

Meet the Member!

Ben & Diane Smith

Ben and Diane moved to Baxter Village about 13 years ago and searched many weeks to find a church that had solid biblical teaching, great music and members who are genuine and authentic. Eternal Church is where they landed and even though they now live in Audubon Lakes Estate in Indian land, they continue to be active in church. Ben has served as an Elder in the church for the greater part of 10 years.



Ben grew up in the Washington DC area and matriculated to Virginia Tech. Diane grew up as a Navy “brat” which meant they moved around living in Oak Harbor, WA, San Diego, Denver, Hawaii, Fairfax, VA and Virginia Beach, VA where she graduated from high school. She enrolled at Virginia Tech where she eventually met this energetic young soccer fanatic who was a fellow student in the Engineering program. Both Ben and Diane have their bachelor and master’s degrees in aerospace engineering from VA Tech. They continued growing their relationship and were married in 1989, just settling into what they thought would be a long career in aerospace in Texas. Ben worked on a top-secret project in “hypersonic flight” and Diane was in the Structural Dynamics Group for the F-16 fighter jet. A year later the cold war ended with the dismantling of the Berlin wall and many aerospace engineers were suddenly out of work.

They moved back to Blacksburg, VA to pursue PhD degrees, but with a growing family to support, Ben took a full-time job with Volvo Trucks. Diane was an Instructor at VA Tech, but mostly stayed home to take care of their three young children. In 1997, Daimler’s Heavy Trucks division offered both Ben and Diane jobs in Portland, Oregon. They packed up their belongings, moved, and made the Pacific Northwest their home for the next 11 years. In 2008, Daimler moved their family to Fort Mill where Ben continues to work in their Fort Mill office while Diane has since retired.

Ben grew up in the Methodist Church (his grandfather was a Methodist minister) and Diane in the Catholic Church. Neither of them had any desire to continue their church experience once they were in college. Diane felt God “nudging” her to go back to church during their first year of marriage, and eventually they started attending Blacksburg Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational church, and an acceptable compromise with their vastly different church backgrounds. Their faith began to grow and they both, through separate experiences, made personal acknowledgements of faith. Ben can even remember the date in 1992 at the age of 27.

Ben and Diane have three children: Nathan, 39 (from her 1st marriage), Katie, 31, and Nicholas, 29 years old. Last year they were blessed with their first grandchild, August. They continue to plan family vacations so the whole family can stay connected.

Diane enjoys being creative with craft hobbies like stamping, (card making to uninformed folk like me), and stitching. She loves to cook and still loves the water, having been an accomplished swimmer and lifeguard in her earlier years. Even though Ben played competitive soccer much of his life, the onset of middle age and knee replacement surgery has kept him wisely off the field.

Ben & Diane both love to read. Besides the Bible, Ben’s favorite authors are Thomas Merton (*The Seven Storey Mountain*) and Madame Guyon, an author from the late 1600s. Diane loves the videos and writings of Bishop Robert Barron with Word on Fire Ministries. A favorite book for both is *Bruchko*, the autobiography of Bruce Olsen.

They love to travel and have been to many exotic locations around the world. However, Disney World is a favorite destination (for Diane mostly) as are the National Parks out west and the mountains. Their favorite hike was The Narrows in Zion National Park.

They love the ministry of Eternal and were both active in mission trips the church led to Guatemala. Ben participated in eight trips and Diane six. Ben continues to be an Elder and Diane was a Deacon. Five years ago, Diane felt the call of God to return to worship back in the Catholic church. She loves the liturgical style of worship and the weekly participation in the sacraments at St. Philip Neri church in Fort Mill. The message she is receiving from the Lord is Christian Unity, so she balances her time between the two congregations.

A favorite Bible passage for the Ben and Diane is 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

When you see Ben or Diane ask them about their cat, Smokey. He is a gentle and loving cat when inside the home, but a hunter outside. It is not uncommon for him to bring home a prize trophy to the back door, whether a rodent, rabbit, or bird. Cuddly or killer...you choose.

Written by Paul Veerman

