

Jonathan & Liz



hello!



We're Jonathan, Liz and Theo. But our family is bigger than just the three of us — we are also Shyan (Theo's birth mama in Kentucky), Nana and Papa (in North Carolina), Pop and Mima (in Missouri), 11 brothers and sisters, 22 nieces and nephews and many close friends and neighbors. We all look forward to loving and welcoming you and your child into our family!

We have a special relationship with Shyan (and her aunts), and look forward to building an open and trusting relationship with you too. She wrote a letter on page 9 of this book for you.

As you can see, our family is multi-racial. Many of our nieces and nephews are Black. Our community and church are diverse, led by a Black pastor and focused on racial justice. Most of our artwork and books feature Black heroes. It's important to us that our children have many beautiful, strong mirrors — both friends and adults who look like them. We are active in serving the local NAACP and always want our children to grow up knowing Black Lives Matter.

We've been married for eleven years. We both love kids and have one adopted son, Theo. Before adopting, we were foster parents for four years, temporarily caring for children who needed a safe place. We can't have kids biologically and have treasured growing our family through adoption.

In our profile book, instagram and video, you'll get a picture of what we value and how we live. Thank you for taking the time to read this bit of our story.

With respect and admiration,

Jonathan & Liz



Jonathan's dad and his sister, who was adopted from India.



Theo with several of our nieces and nephews.



Theo with our nephew Isaiah.



Theo with his friend Elena.



Liz with her friend Marla.



Many of our closest friends have adopted. Here are two of their kids with our pup.

ADOPTION

Our family & community

Adoption has always been part of our family's story. Jonathan's parents founded an adoption agency called Love Basket and ran it for more than 30 years. (Love Basket is now Nightlight.) Jonathan grew up watching families be built through the gift of adoption, and his younger sister, Chandra (above) was adopted from India. Liz's family is also extremely supportive of adoption.

Together, we have many adopted relatives, including a niece adopted from Haiti, a niece adopted from Ethiopia, and a niece and nephew adopted in the United States.

Our community includes many adopted children and diverse backgrounds. We are active in the local NAACP, as well as in local Transracial Adoption and Race Conscious Parenting groups. These, along with lots of reading and listening to books, podcasts, neighbors and friends, help to prepare us as parents of a child of another race. It's important to us to raise a child in an environment that respects and honors his or her culture and heritage.

Four of our nieces and nephews are adopted, along with Jonathan's sister and many of our friends' children.

We have a supportive, diverse community and want to raise your child in a way that honors his or her background.



In the North Carolina Smoky Mountains.



Diving into Crater Lake in Oregon.



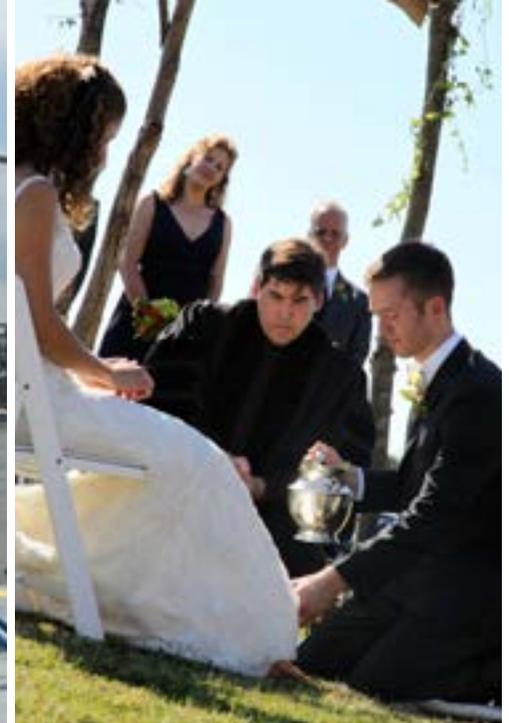
Hiking with our son Theo in a local park.



The sign Jonathan painted and placed on the roof of his apartment.



Heading up in a helicopter in downtown St. Louis.



Washing each other's feet during the wedding ceremony.

Jonathan wears green a lot because it's Liz's favorite color!

OUR STORY

How we met

We met over a business dinner. Jonathan asked Liz what magazines she read. She answered "Backpacker" and "Adventure," which caught Jonathan's attention because he loves to hike and travel, too. He asked her on a date the next Saturday, and she said yes. We have been together ever since.

Eleven years later, we still love to explore the world together, especially National Parks. Our adventures look different now, but are even sweeter as we share the great outdoors with our son Theo (and hopefully another little one someday).

OUR STORY

How we got engaged & married

Jonathan wanted to ask Liz to marry him in a big, memorable way. With friends, he painted a gigantic sign that said, "Liz, marry me?" They put it on top of his apartment building. Then he took Liz on a helicopter ride and asked the pilot to hover over the building so Liz could read the sign below us. She said "Yes!"

We got married in an outdoor ceremony at Jonathan's parents' farmhouse. During the service, we took time to wash each other's feet. Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show His love for them. For us, it was a promise to serve each other in messy, inconvenient ways. Now, we get to love a toddler (and someday his brother or sister) with that same forever committed love.



As foster parents, we've cared for and loved 15 kiddos in foster care.

When Theo was only a month old.

In London together.

At Halloween.

Such a happy boy.

OUR STORY

Being foster parents

We both love kids. Seven years ago, we decided to respond to Jesus' call to care for kids who need a safe place to live. We took thirty hours of training, passed an FBI background check, and became licensed foster parents. We welcomed fifteen kids ranging from newborns to sixteen year olds. Some stayed for a long weekend and others for months or years.

In 2018, after our last foster child left, we stopped being foster parents in order to focus only on adoption.

We love to laugh!

OUR STORY

Our son Theo

Our son Theo, born in 2018, is a complete joy. We were in the hospital with his birth mama Shyan when he was born and we haven't stopped smiling since. Theo is a sweet snuggler and a wonderful laugher, with whole face grins and full-body giggles. He enjoys being outside so we go on daily walks around the neighborhood and often visit local parks and playgrounds. He also loves books and music, building towers out of wooden blocks, and singing loudly. Theo is wonderfully social, making friends everywhere he goes. We know he will make a great big brother.

In foster care, we built good relationships with kids' biological families in all different ways - photos, phone calls, visits. If chosen, we hope to work together with you to build the kind of relationship you desire.

Theo is wonderfully joyful and will be a great big brother.



At the hospital with Shyan.



Together at our home.



Celebrating Thanksgiving together.

OUR STORY

Theo's birth mama

We are enormously grateful for Theo's birth mama, Shyan. She is a remarkable young woman and we are so glad she is a part of our family now. She loves Theo in a powerfully sacrificial way and continuously chooses the best for him. We've enjoyed getting to see Shyan in Kentucky where she lives, welcoming her in our home in Atlanta, and sharing Thanksgiving together with Jonathan's family in Missouri. Celebrating Theo's first birthday together was definitely a highlight.

We love that not only Theo gets to know and love his birth mama Shyan, but we do too. Such a gift.

A letter to you from Theo's birth mama, Shyan:

Dear future sister,

I hope the title isn't too much, I'm just so excited about our family possibly expanding! If you're reading this, it means that you are considering our family and an open adoption for your baby. This decision isn't easy. It's the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. And honestly, I can't tell you it gets easier right away. I miss our son, Theo, everyday. I think about him and wonder what he's doing and what he's thinking and what life would've been like if I had decided to keep him. Those motherly instincts never disappear. But the one thing that does help is seeing the smile on our baby's face, hearing his voice and watching him grow day by day. And Liz & Jonathan both do their part to make sure I don't miss out on any of it. It hurts being away from him, but he's the happiest child in the world & no amount of pain I feel from missing him would ever make me change that.

I struggled a lot at first, mostly due to postpartum depression. Everyone kept telling me how selfless I was and how brave I was and how I did the right thing but I wasn't sure in the beginning. How can life without my child be the right thing? And then I started looking back over all the things I had been through since he's been born and tried to picture him in every situation with me & the pit in my stomach sank lower.

I was homeless more than twice the first year of his life. I struggled to create boundaries with toxic people in my life that led me to some pretty low places and imagining our son by my side through all those things hurt so much. But after taking a better look at our reality, I understood that I don't live my life without him because his parents do everything they can to include me in all areas of his life. I never had a traditional family and I've always felt left out and abandoned because of it. But now I do have a family. People who love not only my child, but me as well. Our son has everything I never had as a kid. He has everything I want all my children to have; a permanent home, loving parents who are active in his life, and parents who make big sacrifices in order for him to have the best of the best.

I remember the first time I met Liz and Jonathan like it was yesterday. I picked them as my number one out of 10 profiles and a few weeks later, we met at a Cracker Barrel in Lexington. As soon as I saw them I knew they were good people which was my biggest concern.

We sat down and had a meal with my Aunt (me and Liz ordered the same thing!) and we talked about everything. Me and my Aunt have the same birthday and we joked that our son and Jonathan would have the same birthday since my due date was so close. We talked and joked and laughed the whole afternoon. The more we talked, the more I realized that they were everything I wanted to be when I became a parent.

Liz quit her job to be a stay at home mom just like I wanted to be able to do. Jonathan found a job closer to home with less travel so he'd be around more. They both have went out of their way to learn how to take care of our son in the best way possible, from hair care classes to books about his heritage and even moving states and schools so he has a more diverse learning environment. (They even have a picture of me in his room and he shows it to me on FaceTime all the time!) We talked and ate and then they picked out an outfit for our son that had both me and Jonathan's favorite animal on it- an elephant.

It wasn't long after that when they got the call that I was in labor. They dropped everything and started driving to Kentucky and they made it just in time for Liz to watch me give birth and cut the umbilical cord afterwards. Our son was born December 25, 2018 at 7:04pm (turns out him and Jonathan would have the same birthday after all!). That's the day we became a family. They did everything they could to involve me in all his firsts (they even invited me to have thanksgiving with them and Jonathan's siblings and family who have also adopted children of their own). COVID messed up a lot of our plans but we still made the visits work for all of us! I honestly couldn't imagine better parents for our child than them.

I know how scary all of this is, and trust me when I say that I know exactly what you're feeling even now reading this letter. But the difference between my story and yours, is that you will have someone right by your side who understands exactly what's going on and will be right there with you every step of the way. Any day, any time, we'll all be right here for you.

I chose Liz and Jonathan for our son because I truly believe that they are the best parents for him. They really are my family and I'm hoping that you and your child will become part of our family too. But no matter what you decide, you can always reach out to me and chat with me anytime about anything. We're all praying for you and your family during this time and sending you lots of love.

Sincerely,

Shyan
a fellow birth mom





Liz's sister Kathryn is an amazing aunt and taught Theo to clap.



Liz's parents with Theo.



Liz's family, Jonathan's family and Theo's birth mom Shyan joined us for Theo's dedication at church.



Jonathan's mom with Theo and his cousin.

OUR STORY *Liz's family*

Liz: I have a small, close family with an older sister, mom and dad. We love each other dearly and get together regularly. Growing up, my dad coached my softball team and my mom taught my Sunday School class at church. My parents are about to celebrate 46 years of marriage and are very active grandparents. Theo's third and fourth words were "Nana" and "Papa" after "Mama" and "Dada!" My sister is a wonderful aunt. She has a talent for buying thoughtful presents and gifted Theo with a monthly toy subscription full of learning toys. We all have special family Christmas stockings and are excited to get one made to match for our newest little one.

Liz's family (mom, dad and sister) are very active in Theo's life and look forward to welcoming another child.

OUR STORY *Jonathan's family*

Jonathan: I grew up in a loving Christian family as one of six children. My parents have been married for 49 years. We grew up on an old farm, where I spent summer afternoons catching crawdads in the creek and climbing in our front-yard treehouse. My mom taught me to read and to explore the world around me, and my dad took me on business trips all over the globe. As adults, my siblings and I remain very close and I love being an uncle to our 22 nieces and nephews! They have welcomed Theo with open arms, and are excited to welcome another grandbaby and cousin into the family.

Jonathan's family (mom, dad, 5 brothers & sisters, their spouses, and their 22 kids) can't wait to say hello to our child.



Jonathan reading with Theo.

Liz reading with Theo and his cousin Lohrea.

A small selection from our library.

Jonathan cooking with Theo.

Liz baking with Theo.

We love to host friends and family.

HOW WE LIVE *Reading together*

We both read a great deal because we love to learn. Jonathan reads about current and historical events. Liz loves a good story, but most often chooses books about parenting or racial justice.

We read with Theo everyday and make sure he has lots of diverse books with characters that look like him.

We will read to your child every night.

HOW WE LIVE *Eating together*

Jonathan is a talented gardener and chef. Every summer he plants a garden full of vegetables and often encouraged our former foster kids to plant and care for some of their own. The kids loved watching their peppers grow and we all enjoy eating them together!

Our family has dinner together every night - whether it's a big table full of kids or just the three of us. We take turns cooking and are even starting to involve Theo in small ways that he can help.

We will eat dinner together every night as a family. And sometimes cook together too!

Sometimes even with sparkling grape juice



Our house.



Playing with water balloons in our backyard with our best friends.

Hosting an event for our church in our backyard.



Theo with his buddy Lennox at the playground behind our home.



Liz helped with the unveiling event for this statue in our city.

HOW WE LIVE *Our home*

We have a welcoming home with lots of room to explore, play, and recharge. Our backyard includes a trampoline, climbing gym, ninja kit, and even a small forest to explore.

Whenever we can, we spend time outside grilling, having bonfires, and playing games with friends. We love sharing our space with family, friends, neighbors and our church community.

Our home has plenty of space to play and relax - outside and in.

Jonathan plans to build a treehouse.

HOW WE LIVE *Our neighborhood*

Our backyard borders a neighborhood park with a baseball diamond, soccer field, pool and playground. We go there nearly every day so Theo can stretch his legs and spend time with kids his age. He loves it, and we do too.

Our home is on a quiet street with friendly neighbors, many of whom we know by name.

Our city is an easy 15 minute drive into Atlanta, offering the sweetness and safety of a small town with the opportunities of a large city at a our fingertips.

Our favorite playground is just a 3 minute walk through our backyard.



In North Carolina together.



With Theo at the beach.



Over the moon with our son Theo.



Making Liz laugh, as usual!



On a hike with Theo.



Laughing with Theo after bathtime.

Jonathan talks about Liz

Without question, I married up. Liz saw something in me way back when that I didn't see in myself. I am absurdly lucky to be her husband, and that has only increased over the years.

Liz creates art, order, and beauty. She makes meals for sick people and families with newborns. She remembers people's birthdays. She stands up for the little guy. That might be my favorite thing about her: Standing up for justice. She has a backbone of titanium.

I am in awe of the way Liz plans good things for Theo: finding just the right toys, staying connected with his birthmama, and ensuring he has handsome clothes to wear.

If we are lucky enough to be selected as adoptive parents again, Liz is the kind of mom who will bring cupcakes to our child's birthday at school, remember the names of all of his or her friends, and make our home the place other kids want to visit.

Liz talks about Jonathan

Jonathan is an amazing partner, dad and my best friend. He loves adventure and never turns down the opportunity to climb to the highest spot he can see, always inviting me to join him. His confidence is inspiring as he gently encourages me and others to step out of our comfort zones and try something new.

He is the best listener I know. Seeking to understand and empathize with whomever he is with—whether they are eighty years old or eight.

Seeing him with our son Theo blows me away. He is 100% in. On the floor wrestling. Laughing together as toddler food flies about. Encouraging Theo in every good way.

He has always made me laugh and I love seeing him guffaw with Theo. I look forward to seeing how another little one will find joy from Jonathan's delight in him or her.

MEET
Jonathan

OCCUPATION:
MANAGEMENT
CONSULTING

EDUCATION:
MBA Master's
Degree
in Business

RELIGION:
Christian
Both active in church

Brown hair
Brown eyes
6 ft tall
Born Dec 25, 1983



MEET
Liz

OCCUPATION:
STAY-AT-HOME MOM
Previously graphic design

EDUCATION:
BFA Bachelor's
Degree
in Art

RELIGION:
Christian

Brown hair
Hazel eyes
5'8" tall
Born Aug 5, 1981

Marriage Date: October 9, 2010

Kids: Theo - born December 25, 2018, adopted. He is wonderfully social and happy — always smiling and making new friends.

Hobbies: We both love hiking and reading. Jonathan also enjoys working out, while Liz likes to spend time creating.

Home: We live in a single family, ranch style home in Decatur, Georgia. It is 15 minutes outside Atlanta with excellent schools and a park accessible through our backyard. We have a large fenced yard with a trampoline, climbing dome & lots of room to play.

Why adoption? We love kids and want to raise a family, and can't have kids biologically.

Open Adoption: We value you and the role you play in this little one's life. We have a wonderful relationship with Shyan, Theo's birth mom. We text, call and visit her regularly. We are so grateful for her love for Theo. He not only gets to know her, but we do too. Such a gift. We hope to work with you to create the type of relationship you desire with your child.

Childcare Plans: Liz will stay home with the baby.

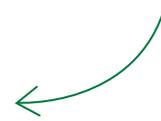


Caskey is our gentle 12-year-old Chocolate Lab. She is super sweet with kids—all 22 of our nieces and nephews love her.





*Nursery is ready.
Do you have a favorite animal
we can include?*



*We keep a photo of
Shyan in Theo's room.
Could we add yours to
your baby's room?*



Our Promise to you

We support you and your baby, no matter who you choose.

If you decide you want us to care for your child:

We will work with you to find a relationship where you feel comfortable and honored in your irreplaceable role as your child's birth mom.

We will love, nurture and lead your child.

Enrolling him or her in exceptional, caring schools.

Encouraging him or her to grow into the man or woman he or she decides, not us.

We will teach him or her about Jesus' never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love for him or her.

When we make mistakes, we will ask forgiveness.

We will laugh together. Lots.

And we will always, always love your child.

