



TREE OF LIFE JOURNEY – MARCH 12-23 2019

MOTHERS OF A NEW CREATION



Tree of Life Educational Fund will offer its next journey in March of 2019. This journey will have a special focus on the role of women, past and present, in their struggle to give birth to a New Creation. The Land of Canaan, sometimes called the "Holy Land" or the "Land of Promise", is a place replete with the sacred stories of women who by their love, courage, resilience and determination endeavor to make their communities a place where all God's children could learn to live together in peace. The voice of Rachel weeping for her children can be heard in the lamentations of Palestinian and Israeli mothers who have lost their children in the violence. In organizations such as Women in Black, in those Israeli women who, despite being ostracized by members of their own families, courageously keep vigil at checkpoints in solidarity with Palestinians and their quest for human rights, we will be reminded of how Naomi said to Ruth, "Your people shall be my people." The dignity of Hagar can be seen in Bedouin women who in weaving beautiful carpets also weave a new and better future for their children. They have opened a school in Hagar's name where Palestinian and Israeli children can learn together.

We will see the face of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in those who everyday "magnify" God's love in the love and compassion for those victimized by a brutal occupation. In Nabi Saleh, in the home of 17 year old Ahd Tamimi, we will be reminded of a young woman from Magdala who refused to be intimidated by those in power. In Nablus, we will be reminded of a Samaritan woman who offered a cool drink to Jesus, a Jew, and in that hospitality reminded us of how crossing boundaries and comfort zones and transcending stereotypes can help to build a new and better future for us all. In traditional Palestinian Dabke Dances, singers and ancient instruments such as the oud, we will remember the spirit of Miriam who with her tambourine and dance helped to keep alive the hopes and dreams of her people.

This journey will be led by 2 remarkable women, Ghoufran Allababidi, President of Tree of Life Educational Fund and Mary Tomassetti, Executive Director of Tree of Life. Serving as chaplains for the journey will be Colleen Keyes, former Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs at Zaytuna College and Muslim leader in the interfaith community and Laura Fitzpatrick Nager, Senior Associate Minister of The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, CT. Although this journey will have a special focus on the role of women from biblical times to the present; all — men and women — are welcome!

TOL March 2019 DRAFT itinerary 043018

12th Tuesday – Depart JFK Jordanian Air

13th Wednesday– Arrive Amman, cross Allenby Bridge and drive directly for overnight in the Bedouin community of the Negev.

14th Thursday - Meet with Khalil Alamour to learn about “Unrecognized Bedouin Villages” and Amal Abu AlKhom, founder of “Bedouin Women for Themselves” and a school for Bedouin children. Visit coexistence school, Hajar, and then visit the Bedouin Women’s Weaving Cooperative. Overnight Negev

15th Friday –Depart for Tent of Nations, south of Bethlehem, a working farm surrounded by illegal settlements to meet with Daoud Nassar and his family to learn how they honor a sign at the entrance to their farm, “We Refuse To Be Enemies.” After lunch, travel to Bethlehem University to meet with Muslim and Christian students and their faculty. Afternoon, meet with Rami Elhanan and George Saadeh of The Parents Circle, a community of Palestinians and Israelis who have lost family members in the conflict. Dinner and overnight at Paradise Hotel or host homes for all who choose.

16th Saturday –Visit Church of the Nativity and other key sites. Lunch and visit with Shoruq an organization established in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp that provides youth the opportunity to celebrate their Palestinian identity through indigenous dance, rap songs, and other programs that support those of their community. Meet Mazin Qumsiyeh, author of *Sharing the Land of Canaan* and *Popular Resistance in Palestine* and founder of the Palestine Natural History Museum. Dinner with festivities with Palestinian friends, overnight Paradise Hotel in Bethlehem.

17th Sunday – Early church services for those who choose to attend. 9:00 depart for Hebron. Tour of Ibrahimi Mosque and the market, visit with voices of conscience in Hebron. 2:30 depart for Taybeh. Tour and visit with Maria Khoury, author of *Witness in the Holy Land* and founder of a scholarship program for Taybeh youth. Overnight in Taybeh Golden Hotel.

18th Monday –Depart for visit to Jacobs Well (interfaith prayer and meditation) in Nablus, walking tour of the old city, lunch and feast on Kannafeh, a Nablus delicacy. Meet with Human Supporters Association. Depart for overnight in Narjis Hotel in the Golan Heights, occupied Syria. We will stop by a ruined Mosque to offer prayers.

19th Tuesday – All day visit in Golan Heights. Tour of the area and visit with Dr. Taiseer Maray and other Syrian voices of conscience to learn of their perspectives on both Syria and Israel. Overnight in host homes for all who choose or Narjis Hotel.

20th Wednesday – 9:00 AM depart for Sea of Galilee and Mount of Beatitudes for interfaith prayers, possible visit to Magdala, ancestral home of Mary Magdalene and then travel to Nabi Saleh to visit with the family of Ahed Tamini to learn of their heroic non-violent resistance. We will then travel to Jerusalem to meet with Sahar Vardi, a young Israeli woman incarcerated for her refusal to serve in the Israeli Defense Force who now does advocacy work with American Friends Service Committee. Overnight in Austrian Hospice in old city of Jerusalem, near Al Aqsa Mosque.

21st Thursday - Morning tour with Fayrouz Sharqawi of Grassroots Jerusalem and meet with Ivan Karakashian of Defense for Children International – Palestine and other voices of conscience such as Women in Black or Machsom Watch, human rights women’s organizations who stand vigil at check points. Ramparts Walk to see the old city, visit Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy sites. Overnight in Jerusalem, Austrian Hospice.

22nd Friday – Morning coffee and conversation with a woman member of Breaking the Silence. Free time in the old city. After mid day prayer at Al Aqsa, cross King Hussein bridge to Jordan for overnight in Madaba.

23rd Saturday – Some fly home, extension for others

Jordan extension March 23-26

23rd Saturday morning in Madaba, then on to Wadi Rum overnight in Bedouin encampment, Jordan Tracks.

24 Sunday Wadi Rum all day, move to Petra for overnight.

25 Monday Petra Full day then to Amman for overnight.

26 Tuesday Transfer to Airport for departure

Cost: \$2800 per person and reduced to \$2,250 for students for Palestine/Israel itinerary
\$1000 per person for the extension to Jordan

Cost includes accommodations, ground expenses in Israel and Palestine, most meals and some tips.
Airfare is not included in the Journey cost

For further information please contact Mary Tomassetti at Mary@tolef.org