

Middle East Trip Preparation

Jordan, Palestine/Israel, Egypt

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, Illinois

May, 2007 **Exploration of trip feasibility by Global Links Team**

June **Global Links decision to sponsor the trip on behalf of the congregation**

Goals set:

- To learn – An opportunity to walk behind the headlines in a complex situation and learn of efforts toward a permanent and just peace
- To grow – An opportunity to deepen faith through a pilgrimage to a land called holy where the Bible comes alive
- To receive – An opportunity to experience the daily lives and challenges of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Holy Land

September interest meeting

- Prayer and introductory conversation
 - What brought you to this table of exploration?
 - What is your fondest hope for this journey?
 - What gives you pause?
- Why we're proposing this trip at this time – "Peace Not Walls" emphasis, diminishing Christian presence, our connections with the ELCJHL and LWF
- Introduction of goals
- Middle East slides to whet the appetite
- Map and itinerary
- Cost and time frame
- Expectations of travelers: preparatory meetings; education through websites, articles, books; sharing the experience with the congregation as we prepare and after we return

November travelers' preparation meeting

- Prayer and "This trip will change your life" from *Welcome Forward*, pp. 10, 11 available from ELCA Global Mission
- Getting acquainted conversation
 - One thing most of us don't know about you
 - "I expect that . . ." regarding expectations for the trip
- Description and discussion of ELCA accompaniment model of mission – How do we accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land

Description and discussion of ELCA Peace Not Walls emphasis
Brief introduction of the ELCJHL
Viewing of *The Dividing Wall* or other relevant DVD – available through ELCA Global Mission
Assignment: Read hand-outs, check suggested websites, begin reading suggested books

December travelers' preparation meeting

Viewing of DVD, *Faithful Travel with Rick Steves*
Traveling as a representative of the ELCA and a guest in the land
Writing and sharing exercise: "As a guest in Israel and Palestine, I will . . ."
What behaviors come to mind with the phrase "ugly American"?
Values exercise: List U. S. cultural values; note contrasts with those of some other countries; hand-out – "Commentary on the List of American Values" available from ELCA Global Mission
U.S. values: Personal control over environment, change seen as natural and positive, time and its control, equality/fairness, individualism/independence, self-help/initiative, competition, future orientation, action/work orientation, informality, directness/openness/honesty, practicality/efficiency, materialism/acquisitiveness
Baggage Check exercise: Complete form individually and discuss small groups
Having an Excellent Adventure, p. 32 – ELCA Global Mission
Handouts: reading list, Israel/Palestine timeline available from Global Mission

January travelers' preparation meeting

Question and answer session, practical pointers -- Dr. Carol LaHurd, ELCA Global Mission

March travelers' preparation meeting

Sharing what we have read in preparation for the trip
Re-entry and telling the story when we return

May final travelers' preparation meeting

Samples of typical Middle Eastern food
Guest presenter, Pr. Said Ailabouni, former ELCA Program Director for Middle East
Last minute questions regarding packing, airport, customs