

# Introducing Lauren Fernandez!



In September 2017 Rhythm's leadership began a public search process for a half-time pastoral role. Over the past four months, both the temporary Search Team (ST) and Guidance Team have spent considerable time, prayer, and dialogue in the pastoral search process.

Rhythm's GT and temporary ST are excited to announce that we unanimously recommend that Lauren Fernandez join Rhythm's pastoral team!

We believe Lauren is a fantastic candidate for this pastoral position and believe God has led her to serve and lead Rhythm during this season of our church's life. We are thankful for God's quick provision for Rhythm and are excited to take the next faith step as a community!

Both the GT and ST are very encouraged by the spirit of unity and enthusiasm within the leadership

throughout the search, interview, and hiring process. In Christian tradition, unity is a fundamental marker that God's direction has been discerned. Please pray that we continue "being one in spirit and of one mind" (Philippians 2:2) as we seek God's direction for our community.

Please read Lauren's bio on this page and the Q&A section about her pastoral role on the following page.

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## Lauren Fernandez Biography

Lauren is a Miami native and grew up in Hialeah-Miami Lakes. She graduated from the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa with a BA in Interdisciplinary Social Sciences. During undergrad, Lauren became involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a national campus ministry which helped deepen her relationship with Jesus while also learning how to live life on a campus as a missional student.

While living in Tampa after college, Lauren was also part of planting a missional church movement called The Underground, where she planted and co-lead a micro-church which served the undocumented immigrant community for several years. She also worked full time in social services as a case manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters directly serving children and families in lower-income communities for six years.

In 2012, Lauren discerned Jesus calling her back to serve in Miami, but this time again with InterVarsity, first as a volunteer staff and eventually into a paid ministry role. Lauren served, coached and discipled students at Miami-Dade College, FIU and the UM for 5 years up until this past spring. Lauren continues to feel called to Miami in this season of life and is excited to have been led to an opportunity to serve the local church.

Lauren and John have been married since October 2016, and she is excited to support him in a new season as a high school math teacher. In her free time, Lauren enjoys writing, enjoying good coffee with friends, frequenting parks, reading, and traveling when possible.

## Common Questions

### **What was involved in the pastoral search and interview process?**

There were multiple stages of the pastoral search and interview process beginning in the 2017 summer when Matt and the GT held a Town Hall meeting and three different Huddles to have prayer and dialogue about Rhythm's vision, mission, and leadership needs.

In September a final job description was publicly posted on Rhythm's website and the temporary Search Team was formed.

The interview process included: resume submission and completing an on-line application questionnaire, a phone interview, reference checks, an in-person interview with the Search Team, and the final hiring proposal approved by the Guidance Team.

### **Who was part of the temporary Search Team?**

The temporary Search Team was comprised of several long-time members of Rhythm: Marlene Riesco, Natalie Freitas, Cary Gahm, Jounel Bonilla, Jen Estime, and Matt Alexander.

### **What role did the GT play in this process?**

The GT is what the New Testament describes as elders and overseers. The GT provides spiritual guidance, organizational oversight, theological direction, prayer, and cultivation of our unique vision.

The GT made the final decision to approve the Search Team's recommendation of Lauren and formally invite her to serve on Rhythm's pastoral team.

### **What are Lauren's primary responsibilities?**

Rhythm's pastors share some core leadership responsibilities like preaching, missional leadership, pastoral care, and leadership training. So expect to see Lauren leading in these types of ways!

Lauren will also lead Rhythm's ministry for families, teenagers, and children. For a detailed job description, please refer to Rhythm's website [<http://rhythmmiami.com/2017/08/pastor-job-application/>].

### **What does this mean for Julie and her staff position?**

Julie Heath has served as the Rhythm Kids Director for the past three years and shared on Sunday, December 3 during the worship service that she has sensed for several months that her time of serving in this role has been drawing to a close. She will continue to fully participate in Rhythm and is excited to serve and lead in other ways. Julie will continue in her staff position until December 31, 2017.

Make sure to listen to the sermon audio for December 3 to hear Julie share her story and her sense of direction moving forward.

### **What happens next?**

Lauren will be commissioned into her role as a pastor and member of the GT on Sunday morning, December 17! Make sure to be at this special worship service for Lauren, her family, and our church. She will start in her pastoral role at Rhythm on January 1, 2018.

### **Who do I talk with if I have questions or concerns?**

Please contact any of the Guidance Team with questions, concerns, or suggestions that you may have. We will be available to talk on Sunday mornings and are also available during the week.

Matt Alexander [matt@rhythmmiami.com](mailto:matt@rhythmmiami.com)  
Angel Pittman [angel@touchingmiamiwithlove.org](mailto:angel@touchingmiamiwithlove.org)  
Jason Bean [jasonallynbean@gmail.com](mailto:jasonallynbean@gmail.com)

Liz Sastre [lizmats@me.com](mailto:lizmats@me.com)  
Natalie Freitas [nlfreitas1121@gmail.com](mailto:nlfreitas1121@gmail.com)  
Paul Olver [paulolver@me.com](mailto:paulolver@me.com)