



RYAN + EMILY

2101474

NICE TO MEET YOU

We want to thank you for taking the time to get to know us during what may feel like a very challenging time. We believe God has called each of us to use what we have for His glory. In that calling, we wish to open our home. You have a difficult task ahead of you: to choose the family you wish this child to grow up with. We are writing this in awareness of the magnitude of that choice. No matter which family you decide, know that you have our heartfelt prayers.

May God bless you and thank you for considering us.

RYAN + EMILY



OUR STORY

Our relationship began online while we were both finishing school. We dated briefly long-distance until marrying and moving in with one another: first in Louisville until Ryan finished his nursing degree, then to Cincinnati after he obtained an Ohio nursing license. We moved where the job positions were within the greater Cincinnati area. Our priorities shifted as we grew in our relationship with Christ and with one another. We became determined to put down roots and begin a family.

We began this process by moving to Florida in the beginning of 2023 while starting to explore adoption. Ryan now works as an inpatient hospice nurse and Emily works at home as a mental health therapist conducting telehealth visits. During this time, God surprised us with a new community and calling within the Eastern Orthodox church. Our local parish has been very welcoming and we now practice our faith through participating in various ways such as support ministries and signing in the choir. Our path has had a lot of twists and turns, but we have built up a home and traditions we call our own.





meet EMILY

Hi! I'm Emily. I was born in Ohio and grew up with my younger brother in a suburb north of Cincinnati. Our parents divorced several years after he was born. This experience taught me the importance of commitment and good communication in building a healthy marriage. Despite these challenges, we were involved in school and community activities and spent time with extended family on both sides. I initially became a therapist with the goal of helping kids in hard situations and have expanded my practice to working with adults as well. I love to sing and have participated in both school and church choirs throughout my life. I also enjoy helping young women grow in their relationships with God through teaching and mentorship opportunities. I like to read across a wide range of subjects and recently started seeking out stories to share, as being read to as a child is one of my cherished memories. I work full time during the week and enjoy taking walks, spending time with Ryan, and coffee with friends during my free time.

One of the reasons I want to be a mom is because I love helping people grow. There is something so beautiful and exciting to see a person "get it," whether that's learning to tie their shoes for the first time or recognizing the first step on the pathway to change. I love to guide, cheerlead, and celebrate these wins. I know growing also involves effort, patience, and at times, pain. This is especially true with the many complexities that can arise in an adoptive family. I believe my background and experiences have made me uniquely suited to welcome a child and hold space for all parts of them as we grow together.



RYAN says

Our first date was at an Applebee's in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was early for a good 20 minutes since I was coming in from Louisville and wanted to give myself time to find the restaurant. I remember the look of pity my waiter had after I ordered for myself a full ten minutes after the date was supposed to start. I was stuffed into my one pair of dress clothing I had since middle school and here I thought that I had been stood up.

But then, there she was, apologizing for her delay (she had cut herself and there was some last minute first aid). She ended up wearing jeans and a casual outfit, and that sort of invited me to drop the awkward pretenses first dates tend to have. That's what I remember most: a sort of comfort that let me drop my guard and be myself. I ended up getting her to belly-laugh at my best horror stories from being a nurse aide: the sorts of stories you normally shouldn't tell over a meal involving very confused patients and preparing their colonoscopies.

I had just become a Christian but I could recognize someone who wanted to follow God. Over those years, many of her awkward insecurities have fallen away. It seems universal that the older you get, the more comfortable you are in your own skin. This can be a great asset if you have developed yourself as a disciple of Christ. The genuine concern for others that she had then has developed more over time. I've seen her stretch herself over these past years and become more conscientious, more loving, and more considerate. I am proud to have her as my wife these 18 years. I have no doubt her child will be proud to have her as a mother.





meet

RYAN

My name is Ryan. I am a nurse who has been in the medical field for 20+ years. To be honest, I stumbled into it. I grew up a latch-key kid: my parents divorced when I was very young and my mother worked full time and sent herself through school. Most of my formative memories involve my grandparents and the time I spent with my father on the weekends. He didn't have a lot of money after the divorce, so he would entertain us with trying new recipes from a cookbook, including the mile walk to the grocery store for the ingredients. My mother stressed independence, teaching me how to clean after, and cook for myself.

When I became of age, my mother gave me the choice: go to school, pay rent, or move out. The choice was to do all of my undergraduate work at the local community college. They happened to have a locally recognized nursing program so I tried out being a nurse. I noticed I had a bit of a penchant for it. I've been in medicine ever since and I ended up in pediatric home care for almost 15 years after graduating.

Over that time I have been growing in my relationship with my wife and with God. We have come to accept that natural conception may not be a goal achievable for us. I trust God and His wisdom. This is how I find myself typing this to you today. I've seen parenting up close for many years: I've seen examples of the good and the bad. I believe God has given me this experience for a reason and wish to put it into practice for you and for Him.



EMILY says

Ryan's right about the first date. I was running late and he was pretty early, probably more than 20 minutes if we're being honest. I used to joke that this set the tone for the rest of our relationship. While I've made (some) improvements in my punctuality since then, one of the things I admire most about him is his thoughtful and measured approach to decisions and life in general. He thinks through his options, weighs pros and cons, and makes the best decision he can based on the information he has. Ryan is a natural leader and works to bring out the best in people. He is especially skilled in listening to different points of view and doing his best to help all sides feel heard and valued. He has guided our family well through some uncertain times and I feel confident in his strengths to lead, plan, and parent.

Ryan is also creative and adaptable, intelligent and funny. The sound of his laugh automatically brightens my day. One of my favorite memories during our first date besides the poop stories was when he was getting excited about a topic, swooped his arm, and accidentally knocked his water over. I think this was when I started falling for him. It had the same effect as what he described: it was a very human moment that embraced the awkwardness of the situation and allowed me to relax and let my guard down. Ryan has passion and enthusiasm for things that he cares about. It makes him an effective teacher, a loyal friend, and a loving husband. We have talked many times about his desire and excitement to pour into the life of a child. I have watched him channel these qualities over the years and balance them with wisdom as he becomes more and more like Christ. I'm proud and grateful to be his wife. I believe he will be an excellent father.



Home sweet home



our Home

Early in our marriage, we found ourselves moving around a lot. Ryan had moved to Ohio and Emily's family was often scattered due to illness or moving away. We did not wish to replicate the chaos of our childhood environment, so we threw ourselves into the life of the church. We've met so many faithful Christians that formed types of families over the years - some of which we still keep up with. When we moved to Florida to pursue adoption, our faith was the core of our relationships.

If there is one thing we want to emphasize, it is our commitment to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Christ is the focus of our relationship and Orthodoxy is the vehicle which we maintain that relationship. We understand if our children wish to leave it once they are grown to find Christ in their own way. However, to us, Orthodox Christianity is central to our lives and we want to be transparent that we plan to raise our child in this faith tradition.

Playground



Park





our *Community*

We live in the panhandle of Florida, right along the Emerald Coast, in a small town called Lynn Haven. This is one of three small communities that help maintain the tourist industry in Panama City Beach. We sit next to the North Bay region. From our house you can see our city hall and our centrally located park. Six blocks north of us sits another park on the coast of the bay. Groceries and most essentials are either within walking distance or under a 10 minute drive. It's the sort of small community that has children riding their bikes in the street and the older residents walking or taking their golf carts to the store. If we drive a half hour, we can get to some of the best beaches in the world and the tourist attractions that have built up around them over time. An hour or two away are Pensacola or Tallahassee: both have cultural centers and museums.

Our home is a little three bedroom block house that has stood the test of time. It is centrally located in Lynn Haven and has an acre of yard space. We'd like to turn it into a garden or a chicken run (or both) sometime in the future. There's ample space to raise a family and to have some room outside to play.



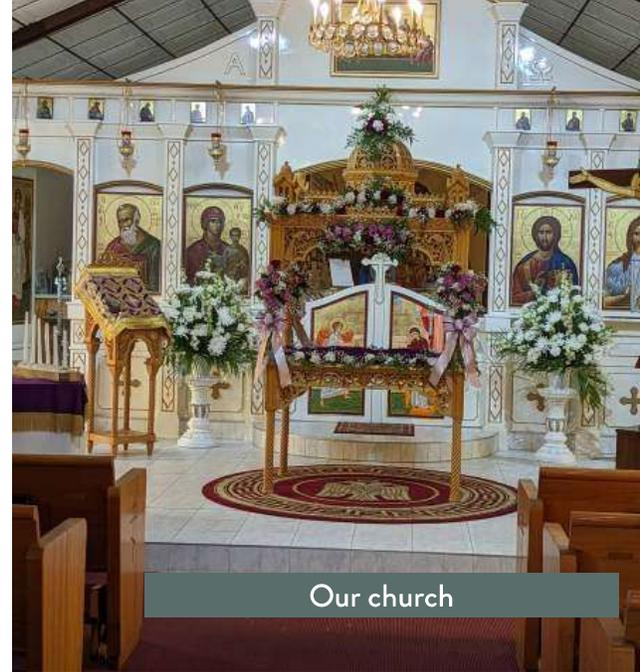
Night lights



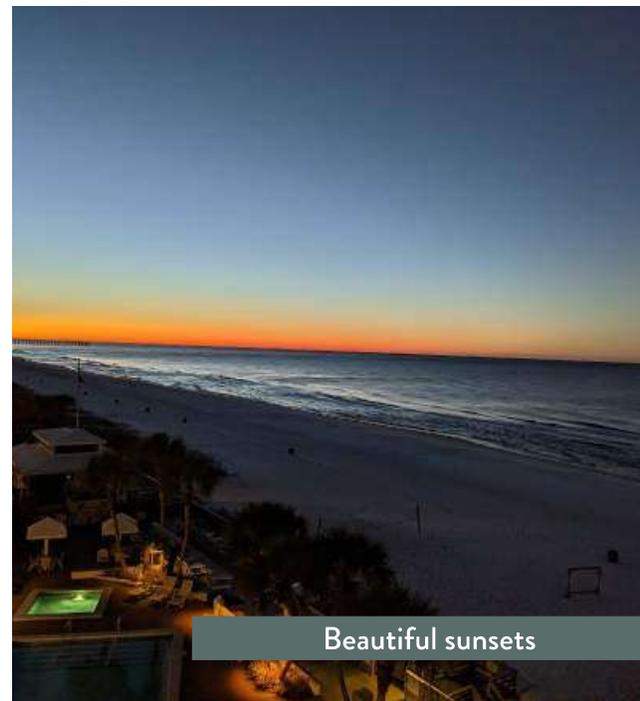
Park Concert



Ryan's parents



Our church



Beautiful sunsets

EXTENDED FAMILY

Our parents occasionally visit us once every year or two and visa-versa. We have discovered that our church family has stepped up to be our family down in Florida. Of all the churches (or parishes, in this case), this has been the most diverse. Because this is the only Orthodox parish in town, we worship alongside Greeks, Cyprians, Romanians, Moldovans, Georgians, Russians, Ukrainians, Serbians, Arabs, and Americans from all over the country (some on vacation, others stationed at the local airforce base). They have their own languages and traditions, but we get along and share each other's foods and worship styles. Make no mistake, we have an army of yayiais and babushkas excited to hear we are adopting.



Attending community events



Emily and friends



Ryan and his hospice coworker



Bayside pier

VALUES & TRADITIONS

In many ways, our traditions have been flexible. We've had to move around a lot due to Ryan's homecare position. Coming from divorced homes, most of our childhood traditions dissolved with the passing of our grandparents. When we became determined to start our own, we faced the headwinds of the pandemic until building the foundations of them here in Florida.

Being Eastern Orthodox has grounded us into the Liturgical calendar and traditions older than most countries. We both take time off for Holy Week and both try to live a life marked by daily prayer. Our traditions from Ohio remain: we always try and take one night a week out for a date. Ryan continues to keep up with his friends one night a week and both of us dedicate one day of rest. Both of us give one night per week to our church and often will take another night either practicing music or baking for the parish. In our down time, we will go for walks in the neighborhood and explore the areas around Panama City.



HOBBIES + ACTIVITIES

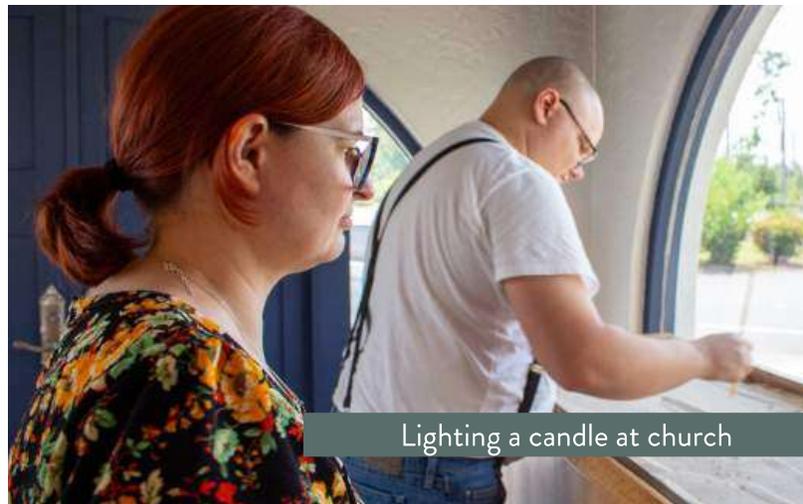
We've never really stopped appreciating learning something new. Emily often will read in her spare time and often makes trips to the local library. Ryan's hobbies tend to revolve around listening to informational or educational podcasts/videos. He still plays games with his friend of 36 years over the internet once a week. Both of us are heavily involved in our church. Emily is a mainstay in the choir and Ryan volunteers in leadership committees and baking proshphoro, the blessed bread used during Communion. Usually we have one show we've sworn to only watch with one another (we could see this ending up in our vows if we ever renew them).



Ladies group



Emily sewing



Lighting a candle at church



Emily baking



PARENTING + ADOPTION

Our choices of employment have reflected our views on raising a child. Both of us have adjustable schedules to cover childcare: Emily currently works weekdays and Ryan works weekends. This will allow us to provide our child with a home-school education. Our view is that learning should be holistic and experiential. In addition to the core curriculum, we want to focus on a broad knowledge base and practical skills: anything from history, philosophy, and critical thinking to cooking, wilderness craft, drywall patching, etc. What we don't personally know, we hope to learn together with them or link them with others who have the expertise. We hope most to have a child that is prepared for independence, who is confident, and (most importantly) who is virtuous.



Father's Name:
Ryan

Occupation:
Nurse

Education:
Bachelor's of Science in Nursing

Religion:
Orthodox Christian

Date of birth:
06/10/83

Hair Color:
Brown

Eye Color:
Brown

Height:
5' 9



Mother's Name:
Emily

Occupation:
Mental health therapist

Education:
**Masters of Counseling;
Bachelor of Science in Biblical Studies**

Religion:
Orthodox Christian

Date of birth:
09/01/82

Hair Color:
Natural brown but often dyed red

Eye Color:
Hazel

Height:
5' 2"

FAMILY INFORMATION

Date of marriage:
09/10/07

Children:
None

Interest and hobbies:

We both love to learn. Emily prefers trips to the library and reading. Ryan often listens to podcasts on history, religion, or philosophy. We set aside time to spend together as a family at least once a week, if not more. Both of us are dedicated to our church and volunteer in the choir or leadership committees.

Home:

We live in a quiet coastal town within walking distance of several parks. We are within a 10 minute drive to all of our essentials. We are 30-60 minutes away from several nature preserves and tourist attractions. We hope to provide a broad range of experiences to teach a child about the natural world and to help them appreciate an occasional vacation.

Pets:
None

Why are you interested in building your family through adoption:

At times, God puts upon the heart of His people a calling. After having both of us work professionally with children, and experiencing fertility challenges, we believe it is our calling to raise a child through adoption.

Openness to birthparent(s):

We're open to parental involvement. We understand a parent's wish to be invested in their child's life and we are used to non-nuclear family dynamics.

Childcare plans:

We are wanting to home school our child/children. Ryan works on the weekends in order to free up weekdays for schooling. Emily plans to care for the children on the weekends while Ryan is working. There may be a day or two during the week that will require professional childcare. We hope to use that as an avenue to build broader social connections beyond our home and parish.



BEFORE YOU GO

We know that you are in the process of carefully considering who you would like to raise your child. We cannot imagine what it must feel like to put blind trust in the words you are reading today for such an impactful decision. We could promise you the world but we've lived long enough to know that many promises are given before reality and circumstance tests them.

Here's what we can say: We've been Christians for decades, through the highs of mission trips and joy to the lows of infertility and doubt. We've been married for nearly two decades: through sickness, through unemployment, through not knowing where we would end up with moving. There's not much we could fully say we trust, but we have experienced putting our trust in God and experiencing just how faithful He is. That's why we know that if God chooses us to raise a child, He will equip us for one of the scariest things we've ever done too. No matter what you decide today, we appreciate your time and pray for you. For now, let us encourage you with this: God is faithful! "Cast all your anxiety on him for he cares for you." -1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

God bless you,

RYAN + EMILY