

OVERVIEW

The idea of seeking new places, new relationships and new understanding is key in all three Abrahamic faiths.

God's call to Abram to "Leave your native land, and go to a country that I will show you" is the beginning of the journey - both literally and spiritually. *Imagine taking all your family and dragging them off with no idea of where you are going or what you will find there!*

Abram's act of faith has set the stage for generations of pilgrims. The pilgrimage may be literally a journey to a holy place of history, or it may be an internal journey of insights and faith.



The Temple Mount in Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a holy place in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We will begin our series with an overview of the historical role of Jerusalem in all three faith traditions.

We will continue the series with an exploration of contemporary holy places and acts of pilgrimage around the world.

Join this pilgrimage of exploration and increased interfaith understanding.

Matter of Faith - 2009 Summer Series

Pilgrimage and Holy Places

Each session will provide a time for questions and discussion. Following each formal presentation there will a time for fellowship. Refreshments are graciously provided by the host congregation.

Tuesday, July 7 – 7:00 p.m.

**Garden Heights United Methodist
109 Bellview Street, Altoona PA 16602**

Host: Pastor Jennett Wertz

A **panel of presenters** will lead the opening session of this exciting series about the powerful role of Holy Places and Pilgrimage. Portions of the recent PBS Documentary "Jerusalem: Center of the World" will be shown to establish a common understanding for the rest of the series.

Where do you find holy places on your life journey?

A labyrinth walk reflects the idea of a religious pilgrimage – a meditative, intentional walking toward a goal, to a place of spiritual significance—a holy place. You will have the opportunity to learn about and experience a labyrinth walk.



Tuesday, July 21 – 7:00 p.m.

**150 Hawthorne @ PSU – Altoona
Ivyside Drive, Altoona, 16601**

Host: Shamsa Anwar

Shamsa Anwar will share the importance of Mecca and Medina for Muslims. Each year millions of Muslims travel to these holy cities in Saudi Arabia to perform the centuries-old rituals of Hajj, Islamic pilgrimage. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam and is mandatory for every able Muslim.

Tuesday, July 14 – 7:00 p.m.

**Agudath Achim Congregation
1306 17th Street, Altoona PA 16601**

Host: Hazzan Michael Horwitz and Bill Wallen

Father Mark Begley, Pastor at St. John's Catholic Church in Lakemont will share photos and reflections on his recent pilgrimage to Turkey and key biblical sites for Christians.

Father Stephen Lourie, pastor at St. George's Orthodox Church in Eldorado will present a look at two places of pilgrimage for Eastern Orthodox Christians in Arizona and Alaska. Fr. Stephen will introduce us to these two places with music and photos. You don't have to have a passport to go on pilgrimage!

Tuesday, July 28 – 7:00 p.m.

**St. John the Evangelist,
309 Lotz Avenue, Lakemont, 16602**

Host: Father Mark Begley

Bishop Jere Cross from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will explain why pilgrimage to the temples is so pivotal in the Latter-day Saint's goal of moving toward the attainment of eternal life. It is in these sacred edifices that members are spiritually strengthened.

Hazzan Michael Horwitz and Bill Wallen will discuss the Kotel (Wailing Wall) and the significance of Jerusalem as a holy city for Jews. They will explain the history, significance and customs associated with the land of Israel, including the pilgrimage festivals and the importance of the holy land today.