



EPISCOPAL
holy LAND
PILGRIMAGES

12 DAY TOUR: JULY 7-19, 2024
GALILEE, JERUSALEM, BETHLEHEM, JORDAN



Twelve days in the Holy Land and Jordan

A lifetime of memories

A journey to the Holy Land is more than a trip, certainly more than a vacation.

To sail upon the Sea of Galilee is to deepen your understanding of Jesus's ministry. To see the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and to walk the cobblestone streets of the Old City is to enrich your commemoration of Holy Week year after year. To experience the rugged terrain of the Judean Wilderness, the heat of Jericho, the height of the hill country of Judea, is to forever transform the Bible from a black and white text into a full color, three dimensional reality.

A journey to the Holy Land will bring your faith to life. The Christian tradition is rooted in the idea that God has worked in the world at specific times, in specific ways, and in specific places.

And to see that world, with an open heart and an open mind, is truly to make a *pilgrimage*—a journey of faith that changes you forever.



Trip Leaders

Fr. David Houk is the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Dallas. He first traveled to the Holy Land for an undergraduate program in 1990 and then for a couple volunteer positions in Haifa and Bethlehem following graduation. His love for the land of the Bible, his appreciation of Middle Eastern culture, and his working knowledge of Arabic make him a popular tour leader for the pilgrims he leads as well as the locals he encounters on his travels.

Our local guide is Jude Hanna, an Arab Christian from Bethlehem whose Biblical knowledge, teaching gifts, and good humor make him one of the very best guides in the country. All accommodations, meals, and programs are organized by Sari Hazou, CEO of [Raji Tours and Travel](#), a group with three generations of experience providing quality care and service for travelers to the Holy Land.



July 7, 2024: Fly

This is our departure date from the US to Tel Aviv. When tickets are available for our travel date, a list of options will be sent out, and you can book your flight based on your favorite carrier or itinerary.

July 8: Arrive

The program begins at Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV), 6:00 pm local time. The airport is just east of the cities of [Tel Aviv](#) and [Jaffa](#). Jaffa, pictured above, is one of the oldest cities in the world. This was where the prophet Jonah jumped on a boat bound for Tarshish but ended up in the belly of a whale. Jaffa is also the site of Peter's rooftop vision in Acts 10 at [the house of Simon the Tanner](#).



From the airport we will head north to [Tiberias](#) on the shores of the Sea of Galilee where we will check in to the beautiful [Magdala Hotel](#). We will have earned some rest after a long day of travel.

July 9: Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum

Our first full day of touring begins in [Nazareth](#). We will visit the beautiful [Basilica of the Annunciation](#), built upon the childhood home of Mary. Here, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" when Gabriel announced the miraculous birth.

Nearby is [Cana of Galilee](#), the site of Jesus's first miracle of turning water into wine. (John 2)

After a memorable lunch of St. Peter's fish, we will visit [Capernaum](#), the hometown of brothers Peter and Andrew, James and John. Jesus made Capernaum his home after leaving Nazareth, teaching in the synagogue and ministering at [Peter's house](#). There are excavations at both sites that will help us connect with the Scriptures.

Nearby is the [Mount of Beatitudes](#), commemorating Jesus's famous Sermon on the Mount, and [Tabgha](#), the site of the multiplication of loaves and fishes and the feeding of the five thousand. We are back at the Magdala Hotel for dinner and overnight.



July 10: Galilee to Jordan

Before we leave the hotel, we will see the excavation at [Magdala](#), the hometown of Mary Magdalene.

Then, we will board a boat and sail on the [Sea of Galilee](#). For many pilgrims, this is a most memorable event, sitting in stillness and observing the unchanged terrain where Jesus spent so much time preaching, teaching, and healing.

We will visit [Mount Tabor](#), the site of Jesus's Transfiguration in the presence of Moses and Elijah, on the way to the [Sheik Hussein Bridge](#) as we cross into Jordan.

Our first stop in Jordan is Jerash, founded in 300 BCE by soldiers of Alexander the Great. An amazing excavation, it has been called "the Pompey of the East." Jerash is one of the cities of the [Decapolis](#), a region mentioned in the Gospels as having been visited by Jesus.



Then we're on the bus heading south to Petra, where we will check in to [the Old Village Resort](#).

July 11: Petra

Today, the amazing [Petra](#)! Carved into the rock by the Nabateans, this city is one of the ancient wonders of the world. We will see the Treasury, amphitheater, necropolis, and learn about the inhabitants of the city down through history. Opportunities to ride a horse or a camel abound.

On our way back to the Dead Sea area we will visit St. George's Church in Madeba, which features a [famous mosaic floor](#) with a map of ancient Jerusalem.

Then, we will check in to the posh [Dead Sea Hilton Resort and Spa](#) for dinner and overnight.



July 12: Jesus's Baptism Site and Mount Nebo

Today we start at "[Bethany Beyond the Jordan](#)" (John 1:28) the site of our Lord's baptism. On the banks of the Jordan River we will renew our own baptismal promises.

Then, we drive to the top of [Mount Nebo](#) where Moses, before his death, was allowed to see the Promised Land.

In the evening, we are back at the Dead Sea Hilton for a dip in the world's most buoyant body of water and some R and R.



July 13: Crossing the Jordan

Today we will cross the Jordan back to Israel/Palestine at the [Allenby Bridge](#), near the place where the Hebrews entered the Promised Land in the book of Joshua.

Nearby is [Jericho](#), the lowest city on earth and the world's oldest inhabited city. Jericho features a fascinating excavation of the ancient city walls and is also a good place for a camel ride and a photo op.

Then we will journey through the [Judean Wilderness](#),



where Jesus fasted for 40 days, to Jerusalem. Just six miles south is Bethlehem, where we will unwind at the lovely [St. Elias Hotel](#) for our dinner and overnight

July 14: The Western Wall, Al-Aqsa, the City of David

Today, Jerusalem! We will start with [The Western Wall](#) of the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism where the devout still pray. On top of the [Temple Mount](#) are two shrines sacred to Muslims: [Al Aqsa Mosque](#), the destination of Muhammad's night journey, and the iconic [Dome of the Rock](#), where the Temple once stood and where Abraham nearly sacrificed Isaac in Genesis 22.

Just south of the Temple Mount are the [Southern Steps](#), which in Jesus's day would have led to the Temple precincts. Many believe that the Southern Steps were the site of Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2, following the apostles being filled with Holy Spirit, with "tongues of fire" resting on each of them.

Downhill from the Temple Mount is the [City of David](#), the heart of ancient Jerusalem and the most excavated site in the Holy Land. The excavation continues underground as we go back in time to when King David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his capital (2 Samuel 5).

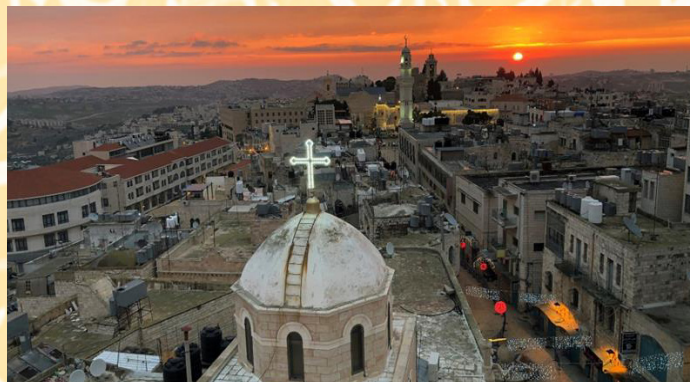


We will proceed through [Hezekiah's Tunnel](#) to the [Pool of Siloam](#). In John 9, Jesus healed a man born blind and told him to wash here.

We are back at the St. Elias for dinner and overnight.

July 15: Ein Karem, Israel Museum, Bethlehem

We start the day at [Ein Karem](#) where we will see two churches. First, the Church of the Visitation, where Mary journeyed to see her cousin Elizabeth, also with child (Luke 1). Then, nearby to the Church of the Nativity of St. John, built on the grotto where John the Baptist was born.



Around the corner is the [Israel Museum](#) where we will see the Shrine of the Book, home to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period, a sprawling reconstruction of Jerusalem in the first century.

Then, back to Bethlehem to see the [Shepherds Field](#), where the angels appeared to the those “keeping watch over their flocks by night.” We will read from Luke 2

and celebrate the Eucharist in one of the caves used by shepherds in generations past for tending sheep.

Then, the main attraction: [the Church of the Nativity](#), built above the grotto where Christ was born. This massive, ancient basilica was constructed around the year 550 ad and is the oldest continuously used church in the world, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We are back at the St. Elias Hotel to cool our heels.

July 16: Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, Holy Sepulchre

We begin this day atop the [Mount of Olives](#) with a beautiful panoramic view of Jerusalem. We will walk the Palm Sunday route down the Mount of Olives, a path perambulated by pilgrims for millennia. On our way, we will see the [Church of Pater Noster](#), commemorating the Lord’s Prayer, and [Dominus Flevit](#), where Christ wept over Jerusalem. Finally, we come to the [Garden of Gethsemane](#), the site of Jesus’s prayerful agony before his betrayal and passion.



In the afternoon, we will visit the beautifully austere [Church of St. Anne](#) and the [Pool of Bethesda](#) where Jesus healed a lame man in John 5. We will then walk the final footsteps of our Lord along the [Via Dolorosa](#), “the Way of Sorrows,” making the Stations of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The [Church of the Holy Sepulchre](#) is the holiest site for Christians. We will bend a knee at Golgotha, the rocky hill (visible on either side of the altar in the picture) where Christ was crucified on Good Friday. Then we will visit the empty tomb where he was raised on Easter Sunday. We will make sure to take time to pray at the place that is at the very heart of our faith. “For as all



die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:22) Tonight, we move into our new home in Jerusalem: the [Grand Court Hotel](#).

July 17: Masada, Ein Gedi, Qumran

Today: an unforgettable field trip to sites around [the Dead Sea](#). Our first stop is the amazing [Masada](#), an isolated plateau that was home to Herod's southern palace. Later, Masada was where Jewish rebels made their last stand against the Romans in AD 74.

Next, to [Ein Gedi](#) for a scenic stroll through a beautiful nature reserve. In caves among these craggy hills, young David hid from jealous King Saul in 1 Samuel 24. If we're lucky, we will see some [ibexes](#) and [hyraxes](#).

Then, [Qumran](#), where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947.

We are back at the Grand Court for overnight. For those who are not too tired, we can venture out after dinner to Ben Yehuda Street in West Jerusalem, an outdoor mall with shops, cafes, and street performers.



July 18: Mount Zion, Yad Vashem

Today we start at the [Garden Tomb](#), excavated in 1867. It is not the tomb of Jesus, but it is an ancient, rock-cut, rolling-stone tomb similar to where Christ was buried, into which pilgrims can enter and pray.

Then we will go to [Mount Zion](#): first, the [Upper Room](#), the site of the Last Supper, and then the nearby [Tomb of David](#). Then to [the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu](#), which means "rooster's crow." The church is built on the House of Caiaphas, where Christ was held upon his arrest and where St. Peter denied Jesus three times.

In the afternoon, we will see [Yad Vashem](#), the memorial for the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust.

Tonight is our Farewell Dinner, a "Feast in the Middle East" as we give thanks to God for all the learning and meaningful moments we have experienced.

July 19: Free time and return

We will have free time to explore Jerusalem until it is time to pack our bags and head to Ben Gurion for our return to the United States.



Price: \$2,849 (Double occupancy)

\$3,534 (Single occupancy)

The tour price includes all transportation, guides, lodging, tips for hotels, admission fees, all breakfasts and dinners and nine lunches.

ADDITIONAL COSTS: Not included in the price is airfare to and from Tel Aviv. Fr. Houk will provide a number of travel options and travelers book their own flights. Other out of pocket expenses include beverages at meals, after hours activities, lunches in Jordan, and tips for meals, guide, and driver.

To confirm your reservation, send a \$300 deposit via Venmo to @David-Houk-19. Or, send a check to

Fr. David Houk

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The full payment is due on May 1, 2024. For further information, please email Fr. David Houk at hok@stjohnsepiscope.org.



Cover photo by Mark Millan; used with permission. Other photos taken by St. John's travelers Lauri Bradley, Dick Couch, Fr. David Houk, Heather McNeill, Madeline Near, Jay Patterson, Randy Spence, and others.

