

Zion Lutheran Member “Spotlight” – The Conrad Family

By Ken Picking



Be it leather gloves or Oxford walking shoes, a wool 3-piece suit or blue jean jacket, The Perfect Fit feels right almost instantaneously.

That’s how it was for Chris and Laura Conrad when they entered Zion Lutheran Church 17 years ago. “We fell in love with Zion right away,” says Chris. “We knew this was where we wanted to be.” And so it has been for the Conrads, regular parishioners and participants at the 10:45 a.m. Sunday Services.

Chris serves as an usher and lector; he formerly served on church council. Laura is in her second year as church treasurer and plays in the Adult Bell Choir. Son Ethan, a 6th grader at Edgewood Middle School in Wooster, is growing up before the congregation’s eyes.

First he was a bashful young boy walking up for Pastor Marty’s *Children’s Message*. Now Ethan, looking taller every Sunday, has blossomed into an Altar Boy and plays in the Youth Bell Choir.

“We want to contribute as much as we can to Zion,” says Chris. “The people have shown us so much kindness, we want to give back.”

After church, the Conrads often can be found having brunch together across Market Street at *Buehler’s*.

“Sometimes the week can be hectic with commitments,” says Chris. “On Sundays, we get to slow down and enjoy each other.”

Chris is originally from Loudonville and graduated high school with honors in 1992. He earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Communications/Psychology from Case Western Reserve in 1997 and later added data programming degrees.

Before settling into his current position as a system administrator for hardware and software at Cleveland Clinic Akron General in 2019, handling cybersecurity and inventory, Chris experienced being laid off twice and having to start over from scratch.

Chris learned unexpected twists and turns in life can happen suddenly and without warning.

“You not only have to have faith in God and yourself, but you also need to adapt to the current situation and face whatever challenges that may bring,” he says.

Chris met Laura Bixler, from Strasburg, through mutual friends at the Ashland County Fair. They hit it off immediately, especially when discovering they shared the same birthday, Oct. 7, five years apart. The chit-chatting and strolling were non-stop, even after the friends said good-bye.

“Laura was the first person I ever met with the same birthday as me,” says Chris. “I had an inkling this might be something special.”

Wooster became a logical location for the Conrads to settle with Chris working outside Wayne County and Laura being a Certified Public Accountant for *Meaden & Moore* in Wooster.

The family enjoys travel, hiking and biking. At home, Ethan spends hours with his Legos and plays *Minecraft* with Dad. Chris said Ethan will decide if a pet is in the future.

“Zion and our faith means family to us,” says Chris. “It is so important to us that we have a place to call our church home. We want to show that love in return.”