

Paul Rock - Bio

I was born into the hard working, fun-loving, church-going family of Ann and Carroll Rock in Falls Church, Virginia, the youngest of three. Family life was marked by dinners at 6, neighborhood friends, sports, a dedication to academics, laughter and Sundays at church. My father's job in the Department of Agriculture kept us moving every 3-5 years until we landed in Stillwater, Minnesota where I attended Jr. and Sr. high and where my parents still live today. After five years of college at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and degrees in education and history, I headed overseas with a Christian educational organization where I taught English and history at a bi-lingual high school in Budapest, Hungary.

During my first year overseas, I fell in love with and proposed to another expatriate, Stacey Perkins. Together, we became in-country directors of the Central European program; overseeing 60 teachers and traveling throughout Central Europe to visit schools and meet with government officials and school administrators. Also while overseas I felt compelled to begin a graduate degree in theology, testing out a possible call to pastoral ministry.

Upon our return from Budapest in 1994, we landed in Pasadena, California where I began an MDiv at Fuller Theological Seminary. The diversity of traditions and cultures represented at Fuller caused my faith to both expand and adapt. In the course of my studies and process of discernment, a call to ministry was confirmed.

Upon completion of my MDiv., Stacey began work on a law degree and I received a call from the First Presbyterian Church of Newhall. Most of my responsibilities were with families, youth and young adults. Among other things, we established local and international mission and service experiences, small groups, a rock and roll outreach that drew hundreds of unchurched teens, a young family's ministry, a college ministry and an alternative worship service. With the departure of the senior pastor and other personnel, I assumed the role of acting head of staff for two years.

In the midst of these years of graduate education and parish ministry, Emily (now 13), Nathan (9) and Claire (6) were born into the Perkins Rock family and brought chaos, joy and incredible fulfillment to our lives. Sensing that it was time to move on from southern California, I explored senior pastor positions at several churches. However, upon reflection on priorities and ultimate call, I decided to take a position as Associate Pastor at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City in August of 2004; a position with increased responsibilities and oversight, yet greater leeway to be a present and supportive father and husband at home.

When I arrived, FAPC was one of the largest and fastest growing Presbyterian churches in the Country with 3,600 members. I oversaw a full time director of Family Ministries and worked to better organize and develop the church's ministry to 20s and 30s, a demographic which made up roughly ¼ of the membership. Again, church developments and pastoral transitions resulted in my assumption of greater responsibilities - leading the extensive adult education ministry, coordinating outreach ministries and overseeing management of the substantial facilities and its staff.

In 2008, I received Session's blessing to begin my doctoral studies in 21st Century Church Leadership at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. I expect to complete the degree in May 2011. We truly enjoy the diversity, challenge, history and excitement of living in New York City and are thankful our children have had this opportunity to experience the unique education an international city affords. Currently, Stacey is working at Fordham Law School as associate director of their International and Non-J.D. programs. We look forward to continuing the adventure of serving God and being a part of expanding God's kingdom, wherever that takes us.

Rev. Paul T. Rock - Statement of Faith

I BELIEVE God is the triune, all wise, all loving, faithful and just Creator. God created humans in God's image, in relationship with God and others. Sadly, humans rejected and continue to refuse and misunderstand the love and sovereignty of God. Instead, we are driven by a destructive fallen nature which we cannot, and often chose not, to overcome. In this we damage others, ourselves and creation. Yet, rather than abandon us, God embraced us with a covenant of grace to forgive sin and afford reconciliation. God's promise has never altered from Abram, to David, to Christ, to the present. In a complete act of reconciliation, God not only pursues us from on high as a widow searches for a lost coin, God also embodies the perfect human response from below through Jesus Christ.

I BELIEVE Jesus Christ was fully human, fully God, the incarnation of the eternal Logos. Through Christ, the Kingdom of God on earth was inaugurated. Jesus shared the needs, joys, temptations and sorrows of creation. Religious leaders, challenged and offended by his life and teaching, opposed him, unjustly condemned him and finally had him crucified. Jesus died, was buried, descended into hell and was raised bodily on the third day. Through Jesus' sinless life, death and resurrection, God's love for humanity is embodied, all is forgiven, sin's power of reciprocal violence and scapegoating was defeated and the redemption of creation is assured.

Jesus befriended the poor and the outcast and brought healing and inclusion to the sick and lost. Jesus judged the pride and idolatry of those who judged themselves righteous. Jesus called on all to repent and receive God's love and sovereignty. Jesus taught his followers that true power is realized through service and acts of forgiveness. As head of the Church, Jesus provides the example, power and leadership for the family of God. As our judge, he calls and empowers us to live sanctified lives marked by service, health, love, joy, power, humility and an appetite for justice.

I BELIEVE the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the resurrected Christ, continuing his work of advancing God's kingdom in, through and in spite of us. God's covenant community, the Church, was born at Pentecost and continues to embody and facilitate God's truth as we reach out in love to bring effectual healing, hope, justice and reconciliation to a broken and fragmented world. As the church worships together and continues the mission of Christ, we glimpse the Kingdom to come. I believe the Holy Spirit reveals God's will and power through general revelation, accessible to all. She further speaks in special ways through:

The study and proclamation of the Word which is the authoritative recording of and witness to God's revelation to the world, culminating in Jesus Christ;

The celebration of baptism, a welcoming party for the baptized, thrown by the community of faith, and hosted by the Spirit, marking us as God's own

The celebration of the Lord's Supper, which provides the family of God a visual and tactile opportunity to commune with Christ's suffering and death, and touch and taste the grace, forgiveness, assurance, love and unity we crave and receive from God.

As we continue to struggle with the effects of sin in our lives and in our world, the Holy Spirit provides the Church with hope that the day is coming when "...the dwelling of God is with men and women... [and] God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain..." And so we pray with all the saints, "Come Lord Jesus!" -Rev. 21-22.

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