

# The Coopers

*Nathan and Laura*





Hello! We are Laura and Nathan Cooper, and we are excited to introduce ourselves! Our wish is to welcome a child into our lives with love, joy, and appreciation. Our family believes love is the foundation of our beautiful life together and we hope to cultivate that belief as our family expands. Because of your love and your choice, we hope to be blessed to begin the journey of parenthood. We know there will be moments of joy and celebration and moments of great adversity and struggle which we will navigate through together with a foundation of love.



Laura was born in Clinton, Iowa in April 1985 and experienced a childhood filled with love, play, and travel. Having two brothers meant there was always someone to play with and adventures to be had. The love of reading, music, travel, and sports were instilled at an early age through participation in dance, piano lessons, swim team, and basketball.

Because Laura's parents were public school teachers, the summers were spent as a family of 5 taking road trips to explore the US, swimming in the family's pool, growing a garden, participating in the summer reading program at the library, and many bike rides to Dairy Queen.

With both middle school and high school came leadership and involvement in the arts, sports, and music. Laura performed in school plays & musicals, sang in the choirs, played alto saxophone in the bands and loved springtime on the golf course.

Laura was also involved in student government in high school which continued during her undergraduate years at Butler University where she served as Student Government Association President as a senior. Laura cherishes memories of time spent with grandparents and having them attend important events from childhood to graduations through to our wedding.

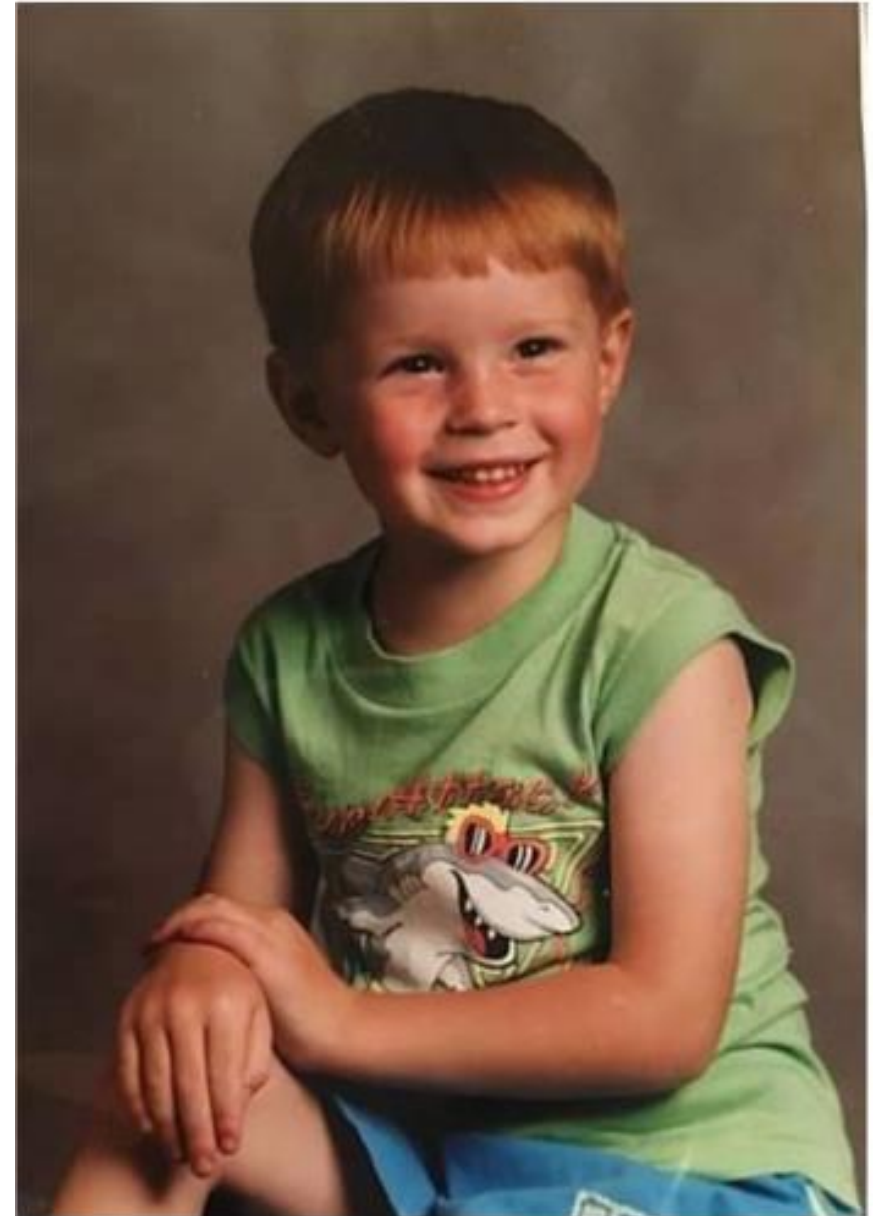
Christmas Eve at Grandma and Grandpa Raney's house will always hold such special memories and components of this memorable tradition have been incorporated into our holidays as the Coopers!

Nathan was born in Mason City, Iowa in July 1987 and grew up with two sisters on the family farm in Glenville, MN, that his paternal grandparents moved to in 1953. Both sets of grandparents were farmers which offered rich opportunities to understand the value of community, building long-lasting relationships, working hard and seeing projects to completion.

Nathan had a great deal of independence growing up as both parents worked, mom an office job and dad a construction job during the day and farming on the evenings and weekends. There were ample opportunities for play and work on the farm, including feeding animals, cleaning stalls, building fences and maintaining the numerous buildings and implements. The Coopers had ATVs, a snowmobile and plenty of ways to stay busy on 190 acres with friends who lived nearby. Rural living also provided unique opportunities to participate in 4-H and experience raising hogs, cattle and the occasional flock of chickens or rabbit pen.

School-age years were spent with numerous school and community activities, including youth sports, band, building projects and raising animals for show at the Freeborn County (and Minnesota State) Fair. All four grandparents lived within a 10-minute drive into Northwood, Iowa, so many summers were spent with grandpa and grandma playing games, growing and selling sweet corn, having coffee at the local diner and tagging along with Grandpa to play afternoon pool with some of his also-retired friends.

Middle and senior-high continued activities and extracurriculars - Nathan was a captain on his high school baseball and football teams, was elected President of Freeborn County 4-H Leaders Council and Vice President of the local FFA Chapter. High school summers were spent at camps (as a camper and as a counselor), preparing for competitions and an occasional trip to a cabin and Wisconsin Dells.





Clockwise from top: Nathan's sisters; Nathan's parents, sisters, grandma and future brother-in-law; Nathan & Laura with Grandma



Our families are integral to our lives and who we are today. We both have strong relationships with our parents and siblings and as time passes, our siblings' spouses and partners and our nieces and nephews. We travel back to the Midwest multiple times per year to spend time together and partake in special events.

Living in Colorado also entices our families to come visit! We host siblings for visits most commonly for skiing in the winter and mountain hiking in the summers. We connect with our parents and siblings weekly through text threads, picture sharing, and video calls. We know the importance of being involved in each others' lives despite geographic distance between us.

We will treasure the opportunity to foster deep relationships and build core memories with our families, the birth family, and new little one!

Clockwise from top left: Laura's older brother and his family; Laura's siblings, parents and their kids; Laura and Nathan with Laura's grandma.



Our paths first crossed when we were paired in a golf cart at a charity golf outing in Des Moines, IA, in the summer of 2011. We kept connecting through an organization in Des Moines called The Young Professionals Connection and Nathan (finally) got the courage to ask for a first date first date in February of 2012. We had an Italian dinner and saw a community theater production of "To Kill a Mockingbird".

Through shared interests of golf, travel, and community engagement we began dating and married in 2017.

We had a beautiful ceremony and reception in Des Moines followed by a snowy honeymoon in Quebec City, Canada. One of the scriptures read at our wedding was from Colossians 3; 12-14:

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

While we are far from perfect, these words serve as a reminder that love stands above all.







What Laura loves and admires about Nathan:

- \* His calm and consistent nature
- \* His subtle humor especially his use of puns
- \* his intelligence and curiosity
- \* His love of being active and striving for a healthy, balanced lifestyle
- \* His focus on family and making memories together
- \* His financial knowledge and dedicated planning for our todays and tomorrows
- \* His sense of adventure and supporting me as I experience things outside my comfort zone
- \* His hugs paired with kisses on my forehead
- \* His kind, loving, and giving heart
- \* His ability to connect with others

I feel so blessed to be on this journey of marriage and life while anticipating parenthood with a true partner~ Love you Nathan!



What Nathan loves and admires about Laura:

- \* Her ability to perfectly plan for EVERYTHING, from a short car trip to a week-long vacation to a new place
- \* The care she takes to remember and hand-write cards for friends and family birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions (she has an organized birthday cheat-sheet for year-round card writing)
- \* Her attention to and understanding of people's feelings and her desire to help those around her
- \* Her beautiful brown hair
- \* Her willingness to be pushed out of her comfort zone so that we can do something together, like snowmobiling, jet-skiing, or skiing a black diamond.
- \* Her insistence on pictures (which I appreciate later)
- \* Her emotional intelligence
- \* She's an everyday hero at Children's Hospital helping kids with special needs improve their communication.

I am so lucky to have met someone as kind, compassionate, and forgiving as Laura :)





Attending sporting events from Butler basketball to Iowa Hawkeye football and specialty events like the Solheim Cup along with cheering for professional teams like the Minnesota Wild and Vikings are favorite pastimes.

Over our 6+ years of marriage we have started to cultivate our family traditions. We have taken inspiration from our families of origin and created new ones for our family. Our traditions typically center around holidays: Christmas and Easter.



Homemade ice cream making with the Coopers (above and below)



Sunrise Easter service on South Table Mountain



Christmas Eve service at Deer Creek Valley Lutheran Church with Nathan's family



Celebrating Christmas with Laura's family

One particularly fun tradition is securing a permit to cut down our Christmas tree each Thanksgiving weekend in a national forest. Its so special to hike around in the forest and select just the right one each year. They don't look like the ones from the TV Christmas movies or lush artificial trees, but they are so special and unique in their own special way. We also attend a candlelight service on Christmas Eve culminating with the singing of Silent Night. We are always with family in some capacity at one of our childhood churches or sharing the experience with family in our Faith Lutheran church congregation.



Nathan's family has a tradition of making homemade vanilla ice cream when we are together to celebrate Christmas. The important thing to note is there can never be too much vanilla paste added to the recipe and we use all human power to churn the ice cream using an old-fashioned manual crank!

Another special tradition is hiking up South Table Mountain for sunrise service on Easter Sunday as its quite an incredible experience to hear the scripture and message of the resurrection while the sun crests over the mountain.

We have recently started an occasional tradition of hurkle-durkling on quiet weekends which don't require a hurried start. The Scottish term is at least 200 years old and refers to lounging in bed. After busy work weeks and evening events, we treasure this time to be together, enjoy each others company and make a plan for our day/weekend. We hope to use this approach to encourage us to slow down and cultivate moments of connection as a family.



Nathan studied journalism and mass communication at the University of Iowa and graduated in 2009 with a bachelor of arts degree. After volunteering as a flash-quote reporter in 2008 for the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, Nathan worked at the Iowa Capitol for a state senator for the 2009 legislative session. A few weeks after the session adjourned, he began his career in association leadership. Nathan has been an executive director of two trade associations since 2015, including his current role at SMACNA Colorado that brought the Coopers to Colorado. He was awarded the SMACNA Chapter Executive of the Year in 2022 and has built meaningful relationships with people with diverse backgrounds who represent varied interests across organizations and throughout the country and is valued for his insight, vision and relationship building skills. Nathan's board members, staff and their families are pictured above in 2023.

Laura graduated from Butler University with a B.A. in Communication Disorders and completed a M.S. in speech-language pathology from the University of Nebraska. Since graduation she has worked in two pediatric hospitals and is currently a clinical practice specialist at Children's Hospital Colorado. She loves serving her patients and families and will be able to support the development of the child throughout their lifetime. She values the professional and personal relationships she has built with her colleagues! Below, Laura hiking with her coworkers.



Nathan and Laura will be well-prepared if a baby is born with special needs. Laura's 15 years of experience working with kids with special needs, their parents, and clinical professionals to best help and support everyone on that journey will help inform us about how to best support a child with special needs. Laura and Nathan understand that each situation is unique and are prepared to respond with love and to provide resources necessary to best assist the child no matter what life may bring. The Coopers are caring, compassionate, and ready to meet the child wherever he or she is. Laura pictured here with some of her more adventurous co-workers.

Our friends have been with us through it all! We are lucky to have formed and maintain strong friendships throughout moves to new cities and new opportunities.



Nathan has poured energy into his close friends, met during his undergraduate years at the University of Iowa, to maintain connection despite the move to Colorado through weekends together golfing and boating. Nathan also has the incredible ability to build connections with anyone he meets based on his love of reading, personal finance and sports- especially the Iowa Hawkeyes!





Laura has sustained friendships from her undergraduate years at Butler University through her life as a young professional in Des Moines to a beautiful collection of work colleagues turned friends in Colorado. These relationships are maintained through shared interests of being active by hiking, yoga, biking, time spent together on adventures, and the love of correspondence.



Laura loves to send letters, cards, and packages through snail mail and loves a good commemorative stamp too! This love of connection through the written word will help sustain connection with our birth family through the years!





Clockwise from left: Lake Tahoe (2019), Norway (2017), Havana (2024), Copenhagen (2017), Vinales, Cuba (2024).



We are fortunate to travel to different states and countries to learn from and about others and their cultures. We also have recently started learning about voluntourism which we hope to explore more in upcoming trips.

As a family we value being active, traveling, learning in our community, volunteering, and supporting the arts. We wish to be able to share these with our child from the very beginning. We remain active through golfing, skiing, hiking, biking, practicing yoga, and strength training.



Clockwise from left: Imogene Pass (Telluride, 2023), San Francisco (2019), Maui (2021), Tucson (2021).



Our hopes and dreams for our child include a life filled with play and fun, finding purpose, having a kind, grateful, and joy-filled heart, discovering a love of being active, learning, and helping others, and knowing the unconditional love and support of God and their village.



We will strive to be consistent and fair in our parenting style. We will parent and engage with compassion, connection, and empathy. There is true power in a listening ear, an open heart, and being present for all of life's ups and downs.

Left, top down: Laura & Nathan at Quandary Peak summit, 7/3/2020; Skiing; Laura's brother Ryan and his wife Marissa on a hike. Above: Colorado golfing!



Clockwise from top: Laura & Nathan snowmobiling; hiking with Nathan's siblings: Devin, Danielle and Cory and Laura on a mountain bike in Arizona.



Learning through and in our community is important by visiting the library, museums, and exploring and spending time in nature. We support the arts by attending Broadway performances through the Denver Center for Performing Arts. Laura always knows which show is coming up next and delights in listening to and singing along to Broadway songs. We fill our home with art from local artists in Colorado and from our travels. We will cultivate any and all interests for our child to support engagement and exploration in their community.

Clockwise from left: Hiking in Buena Vista, CO; at a showing of the musical Hamilton in 2018; at an Old Dominion concert in July 2023.

We have been lucky to call Arvada, Colorado home since April of 2018. We moved from Iowa shortly after our wedding on December 9, 2017, to begin our new life together. We live in a detached single-family home nestled in a suburban neighborhood filled with families and children with opportunities to roam, play, and to be a kid in a supportive environment. We have access to trails and parks and take frequent trips into the mountains to ski, hike, and to be present in nature.



Clockwise from left: exterior view of our Arvada home, our living room, a sunset on a trail a few yards from our home, our kitchen and dining room.

The baby will have a dedicated nursery, loving parents, and trusted community to provide all of the child's necessary care. We plan to have a nanny care for the baby as both Laura and Nathan plan to continue working full-time. We will ensure that the nanny is highly qualified in child development and provide guidance of a consistent schedule filled with play, shared reading, and socialization such as baby story time at the library.



Our parents established strong faith foundations for both of us in the Lutheran church. We attended Sunday school, were confirmed and had a pastor from Lutheran Church of Hope officiate our wedding. Upon arrival to Colorado in January 2018, we were searching for a church home and Laura found a posting for the Easter sunrise service at Faith Lutheran Church in Golden.



Pictures: at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp in Hillside, CO with high school youth. At right: summit of Eagle Peak



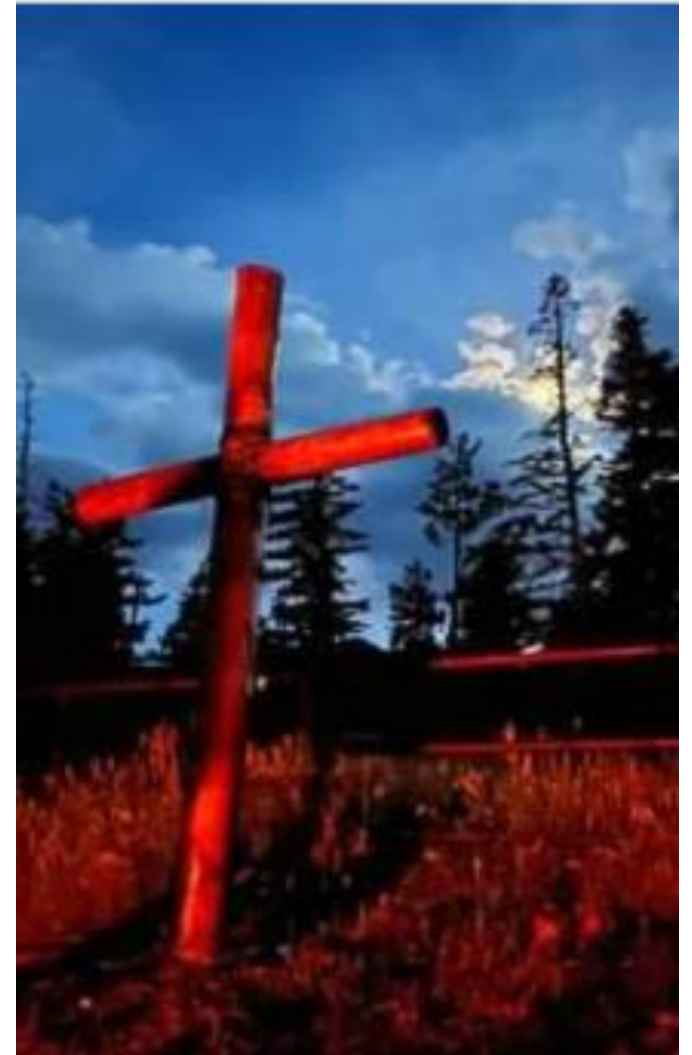


We made a plan to set the alarm, hike up the hill and see what it was all about. Finding an initial connection with our Pastor who had ties to Iowa and the Midwest, we decided to continue showing up on Sundays. We soon found a welcoming and accepting multi-generational congregation who were passionate about being the hands, feet and voice of Jesus in our world.



With Pastor Jane after sunrise Easter service 2024

We were soon asked to support the middle and high school youth group as adult leaders and have since attended week-long summer camps at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp each summer with our senior high kids. Nathan currently serves on the Church Council, and we continue to find volunteer and service opportunities with our Faith family!





Looking toward the future with love, joy, and gratitude!