

Rev. Jon Paul Sydnor, sometimes known as "JP," was born in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to a nurse and Presbyterian pastor. He was raised in Richmond, Virginia where he had a wonderful childhood and the usual challenging adolescence. After high school JP moved on to Charlottesville where, ever the pragmatist, he studied English and Philosophy at the University of Virginia. In the meantime, two of the best summers of his life (1989 and 1991) were spent as a counselor at Camp Hanover, a Presbyterian nature/overnight center in Hanover County, Virginia.

After graduating from college in 1991, JP spent that winter traveling in Central America, then joined the Peace Corps and went to Nowy Targ, Poland to teach English for two years. While there he fell in love with the Tatry and Gorce mountain ranges and did a lot of hiking. He also traveled throughout Europe on a shoestring Peace Corps budget.

After returning home from Poland JP went to work on the Mexican-American border as Interim Director of a Presbyterian Border Ministry site in Nogales, Arizona. That experience capped off a long and wandering spiritual journey out of and into faith, away from and into the church. Like the Prodigal Son, except maybe not quite that extreme, JP took a leap of faith and began studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in the summer of 1996. While there he spent a summer in India, two years in church internships, and nine months working as a chaplain in a psychiatric hospital.

After completing his Master of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees at Princeton Theological Seminary, JP has gone on to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy at Boston College in Systematic and Comparative Theology. Currently, JP is writing his dissertation on the Hindu theologian Ramanuja and the Christian theologian Schleiermacher. He expects to finish sometime before retirement.

Of course, JP is also pastoring Union Congregational Church with his beloved wife and partner and co-pastor, Abby. They are extremely thankful that they have been called to such a warm, wonderful, caring church. They are also extremely thankful for the two beautiful children that they have been blessed with over the past few years. Grace abounds.