



PILGRIMAGE TO TÜRKIYE & GREECE

"IN SEARCH OF PAUL"

AN AEGEAN ODYSSEY

April 2-18, 2024

The Rev. Dr. Don Carlson, Host

a LEAD Pauline study pilgrimage for rostered leaders and inquiring disciples



In partnership with [TUTKU TOURS](#)

ODESSEY OVERVIEW

Tuesday, April 2

Fly out of a Turkish [Airlines](#) hub; direct flight to Istanbul. Tutku Tours can arrange departures via other Star Alliance carriers.

Wednesday, April 3—Türkiye

Arrive in Istanbul, meet our guide for Türkiye, Cenk Eronat, and travel to our hotel located along the Golden Horn. Dinner together and introductions in the hotel dining room.

Thursday, April 4—Türkiye

We start at Istanbul where we glimpse the “imperial church” of the early 4th century under Constantine. We visit the hippodrome, archeological museums, Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, Blue Mosque, and the Topkapi Palace.

Friday, April 5—Türkiye/Greece

We depart early for the Greek border, meet our guide for Greece, Voula Kalapoda, and then travel to Philippi. We visit the traditional river site where Paul met Lydia and see the magnificent baptistery built there. At the river we discuss Paul’s letter to **Philemon** and its patronage subtext. 1st century city life then emerges in the ruins of ancient Philippi. Overnight in Kavala, modern Neapolis.

Saturday, April 6—Greece

We get another glimpse of the Via Egnatia that Paul walked from Neapolis to Philippi, then on to Thessaloniki where we see the Roman forum, the arch and mausoleum of Galerius, and the archeological museum. We stop at the tomb of Phillip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, to appreciate the roots of imperial theology. Overnight at Kalambaka/Meteora.

Sunday, April 7—Greece

Visit Varlaam Monastery, built 1541, high atop the rocks of Meteora; reflecting upon the medieval theological worldview of its art. After a traditional lunch, we later discuss **Philippians** and celebrate the Eucharist. Overnight at Kalambaka.

Monday, April 8—Greece

We stop at a studio where icons are hand crafted and can be purchased, then go Delphi to explore the cult of Apollo. After visiting the archeological museum, we overnight in Delphi; taking a look at **Galatians** after dinner.

Tuesday, April 9—Greece

In Athens, we visit the Areopagus where Paul delivered his sermon about “an unknown God” and then climb the acropolis to see the temples of Athena, Nike, Poseidon, and Augustus. There will then be free time to visit the new archeological museum or to have a leisurely meal “al fresco”.

Wednesday, April 10—Greece

We visit the site of ancient Corinth with its excellent ruins and museum. While on the grounds, seated in view of the Temple of Apollo and the ancient meat market (1 Cor. 8), we discuss **1st Corinthians**. After lunch we head for the port of Athens, say “Goodbye” to Voula Kalapoda, and board our 6:00 PM ferry to Patmos. Good dining aboard and cabins with clean linens and bath. Arrive in Patmos about 2:00 AM, go to our hotel and go back to bed!

Thursday, April 11—Greece/Türkiye

Still in Greece, we will visit the traditional “Cave of St. John”, reflect upon the imperial context of Revelation, and visit the Monastery of St. John. Lunch will be by the seaport and then we take a leisurely 3-hour boat ride to the Turkish port of Kusadasi. At Kusadasi we meet up again with Cenk Eronat and go to our hotel.

Friday, April 12—Türkiye

The ancient city of Ephesus gives the most impressive glimpse of 1st century urban life. The Library of Celsus, Temple of Artemis (one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world) Temple of Hadrian, Temple of Domitian, and the “terrace houses” are but a few of the restorations. After a locally prepared lunch we will visit a “cottage industry” outlet to see how Turkish carpets are made; with an opportunity to purchase carpets! Overnight at Kusadasi.

Saturday, April 13—Türkiye

Leaving Kusadasi, we will see the magnificent Temple of Apollo at Didyma, Asian counterpart to Delphi – complete with oracle. There we will discuss **1st Thessalonians**. Then on to Aphrodisias with the Temple of Aphrodite, the Sebasteion (the best example of Roman imperial theology), monumental gateway, stadium, and museum—where “the god fearers” are mentioned. Overnight at a relaxing thermal spa hotel at Pamukkale.

Sunday, April 14—Türkiye

At Hierapolis we see the tomb of Philip the Apostle (?) and the thermal springs, then journey to Laodicea with its many newly excavated and restored ruins; including a magnificent 4th century church. After a brief stop at Sardis and its restored gymnasium and synagogue, we will arrive at Izmir (ancient Smyrna) and have dinner on the waterfront. Overnight in Izmir.

Monday, April 15—Türkiye

We head for the acropolis of Pergamum with its great theater and temples to Athena, Zeus, and Trajan; then visit the Asclepion, a center of healing where the great physician Galen practiced. Overnight at the picturesque seaport of Assos. Eucharist before turning in.

Tuesday, April 16—Türkiye

We climb the acropolis of Assos that has a temple to Athena dating from 530 BCE, then head to Troas (Acts 20) and walk a road that Paul walked. In the evening we discuss **Romans**. Overnight in Assos.

Wednesday, April 17—Türkiye

After a visit to Troy, founded 3000-2600 BCE, we cross the Dardanelles and drive through the area where the Battle of Gallipoli was fought in WWI. Arriving back in Istanbul, we visit the Spice Market before going to the hotel to enjoy our farewell dinner.

Thursday, April 18—Türkiye

After a leisurely morning and breakfast, we leave for the airport and our flights home. Some people may opt for the [Central Turkey Extension](#).

LEAD — In partnership with

Tutku Travel

Educational, Biblical, and Classical Tours

Gaziosmanpasa Bulvarı 3/303 Izmir 35210 TÜRKİYE

Phone +9-232 441-8635 / 441-8676 / 441-8677

Fax: +90-232 441-8636

Email: info@tutkutours.com • www.tutkuturavel.com



On the cover:

The inaugural 2014 group at Ephesus in front of the [Library of Celsus](#) and the adjacent [Gate of Mazeus and Mithridates](#). Cover background is a floor mosaic from the remains of the Octagon Basilica at Philippi, c. 400 CE.

AN ODESSEY OF MIND AND SPIRIT

SEARCHING FOR PAUL?

This is trip #10. People sometimes ask, "Haven't you found Paul yet?" Others may quip, "I didn't know he was lost!" The truth is that every trip brings newly found insights into Paul's letters. And another truth is that the real Paul is often lost; clouded by ignorance about Paul's cultural and religious context, and therefore often misconstrued amid sectarian arguments and "culture wars."

Contemporary Biblical scholars often describe four "Pauls":

- The Paul of the autograph letters: Philemon, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans.
- The "Paul" of Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians.
- The "Paul" of the pastorals: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.
- The "traditional Paul" of Acts.

Lutherans and other churches of the Reformation may also have a "fifth Paul" - the "Paul" of the 16th century.

But, how did the "real Paul" of the 1st century understand justice, righteousness, salvation, faith, law, and gospel as he wrote to diverse urban people living in a society dominated by patronage and Roman Imperial Theology? What does his 1st century gospel mean for our 21st century context? These are some of the questions we explore together on every trip.

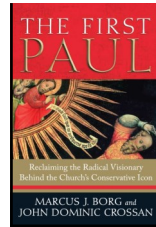
Participants commit to advance reading so there will be common ground for discussion.

- Read the *essential* books on the reading list, and other articles that will be shared electronically.
- Participate in three pre-trip orientation and discussion Zoom meetings in January, February, and March.

So, come along and search out the life and faith of the early church. Come along and search for Paul!

"If we use 'Christian' of this first generation, we pull them out of their context, domesticating them for ours. In their own eyes, they were history's last generation. It is only in history's eyes that they would become the first generation of the church."

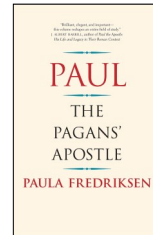
Paula Fredricksen, "When Christians Were Jews"



ESSENTIAL READING

[The First Paul](#) (Kindle available)

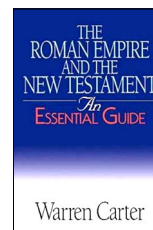
The book explores the widely accepted view that the later "letters of Paul" were created by the early church to dilute his message and make him more traditional to fit Roman norms in regards to slavery, patriarchy, and patronage. In truth, Paul was an apostle whose vision of life "in Christ" is faithful to the message of Jesus.



ESSENTIAL READING

[Paul—The Pagans' Apostle](#) (Kindle available)

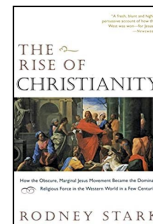
Only by situating Paul within his charged social context of gods and humans, pagans and Jews, cities, synagogues, and competing Christ-following assemblies can we begin to understand his mission and message. The book offers a dramatically new perspective on one of history's pivotal figures.



ESSENTIAL READING

[The Roman Empire and the New Testament](#) (Kindle available)

Understanding the New Testament texts is enhanced by appreciating the political, economic, societal, cultural, and religious aspects of Roman rule. This book will help us to appreciate how structures and practices in the Roman world illumine the New Testament message.



NON-ESSENTIAL— BUT VERY HELPFUL

[The Rise of Christianity](#) (paperback only)

Although the first two chapters seem a bit plodding, they lay the foundation for a fascinating analysis of how the social context of the 1st century Roman Empire both facilitated the growth of — and also shaped— what would come to be called "Christianity." An insightful, disciplined, and much needed socio-religious perspective.



Friends in Christ,

This picture was of me was taken during our 9th trip in 2023. We had finished the Greece portion of our "search for Paul" and were back in Türkiye at the Temple of Apollo at Didyma, discussing 1st Thessalonians.

2024 will be our 10th journey, and I am evermore struck by the wisdom of N.T. Wright's statement, "For too long we've read the scriptures with 19th century eyes and 16th century questions. It's time we get back to reading with 1st century eyes and 21st century questions."

It has been a privilege to host these trips, discovering again and again - along with others - Paul's world, his letters, and his gospel.

I hope that you will consider sharing with others in this educational and spiritual journey. If you have questions, just contact me at: donmcarlson@gmail.com. Full info also at: <https://leadconnects.org/in-search-of-paul-2024/>

Grace and peace,

Pastor Don Carlson, DMin

LEAD Host for "In Search of Paul"



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



How to Register:

Go to <https://leadconnects.org/isop-registration-2024/>. Fill out the entire registration form; red asterisks are required. You will need your passport information.* Once you click “next” at the bottom of the screen, you will be taken to a new page to double check that the information you entered is correct. If it is, click “confirm & proceed with payment”.

If paying with credit card or Pay-Pal at this point, you will receive an e-mail upon completing the process. A 2.9% service fee is added for credit card use. If paying by check, send to: LEAD, 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd, Suite H120-644, Katy, TX 77494. **Checks must be mailed to LEAD two weeks prior to the due date to allow time for processing.**

Payment Due Dates:

Deposit: \$400 per person by **October 27, 2023**

Balance: \$4290 per person by **January 26, 2024**; plus \$1090 single room occupancy, if applicable.

*Türkiye, like most nations, requires that your passport’s expiration date not be within 6 months of our entry date into Türkiye, April 3, 2024. Check your passport and, if needed, renew ASAP. If you are renewing/securing a passport, enter Xs in those boxes when you register. Provide LEAD with updated information when you receive your new passport.

NOTE: Archaeological sites often have uneven footing, ramps, stairs, and are certainly not ADA compliant. A few days may require 5000 footsteps. People of varied ages and physical abilities have participated, but please inquire if you have mobility concerns.

Cost: \$4,690

per person, double occupancy room
(For single occupancy room, add **\$1090**)

This includes:

- Roundtrip airfare between any Turkish airline hub in the United States and Istanbul
- 9 nights at 3-4 star hotels in Türkiye
- 5 nights at 3 star hotels in Greece
- 1 night on overnight ferry from Athens to Patmos
- Daily breakfast and 15 dinners
- Transportation by private bus with A/C
- English-speaking, Bible-oriented, professional tour guides throughout the pilgrimage
- All entry fees to sites and museums
- All tips for hotels and restaurant staff
- All tips to tour guides and drivers
- All service charges and local taxes

It does not include:

- Turkish Visa fee (\$50 per US citizen, obtained electronically before departure from USA)
- Lunches and beverages
- Personal discretionary expenses, shopping

CANCELLATION POLICY

90-60 days prior to departure:	No Penalty
59-45 days prior to departure:	10%
44-30 days prior to departure:	25%
29-15 days prior to departure:	75%
14 days prior and after:	No Refund

Air Cancellation Policy subject to airline standard rules.
Travel Insurance can be purchased from a third party:
Travel Guard, Travelex, or another.

On the road that Paul walked from Troas to Assos. (Acts 20)



A TRIP EXTENSION IS BEING OFFERED BY TUTKU

While in Türkiye, some former participants have extended their trip in order to visit Cappadocia, Tarsus, and Antioch. This year TUTKU is formally offering such an extension. LEAD’s trip service ends on April 18, 2024, so reservations and payments for the extension are made directly through and to TUTKU.

Information on the extension can be found at: [Central Türkiye Extension](#)

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES



Learning about the cultures and the class structures within Paul's communities was helpful for me in understanding his 1st century ministry and how it is relevant today. The trip exceeded my expectations and I built lasting friendships.

Susan Keene
Member at Messiah Lutheran, Houston, TX



The trip equipped me to counter people who misuse Paul to silence women in the church — and his letters have become alive to me. The readings and discussions helped me understand Paul's context.

The Rev. Mytch Pierre-Noel Dorvilier
ELCA YAGM Coordinator, Darka, Senegal



Searching for Paul introduced to me a Paul I never knew. It was a transforming experience to understand the 1st century and begin to grasp what that means for teaching and preaching Paul's letters today.

The Rev. Solomon Hailu
Sharp Hospice Care, San Diego, CA



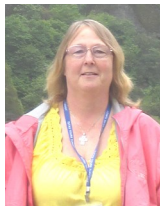
I knew Paul and Empire in my head, but to travel the roads he walked brought a new depth and nuance to my understanding. Now I can more competently and confidently connect our tradition of church and culture in my preaching, teaching, and advocacy.

The Rev. Ashley Bathe
St. Stephen's Episcopal, Houston, TX



"In Search of Paul" enabled me to experience the places the context of the communities Paul created. I now have much greater understanding of his letters and would recommend this opportunity to anyone.

The Rev. Rudy Flores
Messiah Lutheran, Aurora, KS



This was the trip of a lifetime for me. No amount of classroom study is like standing on Mars Hill (Areopagus) and realizing the perspective Paul had as he spoke. I hope that I can *experience* scripture like that again.

The Rev. Tammy Sharp
Christus Victor Lutheran, League City, TX



My ministry is forever changed by this pilgrimage that vividly captures the revolutionary and radical nature of Paul and his Gospel in the 1st century. I will never read Paul's letters in the same way again.

The Rev. Jennifer Michael
St. Timothy Lutheran, Hendersonville, TN



This trip greatly expanded my knowledge of Paul's journeys. I have been able to practice new ways of reading Paul and talking about him and the whole bible. This trip was not just a gift to me, but also a gift to the way I will be a leader in the church.

The Rev. Tim Wrenn
Prince of Peace Lutheran, Dublin, OH



The "Search for Paul" was transformative for me. Understanding the Imperial Cult and his context, I now find Paul far more accessible. The experience changed me as a pastor, scholar, and catechist.

The Rev. Brad Fuerst
Lutheran Campus Ministry, Austin, TX



When preaching on Acts, my congregation enjoys seeing pictures of places we visited; the river outside Philippi where Paul met Lydia; the Areopagus where Paul told the identity of the unknown god. It brings a new awareness and depth to biblical understanding.

The Rev. Denise Fossen
First English Lutheran, Ortonville MN



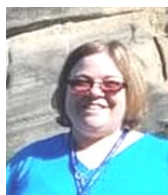
This trip has impacted my preaching and teaching. I have a better understanding of Paul's letters and the early church. I also gained friendships that will continue to grow. I pray that many others can experience this life changing tour.

The Rev. Paul Malek
St. Paul Lutheran, Ontario, OR



In searching for Paul I found a connection to the early church through the food, people I met, and the stones that made the scriptures as relevant today as they were at the time they were written. It was an amazing spiritual journey for me.

Deaconess Colleen Teeuw
Prince of Peace Lutheran, Gillette, WY



To explore the places where Paul visited and the places to which he wrote letters was absolutely amazing. I now appreciate the context of the Roman Empire on Paul's writings.

The Rev. Tonya Eza
Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran, Clay, NY



This trip was the capstone to previous visits to the Holy Land and Rome. Our readings and the journey gave me a new perspective on how "radical" Paul was for his time. This perspective is bringing new life to my ministry. I highly recommend this trip!

The Rev. Nancy Andrews
Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Baton Rouge, LA



Getting a 1st Century view of the church and Paul's ministry will have an impact on *my* ministry. It hopes the Pauline vision of justice and community will inspire my congregation to reach out to the "God Fearers" in our neighborhood.

The Rev. Pete Lopez
St John Lutheran Church, Angleton, TX



Traveling with LEAD "In Search of Paul" was life changing for me, and experiencing the cities in Greece and Türkiye where Paul shared the Jesus movement was captivating. Many empires fell and turned into ruins, but the powerful Jesus movement lives on!

The Rev. Jenny Sung
Free Range Lutheran, St. Paul, MN

"IN SEARCH OF PAUL"



ISTANBUL

PHILIPPI

THESSALONIKI

TROY

TROAS

ASSOS

METEORA

PERGAMUM

DELPHI

IZMIR

SARDIS

ATHENS

LAODICEA

CORINTH

EPHESUS

HIERAPOLIS

PATMOS

DIDYMA

APHRODISIAS