

Sabbatical 2025

Paul Erdmann and family will be taking a sabbatical journey: trekking through Spain, Portugal, & Costa Rica, immersing ourselves in rich experiences, building community and exploring cultures and the beauty of God's creation.



Fly to Madrid

June 16

Monday, June 16, Paul will fly to Madrid and make his way to Saint Jean Pied de Port, the iconic French starting point of the Camino de Santiago.



Camino de Santiago

June 18-July 8

Pilgrims have walked the "Way of St. James", the Camino de Santiago, for centuries. This pilgrimage will be a reset from the fast paced world we live in. Two weeks on the trail, focusing on the physical, mental and spiritual journey, will work to strip away the distractions of daily life.



Portugal Family Trek

July 9-24

Abby and family will join Paul as they explore, rest and relax in the beautiful country of Portugal. Visiting the cities of Porto and Lisbon as well as the southern coast.



Spain Family Trek

July 25-Aug. 1

Paul, Abby & family will experience life on the south coast of Spain, escaping the height of summer heat, enjoying the regional cultural and explore sailing options in the Mediterranean.



Camino de Santiago



Santiago de Compostela



Lello Library
Porto, Portugal



Lagos



Gibraltar



Sailing Spain



Camping on Madeline Island

August 3-8

Community is a large part of rest and renewal. Each August we gather with other families to retreat to the pristine waters of Lake Superior and join together to share meals, stories, and dreams for the future.



Costa Rica Family Trek

August 9-21

Paul, Abby & family continue their trek into Costa Rica, exploring volcanoes, lush jungles and the beautiful coastline.



Renewal & Writing

August 22-September 6

Returning home to the tail end of summer and writing devotional materials for Middle School & High School Students and Immanuel members.

Sabbatical Basics

Minneapolis Area Synod ELCA Guidelines - A sabbatical leave of three months may be granted to 3/4 to full-time rostered staff and lay professionals after five continuous years of service at one ministry site. Support staff may also be granted a leave of three weeks after four years of continuous service at the same site.

*Goals and Objectives - Goals and objectives for the sabbatical, plus the potential benefits to the individual and congregation, need to be discussed and established early in the planning process.

*Return - A sabbatical leave is intended to benefit both the congregation and the individual. Therefore, upon return, at least one year of additional service is expected following a three-month sabbatical, and at least six months of service following sabbaticals of two months or less.

A written, personal report will be submitted to the Congregational Council within 90 days upon completion of a sabbatical. The report will include, among other items, material on (a) the value of the sabbatical for personal and professional growth, and (b) the potential impact on the individual's service to the congregation.

The Plan

My family and I are very aware of the false narrative that more is better, and we plan to use the sabbatical time to focus on our relationships with one another while challenging ourselves to understand how we are members of a global community, shaped by God's love.

As we began the 2024 program year at Immanuel, we focused on Psalm 46:10, "Be Still and Know that I am God!" which has proven to be a monumental task to live into with the schedules we try to keep. Although typically life-giving, we often find ourselves stretched to capacity with work, school, family life and extracurricular activities. To live into our calling and purpose, the answer may be to strip away some of the noise we've come to accept as normal and dream of something different.

The sabbatical period would be June 22 - September 6, 2025. This timing creates the least disruptions for Youth Ministry at Immanuel and the two and a half months would provide time for my family and me to step out of our normal routines and embrace where God is calling us.

May of 2025 will mark 20 years of full-time ministry at Immanuel (not including 2 years of 1/2 time ministry while I was attending seminary). With the retirement of Pastor Paul Nelson during the summer of 2025 and my 20 year milestone at Immanuel, I believe this timing makes sense to re-energize and dream about the future of Youth Ministry at Immanuel.

Benefits

This opportunity to take a sabbatical with my family has many benefits. I believe the intentional time together will strengthen our relationships with one another as well as our faith life and the way in which we understand community and view the world. I believe God will be working in many ways throughout the sabbatical, but I hope to especially see grow together in our faith as a family.

All the experiences from our time away, we plan to bring back with us and share with Immanuel. We will create and update a blog as we travel and learn from those we meet on our journey. We hope this use of technology will help connect us with people at home, creating dialogue and opportunities to deepen faith.

I plan to create a devotional guide based on my experience on the Camino de Santiago for use with both adults and youth at Immanuel. It is also my intention to create more devotional resources to use with our Confirmation students and families, focusing on community and the intentionality that is required for healthy, thriving spaces.

Reading & Learning

Personal Faith Growth - The following two journal/devotionals will accompany my trip on the Camino and beyond during my sabbatical time to allow me to explore/deepen my faith through intentional spiritual time.

[The Journey Within](#): a Journal for Camino de Santiago

[A Daily Pilgrim Devotional](#)



Vocational Reading List - The following three books will provide material and ideas to enrich youth ministry at Immanuel while sharing the good news of the gospel.

[Made, Known, Loved](#): Developing LGBTQ inclusive Youth Ministry by Ross Murray, 2021

[Post-Traumatic Jesus](#): Reading the Gospel with the Wounded by David Peters, 2023

[Talking about Race with Teenagers](#): A Youth Leader's Guide by Kat Armas, Jennifer Guerra Aldana, & Ahren Samuel, 2020

