

IN SEARCH OF PAUL – FAQ

Is it safe to travel in Türkiye and Greece?

LEAD, in partnership with TUTKU Tours, has been offering this pilgrimage since 2014. Over 200 people have participated and have always been and felt safe. The trip is registered with the US State Department, and we receive all travel updates.

How much spending money should be brought?

It's always a tough question in that people's spending habits vary widely. Perhaps about \$250 USD worth of Turkish Lira and \$350 USD worth of Euros. ATMs in both Türkiye and Greece can provide additional money if needed.

What about passports and visas?

No visa is required for Turkey. [ETIAS registration will be required for Greece](#). Participants must carry a US Passport that does not expire within 6 months of April 6, 2027.

How many people will be in the group?

We have had as few as 12 and as many as 31. We anticipate there will be between 20 and 30 participants.

Is the trip physically demanding?

People from age 28 to 70+ have done this trip. However, many archeological sites may have uneven footing, ramps, stairs, changes in elevation, and are certainly not ADA compliant. Some days may require 5000 footsteps. Walk if you need to get in shape. Please inquire if you have concerns about mobility issues.

Is there any other preparation needed?

Yes. There are three "essential readings" listed in the brochure. Upon registration you will be invited to join the Facebook Group for ISOP 2027. It is a way to get to know people prior to the trip and to share ideas and information. There will also be 3 online ZOOM meetings (January, February, and March) in which we will discuss the readings listed in the brochure. (This is not just a "sight-seeing tour". It is a 1st century emersion in which participants, through reflection and conversation, grow in their understanding of Paul, his theology, and the context of the early "church".)

What airline will we fly?

TUTKU will try to book everyone on Turkish Airlines; direct flights to Istanbul from the following cities: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver, Washington DC. TAL is a Star Alliance member. If you want to use Star Alliance miles/points or other points you need to make your own flight arrangements, in which case TUTKU will give you a "land only" rate of \$4190. You need to arrive in Istanbul, preferably in the afternoon, on April 7, 2027.

Can we tour on our own before or after the LEAD event?

Yes, but then you also need to make your own flight reservations (land only) or make arrangements with TUTKU. You need to be in Istanbul on April 7, 2027.

What kind of clothing is needed?

Very casual and comfortable. Bring items that can easily dry after being rinsed out. Dress in layers. Have two pairs of good walking shoes: well broken in. Avoid clothing and accessories with logos, flags, slogans, and symbols. Clothing, especially in Turkey, should be modest.

Is this only for “rostered leaders” – pastors and deacons?

No. Our groups are usually about 50/50 rostered and laity. Makes for better conversation!

Do I need travel insurance?

That is up to the individual. It is recommended that you at least have medical travel and medical evacuation insurance, which is very nominal.

Is any scholarship assistance available?

There are a limited number of \$1000 scholarships for ELCA leaders rostered 10 years or less. Contact: Pastor Don Carlson: donmcarlson@gmail.com. To advocate for the participation of more recently rostered leaders, a letter to the Congregational Council can be downloaded from the website.

Savings Tip:

You may want to book your own flight on Turkish Airlines from one of the hubs listed above. You can usually do so for less than the \$1400 difference between "Land Only" at \$4190 and "Land and Air" at \$5590.