

New Member Profile Story

This week's feature : Kirk and Katie Hartung



Kirk was born in Portland, Oregon and grew up in Clackamas, Oregon with 3 sisters (1 older, 1 twin and 1 younger who passed away 17 years ago from Leukemia). He attended Baldwin- Wallace College and earned a degree in Music Performance. After graduate school for music, Kirk transitioned into the residential remodeling industry as a designer and salesman for a custom closet company. He later became a kitchen and bath designer for a local Lowe's Home Improvement store, then moved to estimating and design with a couple of private contractors in the Cleveland area. He is currently transitioning from one of those companies to start his own business venture as a residential designer/draftsman.

Katie was born in Cleveland and grew up in Westlake with 1 older brother. She attended Ohio University and earned her degree in Education. After graduation, Katie moved to Frederick, Maryland where she was a Special Education Preschool Teacher for 7 years and then an Early Intervention Teacher for 2.5 years (in-home support for families of children , ages birth-3 years with disabilities). During her time in Maryland, she earned a Masters

in Special Education at John's Hopkins University with a dual certificate in Autism and Early Childhood Special Education. Katie also became a Nationally Board Board-Certified Teacher. After 10 years, she decided it was time to move back home to Westlake, about 2 minutes from her parents (who live in the home she grew up in), to live with her older brother (who is now her neighbor). Katie continued her career teaching 5 th grade at Julie Billiard Schools in Lyndhurst while pursuing her Administrative License thru Baldwin Wallace. Next was her position to be Assistant Principal /Director of Special Education at JB. During this time, she saved enough to buy her first house in North Olmsted shortly before meeting Kirk.

Kirk and Katie met through an online dating service. Kirk proposed, he moved in with her, they were married and have 2 beautiful boys! Katie is currently the Coordinator of Special Education for Medina City Schools. Their 2 children are Arthur (age 4); Thomas (age 1.5). Katie and Kirk had been looking for a church for quite a while, but between the pandemic and having children, they had a hard time finding anything consistent and comfortable. Pastor Tom Henderson had been that Pastor at St. Pauls in Berea when Kirk was in college , and when they were planning their wedding they reached out to him and he married them. Pastor Henderson was later the interim Pastor at POP when they wanted to get Arthur baptized, they reached out to him. Katie has 2 close friends that grew up in the Prince of Peace community, so she was aware of the community here. They started attending some services, and felt welcomed. They later reached out to Pastor Charlie to have Thomas baptized, then they decided it was time to join the congregation! They have been mentored by the Perez family, who have been very inviting and kind to them. Kirk and Katie also consider the Buhrman family mentors at church as well, since Katie and her family have been longtime friends of theirs.

In their free time, the family has many hobbies and interests. Kirk enjoys home improvement projects, woodworking, camping, outdoor activities, classical music (French horn), and travel. Katie loves being outside paddle-boarding, hiking, biking, reading, camping, dreaming up the home projects for Kirk to do ;), travel, time with family and friends. Arthur likes

learning about animals (mainly reptiles and amphibians), and practicing riding his bike. Thomas likes being silly and learning to talk , Elmo, Bert, and Ernie, copying his brother.

As they have just joined POP, they have not gotten involved in any activities yet, and are looking forward to seeing how they can get involved in the community in the future. Several interesting things people may not know about them is when Katie and Kirk were engaged , they took a train trip around the country. Also, for fun while living in Maryland, Katie taught Body Combat (Mixed Martial Arts aerobics), Bootcamps and ran lots of Mud Races. She still visits and keeps in touch with all her friends there, but her knees don't love the Mud Runs anymore ;).

They love traveling and went on their honeymoon to Ireland at Christmas/New Years. Kirk and Katie are about to take their kids on a trip to Iceland and Finland, where they will explore some of nature's wonders, and attend Kirk's sister's wedding in Oulu, Finland. Please greet them at the contemporary services. As the Prince of Peace community grows with young families, the missions and opportunities to share the story of Jesus's Love expands!

By Tom Robinholt : Profile Reporter