St. Philip’s Episcopal Church – Egypt Pilgrimage
April 28-May 10, 2019

From the lands of the Pharaohs and the story of the Exodus, to the journey of the Holy Family on the flight into Egypt, the northeastern corner of Africa has had a significant role in the traditions and stories of our faith. The monuments of Ancient Egypt form the backdrop to some of the most important events in the story of salvation, and the wilderness of the Egyptian deserts gave rise to the earliest Christian monasticism. Together, we will visit the temples and cities of the Upper Nile, including a cruise to Luxor, Aswan, and Edfu. We’ll spend time in Cairo getting to know the heart of the modern city and the sites associated with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. We’ll journey into the wilderness of the desert (the edge of the Sahara), the Red Sea, and the southern Sinai to visit the earliest Christian monasteries and to explore the landscapes themselves.

Modern-day Egypt is a vibrant and fascinating place, a Muslim country that bridges continents and traditions. It’s a wonderful place to visit and for many people, a journey through the monuments and temples of the Nile is a lifelong dream. Come and journey with us on a pilgrimage that will take us from the early days of the Israelites, through sites and stories associated with Christ himself, to the monasteries and desert places where ascetic Christianity was formed, all while encountering the hospitality and warmth of Egypt today. The trip will be led by the Rev. Sally French (St. Philip’s, Durham) and the Rev. David Umphlett (St. Mary’s, High Point).
Proposed Itinerary:

Sunday, April 28, 2019: We depart RDU on a late–afternoon flight to Cairo. While the specific flight times will not be clear until registration is complete, we anticipate a group departure in the mid-late afternoon (plenty of time for church in the morning!), and an arrival in Egypt sometime the following afternoon.

Monday, April 29, 2019: Our flight will arrive at Cairo International Airport. After clearing arrivals and immigration, we will travel via luxury tour bus through downtown Cairo, on the way to our hotel near the Pyramids. If possible, we’ll arrive in time for a rest before dinner.

Tuesday, April 30: We begin our exploration of Pharaoh’s Egypt with a morning visit to the Pyramids, Sphinx, and related sites. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Pyramid never fails to both overwhelm and inspire visitors. After lunch on the Nile, we’ll tour the world-famous Egyptian Museum and related sites before returning to our hotel for dinner and overnight.
Wednesday, May 1: our short flight to Aswan departs in the morning to give us time to take in some of the sites of Upper Egypt, including the Aswan Dam. In the afternoon, we will begin our Nile cruise, visiting many of the iconic temples and monuments of ancient Egypt as we journey towards Luxor.

Thursday, May 2: Today, our cruise itinerary takes us to the Temple of Kom Umbo before we sail on to Edfu. We’ll have opportunities to relax and enjoy the Nile scenery, as well as excursions to explore the temples and sites of the region.

Friday, May 3: The Nile will take us to the Temple of Edfu, and on to Luxor as we continue our exploration of Upper Egypt.
Saturday, May 4: After disembarking one final time from our Nile Cruise ship, we will tour Luxor and the Valley of the Kings, before returning to Cairo on a late-afternoon flight.

Sunday, May 5: Our morning begins with an opportunity for worship at All Saints’ Cathedral in downtown Cairo. Home to a large community of Sudanese refugees, we’ll learn about their journey and the circumstances they face as we connect with them and the wider Anglican community in North Africa. After lunch at a downtown restaurant, we’ll visit the other faith communities of Cairo, spending time in Old Cairo at several Coptic churches, the ancient synagogue, and the Mohammed Ali Mosque and Citadel. Today will also include an opportunity to visit the Khan el-Khalili, the largest market in Africa.

Monday, May 6: Today, we depart Cairo for the Wilderness, traveling across the Suez Canal and towards the Red Sea and on to St. Catherine’s Monastery in the South Sinai. After a long day of traveling and seeing the sites of the Sinai Desert, we’ll spend the evening in the Monastery Guest House.
Tuesday, May 7: We wake very early today for a pre-dawn ascent of Mount Sinai, beginning the journey by camel. After a sunrise Eucharist on the holy mountain associated with Moses and the giving of the Ten Commandments, we’ll descent to tour the Monastery and their museum. We’ll have a special private tour of the new Monastery Library (home to the *codex sinaiticus*, the oldest complete copy of the New Testament). Our day continues with a picnic lunch in the desert, followed by free time at a Red Sea beach resort, including opportunities for swimming, snorkeling, diving, and exploring the renowned red sea coral reef.

Wednesday, May 8: After a relaxed morning at our beach resort, we travel south to the town of Sharm El-Sheik for our flight back to Cairo. Upon our return, we’ll transfer to our hotel for continued free time before dinner and overnight.

Thursday, May 9: Our final full day in Egypt will be spent north of the city of Cairo, as we visit some of the most ancient Christian monasteries in the world on our way to tour Alexandria before returning to our hotel for our final evening’s pilgrimage celebration and dinner.

Friday, May 10: return home. Our flights will leave early today to return us to North Carolina.
Pilgrimage Information

Please note that the itinerary and accommodations may be subject to change. At all times, safety and security will be our primary concern while traveling in Egypt. As well, the precise dates of travel will depend on travel routes and flight times. We are committed to keeping prices low, while minimizing the number of stops and hours in transit for our group.

Accommodations and Meals:
This pilgrimage will include all meals (not including beverages) and double-occupancy accommodations with private bathroom. In Cairo, we will stay near the pyramids in a neighborhood with some local attractions, cafes, and sites within walking distance. It is a gentler and more pleasant experience for us than the chaos of the downtown hotels, and the facilities and meals are good. There are also evening activities and options nearby, or easy access to transportation downtown. Our Nile cruise will take place on a smaller cruise ship, one of the many similar offerings that take visitors down the Nile. They are all relatively comparable and calm, and it is a pleasant experience with good food – it’s one of the best and most comfortable ways to visit the many sites of Upper Egypt. At St. Catherine’s Monastery, we will stay at the Monastery Guesthouse. The rooms are rustic but adequate and it’s a remarkable opportunity to stay in such proximity to the holy mountain. And at the Red Sea, we’ll experience a pleasant Egyptian beach resort. The offerings are all different, but you’ll enjoy each one of them.

Cost and Registration Information:
The total cost for this pilgrimage is not more than $4000 per pilgrim, double-occupancy; the single supplement is $350.

If your registration form includes a roommate’s name, you will be paired with that person. However, in the event that you register as an unaccompanied single and do not indicate that you would like a single room, you will be paired with another unaccompanied person of the same sex, in the approximate order that applications are received. Please note that if we do not have anyone to match with you, you will be asked to pay the single supplement. Unaccompanied singles who would like to be placed with roommates are advised to submit their applications early to avoid paying the single supplement.
The cost includes travel (all flights, round-trip from RDU, tour bus and other transportation in Egypt, and transfers), accommodations (double occupancy, as described), all admissions, guiding, and leadership costs for visits included in the itinerary, and all meals (not including beverages). The cost does not include your insurance, passports, travel visas, personal expenses, and other items as listed above. Regarding insurance: we require that all participants provide proof of trip cancellation/interruption and medical insurance in order to participate. Upon registration, you will receive further information about insurance options. When budgeting for the Egypt Pilgrimage, please plan for this additional expense. Because the trip requires a minimum number of participants, please do not purchase this insurance before hearing from us.

Tips are included in your pilgrimage fees. In accordance with the local custom, we handle all tips as a group. As well, we make donations to churches, provide honoraria for speakers, and cover other incidental costs through your fees.

The registration deadline for this pilgrimage is November 30, 2018 and spaces are limited to 20 (minimum) – 22 (maximum) participants, not including leaders. To register, please complete the registration form and submit it along with your $500.00 deposit.

A note about pricing for the pilgrimage: This is a ministry and not a business opportunity. The price you pay will be what it costs. If there are any funds left over at the end of the trip, they will be dealt with as follows: If the funds are less than $50 per person, the amount will be divided among the leaders’ clergy discretionary accounts, to be used to support those in need in our congregations and communities. If there is more than $50 per person remaining, then checks will be issued to each participant to refund the difference.

Registration and Payments:

To register for this pilgrimage, please complete the attached registration form and return it, along with your deposit, to St. Philip’s. Checks should be made payable to St. Philip’s, with the phrase “Egypt Pilgrimage” marked clearly on the memo line. Please note that the amount you pay for the pilgrimage is not a tax-deductible donation and it will not be reflected in your record of donations as such. After the initial registration form reaches me (Sally), please feel free to submit payments in whatever manner is best for you – you can put them in the collection plate, mail the checks in, or just slide them under the office door.
Because fees and accommodations are based in part on group size and airfare, the final price for this trip may be lower than $4000.

Thank you for your interest in this pilgrimage! We wish you every blessing as you prepare for your trip and we look forward to journeying with you on the trip of a lifetime! If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Rev. Sally French, at 919-682-5708 or sally@stphilipsdurham.org

Travel Safety:

Anyone considering a trip to Egypt is no doubt aware of the risks of travel in general and travel to this region of the world in particular. While participation is a matter of individual assessment of risks and benefits, it is essential that individual pilgrims feel comfortable with their decision to participate. If you have grave concerns about the potential risks of a trip to Egypt, including visits to Cairo, the monuments of Upper Egypt, and the South Sinai and you believe those concerns will limit your ability to fully participate in the trip, then perhaps this trip is not for you.

As we prepare for departure, we will continue to monitor the region and the world. We will be in touch with participants regarding trip cancellation and interruption insurance. Any decision to cancel or change our pilgrimage plans will take into account US State Department travel advisories and clergy and leadership recommendations. At this time (October 2018), the Northern Sinai is not considered safe for travel and our itinerary avoids that region, together with the Western Desert and the border regions.

With proper precautions, visitors can expect to encounter a gracious, welcoming, and hospitable community who genuinely wish for you to have a pleasant and safe experience, and who want only to share their lives and their situations with visitors. As we move closer to our departure, we will provide you with guidelines and suggestions for ways to most fully enjoy a safe and comfortable pilgrimage.

At all times, safety and security will be a priority. We will monitor the situation each day as we travel, and if necessary, we will change the itinerary in response to the situation on the ground in Egypt and throughout the Middle East.

If you have questions about any the information here, please contact the Rev. Dr. Sally French, Associate Rector, St. Philip’s, Durham, NC, 27701, 919-682-5708 sally@stphilipsdurham.org
2019 Egypt Pilgrimage - Registration Form

Contact Information:
Name:______________________________________________________
Address:____________________________________________________
Telephone:__________________ Email:__________________________

Personal Information:
Birthdate:____________________ Place of Birth:__________________
Citizenship: _______________
Parish: ____________________________________
Do you have any chronic medical conditions? (please list)
_______________________________________________________
Do you have any allergies? (please list)
_______________________________________________________
Are you currently taking any medications? (please list)
_______________________________________________________
Do you have any special dietary requirements? (please note that we may not be able to accommodate all requests, but we will try)
_______________________________________________________

Passport Information:
Name, as printed in your passport____________________________
Passport Number:______________ Country of Issue:______________
Date of Issue:_______________ Place of Issue:_________________
Expiry Date:_________________
Please list two emergency contacts:
Name:________________________________
Relationship:____________ Telephone:_________________________
Name:________________________________
Relationship:____________ Telephone:_________________________

In the event of an emergency, does anyone have the legal authority to make decisions on your behalf? Yes No (please circle)

If so, who? ____________________________ phone:__________________

Do you have a preference for a roommate? (please name)

__________________________

For an additional charge, would you prefer a single room? Yes No

Thank you for your participation in the 2019 Egypt Pilgrimage. This completed registration form, together with your deposit, will reserve your place on the pilgrimage. By applying, you acknowledge and accept that the itinerary may be subject to small changes as necessary. You also acknowledge that the pilgrimage fees cover airfare, plus all land travel, accommodation, admissions, leadership and guiding expenses, and almost all meals. Further, you acknowledge that the participant is responsible for any other costs, including those listed in the itinerary (primarily insurance, visas, tips, and personal expenses). Finally, by signing this form, you acknowledge that, as with any travel, there are certain risks entailed in this pilgrimage, and you absolve the leadership of any responsibility associated with your decision to participate in the 2019 Egypt Pilgrimage. We look forward to journeying with you!

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________________