

ANDY & ASHLEY



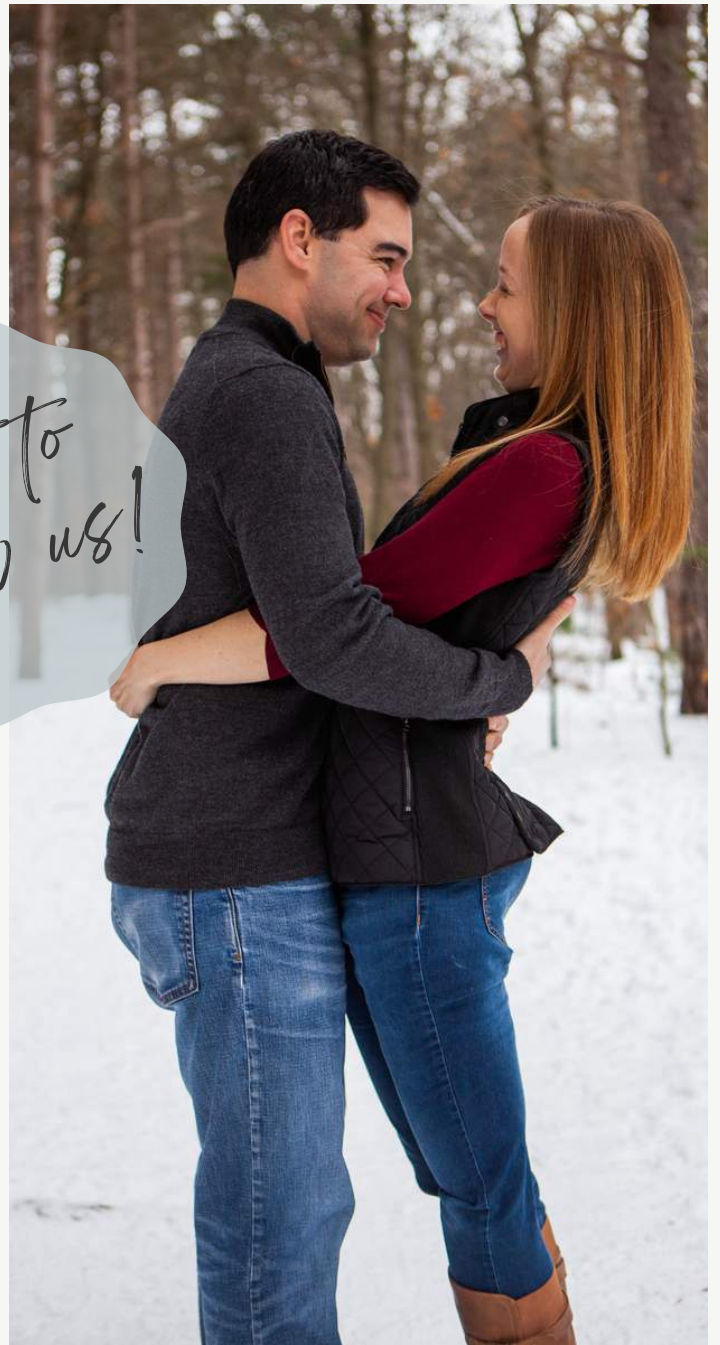
Hello there

Thanks for taking a look at our little family book. We put together a few pictures and stories so you can get to know us a little better. If you turn over the next page, you can learn about our house, our pets, and all the things we like to do for fun! We also included a few stories about our early dating and how we got engaged. Basically, we can sum it all up like this: we're in our thirties, we have two really cute dogs, and we still like to get outside and have a little fun! We live in a mid-sized city in West Michigan where we enjoy boat rides in the summer and snowy Christmases every winter (with hot chocolate and whipped cream!) Family is a big deal to us. Both of our parents live within 10 miles of our house. You can read about them just a few pages down in this book. They're a big help and support for us. Ashley's parents have a pontoon boat at their lake, so needless to say, we spend a lot of time over there in the summer.

But in all seriousness, even though we haven't met, please know that we have been praying for you. Ashley and I serve a God who knows everyone of us by name and he loves all of us deeply. There's this verse in the Bible where Jesus talks about how much he cares for us. "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Matt 6:26. Jesus loves you. And please know that you specifically will be in our prayers every single day this year!

-Andy and Ashley





Get to know us!



Where it all began...

We met through online dating and quickly grew closer to each other by the day. On our first date, we realized that we were attending the same church and had all of the same friends- it was meant to be! In the early days of dating, we found every excuse we could to get together and be close and share our lives with each other. We met shortly before the pandemic, so we ended up spending a lot of time cooking and hanging out while the world was shut down. We were both working from home during the pandemic, so we only had each other as co-workers. During that time, we also made a recipe book and created some of our favorite meals that we still make together to this day.

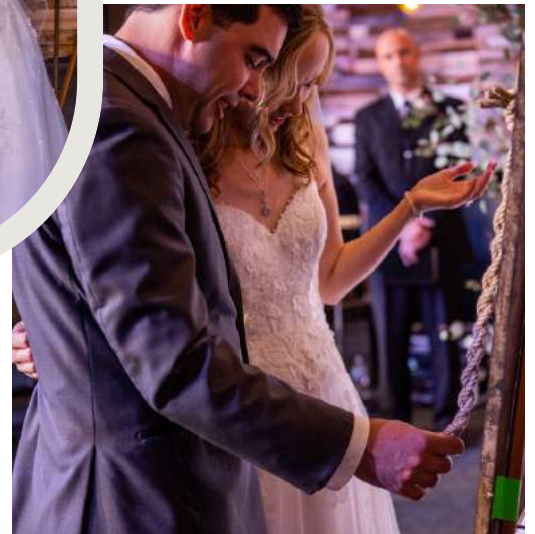


The start of forever...

Ashley always seems to have a way of predicting what I'm going to do and what I'm going to say - she truly knows me so well! So, I had to be creative in planning the proposal. At a certain point, she figured out that I had ordered an engagement ring, so I told her that it was going to take over a month for it to come in. She was in tears, because she was so ready to be married and could hardly wait. Little did she know, I actually picked up the ring from the jewelry store earlier that day! When I got home that night, I stopped and looked down at the ring in my hand. I was so excited I felt I couldn't wait any longer. I thought about her crying and knew that I had the power right then to wipe her tears away and turn them into tears of joy. So, I got dressed in my nicest clothes and drove back to her house with the ring in hand. When I arrived back at her house, she had just started getting ready for bed. She opened the door, and I dropped down on one knee and asked her to marry me.



The day we said, "I do!"



Our wedding day was absolutely perfect! Except, it rained the whole day, our reception venue changed at the last minute, we had to move locations for the photographer, and there was some wedding dress shopping drama! But none of that really seemed to bother us because we were totally in love and committed to each other!

We got married at our church by our pastor. All our friends and family attended (even some friends who flew in from out of town). One of Ashley's favorite moments was the unity ceremony where we tied a cord of three strands together while our worship leaders sang "The Blessing" over us. After the ceremony, we headed off to a local indoor garden/greenhouse with the wedding party to take wedding photos. It was pouring rain outside, but we were surrounded by a beautiful, lush garden inside the greenhouse. Upon arriving at our reception, we were again surrounded by our close friends and family. We did our mother-son and father-daughter dance, and then finally we did our first dance together as a married couple. We could hardly believe we actually made it to that point. The rest of the evening was over in the blink of an eye and then we were off and away on our honeymoon!





WHY ADOPTION?

We have planned to adopt since before we got married. Andy has both a sister and a nephew who were adopted, and he has seen what a real joy that has been for them and their families. Personally, I've dreamed of adopting a child ever since I was little. Ever since I was young and playing with my dolls at home, I just knew that I would adopt a child someday.

We also see the example of Jesus who joyfully accepts all who are willing to be adopted into his family. We want to simply follow Christ's lead by adopting a child, just as he accepted and spiritually adopted us first.

-Supportive

-Caring

-Reliable



Meet Ashley

I grew up in a Christian home and accepted Christ into my life at a very young age. I have very fond memories of my childhood that included many family vacations. My brothers and I have a shared history of playing tennis, spending numerous summer evenings on the court. During high school, I held different coaching positions and continued playing tennis in college. Today, I work full-time as a human resources developer for the State of Michigan where I train and audit licensees, consultants, and workers involved in Adult Foster Care. When I'm not working, I can usually be found volunteering at church with our youth group or at a group Bible study with my women's group. Friends and family are also a big part of my life. Almost every Sunday we eat lunch with my parents and brothers, and we get together at our friend's house every week to watch "Survivor".

Ashley's Favorites

1

I enjoy pepperoni pizza from Jets. I also love making vegetable stir fry, and I eat this every day for lunch during the work week. When it comes to dessert I love all things chocolate: chocolate brownies, chocolate chip cookies, and chocolate cake!

2

My favorite movie is *The Lion King*. I have loved this movie ever since I was a child and still love it to this day. My favorite TV show is *Dancing with the Stars*. Every week, my friend Hannah and I have a tradition of watching the show together. Our weekly routine includes enjoying popcorn and pretzels while watching the show.

3

My favorite song is "The Blessing" which was played during our wedding. It still makes me cry when I hear it.

4

I really enjoy playing a variety of board games. Among them, my favorite is *The Resistance*, a game where players try to uncover who is a spy and who is an ally. It often concludes with everyone defending themselves and trying to persuade others that they are not a spy.

"Ashley has an amazing knack for creating routine and order in our house. If there's a task that needs to be done at a certain time every day or every week, then you can bet that she'll make sure it gets done. Growing up, her parents instilled in her the value of family members attending events like sports games and band concerts to show support and encouragement. I am confident that she will extend this same level of support and care to our future children. These qualities have been ingrained in her since childhood."

-Andy





-Patient

-Great listener

-Hard-working

Meet Andy

I grew up in a loving Christian home with three brothers and a sister. My parents taught me to work hard, but also to be thankful for what I have and to try to be generous with what God has blessed us with. I finished high school in 2005 and later I earned a degree in business and a master's in computer science. I now work as a software developer with a really great team of men and women who like to write code, share memes, and just be nerdy together sometimes. In my off-time I like to read and play video games, as well as keep up with random house projects that come up. I try to lead a stress-free life and a healthy work-life balance. I rarely work more than 40 hours a week, and I try to spend time with Ashley at home whenever I can.

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"Andy loves children and has been excited to be a father ever since we got married. He is very passionate about sharing Bible stories with our future children and to share the love of Jesus with them. He has a way of connecting with kids and making things make sense in their minds. Andy is also a great listener and very patient. These are two traits that I know will make him an incredible father. Andy is also an incredibly hard-working person, doing everything to the best of his ability. Andy will be "all in" when it comes to being a parent, and there is no one else I'd rather raise our children with."

-Ashley

”

Andy's

Favorites



1

My favorite food is roast beef and potatoes, and my favorite dessert is M&M ice cream!

2

My favorite movie is *Infinity War* and my favorite show to watch is *Community*.

3

My favorite music to listen to is anything by the band Pinback.

4

My favorite boardgame to play is *Codenames*.

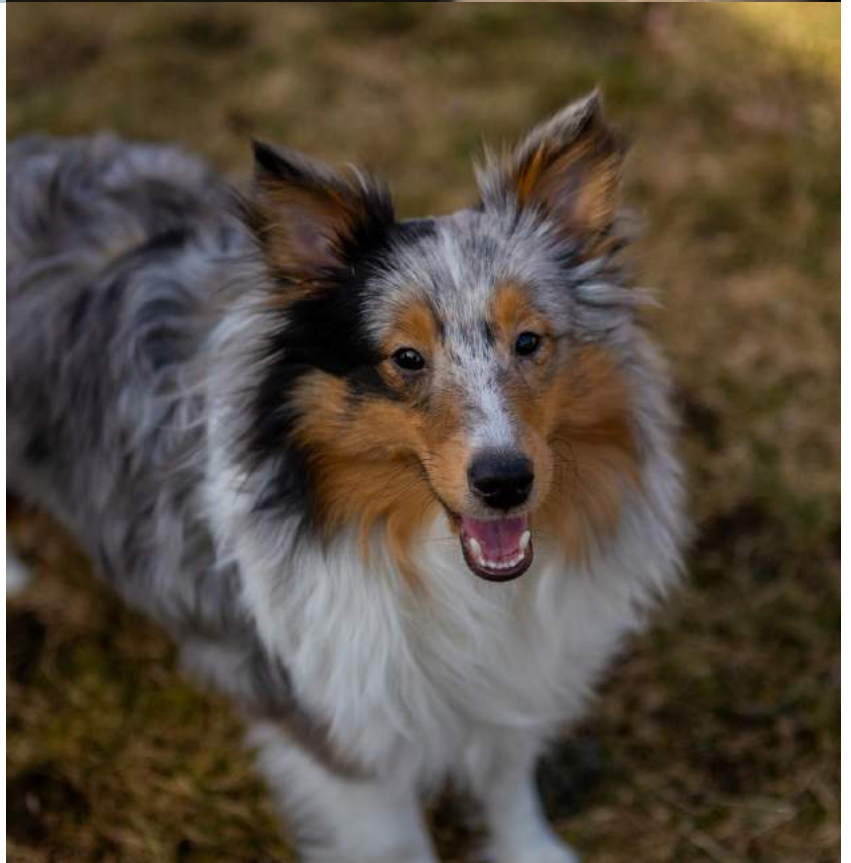
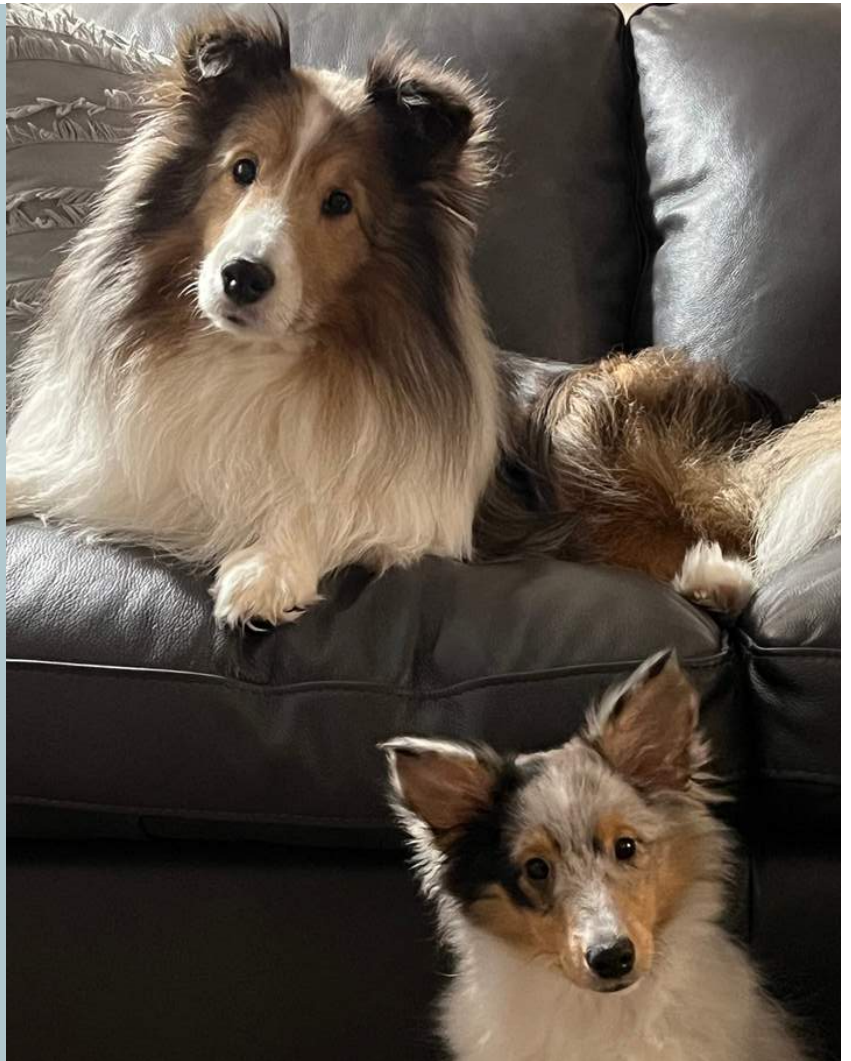
Shared Hobbies



- Working out together
- Playing Pickleball
- Cooking together
- Relaxing at the family lake
- Kayaking, Swimming, & Boating
- Watching political thriller shows

CUTE AND CUDDLY COMPANIONS

Meet Oliver and Cooper! Oliver is a rescue dog who we've had for years, and Cooper is our new puppy who is less than a year old. Oliver's favorite activity is lying on the couch with his head halfway hanging off the edge. Cooper's favorite activity is waking up Oliver and telling him it's time to play! As a puppy, Cooper brings new energy and joy to our house. Sometimes he's naughty and chews up the books on our bookshelf, but mostly he tries to be a good boy!



The Place We Call Home



We live in ranch-style three-bedroom home with a spacious living room and a finished basement that will provide a perfect play space for our future child one day.

We also have a fenced-in backyard that provides lots of room for children to play. Ashley has lived in this house for 8 years, and we have lived here together since we got married. We plan to be in this home for a few more years.





OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

One of our favorite things to do together is to walk our dogs in the evenings through our neighborhood. We live close to a really nice park where we enjoy having BBQs and relaxing in hammocks. We also live only a few minutes away from our church which we love because we are there regularly!



OUR FAMILY

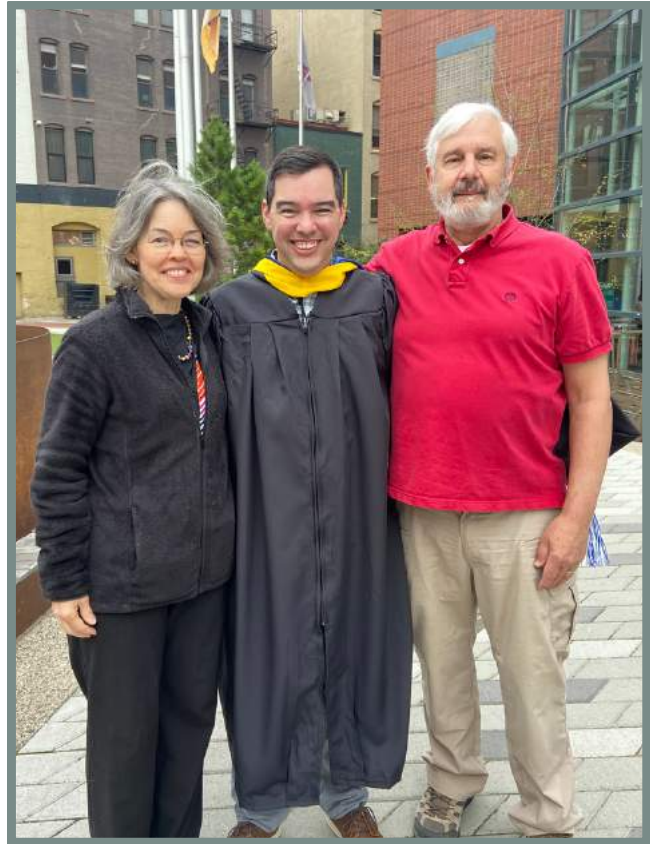


Our families have already shown their support through prayers and valuable advice. Furthermore, both our mothers are registered nurses, with Ashley's mom specializing in working with mothers and newborns. She is well-versed in the latest research on safe sleep, nutrition, and car seats for the new baby. Her involvement in our lives will be priceless as we care for this new child.



Andy's Family

Andy's parents are just approaching retirement age and they will jump at the chance to come over and babysit or just to spend time with the new little one. Andy's parents also adopted his sister, Luisa, from Columbia so they are very familiar with adoption, and are excited for us to grow our family in this way. Andy's brother, Aaron, and his wife, Linnea adopted their son, Joshua, from China. Joshua is still young, but I know he will love the idea of having a cousin to play with — especially when they are old enough to have playdates and run around in the backyard together.



Andy is also an incredible uncle to his nephew, Joshua. Oftentimes, when we hang out with Andy's brother and sister-in-law, it can be hard for the adults to talk as Andy and Joshua will be running around, yelling, and playing with each other. It is fun to watch Andy interact with him, and I can't wait to watch him become a dad one day!





Ashley's parents, Jerry and Beth, are thrilled about our decision to adopt. They are eager to welcome their first grandchild and spend quality time with them. Jerry and Beth are also looking forward to creating precious memories with their grandchild at their lake house.

ASHLEY'S FAMILY

Her parents love going on Disney Cruises and value quality family time and vacations as a family. In 2023, we went on a Disney Cruise in the Caribbean-it was my first cruise, while Ashley had sailed on several with her family before. On the final evening, we all dressed up as characters from the movie Toy Story. Ashley dressed as Barbie, and I went as Emperor Zurg. We are excited for more of these cruises in the future with our future child.



Ashley's dad is eager to pass on his love of tennis to our future child. Both of Ashley's brothers, Aaron and Austin, share the same level of excitement. Austin, who is married to Sarah, along with the other siblings, are eagerly looking forward to being the fun aunt and uncles to their future niece or nephew. Ashley cherishes the time spent with her brothers and is delighted to see them grow a bond with their future niece or nephew.

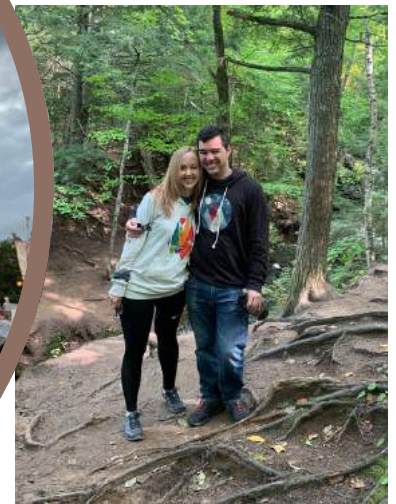
Our circle of friends



We are part of a wonderful community of people, including a few families who have adopted as well. Everyone we have spoken with is excited about our plans to adopt and we are truly surrounded by an amazing support system.



Travel Adventures



Our recent trip to Hawaii was an amazing experience. When we arrived in Maui we were greeted by warm weather, beautiful mountains, and gentle waves crashing against the shore across the street from our condo. We spent the next day driving all over the island. We went from one snorkeling beach to another – checking out beautiful fish and sitting at the beach just watching surfers riding the waves. We were there during whale season, so we did a whale-watching tour to see the humpback whales jumping out of the water! We also went to a Hawaiian luau, and drove the Road to Hana, which is a beautiful scenic drive through the rainforest.

Last year we went with Ashley's brother, Austin and his wife, Sarah to Orlando for a week-long vacation. We spent a couple days at Disney World, where we rode a lot of rides together, stayed up late playing games, and lounged by the pool.”

We've established a tradition where, during every vacation, we search for a rock and inscribe the date and location as a keepsake of our travels.

Family Traditions

The Holidays

We celebrate Christmas every year with stocking stuffers on the day before Christmas and gifts as a family together at my (Ashley) parent's house on Christmas day. Andy's parents usually try to get together to watch a movie and eat brunch together on Christmas Eve. My parents are very into Christmas. Every year they host a large Christmas party for all their friends. Usually, there are 40+ people in the house. Everyone is divided into teams, and they compete against one another in themed Christmas games. My dad and I host all the games. We also have a theme for each year of the party—for instance, this past year's theme was the Polar Express. Everyone wore Christmas pajamas, and my parents hired a Mr. and Mrs. Claus for everyone to take pictures with.



Ashley's dad also goes all out with decorating the house for Christmas. He has 8 full-size Christmas trees that are each decorated with a specific theme, including a 12-foot tree in the living room. We would describe their home as looking like a Hallmark movie with the level of detail that he gives to his Christmas decor.



Summer Fun!



Every 4th of July, we visit Ashley's parents' home for a day packed with outdoor games and rides on their pontoon boat. They live by a lake where one of the residents arranges a spectacular fireworks show at night. Usually, we host a cookout for friends and family before gathering to watch the fireworks display.

Our Faith

We attend a mid-sized church with a great children's ministry, and we can't wait for our child to get plugged-in there one day. Ashley grew up at our church, and her entire family also attends with us. We are very close with our church's pastors and have made some incredible friends while attending there,

We practice our faith with daily Bible reading and prayer. When we welcome a child into our home, we will simply extend what we are already doing by reading Bible stories and praying with our child in the evening before bedtime. As our child grows older, we will teach him or her about how God loves us all very deeply and how He longs for all of us to be His children.



Education Plans

We plan to enroll our child in a Christian elementary school. As our family expands, we are considering relocating to a different neighborhood where our children can attend a well-known public school for both elementary and high school. Following their graduation, we will maintain our love and support for them, all the while motivating them to excel independently in college and beyond. Our goal is to save for and establish a college fund for each child, providing them with a solid foundation as they venture out on their own.

Once Baby Arrives

We plan to tell our child about his or her adoption story as soon as he or she is old enough to read children's books. We believe that adoption is a wonderful part of our family's story and something that our child will know about and understand from a very young age.



Promises to our Future Child

- ❁ We promise to give you a safe home, and as parents, we promise to be emotionally safe people for you to come to when you need to talk.
- ❁ We promise that we will raise you under the warm sunlight of our Savior's love. And that Christ's love will be the driving force in all that we do.
- ❁ We promise to have a home marked by laughter and fun.
- ❁ We promise to listen more than we talk, and to always support and encourage you in all you do.
- ❁ We promise that as a family we are all part of a team. And everyone on this team will support, love, and care for one another through thick and thin.



Thank You



...for taking the time to explore this book and getting to know us. Please understand that we have been praying for our adoption plan for years. Even though we haven't met, we have been praying specifically for you in recent months. We believe that God knows and loves you deeply, and I can tell you with tears in my eyes that He cares deeply for you, me, your child, and everyone involved in this adoption journey.

We promise to take good care of this child while they are under our watchful care.

With Love,

Ashley & Andy



