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A Chance To Be Knit

On June 10th, 2024, at 6:36 PM, a beautiful baby girl was born. Her name is Faith. My aunt was pregnant with her daughter for nine months, but they do not share the same blood. This blessing is because of a process called embryo adoption. For people like my aunt and uncle, embryo adoption is an amazing way to give life to God's children.

While countless couples have started families through embryo adoption, plenty more have never heard of it. An embryo adoption program called Snowflakes explains: "When couples use in vitro fertilization to achieve pregnancy, they will often have embryos remaining after they complete their family. One option available to them is to donate their embryos to another family through embryo donation" (*Snowflakes...*). By choosing to donate their embryos, they offer them a new chance for life that they cannot give themselves. Once parents are approved to adopt, specialists work with them to begin an embryo implant.

Donating embryos to be adopted is one option after IVF but is not what families always choose. Some keep their embryos in frozen storage. There are over 1.5 million of these embryos in the United States ("National Embryo Donation Center"). Other embryos are donated to be used for scientific research. But unfortunately, most are simply destroyed as if they were not human lives, created by God. As Lutherans, we know they are, so embryo donation is the right choice, the only choice. Psalm 139:13-14 says: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well” (*The Bible*). These embryos may have been conceived in a lab, but they are still alive. They deserve to be knit and sculpted in a mother’s womb.

My cousin Faith is now seven months old, healthy, and happy. She lives in Kansas with her parents and three cats. My aunt is a teacher in a Lutheran school. Her husband, my mom’s brother, is in a management position at a company. They have been married since 2016 and had always wanted kids. My aunt wrote in a note to family, “As we learned of [these embryos] our hearts ached for these smallest children who would never be given a chance to live. By God’s grace we found the National Embryo Donation Center (NEDC), an organization whose love for these most vulnerable children is second only to their love for Christ” (Maxson). Both my aunt and uncle were raised believing in the sanctity of life. They knew embryo adoption was God’s way to save one of His children and give them a family. After a few trips to Knoxville and innumerable prayers from family and friends, Faith’s embryo was successfully implanted.

Everyone was so excited for her birth! She is my aunt and uncle’s first baby, the twelfth grandchild, and the fifth adopted grandchild. I also have a special relationship with her because I was chosen to be her godmother. And while she was born most recently, she has been alive longer than I have as the “oldest cousin.” Like most others, her embryo was frozen for years before she was adopted. Faith was conceived in 2005. God has been with His daughter for twenty years, waiting to form her inside my aunt, and now, as she grows and learns.

The impact of embryo adoption reaches so much farther than my family. Almost 10,000 babies have been born from frozen embryos since 2004 just in the United States (Lee, et al.). And 10,000 is not just a number. It is lives saved, new parents, loving families, prayers, and futures. All are made possible through the support of embryo adoption. Our advocacy, financial

gifts, and prayers are always needed. What we do to help determines what happens to the next 10,000 embryos.

Life is worth protecting. That means life in any size or stage. And protecting it can take endless forms from adopting an embryo, to being a doctor, to simply sharing Jesus with others. But it is the weakest who need the most protection. Embryos have no say in how long they are frozen, whose womb they may be allowed to grow in, or if they are just thrown away. Faith and thousands of others have been saved because people spoke up for them. We must support embryo adoption because we know everyone, including each embryo, is fearfully and wonderfully made.

Works Cited

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