

WELCOME

DEREK & *Meghan*

WE'RE SO EXCITED TO "MEET" YOU!



WE LOVED  
YOU BEFORE  
WE MET YOU,  
*even when*  
THERE WAS  
JUST HOPE

WE LOVED YOU.



hello

THANK YOU FOR INVITING US INTO THIS SPACE WITH YOU.

Can we just start by being totally honest? Sitting down to write this letter has been far more challenging than we ever imagined such a thing could be. There is so much we wish to say, and yet it is so hard to find the right words. We cannot even begin to comprehend all the emotions, fears, hopes, and questions you are likely contending with, and there is little more important to us in this moment than telling you that *you matter*. Through it all, we hope you know you are loved beyond measure in the eyes of God, no matter what brought you here or what you decide.

We also want to say that you have been on our hearts, on our minds, and in our prayers for a while now. Our prayer has always been (and will continue to be) for you to find unimaginable strength to discern and make whatever choice is best for you and your child, whether or not that includes us in the end. We hope and pray that you feel surrounded, supported, and empowered in your decision.

As a couple, we have always longed to be parents and knew if we were ever faced with infertility, adoption would be the path we'd walk down. Since we made the decision to pursue adoption, we have been filled with love for a child and a mother we have yet to meet. We are inspired by the way two families become forever intertwined because of their love for a child. And yet, that does not mean we enter this space lightly. We acknowledge that adoption comes with heartache and loss, and we have been humbled as we've thought of you and your strength when it comes to the baby you are carrying.

No matter what lies ahead, we have immense respect for you and the journey you are making. Whatever comes, we pray you are washed in peace and protected in all the days ahead.

WITH GREAT LOVE & HEARTFELT PRAYERS,

Derek & Meghan

## A QUICK LOOK AT WHO WE ARE



### *faith*

#### WE LOVE THE LORD.

Our faith is the driving force of our life and is the foundation of who we are. We pray together every day, attend mass on Sundays, serve our church by singing in the choir, volunteering at festivals, and helping those in need, and regularly seek opportunities to learn more about the Lord.



### *feed*

#### WE LOVE TO EAT TOGETHER.

Not only does food fuel us, it also gives us the opportunity to connect! Over meals, we share about our days, thoughts, concerns, and desires. We love pizza nights, pasta, breakfast for dinner, hamburgers, and ice cream! We eat dinner together almost every night and find a great restaurant at least once a week.

### *family*

#### WE LOVE OUR PEOPLE.

Whether it be our family by blood or the family we have chosen over the years, family is truly the most important thing in our lives. While we do not have the luxury of living near our parents and siblings, this has taught us to cherish the time we have with the people closest to us. We visit our families 3-4 times a year and talk often!



### *and fun*

#### WE LOVE AN ADVENTURE.

Whether it's the occasional day trip or our yearly vacation, visiting new places takes us away from our everyday scenery and allows us to celebrate the beauty of somewhere else. We get swept up in the sounds of the ocean, the beauty of a nearby park, or the food of a different culture (especially Italy!) We can't wait to travel as a family.





(JUST IN CASE YOU LOVE THE DETAILS...)

We first met at a campus ministry retreat called "Give Your Heart Away" over a decade ago.

Derek, being the thoughtful person that he is, followed up with Meghan after the retreat to see how one of the campus ministry events she hosted had gone. For whatever reason, Meghan decided to unload on Derek everything that was going on in her life! Meghan was navigating a very difficult season of life, and Derek quickly became the friend she would confide in. And yet - even with the "crush" rapidly developing in Meghan's heart - the "friend zone" is where we stayed. It was at a church event that Derek held Meghan's hand for the first time. Meghan thought it was because she was crying, but really he was beginning to realize he *did* see her as more than just a friend. The following Sunday, Derek confessed his feelings, and our relationship was put into motion.

After 3 years of dating, Derek decided to complete his Ph.D. proposal and propose to Meghan in the same week. We had a day trip planned to the mountains, and Derek targeted a 1.5-mile trail that ended in a waterfall for his best (and last) spot in the park to pop the question. Having somehow kept it a secret, Derek gave Meghan the surprise of a lifetime and asked to marry her.

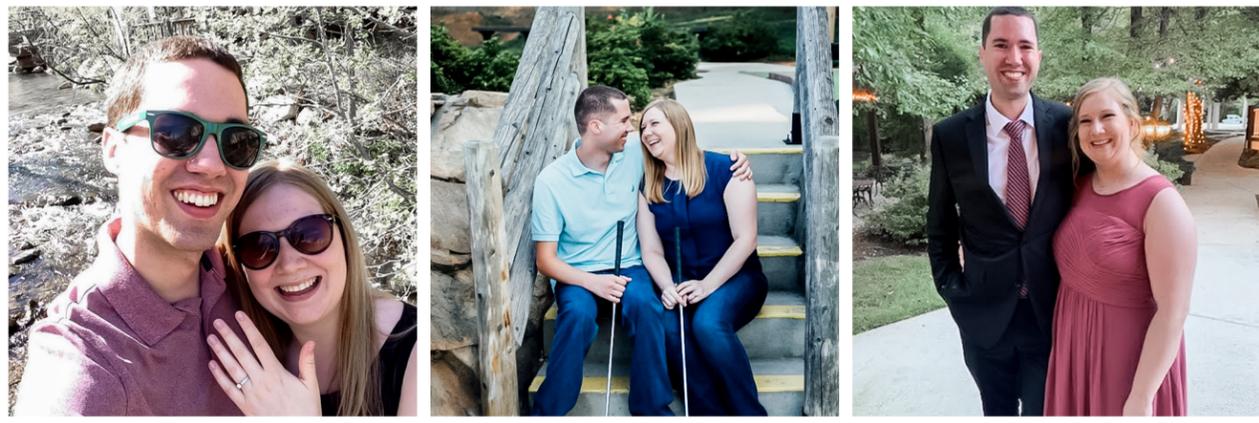
A year later, we were married in Charlotte, NC surrounded by our closest family and friends. Although it was one of the best days of his life, Derek admits he doesn't remember many of the details except how beautiful Meghan was walking down the aisle and how peaceful he felt as he held her hand during mass. We made a choice that day that we will continue to make for a lifetime - the choice to *choose* one another and love each other deeply, even in our weakness.

While life has had its obstacles, we have learned how to lean into one another, rely on our faith, and overcome challenges as a couple. As a married couple and future parents, we hope to lead each other and our future child(ren) to heaven, consistently growing in our faith and as human beings.

*this love is ours*

THE SHORT VERSION OF OUR LIFE TOGETHER

Feb. 2012	Sept. 2012	April 2015	April 2016	Sept. 2016	Sept. 2021
●	●	●	●	●	●
<p><i>We met for the first time at a college campus ministry retreat.</i></p>	<p><i>Derek "friend zoned" Meghan before realizing he also had feelings for her.</i></p>	<p><i>After dating for 3 years, we got engaged at the base of a waterfall.</i></p>	<p><i>We said "I do" in Charlotte, NC right after Derek finished his Ph.D.</i></p>	<p><i>We first moved to Cincinnati for Derek's job and <u>slowly</u> grew to love it.</i></p>	<p><i>We started jobs we love &amp; finally felt peace about staying in Ohio.</i></p>





# Meet Meghan

## THE BASICS.

My friends would tell you I'm loving, loyal and empathetic. They'd also say I'm always smiling, and I love to laugh.

## WHAT I DO

I have a Bachelor's in Psychology and a Master's in Education and am currently a junior high math and science teacher at a small, private school! I can truthfully say that I love all of my unique and sassy students and watching them grow throughout the school year fills me with pride and excitement.

## WHAT I LOVE

My family and friends // Being an aunt // My cat // My faith // Supporting my students // The Buffalo Bills // Reading // The beach // Pandas // Diet Dr. Pepper // Taylor Swift // Playing board games

What else you should know about me. If a stranger met me on the street, they'd probably think I'm nice but extremely quiet. In reality, I am lively and energetic! Once I get to know someone, I can talk and laugh with them for hours. I love those around me so deeply and have this "sixth sense" of when something is not quite right with someone. It allows me to be there for my friends, family, and students, and I love being there for others. When I'm ready to unwind, cuddling up on the couch with a good book or watching a show makes me the most relaxed. I love to plan surprises and choose the perfect gift for someone. My faith is an important piece of who I am, and I enjoy learning about saints. One of my favorite quotes is "Do small things with great love," by Mother Teresa. This is my goal in life.



## MY WIFE IS GENUINE, GENTLE, AND LOVES PEOPLE FIERCELY.

MEGHAN IN DEREK'S WORDS. "Meghan's dedication and concern for her "kids," i.e., her students, is what makes me admire her the most. A group of 8th graders once described her as the "color yellow" or "the season where winter becomes spring", and I'm not sure anyone could say it better. Over the years, Meghan has shared numerous stories about having to handle difficult situations, noticing days when a student is acting differently than usual, or hating having to discipline a student because they've done something disrespectful. They are all times I can see the mother she will be to our future child - attentive, loving, and also sometimes corrective - and it makes me excited to parent alongside her. I also love that one of her main love languages is gift-giving and she is always helping me remember friends' and family members' birthdays! She's intuitive, personable, and loves others so well."

## WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO ABOUT BEING A MOM:

- Spending holidays, weekends, and summers at home - going to museums, the zoo, and reading lots of books together.
- Cheering them on from the sidelines of whatever interests they hope to pursue.
- Teaching my child about Jesus, the saints, the Catholic faith, and loving well.





## Meet Derek

### THE BASICS.

My friends would tell you I'm faithful, humble, and thoughtful, I have a strong moral compass, and I show up for others.

### WHAT I DO

I have a Doctorate in Nanoscale Science and work as a chemist at the Forensic Chemistry Center, which is part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Because my facility handles all of the potential criminal cases for the FDA, I have had the chance to be involved with some very interesting cases!

### WHAT I LOVE

Strategic board games like Ticket to Ride, Gizmos, or Splendor // Open world style video games // Marvel and Disney movies // Podcasts // Hiking // Geocaching // Finding new flowers, bugs, and other critters.

What else you should know about me. My Catholic faith is a huge part of who I am. I often go to daily mass and visit a statue of Mary at the church every morning. I have a lot of patience and am not easily shaken. I am not unemotional, but my highs and lows are also not as deep as others might experience; it all helps me to keep an even keel in many different situations. Spending time with Meghan is truly one of my favorite things - whether it's going out to eat, visiting the zoo, going to musicals and concerts, or just watching shows on the couch, it's nice to be with her. While I prefer the visual element of video games, I also really like a good book and enjoy reading both fiction and fantasy. I also love to be outdoors and really enjoy learning new things.



### MY HUSBAND IS SUPPORTIVE, KIND, AND THE BEST LEADER.

DEREK IN MEGHAN'S WORDS. "One of the first things that drew me to Derek was the warmth that seamlessly stems from him. It's the strength of his faith, the way he smiles at every person he passes, and his love for all of those around him. Derek is Christ-like in his willingness to help those in need, to volunteer, and to love without condition. He is genuinely kind and thoughtful towards everyone, no matter how different from him they may be. He shows his patience, love, and dedication to this day as he sits up with me after a rough day, despite being ready to go to sleep. He also makes dinner almost every night - not because he loves cooking, but because he knows I hate it more. Derek has even embraced the life of being married to a middle school teacher by attending student events so I don't have to go alone. It has shown me how wonderful of a father he will be, always cheering on our child and listening to them in their times of need."

### WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO ABOUT BEING A DAD:

- Both teaching and learning. While there are things I enjoy and want to share with our child(ren), I also know they could be totally unlike me! And I look forward to listening, looking, and experiencing the world from their point of view.
- Walking with them through the ups and downs of life and always being present.



# our home

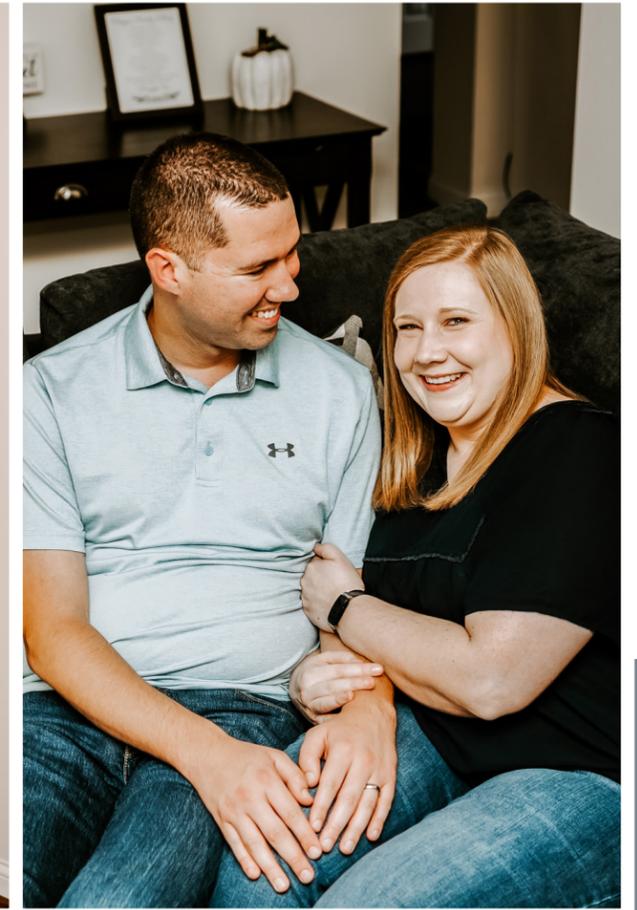
A PLACE WHERE OUR LOVE  
AND DREAMS ARE SHARED.

We live in the suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio in a cozy 4-bedroom home. It sits on the end of a cul-de-sac, not too far away from the local schools and parks.

The walls are painted in neutral colors with motivational quotes all around the house like, "Do small things with great love" and "A home is made of love and dreams". Our living room has the best sectional for reading a book, watching a movie, or simply being together. Our refrigerator is covered with magnets from all the places we have traveled, and we cannot wait to add new ones along with child-drawn pictures to the mix. We also have a dining room table, handed down by Meghan's grandmother, which is the perfect size for gathering with friends for meals and board games.

A stunning deck overlooks our hilly backyard with its woody vibes that seclude us from our neighbors in the warmer months. In the fall, you can look out the back window and see the leaves changing color on the trees and every now and then you can even spot little deer families roaming around.

Another great thing about our home is the location. We are about 20 minutes outside of the city, which gives us the comforts of suburban life mixed with the close access of downtown. On any given weekend, we can go to a major sporting event, see a musical, find a festival, or simply explore a local park. The county we live in has a beautiful and massive parks system with so many ways to enjoy the outdoors!



HOME IS A PLACE WHERE FRIENDS & FAMILY CAN GATHER,  
SHARE LAUGHTER, DREAM DREAMS, AND PLAY GAMES.  
A PLACE WHERE WE CAN RELAX AND UNWIND FROM THE  
STRESSORS OF LIFE. A PLACE WHERE THOSE WHO ENTER  
FEEL SAFE AND LOVED FOR EXACTLY WHO THEY ARE.

## OUR HEART FOR ADOPTION

We have both always dreamed of becoming parents. Before getting engaged, we talked often about our hopes of one day building a family to share our love and faith with. The idea of children excited our hearts, and within the first year of being married, we were open to the idea of our family growing and ready to welcome a child into our lives. This desire was and still is *deep* within our hearts.

After being married for 5 years and not yet having conceived, we knew something wasn't quite right. After visits with a specialist, it was confirmed that, due to medical reasons, conceiving a biological child would be unlikely for us. Through prayer and discernment, we felt God was inviting us onto a different path than we had originally envisioned - that of adoption.

And yet, as our "plans" have changed, we have been able to step forward confidently and with excitement. That is not to say we enter this space lightly. We know that adoption comes with heartache and loss, but we also see the potential for it to be fruitful and beautiful. Through countless hours of paperwork, trainings, reading, and financial planning, we have been opened to the reality that adoption is a lifelong journey, and we are here for it all. We truly can't believe how much love we already have for a baby and his or her parents, whom we have not even met yet!

*Family*

**FAMILY IS FOREVER.**

No matter what comes, we believe this to be true. When it comes to loving a child, we will love them without condition for a lifetime. But in this story of adoption, we are also committed to loving *you* and holding space for the unique and sacred place you will *always* have in the life of your child. *You* will be family forever.





## looking ahead

### WHEN WE THINK OF OUR FUTURE, WE DREAM OF...

- Nights spent together as a family - reading books, watching movies, and playing games.
- Ordering pizza from Jet's or Domino's and "feasting" together on Meghan's favorite food.
- Cheering for our children on the sidelines of whatever hobbies, sports, or interests they choose.
- Taking our little one to corn mazes, orchards, and to pick out pumpkins!
- Celebrating holidays and birthdays in fun and festive ways - some old, some new.
- Filling our home with laughter, but also recognizing there will be times it will be filled with tears, and in those times, holding each other through the pain.
- Growing in our capacity to love in ways that we cannot yet even begin to imagine.

### MEET OUR TABBY CAT, DARWIN.

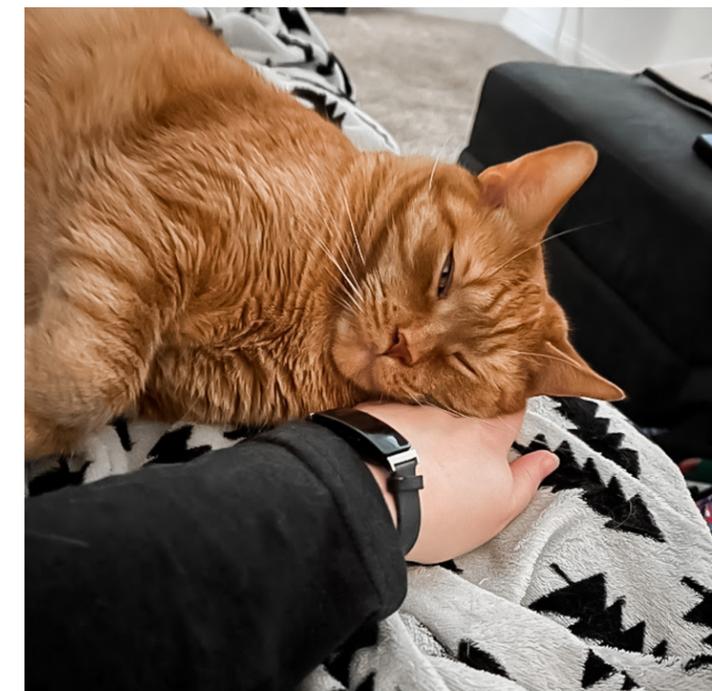
It wouldn't feel right to fill these pages and never mention our furry best friend - an orange, tabby cat named Darwin. Darwin joined our family when he was 4 years old, and now, almost 6 years later, we cannot imagine our life without him. Darwin is a special little member of our family and brightens up our days with his personality, his sass, and his *occasional* kitty cuddles.

While Darwin is not typically a lap cat, he does like to be nearby and can often be found right around the corner from wherever we are. Whether it be cuddling next to us on the couch or sitting on the bathroom floor while we brush our teeth, Darwin is a bit of a little shadow. He also goes through phases where he likes to lie in the sink while Meghan gets ready in the morning.

All in all, Darwin has been a wonderful part of our family, and it will be so fun to see how he reacts with a brand-new baby in the house!

### IN OUR EYES, A GOOD LIFE IS:

- Spending nights at home - cuddled up on the couch reading a good book, watching a show, or playing a game..
- Laughing until your stomach hurts or crying until you've released your pain.
- Taking a walk on a beautiful day or going on a road trip to somewhere new.
- Surrounding yourself with the people you love and facing challenges head on.



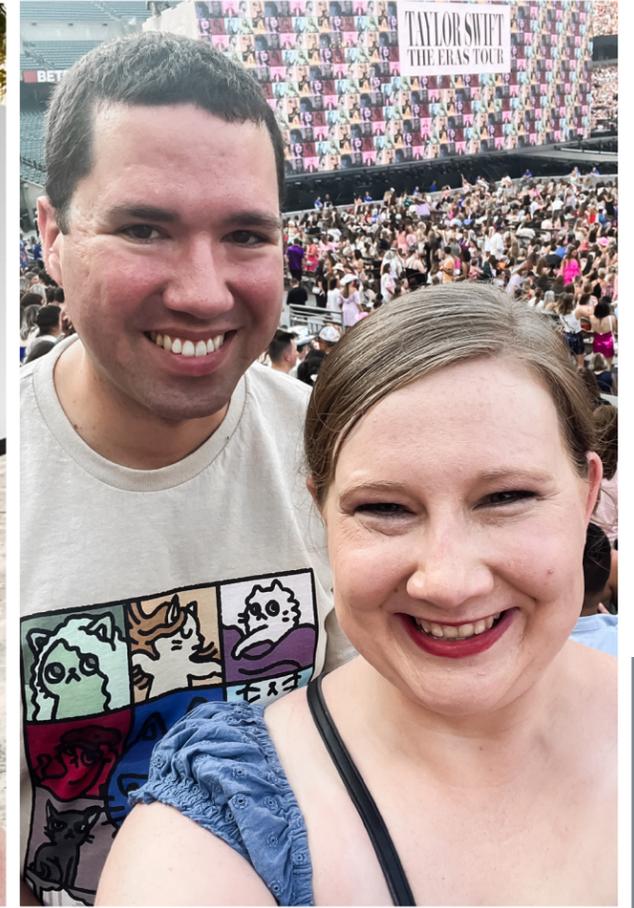
# our life

QUALITY TIME IS & ALWAYS WILL  
BE A PRIORITY IN OUR FAMILY.

Spending time together really is one of our favorite things to do! We cannot wait to share both the big adventures and the everyday moments with a child.

A glimpse of what our life looks like right now:

- During the week, we enjoy binge-watching different shows together on Netflix, Hulu, or Disney+.
- On weekends and free evenings, we take any chance we can get to pull out a board game. We especially like strategy-based games where we compete against one another (like Ticket to Ride) or cooperative games (like Pandemic).
- We love traveling and exploring new places together, whether it be a trip on the other side of the ocean, taking a walk at a park close by, eating at a restaurant, or enjoying a seasonal activity like visiting a corn maze or a holiday market.
- We enjoy watching musicals and take advantage of going into the city to see a show at least once a year. Some of the shows we have seen include Wicked, the Lion King, Waitress, and Hamilton.
- We also love going to the zoo! While Cincinnati has a wonderful and highly-rated zoo that we visit at least once a year, we also love to check out the different zoos when we are traveling, especially if it is one of those few that has pandas or dolphins!
- During football season, you can also often find us cheering for our favorite teams. For Meghan, this is the Buffalo Bills while Derek is a Patriots fan.



IF THERE IS ONE THING TO KNOW ABOUT OUR LIFE TOGETHER,  
IT'S THAT WE ALWAYS MAKE TIME FOR ONE ANOTHER.  
WHETHER IT'S SITTING DOWN FOR DINNER IN THE EVENINGS,  
PLAYING BOARD GAMES ON THE WEEKENDS, OR SHOWING UP  
FOR LIFE'S MAJOR MILESTONES, WE ARE EACH OTHER'S PEOPLE.

## HOW WE CELEBRATE LIFE TOGETHER

Celebrating life together is another huge priority we have carried from our childhoods and into our life as a married couple! We are so excited to share so many of these memories with a child someday.

- For the holidays, we rotate which side of our family we will spend Christmas and Thanksgiving with. With Meghan's family in North Carolina and Derek's in New York, these are always fun trips home.
- On both sides of the family, Thanksgiving meal includes turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing, and (Derek's favorite) green bean casserole. Christmas Day is spent opening presents, lounging around, playing games, and enjoying quality family time.
- For Easter, we stay in town and attend the Easter Vigil mass, then Meghan makes a dinner of honey-baked ham, pineapple, cornbread casserole, and rolls, with a tasty dessert to cap it off.
- Every fall, we take on the challenge of a corn maze, find somewhere to wander amidst the color-changing leaves, and drink lots of apple cider! We also enjoy making apple pie and apple crisp.
- Winter is made festive around our home with Christmas decorations and a trip to the Cincinnati Zoo for their Festival of Lights. We also love mapping out the best neighborhood Christmas lights based on local reviews and driving around town with hot chocolate to see them for ourselves.



## *birthdays*

...ARE OUR FAVORITE!

Meghan is a massive birthday person. She loves celebrating and making someone feel special. For breakfast, she believes birthdays call for muffins, donuts, or banana bread. The rest of the day is filled with presents, cake, and a special dinner of the birthday person's choosing.





A bit more about Derek's family. My family is strong, persevering, and changing! Growing up, there were many times when my mom had to essentially raise us alone as my dad was deployed to different (and often dangerous) parts of the world. He retired just as I was getting ready to go to undergrad, and the dynamics of our home shifted. While I wasn't around as frequently to experience it, the change was good. Over the years, we have grown closer together and stay more frequently in touch. On a recent trip to Boston to see my dad, brothers, and cousins, we went to a Fall Out Boy concert, walked around some historic parts of the city (including climbing up 294 steps in the Bunker Hill Monument), and spent many hours just catching up and having a good time. I look forward to more of this in the future!

## Our Families

### A FEW QUICK FACTS

- Meghan is the oldest of 3 siblings. Her sister is married with a 1-year-old son.
- Her parents met in college and have now been married for over 33 years!
- Meghan's parents and her siblings live in Charlotte, North Carolina, but we make it a priority to talk often and visit each other a few times every year.
- Some of her family's favorite things to do together are "window shopping", going out to dinner, or playing a game of corn hole or ladder golf in the backyard.
- Derek has a twin brother (who's older by 19 minutes!) and 2 other younger brothers.
- His twin brother is married with 2 children, and we are godparents to the oldest.
- His parents got married more than 35 years ago after his dad joined the Army.
- His family is in New York and Delaware, and we try to stay connected however we can.



A bit more about Meghan's family. My family is close-knit, affectionate, and loving. My mom is nurturing and always willing to listen. She is one of my best friends, and we talk daily. My dad is a selfless and thoughtful man who is passionate about his faith and family. My younger sister is the middle child and extremely tender-hearted! We have gone from fighting over what radio station to listen to as kids to talking on a regular basis as adults. Over the last year, it has been a privilege to watch her and my brother-in-law become parents. My nephew is a joyful little guy who loves exploring and playing, and I have loved every minute of being his aunt. I enjoy spoiling him and being labeled as the "sponsor" of his little library. My brother can be extremely quiet but cares deeply about those around him. He loves the Yankees and Buffalo Bills and will enjoy sharing that love with a niece or nephew. Watching my family interact with my nephew has proven to me their ability to prioritize relationships even from a distance, and we know they are going to pour all their love out on our son or daughter.

### OUR FAMILIES CANNOT WAIT TO SUPPORT A CHILD.

- Both of our families are so excited to meet their future grandchild(ren).
- Meghan's parents are most excited about baby snuggles, spoiling them, and spending quality time with them.
- Derek's parents share their love in the form of gift giving but also value the act of showing up for their kids & grandkids.





# our hope

NO MATTER WHAT ROAD LIES AHEAD

We can only imagine that words will always fall short in a moment like this. And still, we hope you know how loved and admired you are, no matter what you choose in the days, weeks, or months ahead. You are strong, worthy, and wise, and we are honored to have shared this space with you.

If you should choose our family to join you in loving this child, know that we will respect whatever relationship you desire to have and always hold space for you as a part of our family. We will honor your place in your child's story, speak of you with respect, tell of your strength, and remind him or her of how fiercely you love them. We would also like to make these promises to you:

1. We promise to deeply love and cherish this child for the rest of our lives.
2. We promise to raise this child in a Christian home, modeling love and faith in Jesus.
3. We promise to show affection, say "I love you", and be present parents - whether in our home or on the sidelines of their favorite event.
4. We promise to encourage them in their educational endeavors, advocate for them in their hopes and dreams, and support them in their passions and desires.
5. We promise to teach this child right from wrong while reminding them that nothing they could ever do would make us love them any less.
6. We promise to honor and celebrate their story, creating an environment where they can feel safe to ask questions and share their thoughts, feelings, and frustrations without judgment.
7. We promise to build a home where, as our child grows up, they will always know they are safe, loved, and welcomed...and where you always will be, too.

You will forever be a part of our hearts and prayers. Just as we have been, we will continue to be praying for you. Thank you again for "meeting" our family, and we hope one day to meet you!

WITH LOVE AND PRAYERS,

*Derek & Meghan*



*for this child*  
ADOPTION PROFILE BOOKS