Information and Registration Packet for Pilgrims of Ibillin Living Stones Pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine October 14-25, 2020

A unique Tour of Witness and Pilgrimage in the Service of Peace in this Region a Third of Humanity Call “The Holy Land”

Pilgrimage - from Wikipedia
A pilgrimage is a journey, often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person goes in search of new or expanded meaning about the self, others, nature, or a higher good, through the experience. It can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life.

Regarding “Living Stones” - Many [Palestinian Christians] have started to ask seriously whether there will be any native Christians left in the Holy Land in the near future, whether this country will become a kind of Christian Disneyland or theme park, and whether all that will remain here to visit and admire will be heaps of stones which have ceased being witnessing ‘living stones.’ Mitri Raheb, I am a Palestinian Christian.
Pilgrims of Ibillin: see www.pilgrimsofibillin.com
The mission of Pilgrims of Ibillin is to support the Mar Elias Educational Institutions (MEEI) founded by Fr. Elias Chacour and similar mission projects that cultivate a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine. Pilgrims of Ibillin provides this support through financial resources, education, and peace building pilgrimages.

The Work of Pilgrims of Ibillin Programs include:

- **Scholarships** - for Arab students at the Mars Elias Educational Institution in Ibillin Israel. This institution is one of the stops during Living Stones Pilgrimages.

- **Peace-Building Partners** - Since 2009, Pilgrims of Ibillin has supported extra projects with our partners in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. We visit several of these on our pilgrimages. These include:
  - Wi’am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center www.alasla.org, the Diyar Girls’ Soccer Program www.discoverfootball.de
  - Hope Secondary School in Beit Jala www.hopesschoolbeitjala.com
• The Seraj Library Project www.serajslibrary.org
• The St. George’s Melkite Church in Zababdeh (scholarships to the Catholic School)
• The Open House Preschool Program for Arab Children in Ramle Israel www.friendsofopenhouse.co.il
• Maia Water Project in Gaza, a Water purification program www.mecaforpeace.org.

• **Living Stones Pilgrimages** - Father Chacour says, “We invite visitors to see the ruins of holy sites but also engage with the “living stones,” that is the people that live and make their homes there. With this as inspiration, since 1995 Pilgrims of Ibillin has taken nearly 350 individuals on two-week pilgrimages to “Meet the Peacemakers” in Israel and Palestine. Led by Pilgrims staff, board members, and local partners in the West Bank and the Galilee, we have visited Christians, Muslims, and Jews who are working creatively to plant and nourish the seeds of a just peace. Our tours also include visits to various holy sites and conversations which connect our experiences with our faith.”
What Makes Pilgrims of Ibillin Living Stones Pilgrimages Unique?

“Typical Christian pilgrimage tours visits Bethlehem as a side-trip from Israel. They enter the West Bank on a day trip, head directly to Manger Square, visit the Church of the Nativity, and make a beeline back into Israel for the rest of their stay. These unfortunate travelers miss a lot and come home with only one narrative. This means that pilgrims who visit the Holy Land to “walk where Jesus walked” seldom walk with the people Jesus walked with. They rarely interact with Palestinian Christians”. Rick Steves in Travel as a Political Act: How to leave your Baggage Behind.

Pilgrims of Ibillin Living Stones Pilgrimages spends 7-8 nights in the West Bank including a home stay night with a Palestinian family. We will visit with and listen to Palestinians and Israelis who are working for a Just Peace in this region that a third of humanity calls “The Holy Land”.

This pilgrimage will offer visits to the major holy sites as well as opportunities to meet and learn from international agencies working on the ground to monitor the situation in the West Bank including Defense for Children Palestine www.dci-palestine.org, the UN office for Coordinating Human Affairs Palestine www.ochaopt.org, and members who work with Christian Peace Peacekeepers www.cpt.org. It is a unique opportunity to dive into and learn about the geopolitical and humanitarian situation in Israel/Palestine.
Trip Leaders

Usama Nicola is the Citizens Diplomacy Project coordinator along with Zoughbi at Wi’am in Bethlehem (The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center). Wi’am is one of our Peace Partner organizations and our West Bank tour planner. Since its inception, Wi’am has offered alternative tourist programs with opportunities for individuals and groups to visit the Holy places (Holy Stones) and the people (Living Stones) and as an introduction to the socio-economic and political conditions (Rolling Stones).


Brenda Mehos, trip coordinator and Pilgrims of Ibillin Board Member. Brenda with her husband Mark have 2 adult daughters and live in Boulder Colorado. She is a retired pharmacist and enjoys travel and learning about other cultures. She has traveled to the West Bank and Israel multiple times since 2013 and enjoys introducing people to this part of the world.
Pilgrimage Itinerary - More Detailed Available Closer to Departure

Wednesday evening October 14th
Meet Brenda and Celene at Tel Aviv and bus together from airport to Bethlehem.
Meet Usama from W’am and check in at Holy Land Hotel, Al Karkfah St., Bethlehem.
Brief orientation, dinner at hotel, sleep.

Day 1- Thursday October 15th
Visit Chapel of the Shepherd’s Field in Beit Sahour
Walk Star Street to Manger Square and Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem
Orientation at Wi’am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center
Tour Aida Refugee Camp, and visit the Seraj Library and Alrowwad Cultural Arts Society
Visit separation wall and Bansky’s Walled Off Hotel and Museum

Day 2- Friday October 16th
St. George’s Monastery and Wadi Qelt
Visit Qumran
Swim in Dead Sea
Visit Khan al-Ahmar Bedouin community

Day 3- Saturday October 17th
Visit Hebron glass and ceramic factory
Visit Abrahami Mosque/Tomb
Walk through Hebron Souq and Shouhada St
Visit with Christian Peacemakers team members
Visit Tent of Nations and pick olives

Day 4- Sunday October 18th
Worship at Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem
Visit Hope School and their olive woodwork shop
Hike to Village of Battir - a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its ancient terraced landscape.

Day 5- Monday October 19th
Start at Mount of Olives
Walk Palm Sunday path to Dominos Fleet
Visit Garden of Gethsemane and Church of all Nations
Guided tour of Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque
Rest and Meditate at St. Annes Church
Walk on Via Dolorosa
Visit ECCE HOMO, Western Wall, and Church of the Holy Sepulcher

Day 6- Tuesday October 20th
Visit Father Hosam Naoum and St. George’s Anglican Church in East Jerusalem
Briefing at OCHA- The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
East Jerusalem neighborhood tour
Visit Cremisan Cellars and wine tasting
Day 7- Wednesday October 21st
Check out of the Holy Land Hotel
Visit Defense for the Children in Ramallah
Visit Samaritans on Mount Gerizim and Jacob’s Well in Nablus
Travel to Zababdeh to meet our host Fr. Firas Khoury Diab
and overnight with local host families

Day 8- Thursday October 22nd
Visit Sebastia and the Basilica of John the Baptist, ancient amphitheater, and pre-Roman ruins.
Visit Canaan Fair Trade and Church of Ten Lepers
Bus to Nazareth
Visit Basilica of the Annunciation
Overnight stay in Nazareth

Day 9- Friday October 23rd
Visit Sisters of Nazareth Monastery
Visit Al Tufula Center and St Joseph’s Church
Tour Nazareth area with Jonathan Cook
Bus to Ibillin for night
Settle into Mar Elias Guesthouse and dinner

Day 10- Saturday October 24th
Tour Mar Elias Educational Institution (MEEI)
Tour Bi’ram with a local guide
Visit church of the Sermon on the Mount at MEEI

Day 11- Sunday October 25th
Check out of MEEI
Bus to the holy sites along the Sea of Galilee: Capernaum, Primacy of Peter, Tabgha, and Mount of Beatitudes
Enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee
Final group diner in Ramle
Bus to airport and depart
**Tour Features and Considerations**

**PROGRAM FEE** OF $2,300/person includes accommodations in comfortable hotel/guesthouse settings based on double occupancy; breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily except 4 lunches; group transfers between airports and hotels; travel in a comfortable tour bus; sightseeing and entrance fees; tips and taxes; and honoraria to organizations and speakers.

**PAYMENT**: Deposit of $500, payable to Pilgrims of Ibillin, is due immediately to secure registration. (Registrations paid by July 1st, 2020 will receive a $100 discount. Therefore, deposits paid before July 1, 2020 = $400/person.) To pay by credit card, please contact Brenda Mehos via email at bmehos@comcast.net. A 2.6% surcharge will be added.

**NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR COST**: Single room supplement of $300, 4 lunches, beverages with meals, passport fees, travel insurance, excess baggage, items of a personal nature. If participants choose land-only registration, fee does not include airport transfers other than with the group.

**TO GUARANTEE A SPOT IN THE GROUP**, register by July 1, 2020. Final payment of $1800 is due September 1, 2020. To offer this group cost, we request deposit and final payment by check. If paying by credit card, please add a 2.6% surcharge.

**NOTE**: The per person tour costs are based on shared occupancy, land costs and currency valuations as of September 2018, a minimum group size of 15 and are subject to availability and change.

**FLIGHT RESERVATIONS**: Arrange through our Travel Agent Debbie Havrilak at Direct Travel for individual airline reservations from your home airport to Tel Aviv and return. Make your plans so you will arrive in Tel Aviv on Oct 14th before 5:00 pm, and plan your flight home to leave Tel Aviv just before midnight on Oct 26th or in the wee hours of Oct 27th. (Leaving later will require spending a night in the airport or paying extra for private hotel & transportation). Debbie is familiar with our tours and the need for specific times.

Travel payment by credit card or check will be made directly to our travel agent: Debbie Havrilak at Direct Travel in Washington State. 1-800-662-3342, or missions@dt.com.

**COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL INSURANCE**: Insurance covering baggage, health, and trip cancellation is available through Debbie Havrilak and is strongly recommended. Payment must be made to Direct Travel within 10 days of booking your airfare, or pre-existing conditions will not be covered.
PASSPORT, VISA & VACCINATIONS: U.S. citizens need a passport valid at least six months after their date of return to the US. Get passport applications at http://www.travel.state.gov/. You will receive your visa at passport control in Tel Aviv. You do not need to apply for it in advance. No vaccinations are required. Non-U.S. citizens are responsible for knowing their own passport and visa requirements; without proper documents entry can be denied at tour member’s expense. **Provide a photocopy of your passport to the tour leader before the trip begins.**

REFUND POLICY: If cancellation is received in writing by Sept 1, 2020, a $200 fee applies plus unrecoverable deposits or air and land service payments. After Sept 1, a $500 cancellation fee will be deducted from your refund, due to the special contracts for tour features, commitments to other tour members, and the services rendered on behalf of all tour members. Airline tickets are issued at the time you make your reservation and are nonrefundable. **Optional travel insurance is highly recommended.**

RESPONSIBILITY: Neither Pilgrims of Ibillin nor its employees or agents, nor any other person, party, or entity associated with it shall be liable for any injuries, damages, accidents, expenses, delays, schedule or itinerary changes, damage to person or property, or any other loss or inconvenience arising out of or in connection with any transportation, accommodation, meals, tours, or other services that relate to the travel program or are referred to herein, or that occur during free time the members may have on the tour. Pilgrims of Ibillin reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to make changes in the itinerary whenever changes are warranted or deemed appropriate and withdraw participation of any tour member whose conduct is incompatible with the group. In the ever-changing world situation, Pilgrims of Ibillin recommends personal monitoring of news about Israel/Palestine. For the latest country information and travel warning from the US Dept. of State, visit [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html)

*Note: By signing my registration application, I affirm that I have been advised and am aware of the U.S. State Department Travel Warning to Israel and the West Bank.*
RESERVATION FORM

Sponsored by Pilgrims of Ibillin: https://www.pilgrimsofibillin.org

To be assured of your place in this tour, please print and complete this form, and mail along with your registration application the deposit of $500 ($400 if before 7/1/2020) with check written to:

“Pilgrims of Ibillin” with Pilgrimage 10/2020 in memo.

Mail To: Brenda Mehos, 1080 Love Ct. Boulder, CO 80303 Questions:

Contact Brenda at bmehos@comcast.net or 303-931-2577

Registrations due no later than September 1st, 2020.

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Name 1 (as it appears on passport): ________________________________

Passport # __________________________________ Expiration Date
______________________________ Birth Date

__________________________________________ Phone

__________________________________________ Email

Preferred name and pronouns______________________________________

Travel History? Have you traveled to Israel and/or Palestine before?

Why are you interested in this Pilgrimage?

Do you have any medical considerations and allergies?
Name 2 (as it appears on passport: ________________________________

Passport # ________________________________ Expiration Date ________
______________________________ Birth Date
______________________________ Phone
______________________________ Email

Preferred name and pronouns_______________________________

Travel History? Have you traveled to Israel and/or Palestine before?

Why are you interested in this Pilgrimage?

Do you have any medical considerations and allergies?
Passport copies: Please enclose a clear photocopy or pdf of the photos signature page of each person’s passport.

Address
City, State, Zip

Preferred home airport: ______________________________________________________

Room Type: ______ Double    or ______ Single ($300 single supplement)

If credit card payment is preferred, please authorize payment of registration fee + 2.6% surcharge per person:

*I have read the Notes and Conditions for this tour and agree to the terms listed therein.
Signature(s): _______________________________ Date __________
_______________________________ Date __________

Emergancy Contacts:
Please provide contact information for at least one emergency contact at home here:

Name: _______________________________________________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________________________________________
E-mail: _____________________________________________________________________

Name: _______________________________________________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________________________________________
E-mail: _____________________________________________________________________
