Anglican Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

A visit to the Holy Land is like reading a ‘fifth Gospel’. The Gospels we are so familiar with become even more real as we see and experience the places where Jesus walked and where the Church began.

Would you like to join us for this pilgrimage from January 13-25, 2011?

Itinerary

Thursday 13th January 2011
We fly out to Bangkok and then board our El Al flight to the Holy Land.

Friday 14th January
It is an early morning touch down at Ben Gurion airport and we are met by our welcoming Guide. Our Guide has led the Tour for three years and knows our needs and just the places to take us. We are transferred to our hotel in Tel Aviv which overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and enjoy breakfast before a much needed sleep.

In the afternoon we leave for the old city of Jaffa, and begin our walk at the sea front where the pilgrims from overseas first set foot on the Holy Land. The Old City is a haven for artisans. We pause at the ‘whale’, a reminder of Jonah’s decision (Jonah 1:3) and end at St Peter’s church, a reminder of his vision of the sisters of Jesus.

Tuesday 18th January
The Arbel look out is one of the most spectacular in the Galilee and it overlooks the whole of the Lake. We spend time here to watch and pray as Jesus did. Then it is off to another high place, Mt Tabor where we reflect on the Transfiguration of our Lord. (Matt 17) After lunch we visit Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up. We visit the authentic Nazareth Village and then the largest church in the Holy Land, the Church of the Annunciation. There is time to reflect on Gabriel’s visit and announcement to Mary. (Luke 1).

Wednesday 19th January
Now it is time to make our way south, beside the Jordan river. We begin our journey where the Jordan flows from the Sea of Galilee and where there is a Baptism site, Yardenit. You will have the opportunity to re-affirm your Baptism promises here. We journey down the Jordan rift valley till we come to Qumran. Here we see the remains of the Essene community and the caves in which were discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls and stop for lunch.

It is a short trip to En Gedi, the spring on the shores of the Dead Sea. Journeying further south, we have accommodation in a Bedouin tent in the arid desert and reflect that night on Abraham whose descendants were promised to be as many as the stars.(Gen 15).

Thursday 20th January
We journey back north along the coast of the Dead Sea to a beach where we can swim in the salty waters at the lowest site on earth. Masada is our next focus and we take the cable car to the top and hear the story of the community which once lived on this high plateau. From here it is a journey west and one which ascends to the Holy City. But first we must pause at Wadi Kelt, to see the old winding road which so many pilgrims took as they too journeyed to and from Jerusalem. (Luke 2:41). We arrive at Jerusalem as the sun sets and the city is seen in a golden glow. We stay at Jerusalem Grand, just near our Cathedral of St George.

Friday 21st January
We begin with an inspection of the Jebusite site, the old city of David, Mt Zion. If possible we will walk through Hezekiah’s tunnel and then walk to the extensive ruins of Herod’s Temple; we remember Jesus walking on the same entry steps. We have lunch overlooking the Western wall, and then visit this most holy place for Jewish people. On leaving the Wall we walk through the Cardo, once the main street of Byzantine Jerusalem.

It is only a short walk to the other main thoroughfare, David st. We make our way up this narrow and busy bazaar to Jaffa gate. On ascending the steps next to the gate we come to the Rampart walk and finish at the Damascus gate.(Ps 48:12,13).

Saturday 22nd January
The Jewish Sabbath.
We begin with a visit to Mt Scopus lookout, near the University from which we see the panorama east across the Jordan valley.

At the Lions gate we enter the city once again (Ps 122) and sing in St Annes, just nearby is the site of the healing of the man with the 38 year wait. (tn 5). We then set out on a walk which follows the Way of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is time for a luncheon feast. We walk and pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the church built over the site of the crucifixion and resurrection tomb and end the day with a Eucharist at the Garden Tomb.

Sunday 23rd January
Bethlehem is only 10 km from Jerusalem and we set out to visit the oldest surviving church building in Christian history, the Church of the Nativity. We visit the grotto of the birth of Jesus and also the grotto of St Jerome.

Retracing our journey we have lunch at Ramat Rachel Centre and a visit to the Israeli Arts and Crafts centre.

Our last call for the day is to the Model of Jerusalem and Shrine of the Book which are next to the Israel museum.

Monday 24th January
This is designated as a free day and you might like to join in at one of the services at St George’s Cathedral. The other possibilities are to join in at the Temple Mount Antiquities dig or visit the Holocaust museum. We will meet in the afternoon and have a meal on the way to airport. At the airport we are assisted through security by our Guide and take the El Al flight to Bangkok.

Tuesday 25th January
Then it is back to Australia with many good and strong memories, as well as new insights and friends made through the pilgrimage.

Please note that there may be slight changes to this itinerary due to weather or accessibility.

COSTS:
Tour package $4685.
Insurance: $206.
Tipping expenses: $176
Airport Taxes: $691
Total: $5758.

For further information please ring The Rev’d Paul Woodhart: 63327370 or Innerfaith Travel: 1800 074 426.

Paul is the Chaplain to All Saints’ College, Bathurst, and this will be his sixth visit to the Holy Land.