



Come along, Come with Me, Come to Me

written by: Sheila De Jong ~ President

It is a very busy season in the ministry, overwhelming as we see it all. There are continual on-going needs of running an orphanage, feeling the huge responsibility that we are the ones fully responsible for their care. Gratefulness as we are rounding out another year of support meetings and excitement as we are planning for where He is leading for next year's work in support community here in Sioux Center and in Sioux Falls. We continue to put before Him the stewardship, discernment, and joyful receiving of so many families for grants – hearing their testimonies moving forward in the adoption process. When we think of all the needs and what is needed to meet the needs, we are keenly aware that we are not enough, that we don't have enough, we can't figure it out enough, that He is the only one who is enough. In all of this, I continue to hear Him powerfully and sweetly say these words over and over to me: "come along, come with Me, come to Me".



As we think about the seasons and the things that He puts before us, we can have reassurance in who He is. He is steadfast, unshifting, and secure in every season, no matter what. He remains the same yesterday, today,

and tomorrow. He doesn't get overwhelmed, He is more than enough.

Our prayer at a recent board meeting was, that we are rooted secure in who He is and who we are. Knowing this, we are like a strong tree whose roots are anchored deep. In this rooting, there is an abiding strength when the winds of pressure, responsibility, and sheer need come swirling around all the time. It is with a grateful heart that we continue to see and seek the view that the Father has for us that we continue to relinquish things over to Him in every season, in every circumstance, and every thing. That can be so difficult to do, the struggle to give things over to Him.

I was reading in James 4 about truly humbling ourselves before Him and in doing this, He brings healing. Oh, how our hearts long to come into that leaning place, to hear His welcome to "come along, come with Me, come to Me". I love His invitation. It is an invitation that needs a response, surrender on our part. There is such joy in coming along with Him rather than going our own way. There is such peace in coming with Him, Him being by our side. There is such hope in coming to Him.

Thank you for taking time to read all of this, to let it soak all the way in, to ask yourself honestly, what are you holding so tightly in this season, what do you need to let go? In our weakness, He is strong. There is nothing that is impossible for Him. He can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. Join us in this prayer:

Father, Thank you. Thank you so much for the ways that You continue to be a light in a world filled with darkness. That as seasons shift and change, busyness and weariness set in, You tell us, we can be anchored secure, both physically and eternally. You are a shepherd who makes a way,
You go before us and say, "come along, come with Me, come to Me".



God's Gentle Nudge

written by: Andrea Westerbeek, Child Sponsor & Faith CRC member

I was walking up the stairs of the hotel. "You can do this, Andrea. Five days. Then you can be back in the states. Back in your comfort zone." That first memory of being in Haiti is still vivid in my mind. We had arrived in Haiti late the night before and we were about to head out to the orphanage for the first time. I had no idea what to expect, which for me, had my stomach in knots.

My church had an announcement in the bulletin a few months earlier, letting the congregation know of a trip to the One Vision orphanage that coming December. My heart was stirred—God's gentle nudge—just enough that it got my attention. At home after church, my daughter came to me. "Mom, I want to go on that Haiti trip." We couldn't ignore the fact that God put it in BOTH our hearts that we should go to Haiti.

But once I had actually arrived in that beautiful country, I was so nervous. We had devotions on the beach that morning, sitting in some of God's most amazing handiwork. My heart was open and willing, but my mind was still hesitant—something that I struggle with often. I had to learn to let go and let God direct my days and time there. He knew everything that we would



experience, how we would be loved unconditionally by the kids, what we would learn, and how my heart would be forever changed. Needless to say, by the time I walked up those stairs on the last day, I was already in tears, dreading the thought of having to say goodbye to the kids that had stolen my heart over those last days.

When we arrived home we immediately signed up to be a sponsor. Alnase is a 16 year old girl that God has brought into our family. Since the orphanage has 63 kids, we were unable to get to know all of them in that short time we were there and Alnase was one of those. This pulled our hearts back to Haiti sooner than we ever imagined. The following June, just six months later, we returned to the orphanage and asked Alnase if she would be willing to have us as her family sponsor. God's plan for Alnase and our family was always there, and now we were seeing it unfold. We got to know Alnase better that second trip. She is quiet, thoughtful, and smart. Her shy smile brings a smile to my face every time I think about her.

Now our church has signed on as a sponsor of the family group 'Victoire' at the orphanage. This group is made up of nine middle-school age girls and one little boy, Jhonny. We are so excited that we are able to help support even more of the

kids there, especially as a body of believers. God has a plan for each one of those kids and loves them all so much.

Partnering with Katelyn's Fund to carry out God's command of defending the fatherless has become so very real through these trips to Haiti. Each trip has changed me and my heart. Our Father is God in Haiti and God in the United States, and that makes me feel close to Alnase and the rest of the kids there every day.

Donations given in memory of:

Burdella De Jager
Marcia Amenson

Gifts given in thankfulness from:

Interstates on behalf of service from Daren Dielman
Kara & Daren Dielman
Diane & Dave Boyd

Faith Christian Reformed Church Sunday school
First Reformed Awana

Prayer Requests:

- ~ The gospel will be spread, known, and received
- ~ Thankfulness in the the goodness & provision from the Lord with financial concerns
- ~ Deepening in relationships with children and staff
- ~ Wisdom in meetings with contractors and starting on transition house/team facilities
- ~ Training with teachers and caregivers

Have you ever wondered?

Question: How do I respond when someone asks our adoptive/foster family an intrusive question?

Good question! Often well-meaning people want to know about the uniqueness of your family so they ask questions such as:

“Are they
ALL yours?”

“Where did
you get
them?”

“How much
did they
cost?”

“Are you
their REAL
Mom?”

There are 4 basic ways to answer this delightfully inquisitive individual.

1. Turn and walk away. Although we desire to teach our children to respect others, your child's heart and feeling of safety should be of utmost importance to you.
2. Simply reply, “It's private. We only talk about this at home.”
3. Share a little: “We are an adoptive/foster family.” Remember your allegiance is to your children and their story is theirs to share when and where they desire. Your job as parent is protector.
4. Educate: “We are an adoptive/foster family. If you are interested in adopting or fostering, you should check out www.katelynsfund.org.”

Question: What is a thoughtful way to ask questions of an adoptive family?

1. Find a time to ask a parent when their children are not present.
2. Ask permission. The information you are asking for is highly sensitive and private. You could begin, “I see you are an adoptive/ foster family. May I ask you...?”

Just as you do not share your medical information and financial details with strangers, the adoptive/foster family has the right to not answer these types of questions. These questions, though asked in love, are being asked about a very traumatic piece of a child's life. Our desire as adoptive / foster / and supportive families is to speak life and healing into our children rather than reminding them of their hurtful past.

Katelyn's Fund vision is simply caring for the orphan.



We advocate for the fatherless
We equip families and caregivers
We love the Lord



The Boote Family

Todd and Sara

Children: Kendra (13), Ava (11), Brenna (7) and Caleb (9 months)

Church: Bethel Church, Lester, IA



We began our adoption journey somewhere in early 2015. We knew we were called to raise more children but did not know exactly what that looked like. We pursued many paths including Foster Care, temporary care, different adoption agencies, etc., but none felt quite right until coming across New Horizons Adoption Agency. We also came in contact with a private adoption firm called The Adoption Help Firm out of Sioux Falls. Both were great to work with! After a few leads/matches fell through and our home study was coming up for renewal, we began to think adoption might not be for us.

However, on April 24th, 2017, we received a call that we were matched with a young birth-mom who had just moved North of Boston into New Hampshire from Ethiopia, Africa. Her story was that she came to the United States for school and work before discovering that she was somewhere between 5-6 months pregnant. She did not speak English, did not have a job, and did not have a decent place to live nor did she have much family support here in the states. Thankfully, a retired Christian Ethiopian businessman decided to help her out. He helped her in many ways, but mostly his heart was to do anything he could do to convince her to give birth to this child as opposed to the alternative. After some time, she decided the best option for her baby boy would be to adopt him to a Christian family that could give him a life she would not be able to provide.

For some reason, she chose us – a dutch family from NW Iowa with three daughters! We are so thankful for her making the decision she did and we are so blessed to have Caleb as part of our family! There is no doubt God has orchestrated this whole thing; from connecting us with New Horizons and The Adoption Help Firm, to the trip out to and home from New Hampshire, all of the adventures and challenges we faced the first 10 days in New Hampshire, all of the joys and God designed things that happened over the final 10 days in New Hampshire, to watching Caleb grow up the past 9 months into an adventurous, active, and joy-filled little boy. We cannot imagine life without him in our family. One of the many highlights along our journey was coming in contact with Katelyn's Fund. We were so thankful for the financial support, but Sara and I both agree that we blessed just as much (if not more) by the prayers and conversation with the board/staff of Katelyn's Fund in Sioux Center when we were able to go meet with them in person. Their genuine hearts of prayer, care, concern, and blessings have impacted us more than we can describe. Thank you Katelyn's Fund for blessing us more than you know!

The Crawford Family

Scott and Saralyn

Children: Kaliaana (4.5) and Maxwell (4 months)

Church: James River Church in Ozark, MO



We are the Crawford family and we have been so blessed through the process of adoption. Our daughter, Kaliaana, was adopted from Taiwan in 2014. Most recently, we flew to Japan and adopted our son, Maxwell (age 4 months), from Japan.

It's amazing how God prepares you for something long before you ever realize. As a teenager, I heard a Christian program on adoption and knew at that point I wanted to adopt some day. I thought I would have biological children, as well as, adopt. Fast forward 20 years later, after struggling with infertility and experiencing the heartbreak that comes along with miscarriages, we began the adoption process. For me, God had prepared me years before and gave me a heart for orphans and adoption. Each of our adoption journeys were very different. As we pursued adoption, God lead us to exactly to the countries and agencies he had planned for us.

Our first adoption process had some bumps in the road with the Taiwanese court system. There were some very difficult moments, but God helped us and gave us favor. During our second adoption process, our struggle in the adoption process was with finances. The process was quite a bit more costly and our finances were more limited having already gone through an adoption process once. In addition, I had transitioned from the role of a public school teacher to a homemaker and caregiver for our daughter. What a blessing it was when we received a call from Katelyn's Fund! It was so encouraging to see how God used them in our adoption story and met us in our time of need. Throughout the process, God provided at the time the funds were needed. We were just a few weeks away from receiving our match and needing to pay a huge in-country fee when we received their call that we had been awarded a grant. In addition, the friends at Katelyn's Fund were so wonderful to pray with us. They asked us to share our prayer requests not just the day we talked to them, but even there after. It was so encouraging that they were interested in us as a family and not just in our adoption. The Katelyn's Fund team knows the power of prayer and love to invest in people through finances and through prayer. We are so thankful for Katelyn's Fund and how they came along side of us to help make our adoption of Maxwell a reality. Our hearts are so full of gratitude and amazement when we look at the family God has knit together for us. To God be all the glory!

The Feekes Family

Travis and Jessica

Children: Landry (6 months)

Church: Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, IA



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We are Travis and Jessica Feekes, and we adopted our daughter Landry from birth in October of 2017. If we are honest, our adoption journey started with selfish intentions. We wanted a baby and financially we wanted to do it on our own. Travis and I never really thought about adoption before we started trying for our first child. We each had very close friends who had adopted so we were familiar with adoption but never felt like it was for us. After trying for some time, and going through failed fertility treatments, on New Years eve of 2016 we felt an overwhelming peace to stop treatments and pursue a domestic infant adoption.

Looking back with every monthly no we received, God was opening our hearts to say yes to adoption. Katelyn's Fund first came into the picture, when I attended their monthly support group with a friend. There I also learned more about their grants. Initially, Trav and I did not want to ask for any financial help, we thought that this was our journey and we were responsible for it, but through this adoption journey, God was making us question what Christian community really was. We started out wanting a baby of our own, but through hearing birth mom situations our hearts were breaking for these women, and we felt that God was calling us to not only open our hearts to a child but to our child's first family as well. This became even more real, when we were matched with Landry's birth mom. I never thought I would feel this way, but we would do anything for this woman. She is our daughter's first mom and her selfless actions allowed us to become parents.

Through our adoption process, we were also learning how to graciously receive financial help. It has always been so much easier for Trav and I to give, but it is a very humble experience to receive. The grant we received from Katelyn's Fund was one of the many gifts we received. By being a humble receiver of this grant and other financial gifts, it has increased our desire to give back. Without God leading us down this road we would not have come into the community that Katelyn's Fund has helped cultivate here in northwest Iowa.

The Hewitt Family

Candace and Ryan

Children: Braddock (7), Jian Lu (7-recently adopted), Mianna (4) and Zion (1)

Church: Church 15:5



Amazingly it was only one year ago this month that God put Jian Lu on our hearts and we began the process to bring him home! Only God knew what the next year would hold for us. As we started the process to bring Jian Lu home, only a few months later we learned his health was rapidly declining and multiple doctors believed he may not make it until Spring 2018. God paved the way for a medical expedite, but with that came one adoption cost after another, much quicker than we were prepared for. It was during this time that God used Katelyn's Fund as a direct answer to our prayers to provide not only financial support through their grant program, but also emotional and spiritual support as well.

We officially got Jian Lu home in November 2017 and have been amazed at just how smoothly the transition has been for Jian Lu and our family. We know that God truly went before us and prepared both his heart, as well as our home and our kids' hearts for this transition. Jian Lu has the sweetest temperament, and spends most of his days smiling, giggling, playing peek-a-boo, and hanging out with his brother and 2 sisters. It has been amazing to see how comfortable they have gotten with him, and vice-versa! We have had a wide range of medical appointments since getting him home and have officially received his diagnosis of mucopolysaccharidosis, a very rare genetic condition affecting only 1 in 250,000 or less, confirming just how incredibly special and unique Jian Lu is! This has allowed us to pursue specialized medical care that he would not have had access to in China. Although this condition makes him non-verbal, he is learning basic signs and communicating!

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Everyone in our community and the specialists we are working with always comment on how at peace he is with our family and in our home. They all say that his level of attachment is amazing! One man said, "I can see in his eyes just how thankful he is and how much he loves you. I never knew eyes could speak that much!"

It is still so hard to believe that just this past August, a number of doctors said that with his medical decline he may not make it until Spring, but here he is thriving as we enter summer 2018! We are beyond thankful for the support of Katelyn's Fund through this process; God used them and all who support their organization as a tangible expression of His love and support over this past year for our family and for Jian Lu!

The Russell Family

Marc and Angela

Children: Logan (15), Parker (12), Abigail (10) and soon to be adopted in June, Noel (7)

Church: Oakwood Church in Hartland, WI



My husband, Marc and I have been praying about adoption for 15 years. Our hearts have always been drawn to China. We went to an adoption seminar before our first son was born. We did not qualify to adopt from China at that time because I was only 25 years old and the minimum age for both spouses is 30. We continued to pray after the birth of each of our 3 children and asked God for His timing in adding to our family through adoption.

We have always had a passion and love for the Deaf community and have taken many ASL classes (Marc is fluent in ASL). As we took steps to begin an adoption we did not initially seek out a daughter who was Deaf. We were open to whomever God desired to place in our family. However, we saw a waiting list from our agency with Noel's photo and description. After much prayer and counsel from our pastors, we felt confident that God was leading us to this little girl.

Our daughter, Noel, has not had any formal training. She is not able to go to school in her province because there are no resources for her Deaf/mute special needs. We are very excited to be a part of God's plan for her to learn a language (she does not know any sign language right now, only simple gestures) and most importantly give her the chance to learn about our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are missionaries who are provided for by faith based donations. When God made the timing clear that we were to move forward with the adoption of Noel, we had no idea how we would pay for it. However, we knew that God owns a thousand cattle on a hill and even though we didn't know how, He could and would make provision for it. We have seen God raise up an army for our little girl both as prayer warriors and monetary givers.

We applied for many grants. We are thankful for all organizations who are willing to advocate and partner with adoptive families. However, our experience with Katelyn's Fund has been more than we could have asked or prayed for. We realized shortly after our skype interview began, that they had a genuine interest in us. Yes, they cared about the finances of the adoption. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. Their approach was to minister to us spiritually and physically. After mountains of paperwork and obstacles, their desire to learn about our journey was balm to a weary soul. We had an amazing time chatting with them and then they began to pray....

We were connected through the power of the Holy Spirit and His desire to place a 7 year old precious Deaf daughter into a family where she would soon have the gift of language and the opportunity to know Him. Thank you Katelyn's Fund. You have touched our hearts and our family more than you will ever know.

The Scuiteiman Family

Jackson and Marcie

Children: Grace (10), Emma (7), Charlie (4), and Mia (8 months)

Church: First Reformed Church in Sioux Center, IA



Throughout our 13 years of marriage, the Lord has blessed Jackson and me with four beautiful children, Grace (10), Emma (7), & Charlie (4), biologically, and Mia (8mo.), through adoption.

As members of First Reformed Church, where Katelyn's Fund began, we have been blessed to be able to see firsthand God's hand at work through adoption. Year after year we sat in the pew during Orphan Sunday and year after year heard the whisper of the Holy Spirit calling us into the journey of adoption.

Over the next couple of years of praying about our decision, we decided it was time to take the first steps on our adoption journey. During the summer of 2016 we met with a local adoption agency, began the daunting task of filling out all the paperwork, created our profile book, and then by early fall were a waiting family.

During the wait we became regular attendees of the Katelyn's Fund monthly support meetings. Month after month, we were blessed by the Katelyn's Fund leaders, speakers, and other attendees. We quickly came to see that it was a safe place for adoptive parents to come and share life with one another, pray for one another, and learn from one another.

We waited close to a year for our sweet Mia, whose name means "wished for," to join our family. During the wait we had one failed match, where we had met the birth mom, began dreaming of the sweet baby boy we would one day parent, only to find out that she changed her mind and decided to parent. That was a hard time for our family. Our church community and the Katelyn's Fund community prayed for us and provided us with their support throughout the wait. We felt God's presence in the waiting and knew that He had a plan for our family.

We met with the Katelyn's Fund board for our grant interview just a week before Mia was placed into our arms. The experience we had with the board is one that we will never forget. We laughed and cried together as we shared our hearts for adoption with one another. The board covered us in prayer, for which we will forever be grateful. A week later we got a call that a baby girl had been born and that the birth parents had chosen our family to be her forever family! We jumped in the van immediately after the phone call and brought our sweet Mia home the very next day. God is good.

We would like to thank Katelyn's Fund for being a part of our story. The spiritual, emotional, and financial support we have been given throughout our journey has meant so much to our now family of 6!

I thank God every time I think of you. Philippians 1:3

We want to connect with you!



NEW! We are adding digital newsletters along with our hard copy newsletters and we would love to keep everyone updated with what God is doing through Katelyn's Fund Orphan Ministry! We need your help in gathering the most current information so we can keep in touch and continue providing opportunities to engage. Can you please send your current email, address and phone number to fonda@katelynsfund.org. Also don't forget to find us on Facebook!

Prime Rib Supper Benefit



With overwhelmingly grateful hearts, Katelyn's Fund Orphan Ministry was again the recipients of a beautiful night of food, fellowship, and friends in pursuit of caring for the kids at One Vision Orphanage. A year and a half ago a group felt a nudge from the Holy Spirit to step out and find a way to care for the older kids at One Vision. They were overcome with feelings on how to help if the kids get to the point of needing to transition out of the orphanage without having support and so they came up with the idea of hosting a benefit supper and executed that plan beautifully. Katelyn's Funds board has been in much discussion in the last two years on how best to meet the needs of One Vision in regards to a transition home. After a few different estimates and figuring out the best floor plan, the original guesstimate was well below contractor estimates. But God is good and faithful in providing! The same crew of ladies that hosted the benefit supper felt compelled to host a second one to help offset more of the financial burden of the transition house. They were able to raise around \$90,000 from the two benefits combined. Wow and all the praise to our God!

The ladies have blessed Katelyn's Fund and the kids from One Vision immensely! We are excited for the construction to begin hopefully in the near future. Both benefit suppers were a huge success because of all the efforts of Alison Obbink, Angela Dekkers, Kristi Vander Veen, Renae Calkhoven, and Andrea Westerbeek, as well as the culinary skills of Lorraine Nieuwsma.



Katelyn's Fund Picnic

Please join us on **August 4th**
beginning at 5:30 pm
location at Children's Park.

We will provide hotdogs, drinks and all table service.





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Spring 2018 Newsletter



Katelyn's Fund Picnic

Please join us on **August 4th**
beginning at 5:30 pm
location at Children's Park in Sioux Center, IA.

We will provide hotdogs, drinks and all table service.

