

## Chip Stapleton – Biographical Sketch

There have been many influences in my faith journey, beginning with my family. I was blessed to grow up in a family that put faith at the center of all of life. I continue to be influenced by the witness of faithfulness that has been shown to me by my family, especially my mother.

Growing up at Graystone Pres. in Indiana, Pa, I was further blessed to be raised among a family of faith that took seriously the responsibility to teach and pass on the faith. As children and youth, we were given the opportunity to ask questions, lead in worship, grow in faith and explore God's call on our lives. It was in this environment, as a high school senior, that I first heard God's explicit call on my life and into vocational ministry.

As a young person two other programs worked together to shape and form my faith and my understanding of what it meant to follow Christ in this world with all that we are. The first, Summer's Best Two Weeks, is a Christian sports camp with Presbyterian roots. I was involved with the camp from age 4 through my first ministry calling, ranging from the youngest camper to camp director. It was in the camps dual focus on sports and faith that I first realized that our faith is not to be a separate thing, but rather that which sits at the center of our lives and forms the foundation for all that we do and all that we are.

The other formative influence for me was the New Wilmington Mission Conference. I have been involved in the conference, an interdenominational Presbyterian mission conference with a focus on youth and young adults, literally my entire life. First being carried to meetings by my mother and grandparents, then attending as a delegate, serving on the staff and the board of managers and now attending as a family. It was at NWMC that I discovered a heart for mission and formed my understanding of the central role of mission in the life of Christ's church and in the life of all of us that seek to participate in the mission of God.

As I seek to navigate God's call on my life God has provided me with a partner for life and ministry. My wife Traci serves a strong support system, an honest sounding board and a grounding force for my life, faith and ministry. It is in relationship with her that I am most fully able to faithfully live into God's call on my life. Together we have been blessed with four children (two biological, two adopted) and through the experience of parenting God has revealed to me a fuller picture of the depth and breadth of his parental love for each of his children.

Through these influences God has honed my understanding of God's call on my life to ordained ministry, the call of each of us to put our faith at the very center of all that we are and all that we do and to restore mission – to our neighbor and to our neighbors around the world – to the center of what it means to live out that faith.

It is in humility, by God's grace, through the sacrifice of Christ that I am able to even talk of responding with gratitude to God's work in my life.