



DESERT PILGRIMAGE 2020

A Soulful Journey for Faith Leaders (and Those They Love)



Feasting and Fasting,
Left-brain and Right,
Fellowship and Solitude,
Joy-filled worship and desert Silence
The promise of Thin Space and
renewed connection with God abounds.

For thousands of years, God's people have discerned the presence and voice of God in desert places. When I was a child, growing up in the desert of Southern California, a Palestinian Christian visited our home. He observed that the interior valleys and mountains of southern California bear amazing geographic similarity to Palestine and its adjacent wilderness regions. When I visited the Holy Land years later, I discovered that he was right!

This year my family bought a home in the Coachella Valley of Southern California, situated at the base of what to me is a holy mountain, towering two miles above the valley floor. It is holy because I attended summer camp in its high elevations almost half a century ago – and there I met the living Christ. Each morning now that I wake in the desert, in the shadow of Mt. San Jacinto, I am grounded anew in faith. Though I still live most of my days in the busy center of Washington DC, the weeks that I spend in Palm Springs cultivate a sense of *spiritual home* unlike any other place I have ever known.

Starting in the spring of 2020, I would like to begin sharing this special place with faith leaders (both clergy and lay) by means of an event called **Desert Pilgrimage**.






– Paul Nixon, President The Epicenter Group

Date & Location	Registration	Lodging
<p>April 20-24, 2020 Palm Springs, CA</p> <p>The Saguaro Resort</p> <p>The United Methodist Church Palm Springs</p>	<p>Registration fee: \$450</p> <p>(Registration limited to 120 participants)</p> <p>Click HERE to register</p>	<p>The Saguaro is offering steep discounts from their normal spring rates to our group.</p> <p>Click HERE to book your room</p> <p>Question? Contact us at: epicentergroup.dc@gmail.com</p>

Key components of Desert Pilgrimage include

- **The desert land** in and around Palm Springs, California and the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation.
- **Learning.** Learning times are built around cutting edge ideas and practices that The Epicenter Group has been discovering of late in our coaching and collaboration with scores of innovative leaders and church communities. Sessions this spring will focus on the art of spiritual discernment, contemplative prayer, innovative disruption and cultivating multi churches.
- **Spiritual Direction.** As was the case with Epicenter’s Weird Church Camp in 2017, there will be a team of spiritual directors, working this year under the leadership of Dr. Gary Shockley.
- **Fellowship.** We have structured the evenings and small group times in a way that will enable each participant to develop several new friendships with ministry peers from around the USA and beyond.
- **Solitude and Silence.** This is the heart of the Pilgrimage experience, lasting about 20 hours from sunrise on Wednesday until time for dinner that evening. We will observe quiet (no enforced silence) with various options for fasting. This solitude experience will be structured with opportunities for both desert and mountain top walks, meditation, journaling and afternoon siesta during a season of the year when the temperatures are delightful.
- **Worship.** We will experience creative, playful and contemplative worship – no two experiences like the other – focused on simplicity, joy and God encounter.
- **Play.** We are partnering with a major Coachella Valley resort, the Saguaro, surrounded by unrivaled opportunity for golf, tennis, and time in the pool. Because Palm Springs is a world-class destination for R/R, you are invited to bring your family along if you wish! We will even offer an afternoon of outdoor lessons in oil painting.

Our Team for Desert Pilgrimage 2020

	<p>Paul Nixon President Epicenter Group and author/co-author of nine books, including <i>Multi</i> (2019), <i>Weird Church</i> (2016) and <i>I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church</i> (2006).</p>
	<p>Beth Estock Executive coach and yoga instructor, based in Portland, Oregon. Beth is author of <i>Discernment</i> (2019) and co-author <i>Weird Church</i> (2016).</p>
	<p>Chris Rapko Top-rated DJ at Atlanta’s Q99.7 radio station, and M.Div. student at Candler School of Theology.</p>
	<p>Gary Shockley Spiritual Director and Resident Artist, Certified Therapeutic Art Life Coach, Certified in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, CPE-Trained Professional Healthcare Chaplain</p>
	<p>Jane Voigts Pastor of The United Methodist Church in Palm Springs, and (pre-seminary) a stand-up comic in LA.</p>
<p>Plus an array of gifted spiritual directors.</p>	

Additional Information

Four major meals and all core activities are included in the registration fee. Daily (optional) yoga instruction, swimming pool and tennis access is provided with registration fee. Lodging is not included in registration, but the discount is more than fifty percent what they are charging others during the same season. In addition, the Saguaro is discounting spa services for our people.

Some meals are not included: for example, we will spend Thursday evening at the downtown Palm Springs Village Festival, eating street food or enjoying cafes along North Palm Canyon Drive. Other optional activities are available for a fee: oil painting lessons out in the desert, martinis at Cary Grant's former home, riding the Aerial Tramway up Mt San Jacinto (10,000 feet above the valley floor), golf at a nearby country club or admission to the hiking trails in Taquitz Canyon.

We recommend flying in and out of Palm Springs International Airport (PSP), which is less than five miles from our event locations. The next nearest airport is Ontario (about a 75 minute drive to the west, back toward LA). If you are planning to rent a car anyway, you will usually find cheaper fares into Ontario.

2 CEU credits available



For more information about Desert Pilgrimage, please contact us at The Epicenter Group:
epicentergroup.dc@gmail.com (202) 506-5472

Registration: Click [HERE](#)

Lodging: Click [HERE](#)