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Join Bishop Connie Shelton & the North Carolina Annual Conference

Voyages of Paul Cruise

May 23 - June 1, 2025

7 Nights Aboard Celebrity Infinity • Round Trip from Athens, Greece



Guest Speaker:
Bishop Connie Shelton



Worship Leader:
Paul Saik



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Guest Speaker

Bishop Connie Mitchell Shelton is the Resident Bishop of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. A native of Mississippi, she has served as pastor of local churches, executive director of a radio and television ministry, and director of field education

at Duke Divinity School. Bishop Shelton is an inspirational speaker and a strategic thinker desiring for others to connect with God and build community.

OPTIONAL PRE-TOUR



Turkiye

May 19 - 24, 2025
Starting at \$1,598*

May 19 – Depart the USA

Your pilgrimage begins as you depart the USA on your international overnight flight.

May 20 – Arrive in Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, Turkiye, where you will be met by our representative. Check into your hotel this evening and enjoy dinner and rest.

May 21 – Istanbul

The bejeweled capital of Istanbul sits between two continents and is home to 450 mosques. You will visit the famous Blue Mosque with its six minarets and sparkling interior. You will also visit the Topkapi Palace, once home to royal sultans. Inside, you will see the fabled jewels of the treasury, delicate displays of Chinese porcelain in the kitchen quarters, and the provocative harem quarters. Walk through Hagia Sophia, which was the largest church in Christendom for 1,000 years, built by Justinian (532-537 AD). The church has 107 columns, fossil-embedded white marble floors, and beautiful glass mosaics. Enjoy the aroma of cinnamon, cloves, thyme, and other exotic spices as you explore the Spice Bazaar. Over 4,000 shops sell everything from herbs to gold. Fly to the Cappadocia area this evening for dinner and your overnight stay.

May 22 – Cappadocia

Drive to Cappadocia and visit the Zelve Valley. As you drive through Cappadocia, enjoy some free time at various photo stops in this magnificent landscape full of fairy chimneys. Visit the Goreme Open-Air Museum before returning to your hotel.

May 23 – Cappadocia/Istanbul

You can take an optional hot air balloon ride over Cappadocia this morning for an additional fee. Fly this afternoon to Istanbul. Enjoy a cruise on the Bosphorus River, then check into your hotel for dinner and your overnight stay.

May 24 – Flight to Athens

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Athens. Upon arrival, transfer to Piraeus and board the Celebrity Infinity cruise ship.

Optional Hot Air Balloon is approximately \$250 per person

Guests taking an extension may be on a different flight than their group and/or traveling companion.

**A 3.5% surcharge will be added to all credit card surcharges.*

Itinerary

May 23 – Depart the USA

Your pilgrimage begins as you depart the USA on your international overnight flight.

May 24 – Arrive in Athens

You will arrive in Athens, Greece, where you will be met by our representative and transferred to the port to board the Celebrity Infinity.

May 25 – Santorini, Greece

Dock in Santorini today, one of the most beautiful of the Greek islands, where picturesque, whitewashed villages topped with brilliant blue domes stand in stark contrast to the sheer-drop cliffs overlooking the Aegean Sea. The island itself perches on the edges of a volcano whose eruption 3,500 years ago is thought to have led to the collapse of the Minoan civilization. Explore the island on your own or join one of the optional excursions available for purchase on board.

Shore excursions today will be booked directly through Celebrity and are not included.

May 26 – Kusadasi, Turkiye

Visit Ephesus, which is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation and was once a bustling port town graced with wide, colonnade-bordered streets and a population of 250,000. Although spectacular excavations have revealed much of the glory of ancient Ephesus, including the huge agora and library, much has been lost. The ancient world once declared the Temple of Artemis to be one of the Seven Wonders of the World, but today, only a single column remains to mark its site. View the terrace houses, also known as “the houses of the rich,” which give a true impression of the ancient lifestyle. Explore the Museum of Ephesus for an up-close look at ancient artifacts. You will have time to explore on your own and retrace some of the footsteps of Paul.

May 27 – Mykonos, Greece

Arrive today at the world-famous Greek Island of Mykonos, where gleaming whitewashed buildings seem to climb atop each other to reach the azure sky. Admire its many hills dotted with iconic windmills. Explore the island on your own or join one of the optional excursions available for purchase on board.

Shore excursions today will be booked directly through Celebrity and are not included.

May 28 – Volos, Greece

At the northwest edge of the Plain of Thessaly, between the mountains of Pindos and Antichasia and near the Peneios River, the stone giants of Meteora stand still and silent. Their proud and imposing aspect discontinues the monotony of the vast Thessalic plain. The rocks stand right above Kalambaka and the picturesque Kastraki, which is full of awe and beauty. A daily excursion combines the unique experience that Meteora, also known as “The Stone Forest,” offers with the religious sentiment created by their monasteries. The journey to Meteora starts from Volos and other resorts in Pelion. We pass by the cities of Larisa, Trikala, and Kalambaka. After arriving in Kalambaka, we will reach the massively impressive rocks of Meteora that take one’s breath away. We will learn about the monarchy of the 11th century and also have the chance to visit one of the historical monasteries. Meteora is a World Heritage Site that fascinates every visitor regardless of their religion and cultural background. Uncover the secrets of the unique geological phenomenon of the Meteora rocks, experience the serenity of the surreal landscape that has been home to Christian hermits and monks since the 12th century AD, and feel the spirituality of one of Christianity’s holiest places. Afterward, drive back to the city of Volos and enjoy some free time in this beautiful town before returning to your cruise ship.

May 29 – Thessaloniki, Greece

Discover Thessaloniki, where Paul was accused of turning the world upside down with his preaching of Christ (Acts 17: 3-6). As you explore

St. George's Basilica, believed to be built over the synagogue where Paul preached, reflect on the two epistles the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church here. Stroll through the archaeological museum and the beautiful basilicas of St. Sophia and St. Demetrios. St. Demetrios is dedicated to a distinguished Roman proconsul martyred for his Christian faith. Along the Via Egnatia stands the Galerius Arch, where you can look out over the second-largest city in Greece from the Old City Ramparts, some dating back to Roman times.

May 30 – At Sea

May 31 – Athens & Corinth, Greece

Discover the rich architectural splendor of the ancient city of Athens as your guide introduces you to the world-renowned Acropolis, the Propylaea, the Parthenon and the Erechtheum. Stand on Mars Hill as the Apostle Paul did when he proclaimed, "I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." As you stroll the agora (ancient marketplace and center of Athenian public life), recall that this was where the Apostle Paul preached "Jesus and the resurrection" to the skeptical Athenians. Also, see the House of Parliament, the Presidential Palace, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. This afternoon, tour the city of Corinth, where the Apostle Paul met fellow tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla and received a vision from the Lord saying, "I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." As Paul spoke, Crispus (chief ruler of the synagogue) and many others believed and were baptized, establishing the church at Corinth to whom Paul later wrote his two epistles. Discover the archaeological museum, marketplace, and temples. As you walk among the ruins, stand on the Bema, where the Apostle Paul stood before Gallio to face charges brought against him by the Jews.

June 1 – Return to the USA or enjoy the Rome extension.

SAVE \$200 when you register by June 23, 2024!	Included Perks Classic Beverage Package Basic WiFi Package
SAVE \$100 when you register by August 23, 2024!	

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- Admin. Fees • Port Charges • Cruise Taxes

*A 3.5% surcharge will be added to all credit card transactions and are per-person based on double occupancy.



OPTIONAL POST-TOUR



Rome
June 1 - 4, 2025
Starting at \$1,498*

June 1 – Depart Athens for Rome

Disembark the Celebrity Infinity and transfer to the Athens airport for your flight to Rome. Arrive in Rome, Italy, where you will be met by our representative and travel along the Appian Way. Step beneath the surface into the Catacombs of Callixtus, built along the Appian Way. Here, sixteen popes from the 2nd through 4th centuries were interred, though they have been removed to various churches over the centuries. Check into your hotel this evening and enjoy dinner and rest.

June 2 – Ancient Rome

Discover the history woven throughout Rome with visits to the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Forum, Circus Maximus, the Arch of Titus, the Baths of Caracalla, and the Arch of Constantine today. After touring, return to your hotel for dinner and rest.

June 3 – Vatican City & Christian Rome

Visit the Vatican and explore its museum. Marvel at the beauty of St. Peter's Basilica and stand in awe of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Next, see the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. The present structure stands over the place where Constantine built the first church, which is over Saint Paul's grave. The church features a portrait of every pope who has served the church. Climb the graceful Spanish Steps and stop at the famous Trevi Fountain before returning to your hotel this evening for dinner and rest.

June 4 – Return to the USA

Bid farewell to Rome as you transfer to the Rome airport this morning for your return flight to the USA.

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