

Israel @60

Small Federation Community Mission to Israel

November 8-20, 2008

Sunday. November 9. 2008

Morning Depart US

Monday. November 10. 2008

Morning: Arrival in Israel at Ben Gurion International Airport

Shalom! You have arrived in Israel, forging another link in the bridge between the Diaspora and Israel.

Our Mission begins in Tel Aviv,

Independence Hall is housed in what was one of the first homes in Tel Aviv and the private home of Meir Dizengoff, first mayor of Tel Aviv. On the 5th of Iyar, May 14, 1948, the People's Council gathered to hear David Ben Gurion proclaim the establishment of the State of Israel.

Check in hotel and short rest

Opening dinner in one of the restaurants at Tel Aviv Port

OVERNIGHT: Carlton Hotel Tel Aviv

Tuesday. November 11. 2008

Caesarea, built by Herod, was the Roman capital of Palestine for nearly 600 years. The extensive seaside ruins here date back to Roman, Byzantine and Crusader times. Explore the 2,000-year-old Roman Theater, Crusader harbor and 12th-century ramparts.

Continue to Atlit - Relive the harrowing experiences of clandestine immigrants to Palestine, many of them Holocaust survivors, who were incarcerated during the British Mandate at the Atlit detention camp. The camp was reconstructed based on reports of those who were held there.

Continue to Haifa - Light lunch on route (falafel)

Haifa is Israel's third largest city and northern capital. Situated in a broad natural bay between the Mediterranean Sea and the Carmel Mountain, the city's terraced landscape offers a rich variety of breathtaking panoramas.

Tour the Bahai Gardens. The Bahai religion originated in Iran and its followers decided to build their world center in Haifa when they came under persecution.

Technion visit - Tour the "coexistence road" in Wadi Nisnas, an Arab neighborhood in Haifa. Participate in a discussion and workshop at Beit Hagefen to learn about challenges facing the issue of Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel today in general, and in Haifa in particular.

Return to Tel Aviv and have dinner at your leisure.

OVERNIGHT: Carlton Hotel Tel Aviv

Wednesday. November 12. 2008

This morning we will go to the south.

Rishon LeZion, whose name is derived from a biblical verse: "First to Zion are they, and I shall give herald to Jerusalem" (Book of Isaiah 41:27), was founded on July 31, 1882 by a group of ten Hovevei Zion pioneers from Kharkov, Ukraine.

We will visit the Rishon LeZion Pioneer Museum housed in 100 year-old buildings, includes exhibits such as a reconstruction of the world's first Hebrew-speaking school and a sound-and-light show that depicts the First Aliyah.

Today we will visit a JDC site to explore how our work in the states impacts the daily lives of Israelis.

Afternoon: Lunch in the area

Visit Sderot to learn about the current security situation in the area surrounding Gaza Strip and on life in the shadow of a constant Kassam rockets threat

NOTE: Visit is dependent on the security situation at the actual time of our stay.

Today we visit our partner community of Kibbutz Nachal Oz and join with Israeli for dinner and home hospitality.

Check in at Mitzpe Ramon Inn located in the Negev

OVERNIGHT: Mitzpe Ramon Inn

Thursday. November 13. 2008

Ramon Crater, or in Hebrew Machtesh Ramon, is a unique geological phenomena. We will visit the Visitors Center, learn about the history of the area and view the vegetation and rich mineral content unique to this region.

Jeep ride through in the Ramon Crater

Visit Ben Gurion's house and grave at Sde Boker. Ben Gurion is buried in the Kibbutz cemetery, overlooking the valley that the children of Israel had come through on their way to the Promised Land.

Afternoon: Proceed to Jerusalem. The word "aliyah" which denotes the physical ascent to Jerusalem takes on new meaning as we climb from the Judean lowlands to the city which is the political and spiritual center of the State of Israel.

Within view of the city King David proclaimed Israel's eternal capital 3,000 years ago, we recite Shehecheyanu, the blessing expressing our gratitude upon reaching Jerusalem.

For a different perspective on the history of Jerusalem, head underneath the Old City's chaotic maze of buildings to the Western Wall Tunnel.

Welcome to Jerusalem. Dinner on your own. You may want falafel, you may want to shop, whatever you like feel free to explore the city of Jerusalem.

OVERNIGHT: Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem

Friday. November 14. 2008

A solemn time is to be spent at Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust Memorial. The new museum presents state-of-the-art exhibits and the story of the Shoah from the perspective of the individuals, through original artifacts, survivor testimonies and personal possessions, presented in a multi-sensory experience.

We move from out of the darkness of the Holocaust to the bustling market as Jerusalemites prepare for Shabbat. Machane Yehuda is Jerusalem's colorful outdoor market. We will have falafel lunch, Israel's national dish, and view Jerusalemites preparing for Shabbat.

Depart for the Western Wall

Shabbat is often referred to as the *Shabbat Kallah*, the Sabbath bride, a theme found throughout the traditional Friday night prayers. Sixteenth century mystics of Safed created the Friday evening service, called in Hebrew *Kabalat Shabbat*, which means *Welcoming the Sabbath*.

Shabbat candle lighting and a Festive Shabbat dinner with **Cantor Even Cohen** of Kehilat Har-El, and wife

OVERNIGHT: Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem

Saturday. November 15. 2008

Optional Tours: Shabbat is a day of rest and reflection. Join morning services at one of Jerusalem's many synagogues.

OR

Day tour in the Dead Sea: Ascend Masada and tour King Herod's historic hilltop fortress, where a small band of Jewish zealots took refuge after the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 BCE, resisting a prolonged siege by the Roman army.

Lunch and swim at the Hod hotel

At 1,300 feet below sea level, the Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth. You can make this visit a high point by venturing into the waters for a "float", swimming suspended by the high concentrations of salts and minerals.

The landscape, climatic conditions and water sources at the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve have created a unique ecosystem of springs, waterfalls and pools surrounded by lush greenery in a desolate desert setting. We will have the opportunity to hike up to and cool off in the refreshing pools and waterfalls of the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve.

Return to Jerusalem

As the sun sets over the Jerusalem hills and Shabbat draws slowly to a close, come together with your group to take part in Havdallah.

Free evening and dinner on own in Jerusalem's bustling downtown area where shops, restaurants and cafes cater to a diverse crowd of Israelis and tourists.

OVERNIGHT: Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem

Sunday. November 16. 2008

Tour *Ir David*- the City of David. King David captured a Jebusite citadel in order to build his capital. Learn more about the City of David at: <http://www.cityofdavid.org.il>.

Visit the Temple Mount, a site holy to Jews, Muslims and Christians alike.. Normally tranquil and peaceful with its park like setting, one would hardly guess that this small parcel of land - less than 50 acres - is the center of the world and the hottest piece of real estate anywhere on earth. Biblically speaking, it's most exciting history lies yet ahead.

Free time for shopping and lunch

Mount (Har) Herzl is the burial place of Israel's founding fathers, the country's leaders and the site of Jerusalem's military cemetery. Our Mission will pay tribute to those whose vision helped build Israel and those who gave their lives to keep it safe.

Dinner TBA

Continue to the Binyanei Hauma conference center and Opening plenary of the GA.

OVERNIGHT: Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem

Monday. November 17. 2008 through Thursday morning. Nov. 20

Dan Panorama Hotel.

We will depart for the airport on Thursday morning, Nov. 20