



Grand Commandery of Minnesota

*Knights Templar*

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## Holy Land Pilgrimage

Tom Hendrickson-Editor

Because of the Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage program offered by the Grand Encampment, since 1977 over 2,400 Christian Ministers have been able to travel to the Holy Land. They have walked the streets of the Holy City of Jerusalem, visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, felt the waters of the river Jordon, experienced the land where Abraham, Isaac and Moses lived, where David and King Solomon reigned, and our Lord Jesus Christ was born, ministered and was crucified.

Israel is a tiny strip of land that is about 200 miles long, and ninety miles at its widest point. It is a land of striking differences from the snow topped mount Hermon in the North that is also the head waters of the River Jordon that travels 90 miles to the Dead Sea, to the Galilee region which is rich in farming where olives and bananas are grown, and to the very stark Negev Desert in the South.

For many ministers, the land of Israel is a place that they have read about, intently studied or watched videos about, but have not had the opportunity to visit. I view ministers as storytellers and the sermon each week is the story with a message for the congregation. The minister can interpret and tell a story about what he has learned but when that minister can travel to the Holy Land and make the pilgrimage of walking where Jesus walked, I believe the minister can be truly much more effective in delivering the message or story.

I had the opportunity to experience the Holy Land Pilgrimage in 2017. This pilgrimage was a combination of tourists and pastors. During the trip, one of the pastors told me that going on the pilgrimage trip would

allow him to tell the stories of Jesus more vividly and accurately. I recently spoke with my roommate from the trip, a pastor, that told me that every Sunday he makes a reference from the trip in some way.

For those pastors on the Holy Land Pilgrimage, they do more than see the countryside from a tour bus, they have an experience. They walk the steps of Jesus, and by walk, I mean walk. The experience the smells from the spices standing in front of the stores in Old Jerusalem, to the smell of the Dead Sea a mile away. They meet and talk with people of diverse cultures and viewpoints and they eat the wonderful foods. They pray with Rabbis at the Wailing Wall and with Muslim's at the call of afternoon prayer.

The Knights Templar honored their faith with shield and sword, but in these modern times we can use the word and pen to advance our cause. As Knights Templar this is our opportunity to invest in the future of the Christian church which we have sworn to defend. For every Pastor that we send on the Pilgrimage we offer them an opportunity to gain much greater insight into their faith as the Bible and the world of Christ comes alive. The Pastor will be a better teacher that will have an impact on their congregation.

The Minnesota Grand Commandery has sponsored five ministers to attend the Pilgrimage since 2010. The Grand Commandery has a dedicated fund for the purpose of sponsoring a Minister for which they hold an annual fundraiser to raise funds. The cost to send one pastor on the pilgrimage is approximately \$4,000 which includes round trip air travel from JFK airport to Tel Aviv Israel, all lodging, meals, transportation, tour guide, travel Insurance as well as other associated costs.

I encourage you to financially support the Knights Templar Holy Land Pilgrimage.

P. S. Read Psalm 122:1-9 when you have the opportunity and "Peace be with you".