

## FAITH STORY

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I thank Pastor Steve for asking me to share my faith story. I think faith means something different to each and every one of us. It's something that shapes us and molds us into the person we are.

My faith journey started 32 years ago when I was welcomed by my loving parents, Dale and Lisa. I was baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church. My husband Brian and I were married about six and a half years ago in the same church that I had been brought up in. I continued to go there until my faith was challenged. You see, my husband and I were so desperately trying to start a family. For some people, this comes very easily. For us, it was a struggle for several years. I tried several rounds of medication, has a procedure done, but nothing seemed to help. We really struggled if this was a sign that we were no meant to have children. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to work with children all day and love them like they were my own, but the hope of becoming a mother that was always a desire of mine. I couldn't begin to understand why this was happening to us. I was devastated and stopped going to church and became very depressed about it. With each new pregnancy announcement, it was the harsh realization that for someone else, their dreams were being fulfilled and mine were not. I'm sure each of you has something that pulls at your heartstrings in a similar way.

After a few more months we finally decided to pursue a fertility center. That was a HUGE decision for us. I can remember going in for the appointment on a Friday morning, and then heading to school right after. Our families have been a big part of our faith journey as well. They have been so incredibly supportive throughout our entire journey. I remember talking to my dad and he encouraged me to come to St. B's that Sunday as it was a healing service. At first, I was a little resistant, but I figured some extra prayers wouldn't hurt now that we had a plan of action to grow our family.

As I sat on the pew without family, I felt a feeling that I'd never felt before. As I listened to the sermon, I realized that I hadn't truly turned everything over to Jesus. I hadn't placed all of my trust in Him. As I walked up to be healed with family in front of me and family behind me, I got very emotional. Tears streamed down my face as Toni blessed me. I knew that I had to let go of my fears of not being a parent go. I had to let the guilt I felt go. I had to turn it over to Jesus. I had to trust that He had a plan and that I just needed to be patient a little longer.

Well, we got pregnant that week, naturally, and welcomed our sweet girl, Addi, 9 months later. There are several things that I have learned throughout my journey. One of the most important things that I've learned is that you truly are not alone. Several months later I was talking to a girlfriend about whether or not they were hoping to start a family. As tears flooded her eyes, I knew that she was in the same boat that we had been. I quickly sat down and we talked for over an hour. It made me feel good that I was able to help her and tell her what to ask to get the ball rolling. With each passing month we prayed together and cried together. Brian and I were actually able to donate all of our medicine to the center and they were able to use it. I encouraged them to come to church with me, as I knew if they had the same peace come over them, it would help them to deal with the journey they were on. They came to visit last May and got pregnant in June. They now have a sweet baby boy.

2016 has proved to be just as much of blessings to us. We bought a home, a car and got pregnant within three weeks! While that may seem like a lot, we know that He is control and he will be there with us throughout our next chapters. And we could not feel more blessed to welcome another child.

I sometimes get emotional sharing my story, but we all have a story. It's a constant reminder that Jesus has everything planned for us. Sometimes the story has a happy ending, and sometimes it doesn't. But He will not give you more than you can handle. After we learned we were pregnant, I made a decision to become a member here at St. B's. I can't begin to say what a special place St. Be's is. There's a feeling of family, a feeling of togetherness that you can't find anywhere else. There's a feeling of generosity and giving. There's understanding when your energetic two years old can't quite sit still in the pew. There's a feeling of home and belonging. There's a feeling that Jesus is here. I would really like to thank you for you all making me feel so welcome and at home here and for being part of my journey.