

Blessings of the season!

One single birth.

One single birth can transform a loving couple into a family.

One single birth can mean so much to so many.

One single birth can change the world.

When Jesus was born the angels shared the joyous news and the world rejoiced. A crowd, led by the presence of God's Spirit, gathered around a tiny manger in Bethlehem to see the spectacle. They were filled with love and joy and hope and peace. Jesus's birth brought the world the gift of love without conditions and the promise that, even in difficult times, the world could experience God's blessings and grace. It was a birth that changed the world!

Many couples plan and anticipate the birth of their child. Others pray that a child will be born and placed into their arms. Regardless how a family is formed, the birth of a child renews God's blessings, gifts and promises for the future. Here is the story of one couple's journey through adoption with Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of Wisconsin (LCFS) and how one birth meant so much.

Jessica, TJ and Elijah

TJ and I got married in 2011 and on our honeymoon, we discussed how we both want to have children but that first we wanted to have a solid foundation. Over the next couple years, we purchased a home, TJ finished his degree and we both had good jobs that lead to financial stability. We knew that we both had some possible fertility issues so when we were ready to start a family we went to medical professionals and found out there was no way for us to have biological children. Our hearts knew that we were meant to be parents so after a lot of research and prayer we decided to go talk to private adoption agencies as well as foster to adopt. After meeting everyone, we knew without a doubt that we wanted to work with Kate at LCFS because we felt like she was meant to be part of our journey. We completed all the paperwork, home study, and background checks. Now came the hardest part...the waiting while holding onto hope.

The day that our lives changed forever was 4/10/2018. TJ got a call at work asking if he was ready to become a dad. Let's just say he lost his mind for a minute because he freaked out on Kate saying he needed to call his wife (Kate had tried me but my phone was on silent on the charger.) When TJ could not reach me, he ran out of work yelling he was going to be a dad and had to go right now to go pick up his son. When TJ got home, he threw the front door open and yelled, "why are you not answering your phone?!" to which I responded, "why are you home?!" He then told me that he got THE CALL from Kate saying a little boy was born yesterday and the birth mom had selected us to be his parents. I literally started sobbing out of shock and joy until I realized I needed to pack for the hospital.

I will never forget the drive to the hospital calling all of our closest friends and family members that have supported us on this adoption journey; how they all cried with us and wished us luck (and begged for pictures as soon as possible.) When we reached the hospital, Kate took us to meet the birth mom and

the maternal grandmother and it was a moment I feared because how do you thank a woman for the ultimate selfless gift, but the moment was beautiful and I will carry that birth mom in my thoughts and prayers until the day I die. TJ and I then were brought to our own maternity suite where a bunch of the staff wheeled our son into the room in a clear bassinet. The moment my eyes hit that little boy my heart exploded...that is when I learned that love can be instantaneous and oh so magical. There was not a dry eye in the room. One day later we got to bring our son home and settle into our new life as a family.



TJ and I have learned so much during our infertility and adoption journey. There are so many highs and lows, but it is important to keep your eyes focused ahead to all the joy that awaits when the right baby is brought into your life. Also, it really does take a tribe of family and friends to offer love and support during the entire journey. Every morning when I look into my son's eyes, I still feel so blessed that we get to be his parents forever. He may not have grown in my belly but for sure he grew in my heart with hundreds of prayers and tears, but it was worth every one because he truly is my ray of sunshine after the storm.

We cannot wait to finalize the adoption which will take place in the beginning of December, making him the best Christmas gift we could have ever dreamed of. Our lives will forever be blessed as we watch this amazing little boy grow up into the man he was meant to be. We cannot thank Kate and everyone else at LCFS enough for all their hard work and emotional support through this process.



Lutheran Counseling and Family Services has been bringing families together through adoption for over 120 years. Can you help our mission to continue?

A significant part of our annual program funding is from financial support from individuals like you. Donations of any size are vital to our mission. Your gift this holiday season will allow our **Adoption Services** to bring children into loving Christian homes. Or it could be used to help support our **Counseling Services** as we help those working to overcome mental health or addiction issues. Your gift will help people who may be your neighbors, your friends or your family members and will help so

many people in so many ways.

This Christmas, we offer you the Gift of Faith, the Blessing of Hope and the Peace of His Love. Please consider supporting the work and ministries of Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of Wisconsin. Donations can be sent via check to LCFS, 3800 N. Mayfair Road, Wauwatosa, WI 53222, or online via Paypal at www.lcfswi.org. We sincerely thank you.



And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people" – Luke 2:10.