



Green pastures and piles of rocks

written by: Sheila De Jong ~ President

"He makes me lie down in green pastures"

He leads us to green pastures...we have been praying His promises of Psalm 23 over families, our family in Haiti, our own hearts this year. As I am traveling home from Branson, Missouri, I am in awe of the beauty of the hills, rock walls, abundant trees and numerous green pastures. As we hiked and walked along the winding trail, leaf covered trees, Took in the sheer beauty. I pick up rocks when we travel as reminders of the beauty of His creation, tangible ways for me to remember significant things that have happened in these places. I picked up rocks in the Netherlands, where they build a small memorial pillar in a forgotten forest honoring my dad's family for their work in helping the Jewish people. I picked up rocks in Hawaii near the rumble from the remnants of the volcano, burned and scorched earth and over the bluffs indescribable beauty. I picked up rocks near the garbage dump and cemetery in Guatemala, I picked up rocks on a beach along the ocean in Haiti as we stood with tear stained faces in the tension of suffering and hope as we sang as loud as we could in worship and prayer. So again on this trip, I picked up rocks as I walked on this

peaceful trail, the sun shining down, the quiet movement of the wind and trees.

Rocks are important in the bible, we see the significance of rocks or piles of rocks set up to tell those around us, coming after us, generations in need of knowledge, in need of knowing what He has done. Joshua instructed those around him to carry rocks out of the Jordan River, to make a pile, so those in the next generations would come and ask, "what does this pile of rocks mean?" They could tell them, "This is where the Lord brought us across the Jordan on dry ground." Joshua 4:4-7.



truthfully a tough couple of years, for our family in Haiti, so many hard things, again, feeling that tension of suffering and hope in Him. As I walked in this beauty this week, my heart ached as I thought of those suffering, I wanted to stay in the peaceful place on the trail, tucked inside the shelter of these trees, absorbing and resting in this quiet place, closing out the chaos just outside, resting in there. I asked for His beloved in the midst of suffering to be tucked in, safe in His shelter. As I walked and picked up rocks, I thought of Joshua's declaration of who God is and what He is capable of. I am one, in need of knowing again what He has done. As we hear and remember, we are given more confidence and can rest in His peace. It eases the tension of the chaos and conflict, taking our eyes off



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circumstances and lifting our eyes to look for His.

Do you know that we have a shepherd that always leads us into green pastures? Not just on peaceful hiking trails but as we stand in the tension, with tear stained faces, crying out to Him. He always leads us. Always is with us. He restores. He is preparing a table for us and anoints us. So how do we stay in the green pastures, just like I wanted to stay on this trail? We abide in Him, we keep our eyes on Him, looking ahead, finding refuge in Him. Even as things in Haiti continue to be so very, very hard, hard in ways that seem unimaginable, we keep our eyes on Him. There are some literally being killed, homes in communities burned, food shortage and unspeakable things happening without what seems any consequence for the gangs, there is such fear and very little peacefulness. Only our Good Shepherd can lead through this, can restore, can say, "even in the valley, do not fear, I am close beside you". We look back at the piles of rocks remembering what He has done in the past, knowing He can still do these things.

I think about a precious moment I was sitting with many of our Haitian kids on the steps, feet in the dirt and the rocks, reading through scripture with them, one young man asking, "do you believe this? Do you think it is true?" I said, I do believe this and do think it is true. That everything in the Bible is true and He keeps His promises. It pierces my heart and spurs me on at the same time to reflect back on this, to think of the rocks below my feet and the piles of rocks of remembrance of what He has done and is able to do.

Not only in Haiti, but all over the world, there are over 200 million children who are in need care, needing a family. Those that desperately need to know "The Lord is my shepherd, I have all that I need" - Psalm 23:1. How do we in the midst of chaos, trauma, confusion, and disruption, say we have all that we need, we lack nothing – only through Him, only by Him, and only in Him.

I am thankful for the slow walk on the trail and the rocks that I can hold in my hand and place for my eyes to see and my heart to remember, yes, my feet on the ground here, in Haiti, the breathtaking beauty of His creation beyond bluffs, in the suffering and burned rubble, in all of it, He is with us, His Spirit within us, was giving us peace, peace in His presence, whispering and affirming, His promises are true, peace that He leads us to green pastures and restores our souls, He keeps His promises.

May we seek Him for solace, seek Him for comfort, seek quiet places of letting Holy Spirit's wind blow over and through us, filling us with peace. May He move over dirt roads in Haiti, giving way for safety and food, may He move over the hearts of expectant moms giving way to wisdom and grace, may He move over transitions within adoptive and foster homes, giving way to understanding and grace, may He move over believers giving way to see the needs around, newfound perseverance and courage. Piles of rocks – even in the middle of a valley, You are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me. He leads into green pastures, beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. Come restorer, rebuild, shepherd of our souls, Come and move, Come and lead, Come and give vision and assurance, hope in the promise ahead, that surely we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever, there, forever with our Good Shepherd.

Please Pray with and for us that:

- ~ That He continues to show His faithfulness over families and children.
- ~ He prompts and presses on the church to rise up to speak up for the orphan and take action, to not draw back.
- ~ Encouragement for the weariness of the season over families, leaders, ministries.
- ~ That Father continues to bring needed provision in this uncertain season, showing He has and owns all things.
- ~ Safety, protection, and healing over families, children, One Vision Orphanage.

- ~ That the Lord will confuse those who mean to do evil and protect those that are doing good.
- ~ He uses this time to bring many to know and call upon Him, new salvation testimonies in Jesus name.
- ~ We walk in identity in Him, not of the world, and being rooted in Him, gives security and peace.



SCAN ME

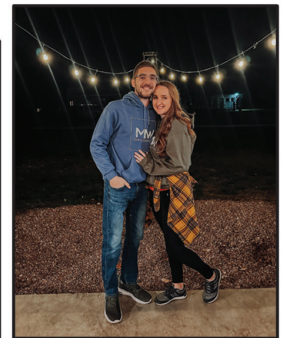
We would love to pray with you! Scan this QR Code and send your prayer requests confidentially to our prayer team.

Did you know Katelyn's Fund gives 6 - 8 grants to hopeful adoptive families each month? Did you also know YOU can be a part of helping families overcome the financial barriers of being together? 100% of every generous donation goes back to serving and supporting foster and adoptive families.

➔ Check out these testimonies from two recent grant recipients! ➔

The Johnson Family

Marcus & Courtney
Adopting Domestically



When we got married, we knew that at some point we would like to adopt, but planned to have biological children first. We started trying for a family back in June of 2022. After many months of unsuccessfully trying to conceive we were very curious as to why we were not getting or staying pregnant. We decided to have some lab testing done to see if there was anything that was hindering us when it was discovered that I have PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome) which can make it very difficult to become or stay pregnant.

This was a huge shock to me and I wish I had known this long before I started trying to conceive, so I could have worked on it and not been as surprised when we didn't end up pregnant. It was becoming clear to us that God was leading us down the path of adoption. We asked those around us who we would know that had gone through the adoption process. We looked into agencies around the country as well as adoption facilitators. None of those options felt quite right and we, by God's grace, ended up finding Lutheran Family Services. From the start we felt safe with Cathy (our case worker) as she told us all about how LFS works with Christian families to provide safe and believing homes for infants to be adopted. We know that they have our, as well as all birth mother's, best interests in mind as they work with us to grow our future family. They, as Christians, also share our deepest values as believers.

We have been working tirelessly to save money for our adoption fund. We have also hosted a few fundraisers, including a Pizza Ranch Tip Night and a Live Jazz Swing Dancing Event. We have felt so blessed by our church, families and local community and their willing and loving hearts to help serve us in this way.

Although waiting has been extremely difficult at times, and we with both joy and sadness watch those around us grow their family "on their own terms", so to speak, we know that God is continuously providing for us. He is giving us the right people, the right amount of money, and the perfect amount of comfort and security that we need to be sustained during our adoption journey.

We are immeasurably thankful to Katelyn's Fund for being God's hands and feet and providing us with this amazing gift to help us along on our journey. While it was difficult to open up about such raw emotions regarding our infertility and adoption, we are thankful for their willingness to serve us and other families like us going through the difficult, yet joyous path of adoption. We cannot wait to share our own big news with them when God presents us with our first child.

...more adoption stories on page 4

The Rucker Family

Chad & Amy Adopting Internationally



Before we were even married, we had both separately felt called to adopt. Sharing that call with each other after being engaged and going through our pre-marital counseling was such a beautiful confirmation of God's presence in our family.

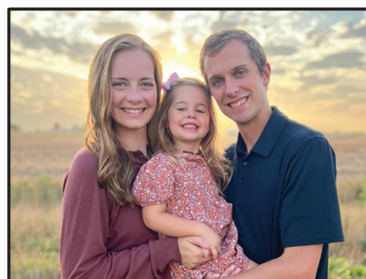
Amy had been on mission trips several times and worked in orphanages in Haiti and China. Because of Amy's personal connection to orphanages in China, we thought we would adopt from there. However, we knew that they required the youngest spouse to be thirty, so once Amy turned thirty, we started researching in earnest. Our youngest was 4 months old at the time, and in our research, we saw that China added the requirement of the youngest child in the home to be 3 years old. We felt God was calling us to adopt now, not once Jonah had turned three. So, we prayed. We asked our families to pray with and for us. We researched other countries' requirements and met with several agencies. When we met with our agency, Small World, God gave us very clear and direct calling to adopt from Liberia with Small World.

We are currently two years into our journey and currently waiting on our match. The Lord has continued to show up and show us His hand as we have been walking through this process and it's a beautiful thing to see our boys see firsthand the goodness of God. Our boys are so very excited to meet their little sister and talk about her and pray for her daily. Our oldest has always said things like, "When WE go get my sister..." so we will likely bring him with us to bring his sister home, and hopefully our two-year-old as well.

We are so thankful to Katelyn's Fund for this grant as it helps bring us closer to going as a family to bring our little girl home!

The Soodsma Family

Thomas & Tianna Adopting Domestically



We dreamt of having a large family with kids close in age. After a house disaster causing several medical complications, we knew we would not be able to carry a biological baby anytime soon. As we began to think about adoption, pray through the process, learn about the true orphan as well as the vulnerable child, and listen to the stories of birth moms, we knew adoption was for us and our family.

By God's grace, we are well again, yet our hearts yearn to adopt, and God has clearly laid the path before us. The financial piece of adoption was our greatest hurdle, and yet, the Father has provided so abundantly through Katelyn's Fund, other grant foundations, and the Church. Katelyn's Fund not only gifted us with funds, but they have provided a prayer team, a support community, and a circle of people we can now call friends, brothers, and sisters as we

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embark on this beautiful, yet messy, journey. The heart behind Katelyn's Fund and the community we've gained through Katelyn's Fund is truly a priceless gift.

When we began to pray about adoption, we knew God would have to make a way financially. Our family had just walked through a season of significant loss, but Thomas often stated, "If the LORD is in it, I am confident the floodgates will open." God had always provided, and we knew he could do it again, so we walked forward in faith, trusting that he would provide if adoption was the plan he had for our family. Early on, we had people generously offering to support our adoption before we had asked. Since then, we've seen God provide again and again. In moments of doubt, we look behind us, and we see all that God has done, we can't help but trust that he is walking before us in each step of this journey too.

Adoption has given us a huge heart for the vulnerable child and his or her birth family. There was a kindling in our hearts before, but now we have a fire in our bellies. We desire to honor everyone involved and speak boldly, with respect, in advocacy for these precious children and their birth families. Life is messy, and adoption starts with grief, often for both the birth family and adoptive family, but we can also be instruments the Father uses for healing and restoration - only by his grace. We are excited to walk as these instruments, and to see the Father work in our hearts, in our child's heart, and in the birth family's heart too.

The Carrington Family

Joshua & Jessica
Adopting Internationally



A few years ago God laid it on our hearts that we needed to consider adopting a little girl. It took a while but we finally felt we were ready and that God wanted us to pursue the adoption. We picked an agency and decided on Bulgaria as the country to adopt from. We went through the process and were accepted into their program.

We were told to expect 2-3 years for a referral, but less than 4 weeks later we received a referral for 2 year old Rosa. We accepted her referral and got to go over there to spend a week with her in June. She has some special needs that we need to get her back to America for proper medical care she can't get in Bulgaria. The incredible speed that God has worked to push our adoption through faster than most has strained us financially, and the unknown medical expenses after she's home can be daunting as well.

Katelyn's Fund grant award has helped bring more peace to us and shown how God has everything perfectly planned out. He is working to capture Rosa's heart and we are humbled to be chosen to welcome her into our family!

There are so many to we have seen God working! As listed above, we were told there are 300 families on the waiting list to adopt and only about 100 children are placed every year from Bulgaria. We were told to expect to wait 1-3 years for a referral, but God wanted us to have Rosa so perfectly that we got her referral in less than 4 weeks of being in the program. She was brand new to the international adoption list at almost the exact time we were accepted into the program.

Adoption has taught us that God provides and blesses! It's nerve wracking thinking of the process and financial requirements, but from day 1 there have been so many blessings that He has provided. We know the hardest has yet to come when we bring her home, but we're not fearful because we know God works so perfectly in everything.

Our deepest desire for our children is to follow Christ and be a positive impact on the world and the people around them. As I get older I realize life isn't about us, so for them to love God and care for others would be our deepest desire.

Support Update

written by Tammy Zevenbergen

Our annual picnic was once again a sweet time of fellowship with many families. What a blessing to see and hear the smiles and laughter of the children and get to connect, catch up and encourage one another.



Support. We all need support in it. In hard times, it can feel easier to isolate than step out and find a community to get the help and support that is needed to get through difficult times in our lives. Our desire is for families to join our community and feel supported, encouraged, and leave with some practical tools. We pray you will come join our community each month to learn and grow as we hear from an incredible lineup of speakers and panelists.

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls down, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10



Adoption & Foster **SUPPORT** Meetings

September 14 - Living in Reconciliation and Restoration
October 12 - Holding Fast: Understanding Healthy Relationships and Attachment
November 3 - Auction
November 9 - The Journey Through a Dad's Eyes panel
November 12 - Orphan Sunday
December - No Meeting this month
January 11 - The Journey Through a Mom's Eyes panel
February 8 - Pastor Mark & Barbie Schwarz
March 14 - Dr. Ken & Barb Addink
April 11 - Self-Compassion: A Prerequisite to Self-Care
May 2 - Fostering Relationships

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
- Isaiah 1:17

SCAN HERE for:
SUPPORT EMAILS
KIDS GROUP RSVP
FOLLOW UP or
FOSTER CARE +
ADOPTION RESOURCES



Meetings to be held at:
Fireside Room/Room 99
at Centerpoint Church
starting at 7:00pm
most meetings will be on the 2nd Thursday of every month

* This event will take place at a different location. be sure to check our FB page for details.



Support Schedule



Adoption & Foster **SUPPORT** Meetings

September 14 - Living in Reconciliation and Restoration

Faye Holsing & Candi Cox - Come and hear the unique way that God intertwined the hearts and lives of an adoptive mom and birth mom. Faye and Candi will be sharing their journey of reconciliation and restoration.

October 12 - Holding Fast: Understanding Healthy Relationships and Attachment

Dordt Social Work Department - God calls us to "hold fast" in our relationships to each other and to Him. He created relationships and attachment for us to feel loved, cared for, and secure, but sometimes our relationships leave us feeling insecure and unlovable. We will talk about how we can regain connection and attachment to God while also seeking to maintain or rebuild healthy relationships.

November 3 - Auction

November 9 - The Journey Through a Dad's Eyes

A panel of adoptive and foster fathers will share the unique challenges and blessings of their adoption journeys. Come with questions for our panel of dads in this open question/answer format.

November 12 - Orphan Sunday

December - No Meeting this month. Enjoy time with your families.

January 11 - The Journey Through a Mom's Eyes

A panel of adoptive and foster mothers will share the unique challenges and blessings of their adoption journeys. Come with questions for our panel of moms in this open question and answer format.

February 8 - Pastor Mark & Barbie Schwarz

Come to hear a story about a family coming together after infertility and then coming to the beautiful choice of adoption. Hear how they handled the ups and down of this journey, learning and growing, seeing His help, hope, and faithfulness.

Please join us - we were not created to walk this journey alone!

7:00 pm • Fireside Room/Room 99 • Centerpoint Church
160 10th Street SE • Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 • www.katelynsfund.org



Adoption & Foster **SUPPORT** Meetings

March 14 - Dr. Ken & Barb Addink

While we are protective of our children's personal journeys, we do believe we're called to share stories of God's goodness to us as parents before, during, and after the adoption process. Ken & Barb Addink, parents who have adopted several children through the foster care system, will share their story of God's faithfulness throughout their family's story.

April 11 - "Self-Compassion: A Prerequisite to Self-Care,"

Darcie Van Voorst, LMSW/therapist/trainer/consultant - Parenting children from hard places will likely be the most challenging thing we will ever do in our life. Left unchecked, the stress and overwhelm can overtake us. Often, we as parents focus on how to help our children; in this session we will learn ways to better care for ourselves. We will start by taking a look at how stress is impacting our overall well-being. We will then explore how body-based approaches increases self-compassion which results in self-care becoming more natural. I am humbled at the opportunity to explore this with you, and pray it is the beginning of your own healing journey.

May 2 - Fostering Relationships

May is National Foster Care Awareness month and we are honored to have Niki Kredit, Sheryl Winterfeld, and Kelsi Ebel come and talk about the trials and triumphs in their fostering journeys.

September 14 - Social skills associated with repair and forgiveness

October 12 - How the brain seeks connection

November 9 - Importance of telling healing stories

January 11 - Emotions both big and small

February 8 - Making healthy choices

March 14 - Different ways they can ask for help

April 11 - Celebrate the beauty of play

KIDS GROUP

Bring your school aged kids along for some therapeutic play and activities. Children ages 4 - 13 years are welcome and the activities will be lead by Dordt University social work students & supervised by Professor Tara Boer. Please keep an eye on our social media post for ALL the updates & topics



SCAN HERE to RSVP your child(ren) for KIDS GROUP



SCAN HERE to sign up for more information on Katelyn's Fund support, events & much more



Annual Auction Invite

NOVEMBER 3, 2023



AUCTION



NEW LIFE REFORMED CHURCH

232 16TH STREET SE SIOUX CENTER, IA 51250

MEAL SERVED 5:30PM - 6:30PM AUCTION BEGINS 6:30PM

CHILDCARE & ACTIVITIES ARE PROVIDED | QUESTIONS 712-441-0540

100% OF THE DONATIONS RECEIVED GO DIRECTLY TO THE CARE OF THE ORPHAN

TO DONATE ONLINE FILL OUT A FORM AT KATELYNSFUND.ORG

Haiti Update - Urgent Call To Prayer

written by Sheila De Jong

It feels like we continue to say the same things, things continue to be so very hard in Haiti without any immediate relief in sight, that said, things are hard, so very hard in Haiti. We continue to pray, we continue to trust that the Lord is with and helping those who love and trust in Him.

A few things happening in Haiti:

- By His grace, we have been able to buy food at a market in Port-au-Prince (3 times higher food costs) and we are loading the food onto a boat to get to a small town located near the orphanage and loading it on a truck to get it the rest of the way.
- Our staff remain committed to the care of the children and so thankful for their jobs. They are very hesitant to leave as they are fearful of kidnapping and harm from gangs. We continue to employ almost 80 people (caregivers, security, washer, cooks, primary and secondary teachers, etc. These jobs help them take care of their families.
- School officially starts in Haiti in Sept. but due to danger and lack of getting curriculum and supplies, the goal was to start in the first part of Oct. Our director feels the importance of school continuing, for the employment of so many, children to gain an education, for the gospel to go out, for our children in care, and the community – the hope this brings.
- It has been increasingly dangerous, the gangs have taken over many towns/villages, burning homes and stealing the contents, many times harming or even killing those not surrendering.
- As of right now, our children/staff are safe because it is fairly isolated but if the main road where we are having the food from the boat come, is not able to be passed, it will be a more dire situation. If the gangs would come more into the area, there would be difficult decisions for the safety and care of the children and staff, we continue to pray that He shields and protects, making this place a refuge and His light to go out.
- Our director and his family are facing difficult decisions with their safety. Their home has been overtaken and a family's home where they transitioned to is very close to where many homes were burned down, so we are all seeking wisdom, as they do not feel released from the calling He has for them in caring for these children and they desire to stay in Haiti and work directly.
- Many people and organizations have left Haiti due to the safety concerns, while this is completely understandable (and we miss going on trips as well) this has been very hard for the people who are very desperate for food and safety.

We apologize for what might feel like a lack of communication, updates to you – as honestly many times we do not have many updates or changes. We were trying to not put too much info. out to draw attention, out of protection for our partners. As things continue to be increasingly dangerous, we need to let you know the seriousness of the situation. We are asking for you to consistently, steadfastly, genuinely come before Him in prayer. We are asking for your continued commitment as a ministry as we are committed to continue to provide for these, we know He loves and so do we.

We continue to pray, we do not feel like He wants to us walk away to leave them, but to stay committed, to continue to provide for food, schooling, and care – we continue to provide jobs so our staff can provide food, schooling, and care for their families. We continue with the same goal- for children/people to know Jesus. Many days do not know what is going on as signals are not dependable, many days we do not know what to do in our own strength, but just like King Jehoshaphat, as he was in desperate situation, we keep our eyes on the Lord. (Chronicles 20) We are trusting that as He asks us to continue to be faithful in caring for the orphan, He will continue to show us His faithfulness.

We hold a prayer time each Wednesday from 12:00-1:00 at the HOME building in Sioux Center, would you come and join us in praying? If you are not able to come in person, pray from wherever you are – please join us in praying. We hold fast to Him, that He longs for many to come to know Him, that He will come to those who call upon His name, and He is with His children in times of trouble. Pray for Him to be seen and known, for His shelter and safety, for many to come to know Him personally, for revival and salvation to come. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support, both financially to meet their needs and spiritually to bring them to Him with us. Thank you for walking with us in caring for the orphan.

Orphan Sunday Invite

 *Katelyn's Fund*
ORPHAN MINISTRY
www.katelynsfund.org



KATELYN'S FUND ORPHAN MINISTRY
INVITES YOU TO:

ORPHAN + STAND *Sunday*

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Please join us for a time of worship and community together! We are please to announce and excited to welcome *Tori Hope Peterson*, speaker, best selling author, advocate in foster care. Tori has equipped and empowered countless churches, organizations, and people to serve the underserved. She also founded the *Beloved Initiative*, a nonprofit where in community people learn how to become professional lovers of people.



with guest speaker
TORI HOPE PETERSEN

New Life Reformed Church
232 16th St. SE
Sioux Center, IA
www.katelynsfund.org



1327 Third Avenue SE
Sioux Center, IA 51250
katelynsfund.org

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Contact alison@katelynsfund.org
to request your newsletter be sent to
your inbox.

Fall 2023 Newsletter

The Lord is
MY SHEPHERD

*I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters.*

PSALMS 23: 1 & 2