

Bio, Paula M. Isgrig:

I am a cradle-Presbyterian, born and raised. I can't remember not being in church—from Sunday morning Sunday School and worship to Wednesday evening choir rehearsals, PW meetings to Vacation Bible School, I followed my mother (a church musician) to church. From rural Iowa to mid-size city Missouri, into a small college town and beyond I always found myself in searching to be a part of church, something bigger than me. Questioning and pondering was fostered in me at an early age from my family to my teachers and pastors. I was never reprimanded for asking questions or even having doubt in difficult personal situations.

In college I dabbled in religion, being born and raised Presbyterian I wanted to see if I fit elsewhere. I enjoyed Sunday night dinners at the Newman House, attended Tuesday night Bible Study at the Christian Campus House. On Wednesday you could find me playing board games at the Wesley House and found myself providing sermon in song on Sunday morning with a theatrical group called Kolaiah (which means, in Greek, "the voice of God"). It was in those experiences I felt the call to ministry. I finished my BA in Vocal Performance (1996) and set out to complete an MDIV at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (1999). Through college and while in seminary I worked at Heartland Center and continued to grow in my faith. It was there, I received my first call into non-ordained ministry at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church. I spent 5 years as the Coordinator of Family Ministries. From there I moved on to Second Presbyterian Church as the Director of Children and Youth Ministry for almost 7 ½ years. In these ministry positions I continued to foster my call into ordained ministry and eventually returned to the ordination process and became the Student Pastor of New Horizon Presbyterian Church for the past 5 ½ years while I finished the ordination exams.

Through these 19 years of lay ministry I have gone from being single to married, struggled with infertility and finally the joy of completing our family through the adoption of our beautiful baby girl (now 6 years old and in Kindergarten) Eva. My husband, Tony, works at Burns and McDonnell as a Senior Electrical Designer. Eva keeps us busy with dance, swimming, and basketball. We are Mizzou fans and cheer for the hometown teams, the Royals and the Chiefs. I enjoy singing, crafting, and taking outside walks for self-care.

I am now in a place where I am able to use the gifts God has given me to serve others at the end of their life. I am honored and privileged to be able to provide this service as a Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church.