian Authority President and once sustained a delicate balance of diverse inhabitants including Muslims, Jews, and Christians.
12:00	Enjoy a quick lunch en route to the Sea of Galilee.
13:30	Enumerate the miracles of the New Testament and explore Galilean life in the time of Jesus, paying visits to longstanding magnets of Christian pilgrimage including the Mount of Beatitudes , the ancient fishing village of Capernaum , and Magadala , a crossroads of Jewish & Christian History.
17:00	Embark on an evening boat ride on the still waters of the Sea of Galilee. Mark the beginning of Shabbat , a day of rest observed in different ways by the many Jewish communities of Israel and beyond.
19:30	Arrive back at your accommodations and enjoy a group dinner.
Hotel:	<i>Nof Tavor Hotel, Galilee</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included</i>

Day 6: Galilee of Many Faiths - Saturday, Oct. 14

Hours	Activity
7:30	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:30am.
9:00	Religions and cultures converge in Tsippori (Sepphoris) , a once prominent town of the Central Galilee. See remnants of a Roman Theater, a 5th century synagogue mosaic and a Crusader tower, among other highlights of the site's excavation. Also known as Safuriyya to mostly Muslim inhabitants during the Ottoman period, the town appears on a map of Napoleon's invasion of 1799.
11:00	Head to Cana to learn about Arab Christian education and culture in the area. Meet with Botrus Mansour , the general director of Nazareth Baptist School , the sole recognized evangelical school in Israel. He has also held leadership positions in several non-profit organizations, including Musalaha, Advocates International and Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary.
13:00	Have lunch with the Jewish and Arab women of the Sindyanna of the Galilee cooperative.
16:00	Conclude the day in conversation with Nabeel Abboud-Ashkar of the local Polyphany organization, which aims to bridge the divide between Arab and Jewish communities in Israel through classical music and to serve as a worldwide model for cooperation based on cultural exchange, dialogue and partnership.
18:00	Return to your accommodations for dinner and an evening at leisure.

Hotel:	<i>Nof Tavor Hotel, Galilee</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included</i>

Day 7: The Valleys - Sunday, Oct. 15

Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, check out, and head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am.
9:00	Visit the unique Religious Zionist community of Gilboa , located in a remote region near Jenin, beside the 1967 "Green Line" dividing Israel from the West Bank. Meet a local educator to discuss the community's unique approach to religious moderation and fault lines within the "national religious" sector.
11:00	Take the highway south, discussing Israeli-Jordanian relations across the nearby border, and environmental challenges impacting the Jordan River and Dead Sea. That this road through the West Bank is nearly indistinguishable from those in "pre-1967 Israel" belies a complicated reality for residents of the region. (<i>Time permitting</i>) Make a brief stop for a look at the Qasr al Yehuda baptismal site.
13:30	Arrive in Jericho for lunch.
14:30	Explore Jericho , a desert hub through ancient times and resort town for Palestinian vacationers until today. See sites of significance for Christianity, Judaism and Islam all within close proximity, bringing to light a vibrant multi-cultural society of some 1,300-1,400 years ago.
17:00	Depart Jericho for Bethlehem.
18:00	Check-in and enjoy dinner at a local family's home in Bethlehem.
Hotel:	<i>Grand Hotel, Bethlehem</i>
Meals:	<i>Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included</i>

Day 8: Faith & Memory - Monday, Oct. 16

Hours	Activity
7:00	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:00am
9:00	After moments for reflection at the Western Wall , continue into the Old City to pass key stations along the Via Dolorosa en route to the the Church of the Holy Sepulchre . Absorb the energy emanating from inside, where visitors wait to approach the site associated with resurrection, according to biblical tradition. Learn about a truce between sects, the role of a Muslim keyholder, and the place of this sanctuary within both Israeli and Palestinian self-understanding.
11:30	Grab lunch in the Christian quarter before departing the Old City.
13:30	Pay tribute to those lost in the Shoah with a visit to Yad Vashem , Israel's Holocaust museum and memorial. Remember this painful moment in history and reflect as a group on the "Never Again" imperative. To whom does this history belong? How does its presentation reflect Israeli attitudes towards security and sacrifice?
16:30	Enjoy dinner on your own in Jerusalem and some free time to explore the area before returning to the hotel in Bethlehem 7pm; or return to the hotel on your own earlier via taxi (ask your guides for assistance)

Hotel:	Grand Hotel, Bethlehem
Meals:	Breakfast & Lunch included

Day 9: Route 60 - Tuesday, Oct. 17

Hours	Activity
7:30	Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, then head to the lobby to depart at 8:30am.
9:00	Meet Mitri Raheb at Dar al Kalima University. Rev. Prof. Dr. Mitri Raheb is the founder and president of Dar al-Kalima University, and was recently awarded the Bethlehem Star of the Order of Bethlehem in recognition of his role in spreading the Palestinian story, promoting it in international forums, and in appreciation for his efforts in creating spaces for culture, arts, and creativity in Palestine.
10:00	Drive to Hebron and enter the Cave of the Patriarchs, the Ibrahimi Mosque, a foundational site for the genesis of Abrahamic tradition. Walk through the now heavily fortified Jewish residential neighborhoods and see how the area is divided into distinct areas of Israeli and Palestinian jurisdiction.
13:30	Have lunch with representatives of Ali Abu Awad's Taghyeer activist community at their unique campus near the Gush Ezion junction.
15:00	Return to Bethlehem , a key site of Palestinian Christian heritage, & explore the city. Visit Manger Square and touch the "Star" within the Church of Nativity . See Jerome's Cave.
17:00	Finish the day's touring with a brief visit to Banksy's Walled Off Hotel and walk beside the mural-covered separation/security barrier.
18:30	Return to your accommodations and find dinner on your own in the area.
Hotel:	Grand Hotel, Bethlehem
Meals:	Breakfast & Lunch included

Day 10: Capitals and Conclusions - Wednesday, Oct. 18

Hours	Activity
7:30	Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, check out, then meet in the lobby to depart by 8:30am.
10:00	Head to the de facto capital of Ramallah , seat of the Palestinian Authority, and civic and cultural hub for Palestinians in the West Bank. Visit the Arafat Museum and Mausoleum to discuss the complicated legacy of a national leader, then walk through the bustling squares in the city center.
12:30	Return to Jerusalem, arriving to the downtown and Mahane Yehuda market areas for free time to explore and find lunch on your own.
16:00	Gather for a closing conversation with your guides and group leaders to reflect on your visit in the Holy Land.
18:00	Enjoy a group farewell dinner nearby.
19:00	Group transfer to the airport for departing flights.
Hotel:	<i>Post-stay accommodations in Jerusalem for those extending their trip.</i>
Meals:	Breakfast & Dinner included