

Jacob's Porch Pilgrimage
Lutheran Campus Mission to The Ohio State University
10 days – Israel-Palestine

Trip Purpose: We called our travel a pilgrimage rather than a mission trip. While we were intending to visit the holy sites ascribed to a pilgrimage, it was also our hope to dive into the conversation of the Israel and Palestinian conflict. We balanced our trip on these two things, what many referred to as the ancient (dead) stones but also with the living stones.

Preparation: When one of our own staff members was called into an internship in Jerusalem, we immediately knew we needed to visit. We began advertising the trip almost a year ago in order to give people time to generate interest and funds for attendance. Commitments were finalized in the middle of the fall quarter and we were very pleased to have 14 in attendance. Beginning in the winter, we met weekly up to the date of travel. We used this time to read a book together (*The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan), received a visit from a university professor versed in the history of the conflict, a visit from a friend who recently returned from the area to share insight, watched the film "Waltz for Bashir", and to group build, covenant share, and have fun! These meetings and planning were all student led. (Jay's note: the only thing I did was help buy the tickets. That's it!).

Sharing our reactions: In response to the trip, we are planning a picture and pancake party here with our students and a presentation for the community-at-large. We used photos of actual locations as a part of our Holy Week worship schedule. We continue to share with our friends and colleagues here what information we have gained from the pilgrimage.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival in evening and transportation to quarters in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Day 2: Visited Holy Redeemer Lutheran church for English service. ICAHD Tour (<http://www.icahd.org/eng/>), visit with Young Adults in Global Mission on the Mount of Olives with cookout and volleyball.

Day 3: Visit to Augusta Victoria Hospital and Ascension Church on Mount of Olives, walked from there all the way back to the city via Via De la Rosa: Stopped at Mosque of the Ascension, Pater Noster, Church for all Nations at the Garden of Gethsemane, Zechariah's Tomb, Absalom's Tower, Golden Gates, Sheep Gate, Ecce Homo Convent, the stations through the Old City, and Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Day 4: Visit to Hertzl Memorial, Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum, Israel Museum and Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Jehuda Street, and supper at an Ethiopian Restaurant.

Day 5: Guided tour of Temple Mount, the Archeological Park, and City of David, Hezekiah's/Canaanite Tunnels, free evening.

Day 6: Tour into Bethlehem and work through Siraj center for tours. Visited Hebron, mosque of the Cave of the Patriarchs, visited Palestinian Markets in Hebron near Jewish Settlement, visited areas of Hebron long since boarded up by Israeli soldiers that had been the market center of Hebron, visit to Hebron Glass Works, Visit to village of At Tawani with a visit to Christian Peacemaker Team at work on nonviolent protest to encroachment of settlements, visited two leaders who exemplified non-violent protest in village and was fed by family in village. Returned to Bethlehem to stay in Palestinian host homes.

Day 7: Visit to Eratz Settlement in West Bank with a visit by Jewish settler, lunch in Bethlehem, visit to Bethlehem University, Herodian pools, Holy Innocent monastery, stay with Palestinian host homes.

Day 8: Visit Church of the Nativity in Manger square, visit to Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church of Bethlehem and the International Center, visit to Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala, visit to the Herodian palace/fortress, return through check point to Jerusalem, dinner at Pastor Mark Holman's home and then off to the airport to fly home.

Day 9: Sleeeeeeeeeeeep