

Voices of Faith Chorus

Musical Pilgrimage to the
Holy Land

June 10 - 22, 2024

Dr. Pearl Shangkuan
Artistic Director

Dr. Dan Forrest
Composer-in-Residence



Music Celebrations International
Concert Tours With Integrity



Faith Journeys

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Our Musical Pilgrimage

Music Celebrations International is pleased to organize this life-changing choir tour to the Holy Land. The pilgrimage will take place June 10-22, 2024 and include visits to Biblical sites throughout the region. This performance tour of the Holy Land will deliver many rare and treasured gifts including the opportunity to learn about the earliest Christians, to sing in and visit ancient churches, temples and cathedrals, and to gather with a great sense of spiritual communion, wonderfully typical of a Christian Group Tour.

The choir will be led by Dr. Pearl Shangkuan and Dr. Dan Forrest will serve as Composer-in-Residence and accompanist throughout the pilgrimage. A spiritually uplifting and inspired program will be selected by Dr. Shangkuan and Dr. Forrest in what is sure to be an unforgettable musical experience for your choir.



SECURITY AND SAFETY

MCI is aware that there are concerns or worries about safety in Israel due to periodic news of uprisings, riots, attacks, reprisals. We are very much involved in monitoring conditions and work closely with the U.S. State Department (daily briefings), the U.S. Embassies in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and our local colleagues who are very close to local conditions and happenings. MCI has never had a client experience any danger or harm (including financial harm) in its history. If the U.S. State Department advises that travel is not safe, tours will be postponed, shifted or refunded. MCI has a history of hundreds of tours to Israel in our 30 year history. MCI colleagues both in our Arizona and Jerusalem offices are professionals. We know Israel and we know how to do tours safely in Israel even when tensions and violence flare. We strongly recommend consideration and purchase of CFAR (Cancel for Any Reason) insurance (created in the insurance industry as a response to Covid, but it also applies to all other reasons for cancellation) as a precaution and for peace of mind. CFAR doesn't need to be purchased with registration and travelers can wait until 60 days prior to departure to get this coverage.



Itinerary

DAY ONE: MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2024

- Depart via scheduled air service to Tel Aviv, Israel

DAY TWO: TUESDAY, JUNE 11

- Arrive in Tel Aviv
- Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach
- Time permitting, enjoy a scenic drive to Jaffa, the oldest port in the world. Walk through the Old City of Jaffa through the artist quarter. There is a beautiful view of modern Tel Aviv from Jaffa
- Check-in to the hotel
- Evening Welcome Dinner included, and overnight

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

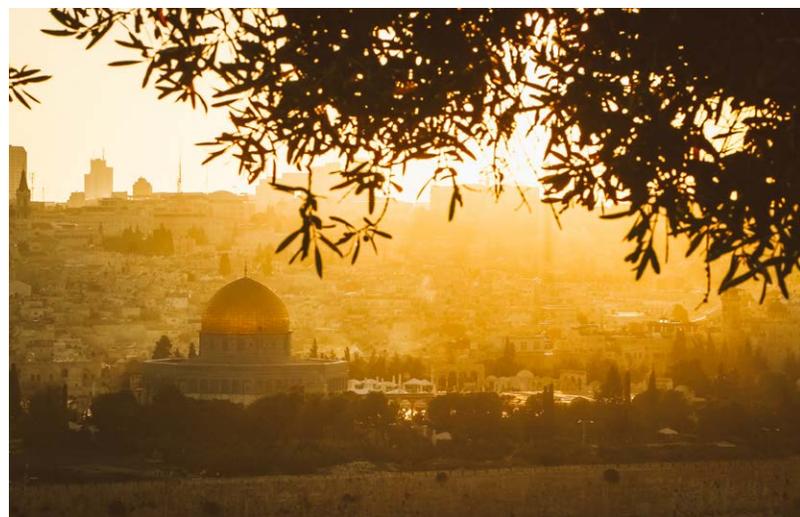
- Breakfast is included at the hotel, followed by check out
- Morning visit to Caesarea Maritima. See the sunken harbor, the hippodrome, the theatre, and the Roman aqueduct
- Next, drive to Muhraka on Mt. Carmel, with a panoramic view of the Plain of Jezreel
- Continue to Megiddo the background to Armageddon
- Lunch, on own
- Proceed to Tiberias at the Arbel cliff, which affords a view over the Sea of Galilee
- Evening dinner included
- *Rehearsal*

DAY FOUR: THURSDAY, JUNE 13

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Enjoy a morning drive along the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum for a visit to the synagogue. Continue to Tabgha (short for Heptapagon, “seven springs”) to view the mosaics in the Church of the Loaves and Fishes. Next, ascend the Mt. of Beatitudes
- Lunch, on own
- Afternoon walk on an ancient trade route. Pass Hazor and then go on to Dan for a nature walk. Also, visit the high place where Jeroboam son of Nebat set up a golden calf
- Continue to Caesarea Philippi
- Next, enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee
- Evening dinner and overnight in Tiberias

DAY FIVE: FRIDAY, JUNE 14

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Morning transfer via taxis up to the top of Mt. Tabor. The elevation provides an utterly commanding view of all of lower Galilee, and the valley of the Armageddon
- Lunch, on own
- Transfer to Nazareth via Cana of Galilee. Enjoy the views of the Valley of Jezreel, Mt. Tabor, and the Caramel Hills in the distance. Visit the Nazareth spring, and the Church of Annunciation
- *Performance in Nazareth*
- Evening dinner included, and overnight



DAY SIX: SATURDAY, JUNE 15

- Breakfast is included at the hotel, followed by check-out
- Depart the hotel for Beth Shean and walk amongst the ancient Roman and Byzantine ruins
- Lunch, on own
- Drive through the Jezreel Valley west to Ein Harod, which describes Gideon's actions in thinning out his army (This is where he brought the men to the spring and sorted them on the basis of how they drank from the water). Transfer East into Harod's Valley with a fantastic view filled with biblical history
- Transfer to the Jordan Valley and then south to Jericho. At Jericho, visit the Tel of this oldest city and view the traditional mountain of Jesus' temptation. Next, visit Mt. Scopus for a majestic view of Jerusalem
- Evening dinner included, and overnight in Jerusalem

DAY SEVEN: SUNDAY, JUNE 16

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Drive to the region of Bethlehem, and pass by Rachel's Tomb on the outskirts of the city. Stop for a hilltop view of Bethlehem, and visit Solomon's Pools which has been Jerusalem's main source of water for almost 200 years
- Lunch, on own
- Walk through the restored old town to the Church of the Nativity, and visiting the manger. Also see the Cave of St. Jerome
- *Performance in Bethlehem*
- Return to Jerusalem for dinner included, and overnight

DAY EIGHT: MONDAY, JUNE 17

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Start on the Mt. of Olives and descend the traditional Palm Sunday Road, visiting the churches of Pater Noster and Dominus Fleuit along the way. Also visit the Church of All Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane. Next, walk down along the new path into the Kidron Valley, which is also known as the Vale of the King.
- Lunch, on own
- Tour of the City of David. View a brief introductory 3D movie that gives a visual timeline of the geography of the City of David from the original settlement to present day. Descend in the ground to Hezekiah's tunnel built somewhere near 700 B.C. to bring fresh water from outside the fortified city of David to the inside to provide drinking water during any siege. Participants of the tour can take part in a 40-minute walk in knee high water from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam
- Evening dinner included, and overnight

DAY NINE: TUESDAY, JUNE 18

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Excursion to Bethany for a visit to the home of Martha and Lazarus. From there, drive through the Judean desert to Qumran. View Cave #4, which contained the greatest quantity of Dead Sea scrolls

- Continue south to Masada, and take a cable car to the top. Visit Herod's mountain bunker and the last stronghold of the Jewish revolt against Rome
- Lunch, on own
- Afternoon excursion to the Dead Sea. Enjoy the opportunity to float in the Dead Sea (at minus 1390 feet, as low as you're ever likely to get), we enter the nature reserve of Ein Gedi, rich in flora and fauna, and walk to a lovely waterfall
- Return to Jerusalem for evening dinner included, and overnight

DAY TEN: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Transfer to Dung Gate where just inside, we take the time to examine the ruins near the south side of the Temple complex. Visit the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site. View the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site of Islam, located on the traditional site of the ancient Temple Mount. Just to the north we find the Pools of Bethesda (John 5) and St. Anne's Church, which has remarkable acoustics and which has been perfectly preserved from the Crusader period. Walk the Way of the Cross (Via Dolorosa) to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Lunch, on own
- Afternoon walk through the Arab Souks, past the Armenian Quarter and exit the Old City through the Mt Zion Gate to visit the Upper Room and King David's Tomb on the grounds of Mt. Zion. From there we take the bus to the Garden Tomb where we end our tour with a special visit and the possibility of having a private communion on its grounds
- *Performance in Jerusalem*
- Return to the hotel for evening dinner included, and overnight

DAY ELEVEN: THURSDAY, JUNE 20

- Breakfast is included at the hotel
- Full day at leisure in Jerusalem for self-arranged activities, sight-seeing, shopping and reflection
- Return to the hotel for evening dinner included, and overnight

DAY TWELVE: FRIDAY, JUNE 21

- Breakfast is included at the hotel, followed by hotel check-out
- View a scale model of the City of Jerusalem of Jesus' Day and the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed
- Visit the Hertzl Museum and the Yad Vashem Museum and Memorial to the Holocaust
- Visit Emmaus, the site of the post-resurrection revelation of Jesus to his disciples
- Transfer to Tel Aviv for a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant
- Leisure time & late transfer to the Airport for return flight to USA

DAY THIRTEEN: SATURDAY, JUNE 22

- Return home

