

Come with me to Israel April 23, 2022!



I hope you will come with me to Israel on April 23, 2022, returning May 3 – a beautiful time of year to be in Israel! The cost will be about \$4395, including flights, hotels, ground costs, and most meals. We say “about” as we can only guess at flights right now. Could be less! Probably not more.

We have an application process. Download the pdf form, fill it out and get it back to Peg Broughton (peg@mpumc.org). And please contact me (james@mpumc.org) to let me know you're interested, or if you have questions.



I love taking people to the Holy Land. It's always inspiring, educational, transformative and great fun. Each trip I lead is unique - because of the particular people who come, and also because we see something new every trip, and archaeological sites evolve over time. Five years ago, after we got home from a pilgrimage to Israel, I wrote [a blog](#) that might interest you - reflecting on the experience, what we learn, how we grow, why it's so profound.

We fly into Tel Aviv, one of the most beautiful and surely the most secure airport in the world. We make our way then to the north, where we spend the first three days exploring Nazareth, Capernaum, and other places where Jesus taught, healed, called the disciples, and even fished.



There is nothing quite like waking up your first morning in Israel, looking out the window - and there is the Sea of Galilee. We'll take a boat out on the lake, and you'll get a sense of how quickly the weather shifts from peaceful calm, to wind and storm, then back to peacefulness.



We will take a day and drive north. The country- side is beautiful near Hazor, where we examine ruins from the days of Joshua and the Israelites coming into the Promised Land. Further north, we will see the Bronze Age city of Dan, with its impressive walls - and most fantastically, the city gate through which Abraham himself walked.



Amazing.



Nearby we visit Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus conversed with the disciples, asking "Who do you say that I am?"



Just a short hike downhill from there we come to a marvelous waterfall, right at the source of the Jordan River - and likely the place where Psalm 42 was composed. This is one of my favorite days.



Mostly likely we'll end the day at BinTal, a high overlook where we can see the Road to Damascus, and into Syria and Lebanon.



But now our attention turns toward Jerusalem, just as Jesus' did midway through the Gospel stories. On our way to the holy city, we visit Beth Shean, where King Saul died, and where the 1971 Jesus Christ Superstar movie was filmed.



We stop by the edge of the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized by John - and we seize the occasion to have a service of baptismal remembrance. It is so very moving to wade into that river.



We'll zig down to the south for a day to see the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth - and where you float without even trying.



Finally we make our way to Jerusalem, where King David built his palace, where Solomon built the temple, where Jesus taught and healed, and was crucified.



We will pray at the Western ("Wailing") Wall, a holy moment indeed. We'll sit on the steps Jesus walked on to enter the temple to teach. In Jerusalem we will visit the Israel Museum, which contains fabulous archaeological finds from Bible times.

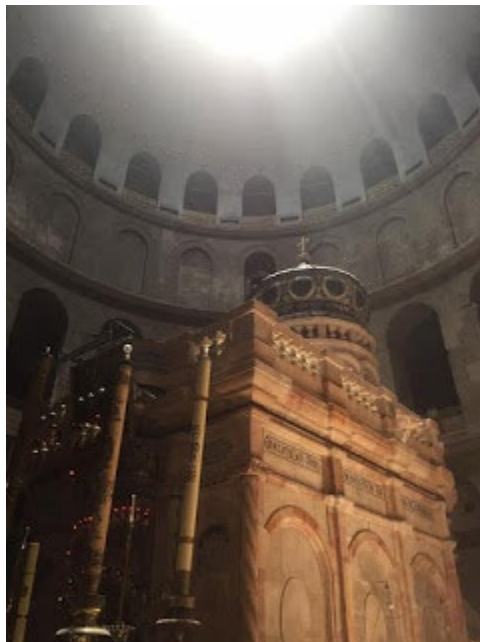


We hopefully will visit the Dome of the Rock, the beautiful 8th century shrine built over the place where the temple stood for centuries. Of special interest for us will be our visit to the archaeological site where excavations are being conducted by our own UNC-Charlotte - the only American university digging in Jerusalem!



Shimon Gibson, longtime archaeologist in Jerusalem will join us for a charming and informative introduction to what they're finding there.

The climax of our time in Jerusalem will be walking the Via Dolorosa, the traditional pilgrim's walk commemorating Jesus' trial and crucifixion.



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre houses both the place where Jesus was crucified, and the tomb where he was buried, and rose from the dead. It has been restored in the past 3 years after years of considerable decay. Stunning.

Here are a few more photos of interesting things we'll see.



1500 year old olive trees grown from the shoots of olive trees that stood in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed there.



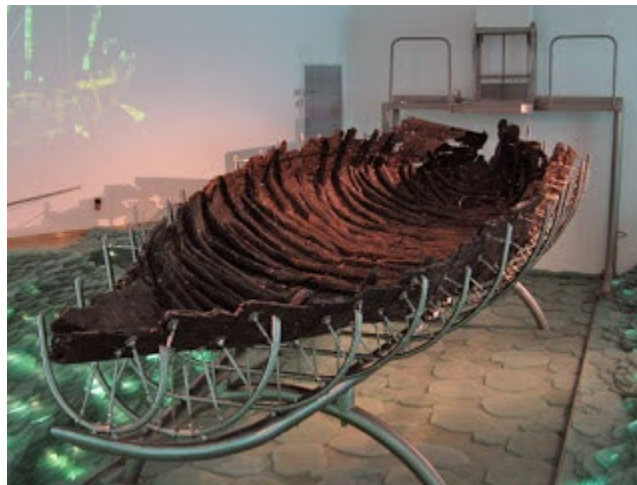
The aqueduct at Caesarea Maritima by the Mediterranean Sea.



Palm trees by the Dead Sea.



Stones from the temple from the time of Jesus.



A fishing boat archaeologists discovered and miraculously preserved - from the time of Jesus.



A statue by the Sea of Galilee commemorating Jesus sending Peter to "feed my sheep."



Most who go with me say it's the trip of a lifetime. I hope you'll go with me. There is a simple but important application process: let me know of your interest at james@mpumc.org. I also strongly recommend travelers insurance, as occasionally someone has to cancel and need a refund. Shalom! See you next year in Jerusalem!