



Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust :

“Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.” Good News Bible 1 Peter 2: 4,5

Charity No 1081204; www.livingstonesonline.org.uk

Living Stones?

- Who are the 'living stones'? According to the text, Christ Himself, as the cornerstone, and each one of His people, built into one fellowship – in the past, present and future.
- A pilgrimage which seeks out the Living Stones, the local people, is a 'living stones' pilgrimage..... But we pilgrims are also Living Stones, and we wish to be built together.
- These slides explain how the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust approaches its pilgrimage planning, and builds relationship with the Christian communities of the Holy Land.



Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust is:

- An ecumenical charity with the primary aim of advancing education about Christianity in the Holy Land and countries around, by:
 - raising awareness in Britain and elsewhere, educating and informing the public concerning Christians in the Holy Land, through our website, lectures, newsletter and a yearbook of academic theological articles;
 - promoting contacts between Christians (and others) in Britain and in the Holy Land;
 - cooperating with other charities and groups with similar aims, by sharing activities and information.



Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust : our Pilgrimage Principles

*Charity No 1081204;
www.livingstonesonline.org.uk*



Living Stones Pilgrimage: 5 priorities

- Our Trustees have a deep knowledge of, and interest in, the Middle East from many different perspectives, and this is reflected in the way we put together a Living Stones pilgrimage.
- Our prime focus is to:
 - Encounter Christian communities
 - Understand the context in which they exercise their faith
 - Encourage by our presence and interest
 - Reflect and pray
 - Witness by sharing what we have experienced

1. Encounter:

- Meeting Christian individuals and congregations, listening to their stories and learning about their faith journeys, e.g.:
 - Christian communities in Taybeh, Zabadeh, Galilee, etc..... Gaza when possible!
 - individuals living out their faith in pursuit of peace: Jean Zaru, Elias Chacour, Naim Ateek....
 - unfamiliar groups, such as Musalaha and the messianic Jewish congregations



2. Understand.....

-the social, political and economic context...



.... by:

- Going out into the towns, camps and villages, e.g.:
 - visiting secular and faith-based humanitarian/ health/ educational projects
 - meeting individuals with particular expertise or experience
 - visiting institutions founded by different denominations
 - going to refugee and other camps
 - meeting representatives of UN and other welfare providers



3. Encourage...

- ...by our presence, interest and support:
 - Using local services and produce
 - Sharing expertise, training
 - Buying produce at source
 - Prayer and donations (of time and talents as well as money)



4. Reflect...



- Visiting holy sites where it is possible to spend quality time in reflection and meditation;
- Allowing ample time within the programme for structured or semi structured opportunities to review and 'decompress'.

5. Witness....

- ...by sharing what we have experienced:
 - talks, slides, discussions
 - writing, reflection, prayer
 - learning more
 - visiting again, and encouraging others
 - offering time and talents, as well as financial support



How we implement these principles: 1

- Choose a date, venue and programme where encounters are possible, e.g.:
- Jerusalem during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a time when many denominations welcome visitors, tourism is quiet and flights are cheaper.
- The WoP is an excellent opportunity to introduce pilgrims to the various Eastern churches – the programme includes a selection of different churches (varying from year to year), typically Greek Orthodox, Latin (RC), Anglican, Lutheran, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox.... and/or maybe Coptic, Russian, Roumanian....

How we implement these principles: 2

- The WoP services are tailored to an ecumenical congregation, but for a more authentic experience of the different ways that worship is practiced, consider attending their main services.
- Churches reflect historical Christian activity - both indigenous historical foundations and those originally serving diplomatic and cultural enterprise – which are fascinating and revealing.
- Build a programme around the denominations included in the WoP schedule – especially lesser known groups, e.g. visiting the Lutheran World Federation or the Armenian Museum, going out to the West Bank towns to worship with Greek Orthodox or Melkite congregations.
- Where possible, use Palestinian-run or Church-owned hotels and hospices, transport and other services.

How we implement these principles: 3

- Meet with representatives of the Jewish and Muslim faiths as well as other indigenous minority religious groups (Druze, Samaritan, Baha'i).
- Ensure a range of different activities each day – balance serious socio-political challenges with lighter cultural and culinary adventures, and essential quiet reflection.
- Check out the experience of the pilgrim group – individuals may have links to projects and individuals who would be delighted to meet the group.
- Respect the faith backgrounds of the pilgrim group, and encourage each to take part in the spiritual timetable, e.g. leading an evening prayer time to round off the day.

Example of Week of Prayer schedule:

[this is from 2014 – there is variation from year to year]

Saturday, Jan. 25	5.30 p.m.	Anastasis (Holy Sepulchre), Calvary Gk Orth “Apodeipnon” (Compline)
Sunday, Jan. 26	5.00 p.m.	Anglican Cathedral of St George, Nablus Road
Monday, Jan. 27	5.00 p.m.	Armenian Cathedral of St James, Old City, Armenian Quarter
Tuesday, Jan. 28	5.00 p.m.	Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Old City,
Wednes, Jan. 29	5.00 p.m.	St Mark’s Church, Syriac Orthodox, Old City, near Jaffa Gate
Thursday, Jan. 30	4.00 p.m.	Upper Room (Cenacle), Mount Zion, led by Benedictine monks from Dormition Abbey
Friday, Jan. 31	5.00 p.m.	Latin Patriarchate Church, Old City, Jaffa Gate
Saturday, Feb. 1	5.00 p.m.	Ethiopian Orthodox Church, West J’lem, off Prophets’ Street
Sunday, Feb. 2	5.00 p.m.	Greek Catholic Church of Annunciation, near Jaffa Gate

Video: <http://www.fmc-terrasanta.org/en/ecumenism.html?vid=5641>

Thank you! And if you would like to join...

- *Pilgrims who are not already members of the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust will be included in the membership for that year.*
- *Subsequently, the subscription of £30 per year covers:*
 - Website and facebook page, etc
 - Invitation to our annual Members' Day
 - Regular newsletters
 - Living Stones Yearbook
 - Invitations to our conferences and other major events
 - News of our scholarship programme
 - Notifications of pilgrimages.....and much more!

