

Introduction to Pastor Paula Lebo

Pastor Paula grew up in Pennsylvania in Lebanon County. She lived among farms dotted with cows, sheep and chickens. Some of her fondest memories of childhood are of riding her bike past those farms on the way to Starner's store to buy Swedish fish.

In 1985 Pastor Paula graduated from Cedar Crest High School and then attended Pennsylvania College of Art and Design in Lancaster. In 1988 she graduated with a Diploma in graphic design and accepted a position with an advertising agency in Harrisburg. Several months later, she was offered a position closer to home with Kapp Advertising Service in Lebanon. At the time, she didn't know she would become a 'jack-of-all-trades' there. She began in the production department and when she left after the birth of her son, Samuel, she was managing a new department.

Samuel was (and still is) the light of Pastor Paula's life. She stayed home with him in his early years and did some freelance work as well doing more volunteer work in her home congregation of Friedens Lutheran in Myerstown, PA. It was during that time she experienced a growing call to ministry.

Church was the center of Pastor Paula's family life as she grew up and she participated in all the usual ways in the life of the church—acolyte, crucifer, lector, choir, youth group, Council and a variety of other activities including being a Home Communion Minister. As time passed, she accepted the position of Director of Christian Education. As the call to ministry became clearer, she realized she would have to complete her Bachelor's Degree in order to go to seminary because at the time she graduated from art school, the school was not granting degrees. Pastor Paula enrolled at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA and completed her remaining coursework in 2000.

After visiting several seminaries, both in-person and online, Pastor Paula decided to attend Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC. graduating in 2005. Because of a divorce, there was a delay in her completion of candidacy and she accepted a position in the Office of the Presiding Bishop at the ELCA Churchwide office in Chicago as an Executive Administrative Assistant following graduation from seminary. She returned to the candidacy process in 2008, was assigned to the Allegheny Synod and accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran in Sidman and St. John Lutheran Church in Summerhill. She began an interim position at Bethany Lutheran Church in Altoona in 2010 and was called as the full-time pastor in 2012. In 2014, Pastor Paula was invited to serve as Assistant to the Bishop in the Allegheny Synod. That call was coterminous with the Bishop who was not seeking a second term. She accepted an intentional interim call to serve Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latrobe of the Southwestern PA Synod and served there for almost a year. On June 5, 2021, she was elected to serve as Bishop of the Allegheny Synod. In October of 2024, Pastor Paula resigned her position as Bishop and is discerning a next faithful step in ministry. She is delighted to return to the parish and looking forward to walking alongside the people of Zion Lutheran Church in Boalsburg.

Pastor Paula's parents are retired and live in State College and are members of Grace Lutheran. Pastor Paula's son, Samuel is married to Daniel Robinson and they live in New York. Both Samuel and Daniel work for the Port Authority. Pastor Paula is the proud Dog-Mom to Princess, the German Shepherd, whom you may meet in the coming months! Pastor Paula is an avid reader, continues to create art and enjoys trying new recipes.