

Our Adoption Journey By Mandy and Mike

Adoption was an easy choice for us, several years ago when we learned we wouldn't likely get pregnant on our own. Why would we use medical intervention to get pregnant when we know there are already babies out there who need parents like us? We have a home filled with love, laughter, family and friends. We would be a good match for any birthmom who loves her baby enough to make an adoption plan.



We are planning for an open adoption, which we hope the birth family will want as well. We learned about open adoption – the practice of sharing information openly between birth parents and adopted parents – from our social worker at Catholic Charities. This was also an easy choice for us. We want to become parents for so many reasons: we want to help a child grow, to guide them as they learn, to help them develop faith in God, to teach them to love as they have been loved, and to share that love with the world. To fully support our chosen child, we need to acknowledge that his or her story started before they joined our family. A birth family can answer questions, provide support and most importantly, have their own opportunity to shower the child with love and acceptance.

We have been (mostly) patiently waiting to adopt for more than four years. We were very close to adopting a baby girl; the birthmom picked us as her match, we developed a relationship, and we supported her through the pregnancy and delivery. We were there for baby's birth and the first 30 hours of her life in the hospital. Then we got the heartbreaking call from our social worker, telling us birthmom changed her mind. Although she had made plans for the adoption with conviction and confidence, in the end, she wasn't adequately supported in her decision by her family and friends.

Our faith in God, support from family and friends, and our care for each other helped us heal from that loss gradually. We take solace in the knowledge that our prayers and words of encouragement helped baby girl make it to the world safely. We continue to pray for birthmom and baby girl as they take their separate journey in life, away from our family.

Our journey to adopt has already had some highs and lows but we try to remember that we're not the first – and we won't be the last – to take this journey. Thanks to Catholic Charities, we are often reminded we're not on this path alone. We attend informational meetings with other couples waiting to adopt and we've developed friendships with these other special people. We talk about our plans to adopt openly with friends and strangers, which inevitably has led to people sharing their stories of adoption with us. This advocacy is very important work - we

believe families come in all shapes and sizes. A strong family is not tied together by blood and genetics; it's tied by people who love and support each other.

Our decision to adopt was short but our wait has been long. We have faith that our turn will come and we'll be matched with a birthmom who will change our lives forever.

Want to know more about Mike, Mandy, and other approved adoptive couples? Go to www.ccsomn.org and search "Families Ready to Adopt".

Catholic Charities' Pregnancy, Parenting and Adoption Program provides supportive, professional, and compassionate pregnancy counseling to women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy so that they can thoughtfully decide between either parenting or adoption and confidently pursue the best plan for themselves and their babies. In addition to counseling and adoption services, we offer parenting education, baby items and financial assistance to new and expectant parents. Social Workers are available 24/7/365 on our pregnancy line at 800-222-5859. All services to expectant parents are free and confidential.