

## Pastor John's Biography

### **Matthew 22: 37-38**

**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”**



***Reverend John Folk***

It is an absolute joy to serve as the associate pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ. While I love working with all people, my heart, and the core of my call to ministry has been firmly planted in the areas of youth ministry, young adult ministry and educational ministry for many years. I am committed to the belief that our youth and young adults are not just the future of our church – they are a vital part of the ministry of the church today.

I am a graduate of Fleetwood High School. I have studied at Penn State University and Kutztown University with a focus on Secondary Education. I graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 2013 with a Master of Divinity degree and a certificate in Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

St. Paul's is my home church and Fleetwood is my hometown. I grew up and have lived most of my life in the Fleetwood & Blandon area with just a few brief stints in Lancaster, Maryland, and New Jersey. I currently live in Elverson along with my husband, Frank and our four dogs, Noah, Cooper (aka Mr. Beeps), Toby and Joey.

My hobbies include travelling, reading, hiking, fishing, gardening, and amateur photography. I self-identify as a bit of a nerd, loving all things tech and get really excited about the ways that technology can connect us and the potential to enhance worship and our learning environments. With that said, I should most definitely add that computers are no replacement for a real conversation over a nice cup of java and still keep on hand my “laptop that never crashes” (also known as a typewriter). In terms of books and movies, I’m a huge fan of both science fiction and medical fiction. I’ve read virtually everything that Robin Cook has ever written. Interestingly, my all-time favorite movies fall pretty far from those genres. Clue is probably my all-time favorite, having watched it so many times that I wore through a VHS tape. A very close second would be Dead Poet’s Society.

My faith journey began with my baptism at Becker’s Lutheran in Molltown. My family moved to St. Paul’s UCC when I was still a young child. My experiences with the youth ministry at St. Paul’s helped to light the sparks that would eventually grow into the fire that is my call to ministry. St. Paul’s has been my home, my community of faith, and the place where the foundation of what I believe and what that means for who I am was formed. I sincerely thank God that St. Paul’s has been a part of my journey. I feel very blessed to be part of such a vibrant, energetic, and loving community of God’s people and to be serving a congregation that holds such a dear place in my heart.

In addition to my work at St. Paul's, I'm on the board of directors for the United Church of Christ, have helped to coordinate youth@synod, am a part of the General Synod Implementation Team, help to coordinate National, Regional, and Conference Youth Events, am a part of the PSEC Annual Meeting Team, help to coordinate Theology with a Twist in Kutztown, and assist with the Berks CROP Walk.