

## Meet the Member

### Garrett and Lauren Copeland

Mr. Foster's 9<sup>th</sup> grade Geometry class would be a most unlikely place for two young high school students to meet and eventually fall in love, but that is exactly what happened for Garrett and Lauren. However, it wasn't until after college that they married. What happened in between? Their separate journeys brought them back together again.

Both Garrett and Lauren grew up in Fort Mill and graduated in 2008. Because of Garrett's love for basketball, he attended Furman University on a promise to be able to play on their team. He soon found out that division one college basketball is a little more competitive than high school sports for a slender, 6'2" shooting guard. Nonetheless he enjoyed his time on the team but concentrated more on his studies graduating in 3 ½ years with an accounting degree and continuing his education at Clemson for his graduate degree. Lauren attended Clemson following in her sister's footsteps to the school and also graduated in 3 ½ years with an Elementary Education degree.



Lauren and her family attended Unity Presbyterian Church throughout high school. She was involved in her youth group and went on several missions' trips, but it wasn't until she attended Clemson that she started thinking more seriously about a personal faith. Her older sister was an upper classman at Clemson and through her sister's own renewal of her faith in college, repeated invitations from her sister to join her at church, and a fellow Christian student on her floor in her dorm, she came to know Jesus in a more intimate way. God certainly knows how to mix it up when it comes to spiritual influences.

Garrett grew up in Fort Mill and attended St. Philip Neri Catholic Church. He believed in God, but it was a work-based faith. The idea of a personal relationship with Christ was missing. It wasn't until he took a spring break to Myrtle Beach in his freshman year that he came face to face with his own depravity. Garrett recalls waking up one morning after a few days there with his buddies feeling empty inside. He left the trip early and decided that there had to be a better way. When he got back on Furman's campus, he found Fellowship of Christian Athletes and through that organization learned about the Grace of God.

Though Garrett and Lauren split up after high school, they decided to meet in the summer after their sophomore year to officially part ways on a good note. However, the opposite occurred. God had been at work in each of their lives in different ways and he brought them together instead. They dated as upper classmen and since the two campuses were only 45 minutes apart, enjoyed visiting each other's campuses on weekends. They were engaged in late 2011 and married in June of 2012 after graduation.

After graduation, Garrett took a position with Deloitte in Greenville while Lauren taught 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in a local grade school. When Deloitte closed their Greenville office in 2013, they had the opportunity to move back to Fort Mill and chose Baxter Village. After the move, Lauren continued her teaching at Springfield Elementary in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She left the classroom when Scarlett was born in 2016 and this year began a new endeavor homeschooling Scarlett, now a kindergartener. Also, she has a small business writing curriculum for elementary school teachers. Garrett still works for Deloitte, and aside from auditing, he has enjoyed a wide variety of opportunities within the firm, including a stint in the Mergers and Acquisitions department and currently in a role as an internal consultant on technical accounting matters.

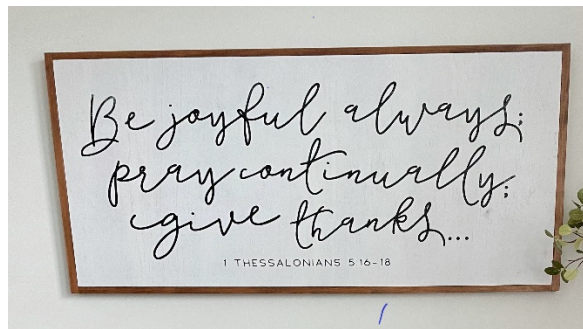
Today the Copelands have three beautiful young girls; Scarlett born in 2016, Aniston ("Annie Reese") born in 2018 and Lucy born in 2020. Lauren claims Garrett is the "best girl dad", but being a stay-at-home mom, Lauren does most of the work.... just saying.

Lauren enjoys reading lots of books including historical fiction and Christian non-fiction. Charlotte Mason books are some of her favorites. Also, she walks as much as she can. They now live in Mason's Bend (no relation to the writer) which gives them plenty of opportunities to walk and hike near their home, including trails along the Catawba River. Garrett enjoys being outside as much as he can, playing basketball and golf, reading, exercising, and fixing things around the house. Needless to say, they don't have much time for TV.

They have been members at Eternal since 2013 and have never looked back. Currently Lauren is serving in the 4/5-year-old classroom for the Family Ministry and as a co-leader for the freshman girls' Bible study. Garrett helps with the men's ministry, and they both serve alongside Melissa and Jeremy Williams to launch the Connect Community Group, which is a landing space for new families before they find a more permanent CG home.

Garrett's favorite verse is Hebrews 13:6. *"So we say with confidence, The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*

Lauren's favorite verse hangs on the wall in their bedroom - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.



*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,  
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*