

# GOING **ON** FAITH

THE MAGAZINE FOR FAITH-BASED TRAVEL PLANNERS

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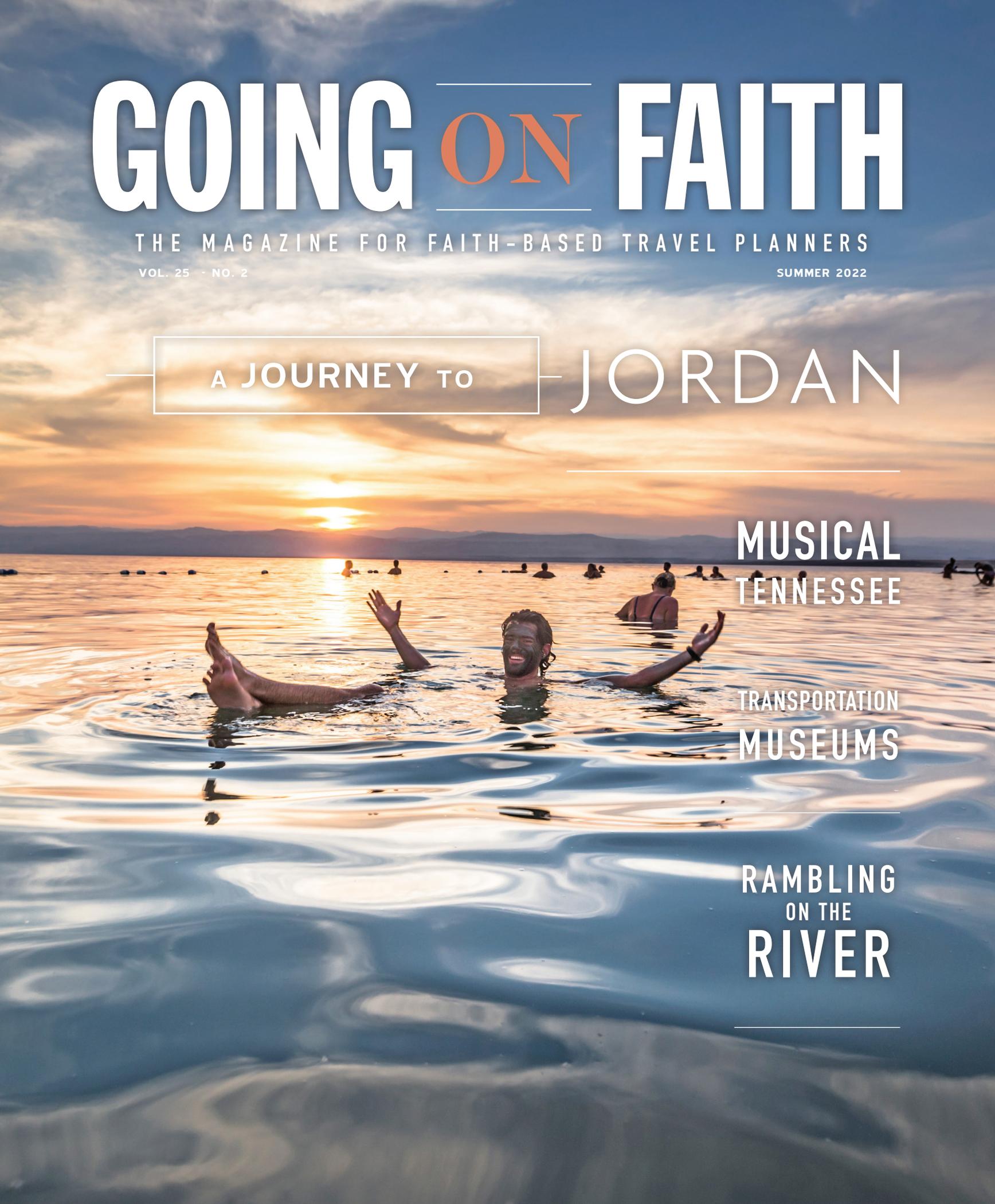
A JOURNEY TO

JORDAN

MUSICAL  
TENNESSEE

TRANSPORTATION  
MUSEUMS

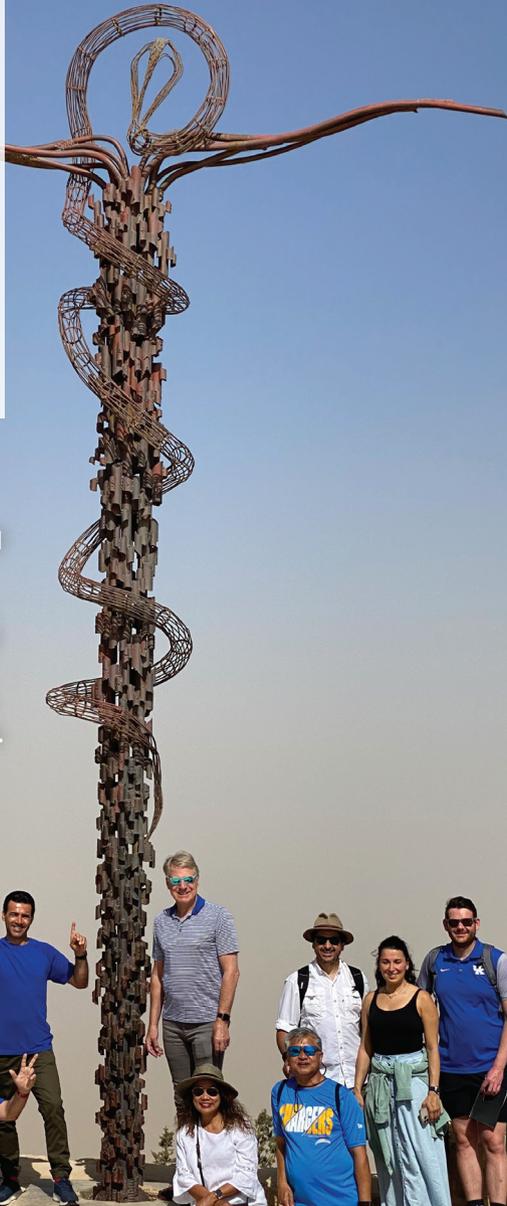
RAMBLING  
ON THE  
RIVER





**OnSite**  
JORDAN FAM

A group of Going On Faith travel planners and their pastors stopped for a photo at Mt. Nebo, where Moses is believed to have overlooked the promised land, during a familiarization in Jordan.



Just as Moses Lifted up the Serpent in The Desert, the Son of Man Must be Lifted up  
So that Everyone Who Believes in Him May Have Eternal Life. John 3:14-15  
وكما رفع موسى الحية في العريضة هكذا ينبغي أن يرفع ابن الإنسان  
لكي لا يفقد أحد من آمن به الحياة الأبدية. يوحنا 3: 14-15

Photos by Kyle Anderson unless otherwise noted.

“Jordan is the land that is the voice of God crying out in the desert. Throughout the Old and New Testament, God’s voice continues to echo and re-echo in and through the people.”

— TRUC NGUYEN  
CATHEDRAL CHAPEL OF ST. VIBIANA



Enjoying the Monastery after a Petra hike



A photo stop at the Treasury in Petra

By Zina Ammari



By Zina Ammari

# ONSITE IN JORDAN

**TRAVELING TO JORDAN CAN BE A  
TRANSFORMATIVE FAITH EXPERIENCE.**

**THAT'S WHAT SEVEN GOING ON FAITH** travel planner readers and pastors discovered this spring on a familiarization tour of the country. Hosted by the Jordan Tourism Board and faith-based tourism manager Zina Ammari, the tour showcased the many biblical sites that make Jordan an ideal destination for church groups.

Over the course of the nine-day tour, the group marveled at spiritual sites such as Bethany Beyond the Jordan and Mount Nebo, as well as significant historical and archeological sites such as Petra and Jerash. They also experienced the incomparable natural beauty of Wadi Rum and had numerous opportunities for meaningful cultural interactions with the Jordanian people.

Here's an overview of the trip's itinerary and highlights, which you can use to plan a Jordan journey for your church group.



Enjoying Umm Qais



Sunset at Wadi Rum



Overlooking the Dead Sea

By Carlos Zuecher

## Day 1

On the first day in Jordan, the group arrived in Amman via an overnight flight from New York on Royal Jordanian Airlines. They were then transferred to the beautiful Marriott Amman City Center, where they enjoyed a welcome dinner and an opportunity to catch up on their sleep before embarking on a busy itinerary the next day.



Dinner at Blue Fig in Amman

By Zina Ammari



Coffee at Sufra Restaurant



A Jordanian lunch

## Day 2

- AMMAN CITADEL
- JORDAN MUSEUM
- ROMAN THEATER

After a good night's sleep, the group had breakfast at the Marriott, then set out to explore sites around Amman, a city of 4 million that is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world.

They began at the Citadel, a historic site in the city center dating back to the Byzantine period. There they saw ruins suggesting civilizations living on the site more than 3,000 years ago.

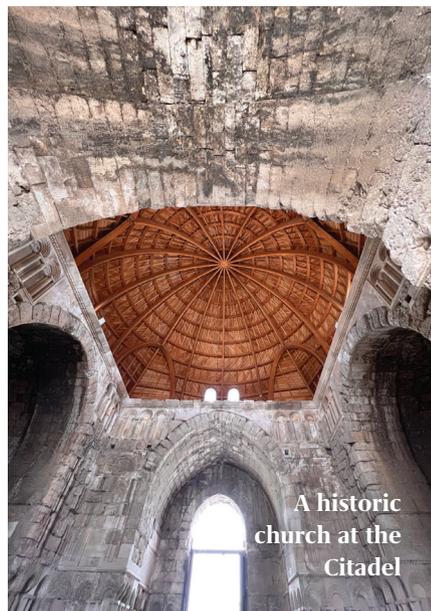
Next, the group visited the Jordan Museum. Opened in 2014, this museum is the largest in Jordan and features an impressive collection of archeological finds from around the country. The group saw artwork dating back thousands of years, as well as fragments of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls.

The city tour finished at Amman's Roman Theater. On a hill opposite the Citadel, this 6,000-seat amphitheater was constructed by Romans in the second century A.D., during a period of Roman occupation when the city was known by the name Philadelphia.

After the tour, the group enjoyed some free time back at the Marriott before enjoying dinner at the locally popular Blue Fig restaurant.



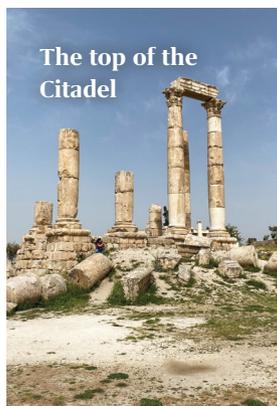
Ruins at the Citadel in Amman



A historic church at the Citadel



Jordan Museum



The top of the Citadel



A mosaic at the Jordan Museum

## Day 3

- UMM QAIS
- BEIT AL BARAKA
- PELLA

The next morning began with another deluxe buffet breakfast at the Marriott. From there, the group departed for the short journey to Umm Qais, a spectacular biblical and archeological destination.

Referred to in the New Testament as Gadara, Umm Qais was

one of the cities of the Decapolis, and the group spent time exploring extensive ruins from both the Roman and Ottoman periods. The site is perched high on a hill overlooking Lake Tiberias. It was here where, according to the New Testament, Jesus drove demons out of a possessed man and into a herd of pigs, which then plunged down the hill and into the lake.

After touring Umm Qais, the group stopped at Beit al Baraka, a bed and breakfast and cultural center that provides employment opportunities for Jordanian women and cultural exchange opportunities for travelers. The group enjoyed lunch prepared by the women there, as well as an experience weaving bookmarks and baskets using traditional materials and methods.

After lunch, the group visited Pella, where a massive Bronze Age and Iron Age temple from the Old Testament was recently discovered, suggesting that modern Pella is the site of ancient biblical city Penuel.

## Day 4

- JERASH
- BEIT KHAYRAT SOUF
- IRAQ AL AMIR

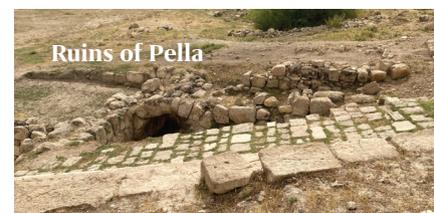
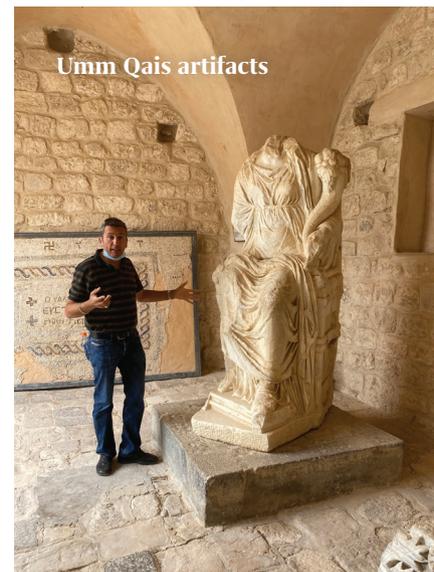
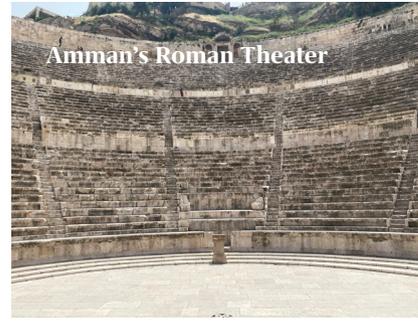
After spending another night at the Marriott City Center in Amman, the group departed the next morning for Jerash, a city known as the “Pompeii of the Middle East” for its well preserved Roman ruins, then enjoyed some meaningful travel experiences with stops in local communities.

The ruins at Jerash give travelers a remarkable look at life in the Roman empire of the second century. The group walked the streets of this historic city, stopped for photos at Hadrian’s Arch, ascended the hotel to the Temple of Diana and marveled at the 3,000-seat amphitheater, which is still remarkably intact almost 1,800 years after it was built.

On the way back to Amman, the group stopped to visit two significant community organizations. The first was Beit Khayrat Souf, a nonprofit organization supported by Tourism Cares and UNICEF that empowers local women. The home at the site was built in 1881 and now serves as a restaurant, at which the group enjoyed a wonderful homemade lunch on an outdoor terrace surrounded by trees and flowering plants. The second was Iraq al Amir, a cooperative where locals taught the visitors to make ceramics by hand.

“Wadi Rum was my favorite. I loved the jeep ride that showcased the mesmerizing topography of the desert. I also enjoyed the glamping and waking up to a beautiful sunrise.”

— GIGI INIGO  
STYLE YOUR TRIP





Iraq al Amir ceramics



A ceramics lesson at Iraq al Amir

By Zina Amari

# Day 5

- BETHANY BEYOND THE JORDAN
- TEL MAR ELIAS
- PANORAMA RESTAURANT AT THE DEAD SEA



Arch of Hadrian in Jerash

After three nights, the FAM group left Amman and began making their way south. During the journey, they stopped at two of the country's most significant biblical sites — Bethany Beyond the Jordan and Tel Mar Elias — and enjoyed lunch with a panoramic view of the Dead Sea.

For many people, Bethany Beyond the Jordan is the spiritual highlight of a Jordan journey. On the banks of the Jordan River, this site preserves the cave where John the Baptist is believed to have lived, as well as the place where biblical and archaeological evidence suggests Jesus was baptized. The group got a guided tour of the site, and several members chose to wade into the river for their own baptism experience.

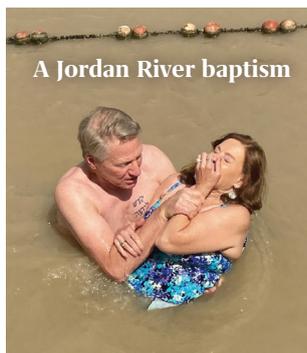
Another important site the group visited in the area is Tel Mar Elias, or the Hill of Elijah, which commemorates the life of the Old Testament prophet who spent much of his time in what is now Jordan. From the hill, visitors can see the area where Elijah was born. Tradition holds that the hill is also the site where Elijah was taken up into heaven after crossing the Jordan River.



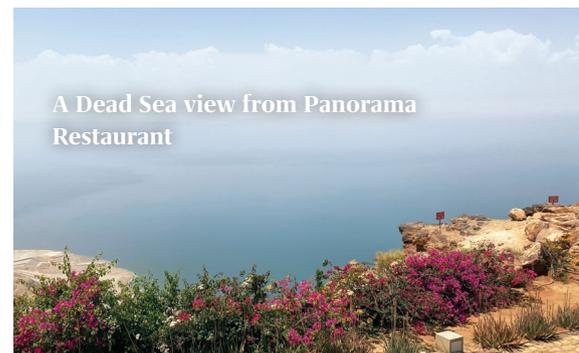
A Jerash musical performance



Joining the dance in Jerash



A Jordan River baptism



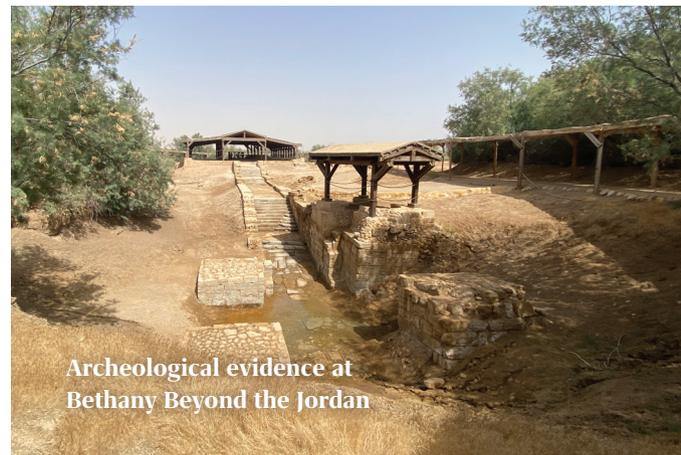
A Dead Sea view from Panorama Restaurant



Traditional food at Beit Khayrat Souf



Lunch on the terrace at Beit Khayrat Souf



Archeological evidence at Bethany Beyond the Jordan

## Day 6

- **PETRA**
- **WADI RUM**
- **SUNCITY CAMP**

After spending the night at Movenpick Petra, the group spent the next day at two of Jordan's most beloved sites: Petra and Wadi Rum.

The most visited site in the country, Petra is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. This city was carved into rose-red cliffs by the Nabatean people who lived there from the eighth century B.C. through the eighth century A.D. The group spent the majority of the day exploring the site. They stopped for photos at the iconic Treasury, made famous by "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," and hiked to the Monastery for breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape.

After leaving Petra, the group continued to Wadi Rum, a haunting desert famous for its towering rock formations and red sands. The group explored the area on a sunset jeep tour and took camel rides for a more authentic experience.

The group ended the day at Sun City Camp, a Bedouin camp in Wadi Rum, where they enjoyed traditional Bedouin fare cooked underground and an overnight in "glamping" accommodations.



Posing in Petra

## Day 7

- **LAWRENCE OF ARABIA TRAIN**
- **DEAD SEA**

After a night camping in Wadi Rum, the group began journeying back north from the desert toward the Dead Sea. Along the way, they stopped to see the Hejaz Railway Train, made famous by the movie "Lawrence of Arabia."

The trip brought them to the Dead Sea, one of the ecological wonders of the Middle East, where they checked into the Dead Sea Marriott Resort. They had the afternoon to enjoy this beautiful property and spend time on their own. Many group members chose to bathe in the Dead Sea, where the ultra-high salt content creates buoyancy that makes people float. Some also enjoyed coating themselves in the Dead Sea mineral mud, which is treasured for its restorative properties, or taking advantage of the pool and amenities at the resort.



A Wadi Rum camel adventure



Resting on the heights in Petra

By Zina Ammari



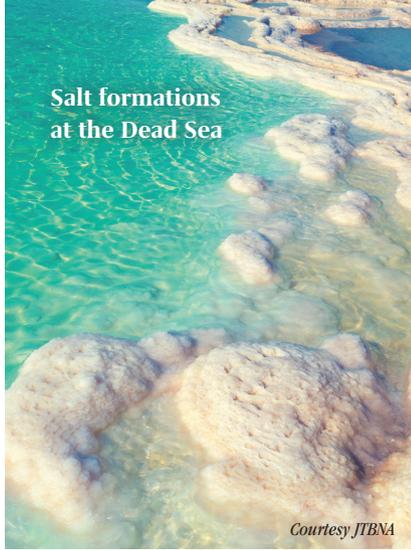
Exploring Wadi Rum



A Wadi Rum sunset



The iconic sculpture atop Mt. Nebo



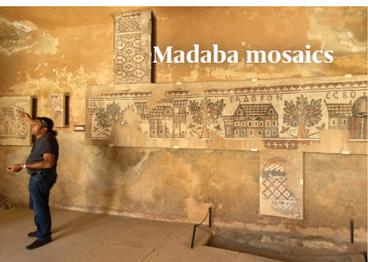
Salt formations at the Dead Sea

Courtesy JTBNA



Relaxing at the Dead Sea Marriott

By Truc Nguyen

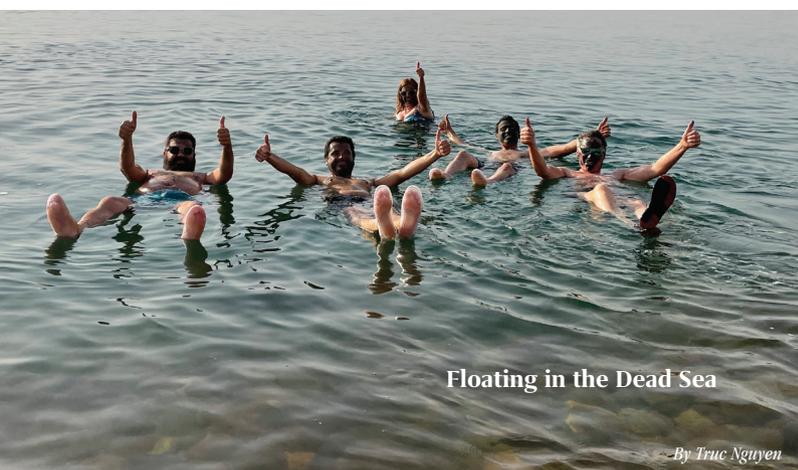


Madaba mosaics



Making friends in Madaba

By Miqueias Gomes



Floating in the Dead Sea

By Truc Nguyen

“The Jordanian people are friendly, kind and gracious, always willing to help and always willing to talk. Jordan will be a part of my Holy Land pilgrimages from now on.”

— DAVID JOHNSTON  
MT. BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Day 8

- MOUNT NEBO
- MADABA

The group spent this day discovering two more significant faith sites in Jordan: Mount Nebo and Madaba.

Visited by three popes, Mount Nebo is the site where, according to the Old Testament, Moses overlooked the Promised Land at the end of his life. Later, God buried him somewhere in the valley below. The site is marked by a giant sculpture reminiscent of both Moses' staff with a snake and a man on a cross.

Next, the group visited Madaba, the “City of Mosaics.” The Greek Orthodox Church of St. George there preserves the Madaba Map, the world's oldest surviving mosaic map of the Holy Land.

After that visit, the group returned to the Dead Sea Marriott for some final relaxation and a farewell dinner.

## Day 9

On their final day in Jordan, the group said goodbye to the Dead Sea and made their way back to Amman's Queen Alia International Airport to board daytime flights back to the U.S. They departed with fond memories of the sights, sounds and faces of Jordan, eager to begin making plans to return with their church groups.

# JORDAN



## OnSite

WITH THE GROUP TRAVEL LEADER

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# JORDAN

Immerse Yourself in His Story

The Gospel of John 1: 26-28.



HISTORY



SPIRITUAL



FAITH

Location:

Bethany Beyond the Jordan; Baptism Site of Jesus Christ

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