

VISITING THE HOLY LAND

AND

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN JORDAN AND THE HOLY LAND (ELCJHL)

The Holy Land, vital to three of the world's major religions, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, is a rich and challenging place to visit. This guide offers some basic information for planning a visit to Israel and Palestine and especially Jerusalem, a visit that, besides letting you experience the sites of Jesus' life and ministry, will help you encounter present-day Palestinian Lutheran ministries and Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. It also provides the contact information you need to arrange visits to ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and the

Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The contents of this guide were contributed by ELCA mission personnel in Jerusalem and staff of the ELCA Global Mission Europe and Middle East Desk, along with leaders of the ELCJHL.

For additional resources or guidance in developing a trip to the Holy Land, please contact Carol LaHurd, coordinator of the ELCA Peace Not Walls team, at carol.lahurd@elca.org or 773-380-2117.

WHY VISIT THE HOLY LAND?

- For an unforgettable, faith-deepening pilgrimage to the setting of Jesus' life and ministry
- To meet, worship with, and get to know the descendants of the first Christians
- To build a relationship with the members and leaders of the ELCJHL and see how the world's only Arabic-speaking Lutheran church ministers to its context
- To experience the daily lives and challenges of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Holy Land
- To go behind the headlines and inform yourself about a political situation of significance to the world
- To learn about efforts toward a permanent and just peace

Is it safe?

That North American media portray the Holy Land as a volatile and dangerous place discourages many people from visiting. And it's impossible to predict, months ahead, what the political and social situation on the ground might be when you arrive. Fortunately, ELCA members can rely on our excellent companions and resources in the Holy Land for advice about safety and security. Many times a situation that appears to be tense and dangerous when viewed in U.S. media is life as normal for local residents, and thus a reasonable time to visit.

Peace Not Walls is the campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to learn, pray, and act for peace with justice in the Holy Land. The 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted this strategy to promote a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to call for a halt to construction of the Separation Barrier and its removal from Palestinian land. The ELCA is working with other Lutherans and with ecumenical and interfaith partners toward:

- safety and security for all Israelis and Palestinians
- reduction of poverty and unemployment
- a negotiated final-status agreement that includes a shared Jerusalem as capital of two independent states and with access and full rights in the city for Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Traveling to the region and engaging in dialogue with Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians and Muslims is an important way for us to educate ourselves about the historical background and current issues in this long-term conflict.

To learn more about ways the ELCA is working for peace in the Middle East, visit www.elca.org/peacenotwalls

Generally speaking, the Holy Land is a very safe place. There are virtually no problems about personal violence or security. Jerusalem is safer than most American cities.

People in the Holy Land are extremely happy to welcome you to their home and will go to great lengths to help you feel comfortable and secure.

DEVELOPING A FAIR AND BALANCED TRIP

The wealth of experiences and destinations available in Jerusalem and the Holy Land can make planning a trip very challenging. In addition, there are many perspectives on the complicated situation in Israel-Palestine. To plan a fair and balanced trip, create opportunities to listen to diverse voices. Work with the ELCA Peace Not Walls team or the ELCJHL to schedule a mix of visits and guest speakers to expose your group to varied Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Christian and Muslim perspectives and life experiences. You will also want to engage the various Lutheran ministries of the ELCJHL and the LWF in Jerusalem and the West Bank. You will want to correspond with these Lutheran partners and plan to visit with each at least briefly.

For best results, set clear goals for your trip first, and then shape an itinerary that helps you meet those goals. Your trip's purposes and foci will help you decide what percentage of time you want to devote to various political perspectives and to various ELCJHL and LWF ministries.

The following information is an example from a delegation that chose these three goals for their six-day trip to Jerusalem:

- Understand the concerns of Palestinian Christians
- See the effects of the occupation on the daily life of Palestinians
- Meet with Palestinian and Israeli leaders who are addressing political, economic, and educational issues

Their final itinerary looked like this:

Day 1

Arrival at Ben Gurion Airport and transport to Jerusalem hotel
Welcome dinner with local ELCA missionaries and/or

representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

Day 2

Visit with Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel
Lunch
Guided walking tour of Old City
Dinner at hotel with ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan

Day 3

Visit to Beit Sahour and Dar al-Kalima Lutheran Schools
Lunch at the International Center of Bethlehem
Meeting with Pastor Mitri Raheb
Guided tour of Bethlehem Manger Square and Church of the Nativity
Visit Separation Barrier near Rachel's Tomb
Dinner at hotel: group reflection on visit so far

Day 4

Worship with Palestinians at ELCJHL congregations or attend the English-language service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
Lunch with members of the congregation
Free time in Old City
Dinner at hotel with Israeli peace activist and/or rabbi

Day 5

Visit to Palestinian refugee camp and/or a village divided by the Separation Barrier
Meetings with Bishop Munib Younan and Palestinian and Israeli political leaders
Dinner at hotel with Muslim religious leader

Day 6

Visit Lutheran World Federation Vocational Training Center
Mount of Olives and Augusta Victoria Hospital
Dinner at hotel: Trip Debriefing
Late evening or early morning departure for Ben Gurion Airport

A group that wished to visit biblical and historical sites in Galilee developed this nine-day itinerary:

Day 1

Arrival at Ben Gurion Airport and transport to Jerusalem hotel
Welcome dinner with local ELCA missionaries and/or ELCJHL representatives

Day 2

Visit one or more Lutheran schools OR
Visit Palestinian refugee camp and/or a village divided by the Separation Barrier
Guided walking tour of Old City
Dinner at hotel with Bishop Munib Younan

Day 3

Visit LWF ministries with Pastor Mark Brown
Vocational Training Center
Mount of Olives and Augusta Victoria Hospital
Dinner at hotel: group reflection on visit so far

Day 4

Worship with Palestinians at the Palestinian congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer or another Palestinian congregation; or attend English-language service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
Lunch with members of the congregation
Free time in Old City
Dinner at hotel with Israeli peace activist and/or rabbi

Day 5

Tour Galilee
Spend night in Nazareth

Day 6

Continue Galilee tour
Spend night in Bethlehem or Beit Jala

Day 7

Guided tour of Bethlehem Manger Square and Church of the Nativity
Lunch at International Center of Bethlehem and meeting with Pastor Mitri Raheb
Visit Separation Barrier near Rachel's Tomb
Dinner at hotel: group reflection on visit so far

Day 8

Visit Palestinian refugee camp and/or a village divided by the Separation Barrier
Meetings with Bishop Munib Younan and Palestinian

and Israeli political leaders

Dinner at hotel with Muslim religious leader

Day 9

Visit schools and ministries of ELCJHL in Beit Sahour and Beit Jala
Dinner at hotel: Trip Debriefing
Late evening or early morning departure for Ben Gurion Airport

One delegation from the northeast took two weeks to visit more biblical sites and explore local conditions in Israel and Palestine.

Day 1

Arrive Ben Gurion Airport

Day 2

Jerusalem
Garden of Gethsemane, Augusta Victoria Hospital, Museum of the Holocaust

Day 3

Jerusalem
Via Dolorosa, Church of the Holy Sepulcher/Resurrection, visit with Bishop Munib Younan
Visit with Israeli peace activists
Shabbat meal and visit to Western Wall

Day 4

Jerusalem/Bethlehem
Tour of the Old City and Redeemer Tower
Abraham's House, Beit Jalah

Day 5

Bethlehem
Worship with Lutheran congregations
Lunch with families
Tour of the Basilica of the Nativity and the Old City

Day 6

Bethlehem
International Center of Bethlehem
Shepherd's Field
Visit to Dar al-Kalima school, Dheisheh Refugee Camp

Day 7

Bethlehem/Jerusalem
Visit to Hebron, Ibrahim Mosque, and Christian Peacemaking Teams
Meet Parents Circle

Day 8

Jerusalem
 Yad Vashem (Holocaust Memorial Museum)
 Free afternoon
 Visit to American Colony Hotel

Day 9

Jerusalem
 Visit with Islamic scholar
 Qumran, Dead Sea, Jericho

Day 10

Galilee/Tabgha
 The Church of Peter's Primacy
 Outdoor Eucharist
 Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes
 Mount of Beatitudes
 Capernaum

Day 11

Galilee/Nazareth
 Church of the Annunciation and "Nazareth Village"

Day 12

Galilee
 Rest and re-creation
 Trip evaluation

Day 13

Galilee
 Kibbutz visit
 Visit to first-century "Jesus Boat"
 Swim in the Sea of Galilee
 Farewell meal

Day 14

Depart

The next section of this handbook offers contact information and guidelines for arranging visits to Lutheran ministries. If your group would like to visit a Palestinian village, an Israeli settlement, an agricultural commune, or another locale, the Peace Not Walls team can offer many suggestions. Contact Carol LaHurd at carol.lahurd@elca.org for additional ideas.

DECIDING WHEN TO GO

Know that January can be a busy time for ELCJHL and LWF ministries because they are hosting J-term visits

from ELCA colleges and seminaries. Some travelers prefer to avoid the hottest months, July and August.

An excellent and very thorough guide to visiting Jerusalem and the Holy Land may be found at www.holylandalternatives.net/default.htm. This guide from Holy Land Alternatives covers every step

in planning a trip, including what you can do if you have already booked a standard tour with a tour operator and would like to amend your itinerary to include Lutheran ministries.

LUTHERAN MINISTRIES IN THE HOLY LAND

Two Lutheran ministries are the ELCA's companions in this region, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, and the Lutheran World Federation. Because they value visits by ELCA members that strengthen relationships with Lutherans in the Holy Land and encourage first-hand experience of the lives of Palestinians, they stand ready to welcome and assist you with site visits, speakers, and local logistics.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

A small and vibrant Palestinian church headquartered in Jerusalem and led by Bishop Munib Younan, the ELCJHL grew out of mission schools and orphanages initiated by European missions in the mid-19th century. The ELCJHL is the only Arabic-speaking Lutheran denomination in the world and the only indigenous

Lutheran church in the Middle East. It has a special calling to work for reconciliation among those who have been victimized by war, to concentrate actively on peace education, and to initiate dialogue among Christians, Muslims, and Jews for truth and reconciliation.

The ELCJHL has 2,000 members in six congregations: one in Amman, Jordan; one in Jerusalem; and four on the West Bank, on the “other side” of the Separation Barrier.

- Amman
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
- Beit Jala
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation
 - Abraham’s Herberge/Beit Ibrahim (Guest House)
 - Boy’s Home
 - Talitha Kumi Lutheran School
 - Environmental Education Center
- Bethlehem
 - Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church
 - Al-Diyar
 - The International Center of Bethlehem
 - Health and Wellness Center
 - Dar al-Kalima Academy
 - Abu Gubran Guest House
 - Dar al-Kalima School
- Beit Sahour
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Beit Sahour
 - Lutheran School of Beit Sahour
- Ramallah
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope
 - Lutheran School of Hope
- Jerusalem
 - Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
 - ELCJHL headquarters
 - Arabic, English, and German-speaking congregations
 - Al-Mahaba Kindergarten
 - Martin Luther Elderly Center
 - Headquarters of the ELCJHL

The ELCJHL-sponsored schools and educational programs are ministries designed to address the needs of the Palestinian people as a whole and have always enrolled both girls and boys, both Muslims and Christians. Students learn together in an open and peaceful environment and are prepared for lives of dialogue and exchange with all people. Visiting one or more of these schools and staying in a Lutheran guest house are both excellent ways to meet Palestinian people, hear their stories, and return home able to tell others about their lives and hopes.

For in-depth information on ELCJHL ministries, visit www.holyland-lutherans.org

The International Center of Bethlehem (ICB), a ministry of the ELCJHL based at Christmas Lutheran Church and headed by Pastor Mitri Raheb, is an ecumenically oriented institution serving the whole Palestinian community from “the womb to the tomb,” with an emphasis on children, youth, and women. The ICB also has a guest house where you may stay during your visit.

For more information on the International Center of Bethlehem, visit www.annadwa.org

Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) funds and maintains Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and several vocational training programs in the West Bank. It has done significant work among Palestinians for half a century. LWF-Jerusalem focuses on:

- Emergency assistance through development, advocacy, peace and reconciliation initiatives, and disaster relief
- Service to refugees, those living in poverty, and the marginalized
- Ecumenical partnerships

Read more at www.lwferusalem.org

ARRANGING YOUR VISIT WITH LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

When the goals for your group's trip are clear, it will be easier for you to decide which ministries to visit, and how much time to spend there. When you have made those decisions, please start your scheduling process with Bishop Munib Younan. Because his schedule is very full, please arrange a time to meet with him BEFORE planning the rest of your itinerary.

Begin by sending a letter to Bishop Munib Younan of the ELCJHL. Include in the letter

- expected dates of the visit, with an inquiry about whether these dates are convenient for the ELCJHL
- purpose(s) of the trip
- how much of your trip time you would like to devote to the ELCJHL
- current relationships with ELCJHL congregations or schools that you may wish to visit
- any specific ELCJHL-related activities or ministries you would like to participate in or visit
- whether you plan to arrange visits with LWF by contacting Pastor Mark Brown or at the International Center of Bethlehem by contacting Pastor Mitri Raheb

Please send a copy of the letter to Carol LaHurd, carol.lahurd@elca.org, of the ELCA Middle East peace strategy, to facilitate coordination of visiting groups. She can help you communicate with the ELCJHL, and, once you have made arrangements with Bishop Younan, with other Lutheran, ecumenical, and interfaith groups you may wish to visit.

Contact Information

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land

Bishop Munib Younan
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land
c/o Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
P. O. Box 14076
91140 Jerusalem, via Israel
Tel: +972 2 626 6800
Fax: +972 2 628 5764
E-mail: administration@holyland-lutherans.org

International Center of Bethlehem

Pastor Mitri Raheb
The International Center of Bethlehem
Dar Annadwa Addawliya
P. O. Box 162, 109 Paul VI St.
Bethlehem, Palestine
Tel: +972 2 277 0047
Fax: +972 2 277 0048
E-mail: Info@annadwa.org
www.mitriraheb.org/

Lutheran World Federation Jerusalem

Pastor Mark Brown
The Lutheran World Federation, Jerusalem
P.O. Box 19178
Jerusalem 91191
Phone: +972 2 628 2289
Fax: +972 2 628 2628
E-mail: Mark@lwfjerusalem.org

WHERE TO STAY

Lutheran guesthouses

ELCA Global Mission encourages groups to consider using Christian-owned hotels, tour agencies, and guides, to lend financial and moral support for the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Be sure to dial "011" from the U.S.; inside the country, dial "0" after 972. The number of guests that can be accommodated varies widely.

Jerusalem

Lutheran Guest House

St. Marks Rd
Old City, PO Box 14051
Jerusalem 91140
Tel: +972 2 626 6888
Fax: +972 2 628 5107
E-mail: info@guesthouse-jerusalem.co.il

Bethlehem

**Abu Gubran at Dar Annadwa
Guest House and Conference Center
International Center of Bethlehem**

P. O. Box 162, 109 Paul VI St.
Bethlehem, Palestine
Contact: Pastor Mitri Raheb
Tel: +972 2 277 0047
Fax: +972 2 277 0048
E-mail: www.annadwa.org/addar/guesthouse.htm

Beit Jala

Abraham's Herberge (House)

P. O. Box 11
Beit Jala
Contact: Pastor Jadallah Shihadeh
E-mail: shihadeh@luthchurch.com
Tel: +972 2 274 2613
Fax: +972 2 744-4966
www.holyland-lutherans.org/beitjala.htm
www.abrahams-herberge.com

Other Christian accommodations

Jerusalem

Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center

Paratroopers Rd #3
P. O. Box 21531
Jerusalem 91204
Tel: +972 2 627 9111
Fax: +972 2 627 1995
www.notredamecenter.org/index.phtml
Located across from New Gate of the Old City
See Frommer's Review at www.frommers.com/destinations/jerusalem/H30647.html

St. George's Pilgrim Guesthouse

20 Nablus Road
P. O. Box 19018
In East Jerusalem at St. George's Cathedral
Tel: +972 2 628 3302
Fax: +972 2 628 2253
E-mail: sghostel@bezeqint.net

Casa Nova

10 Casa Nova, New Gate
P. O. Box 1321 Jerusalem 91013
Inside the Old City of Jerusalem
Tel: +972 2 628 2791
Fax: +972 2 626 4370
E-mail: casanovaj@custodia.org

Knight's Palace

Frere St, Just inside the New Gate
Inside the Old City
Tel: +972 2 628 2537
Fax: +972 2 627 5391
E-mail: kp@actcom.co.il

Ecce-Home Convent

41 Via Dolorosa
P. O. Box 19056
Inside Old City, Jerusalem 91190
Tel: +972 2 627 7292
Fax: +972 2 628 2224
E-mail: eccehomo@inter.net.il

Nazareth

St. Margaret's Episcopal Guesthouse

Street 901 No.1 - P. O. Box 7
Nazareth 16100
Tel: +972 4 657 3507
Fax: +972 4 656 7166

Casa Nova

Casa Nova Street
Opposite Basilica
P. O. Box 198 - Nazareth 16101
Tel: +972 4 645 6660
Fax: +972 4 657 9630

Tiberias

Casa Nova

Ha Yarden St. - P. O. Box 179
Tiberias 14101
On the sea promenade in Tiberias
Tel: +972 4 671 2281
Fax: +972 4 671 2278
(or through Nazareth Casa Nova)

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

More helpful planning information can be found at www.holylandalternatives.net/planning.html

While you don't have to become a policy expert in order to visit the Middle East, you will get more out of your journey if you take the time to brush up on the basics of the situation.

- The Peace Not Walls Web site, www.elca.org/peacenotwalls, offers many basic resources, including a helpful Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the conflict and the ELCA's response
- A good place to start is with the ELCA statements and positions vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Find them at www.elca.org/middleeast/statements.html and www.elca.org/socialstatements/Israelpalestine
- Visit the Web site of the ELCJHL, www.holyland-lutherans.org, to familiarize yourself with the churches and schools and their ministries
- Be aware of United States policies in the Middle East
- Learn about the current situation through Web sites
 - The English-language Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* at www.haaretz.com
 - ICAHAD, The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions www.icahd.org
 - OCHA, United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs provides current information and maps at www.ochaopt.org

Background reading

Choose one or two of the books, articles, and Web sites on this list to deepen your understanding of the situation in the Holy Land. **NOTE:** Many of the views expressed in the materials listed below do not reflect official positions of the ELCA. This is only a small sample of the many excellent background books.

Armstrong, Karen, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, stories and analysis of 3000 years of history, politics and religion

BBC News Israel/Palestinian autonomous areas profiles http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/803257.stm

Carter, Jimmy, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, despite controversy over the title and criticism of Israeli and U.S. actions, is a passionate case for understanding of the Palestinian cause and for a two-state solution from the former President

Gopin, Marc, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*, a realistic and optimistic consideration of the shared heritage and tensions among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as concrete ideas for peace-making, by an American rabbi, scholar, and conflict negotiator

Gorenberg, Gershom, *End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, analysis of beliefs and conflicts about Jerusalem's most contested real estate among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim fundamentalists, from a senior editor of the *Jerusalem Post*

Hafften, Ann E., ed., *Water from the Rock: Lutheran Voices from Palestine*, voices and stories from individual Palestinian and American Christians; good resource for an adult class

Harms, Gregory, and Todd Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*, readable, concise, and balanced account of Holy Land history from ancient Canaan to the 2005 peace negotiations

Journal of Lutheran Ethics May 2007 Christian Zionism issue with very diverse perspectives from Robert O. Smith, JoAnn G. Magnuson, Bishop Munib Younan, John Hubers, and Peter A. Pettit www.elca.org/jle/default.asp

Kaltner, John, *Islam: What Non-Muslims Should Know*, concise, readable, and reliable introduction

Kimball, Charles, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, even-handed analysis of the potential for religion's misuse for extremist ends, especially within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

Knowles, Melody D., Esther Menn, John Pawlikowski, O.S.M., Timothy J. Sandoval, *Contesting Texts: Jews and Christians in Conversation about the Bible*, essay collection with several Lutheran contributors; extensive introduction addresses issues of land, liberation theology, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and responses from mainline U.S. church bodies

LeBor, Adam, *City of Oranges: An Intimate History of Arabs and Jews in Jaffa*, fair-handed human story of Jaffa's Arab and Jewish residents

Lutz, Charles P. and Robert O. Smith, *Christians and a Land Called Holy: How We Can Foster Justice, Peace, and Hope*, survey of historical, biblical, theological and political dimensions of the conflict, with ideas for how Christians can work for justice and peace

Nusseibeh, Sari, *Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life*, Palestinian Al Quds University president's autobiography, tracing the interplay of politics and diplomacy with his own personal and academic life

Raheb, Mitri, *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble*, a personal account of the violent 2003 events in Bethlehem from the pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church

Raheb, Mitri, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, personal, biblical, and theological reflections from a pastor-scholar with provocative views on the concept of "promised land"

Rossing, Barbara, *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation*, Lutheran New Testament professor provides a counterview to that of the popular "Left Behind" series and examines forms of Christian Zionism that affect how Christians respond to the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians

Strickert, Fred, *Rachel Weeping: Jews, Christians, and Muslims at the Fortress Tomb*, scholarly and accessible account of Rachel's significance for Jews, Christians, and Muslims and of the politicization of her traditional burial site

Tolan, Sandy, *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East*, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as seen through the lens of a home in Ramla, Israel, and the Arab and Jewish families who have lived there and maintained their friendship

Wilken, Robert L., *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*, long history of the Christian presence in the Holy Land

Windows for Understanding: Jewish-Muslim-Lutheran Relations, includes interfaith organization links, reading list, and denominational resources
www.elca.org/ecumenical/interreligious/windows.html

Younan, Munib, *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World*, autobiographical and spiritual testimony from the Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem

HOSTING ORIENTATION SESSIONS

Everyone who participates in a visit to the Holy Land can benefit from a thoughtful, well-designed orientation. Travelers are happier when they know what to expect. Exploring the cultural norms that we carry within us—often without recognizing them!—makes it possible to approach a new culture with an open mind.

In-depth preparation will equip participants to get the most out of the experience, to represent your church or

synod and the ELCA in a responsible manner, and to share positive memories when they return. Through preparation, they will also get to know one another, form a community, and develop smooth interpersonal dynamics that can withstand long, challenging hours of cross-cultural travel.

Consider planning at least two pre-trip sessions. The online ELCA *Companion Synods Handbook*

(www.elca.org/companionsynod/cspresources.html) outlines a number potential pre-trip and post-trip orientation sessions and provides worship ideas. Here are suggested activities for two pre-trip orientations.

Orientation session one

Objectives:

- Provide an overview of the trip and the context of the Middle East
- Introduce travelers to one another
- Introduce the accompaniment model for mission
- Plan on-trip communication
- Review itinerary and logistics

1. Open with prayer
2. Use a get-acquainted activity
3. Watch and discuss the ten-minute video “Forbidden Family” (learn more and find out how to order a copy at www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/educate.html)
4. Introduce the ELCJHL (use Web-based resources available at www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/lutherans/index.html)
5. Introduce the concept of accompaniment (see the *ELCA Companion Synods Handbook*, downloadable from www.elca.org/companionsynod/cshandbook/cshandbook-1.pdf; see page 5)
6. Explain trip purpose and how it relates to the ELCA Middle East strategy and Peace Not Walls campaign
7. Review the itinerary and logistics
8. Share materials on journaling and discuss whether the group wishes to do a blog and/or group e-mail message to family and friends
9. Distribute this publication, packing checklist, and trip forms
10. Answer initial questions about logistics and costs

Orientation session two

Objectives:

- Identify typical North American cultural values
- Discuss and compare with Palestinian cultural values
- Review logistics and discuss protocol
- Answer questions

1. Open with prayer
2. Do cross-cultural values activity. Materials to help you investigate North American values are available at www.elca.org/companionsynod/cshandbook/cshandbook-4.pdf; see page 43. Please e-mail Carol LaHurd at carol.lahurd@elca.org for more information about Palestinian cultural values.
3. Collect all necessary paper work: medical, waiver, personal profile (with flight info and passport #), photocopy of passport front pages, flight itinerary copy, etc.
4. Discuss all trip logistics, such as what to carry and NOT carry on the plane, TSA guidelines for liquids and gels, clothing and shoes, money and credit cards
5. Discuss meeting points and airport process at Ben Gurion in Tel Aviv and any interim airports, border entry and exit procedures
6. Discuss protocol: public conversation, taking photos, when asked for money
7. Reiterate trip purposes and emphases
8. Distribute a one-page summary of daily visit to holy sites and contact numbers for hotel, Jerusalem personnel, etc. This may be useful when entering Tel Aviv airport, if you are asked about your plans during your stay.

Two helpful resources

If you are the trip leader, see Part IV, “Planning Trips,” of the *ELCA Companions Synods Handbook*, for help in planning a mutually beneficial and life-changing trip. Download the chapter from www.elca.org/companionsynod/cspresources.html

Participants and leaders alike will appreciate *Welcome Forward: A Field Guide for Global Travelers*. This 144-page paperback helps participants experience travel that will forever changing their ways of seeing, eating, “helping,” and conversing. It provides individual and group process for travel preparation, engagement, and follow-up; guides and tips for the journey; and re-entry assistance. Copies are \$8 each and are available from Augsburg Fortress at (800) 328-4648 or www.augsburgfortress.com Ask for ISBN 6-0002-0186-9

Some hints for coming and going

- *During the flight or at the airport* you usually receive a form to complete. Part of it will become your *de facto* visa at Passport Control. Keep that paper clipped to your passport at all times during your visit.
- *Arriving at Ben Gurion Airport* requires a lengthy walk to Passport Control where you will be asked the purpose of your visit and where you will be staying. Please check with your trip leader or the ELCA Peace Not Walls team about preparing for this process. There is no charge and you will be granted a visitor visa. You will also be given a slip of paper that an employee will look at as you enter the Baggage Claim area. Retrieve your luggage and exit by a sign that says “Customs—nothing to declare” where you will meet transportation to Jerusalem. The ride to Jerusalem is about one hour.
- *Assign “travel buddies”* to everyone in your group to stay together throughout the trip from leaving the plane until you board your return flight. No one wants to be separated from the group or lost in a strange place, but it can happen. It feels better to have someone with you.

Logistics on the ground

- *Passports* should be carried at all times. Have some way to keep it secure on your person—deep pockets or a holder that goes around your neck and under your shirt/blouse. Before you go, make two copies, one for your trip leader and one for a family member or colleague, that can be faxed to you if yours is lost or stolen.
- *Money*
 - Money changers are available in the Old City. Ask your guide or host to introduce you to one. They will often take your personal check.
 - US dollars can be used in many places.
 - Credit cards are accepted at most restaurants and hotels in Jerusalem—if you have informed your credit card company that you are traveling to the Middle East and charges are expected.
 - ATM machines may be hard to find and may or may not recognize your bank card if you can find an ATM machine. Don’t count on them for cash.
- *Shopping* is plentiful. Use your own judgment and feel free to haggle. Remember that tourism is down dramatically, especially on the West Bank. Your purchases help the merchants and their families very much.
- *Walking*, a primary form of transportation, is up hill and down. Jerusalem is built on **steep** hills. The Old City has many steps and uneven streets that are very slippery when wet. It is **NOT** a handicapped-friendly area. Care must be taken while walking. There are abrupt level changes, obstructions, and barriers. Outside of the city, the terrain can be rugged.
- *Weather*: Rain is rare from April through most of October. Daytime temperatures will be warm June through September, but evenings are usually cool. A light jacket or shawl is often needed. Sunscreen and hats are helpful during the day. November through March is usually chilly, sometimes cold, and frequently rainy. A warm winter coat and/or waterproof outer layer may be helpful. Because central heating is not common, it may be colder indoors than outside. Dressing in layers works well for all but the warmest summer months.
- *Clothing*: Shorts and sleeveless clothes are NOT appropriate. Capris for women are fine.
- *Sturdy walking shoes or sandals* are important! You may want to carry a pair of socks with you to put on with sandals if you get chilly or to replace wet ones on a rainy day.
- *Noise* is all around both day and night. Earplugs can be helpful.
- *Bottled water* is readily available. Carry it with you.
- *Unexpected delays* can be common. Snacks can also come in handy.
- *Hand sanitizer* is useful for times when it’s not convenient to wash hands before meals. Check TSA regulations or your air carrier to include in your carry-on luggage.
- *Washcloths* often are not provided at hostels, guest houses, and hotels. You may want to pack one or two.
- *Small trash cans* next to toilets are for discarding used toilet tissue as it may clog the plumbing, especially in the Old City and in most rural areas.
- *Prescription meds* should be included in your carry-on luggage. Check the latest requirements for what can be included in carry-on. If you have them, a back-up pair of *prescription glasses* comes in handy in case of loss.
- *Internet access* is available in Jerusalem as well as many

other towns and cities. If you take a laptop computer, back up your data on a portable hard drive or flash drive.

- *Mobile (cell) phones* from the States can sometimes be programmed for international access at no cost except when used. Check with your carrier.
- *E-mailing back home or creating a trip blog* is a great way to share your experiences while you travel. Just be sure that your entries identify people *only* by first name or general description, e.g. a Palestinian mother, a Jewish father, a man who lives in Bethlehem, an Israeli young man. Avoid specific references to villages or churches, for example, which would inadvertently identify someone.

Manners and morals

- Palestinians are among the most hospitable people in the world. You will often be offered coffee or tea or something to eat. When visiting a home, try not to refuse anything, even if you just take a bite or two. If for health reasons you cannot have sugar or certain foods, don't hesitate to let your hosts know. In most places it is safest to drink bottled water and hot beverages. It is usually fine to eat fresh fruits and vegetables in hotels and restaurants.

- Try to keep your comments general. If you say, "I like that picture" or "Your shirt is beautiful" some people may try to give it to you.
- When you are seated, keep your feet on the floor instead of crossing them. Showing the bottoms of your feet is considered rude.
- Males and females often greet each other by kissing on each cheek. Handshakes are also acceptable. If you are uncertain, let the other person initiate the greeting. Note that some Muslims prefer not to shake hands with persons of the opposite sex.
- If you are attending an ELCJHL church service, it is appropriate to offer ahead of time to take the pastor and/or some members of the congregation out for a meal. Some may accept and others may prefer to host you in their home.
- Remember that Palestinians have great restrictions on their ability to move about. Just because you can travel to a particular destination does not necessarily mean that everyone can.
- Be flexible and patient. Schedules can change abruptly; traffic snarls, both vehicular and pedestrian, occur without warning. Delay and change are the norm.
- If you have questions, always check with your host or tour guide to ensure that you are aware of appropriate behavior and protocol.

SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE LATER

Your visit to the Holy Land will leave you with vivid memories of a place holy to three great religions—and with much to ponder and pray about. By sharing your photos and stories you can help other Americans understand and appreciate the lives and aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians. You can also become an advocate of peace with justice for both peoples.

Be prepared to talk about your experiences in ways that help others grasp both the gravity of the situation and what things are needed to facilitate positive changes. Include stories of people you have met and how the conflict affects their lives. **Identify people only by first name or general description**, e.g. a Palestinian mother, a Jewish father, a man who lives in Bethlehem, an Israeli

young man. Avoid specific references to villages or churches, for example, that would enable someone to guess the identities of the persons you've described. This caution also applies to any blogs posted on the Internet by group members.

As you consider individuals, groups, and venues where you may make helpful contributions through presentations or letters, remember:

- Members of Congress and their staffs
- Letters to the Editor of your local newspapers [usually read by staff members of elected officials]
- Interfaith dialogue groups
- Staff meetings
- Congregational events and groups

- Preaching assignments
- Discussion groups

Remember that you are not expected to become an expert on this complicated issue! To prepare your comments, try focusing on two or three areas of special interest to you, such as what you learned about the Separation Barrier, illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory, or Christian-Muslim relations. The Peace Not Walls Web site can link you to sites with background information on these issues.

When you present, let people know that your observations come from the experiences you had while traveling, and that they may seem one-sided to people who have not experienced the Middle East or heard the Palestinian

perspective on the conflict. Remind your listeners that the fear of violence, which affects both Israelis and Palestinians, is very real, and that we all seek peace, with justice.

You can find photos and resources to incorporate into your presentations at www.holyland-lutherans.org/photosandpresentations.html You can also find excellent tips on making a presentation about the Holy Land at www.holylandalternatives.net/speaker.html

Remember that we can all LEARN, PRAY, and ACT for peace with justice in the Holy Land.

Have a wonderful visit!



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