



LOUK*topia*

Meet Athanasius Lloyd

We're sure you will agree that he is as cute as babies can be.



Born: Friday, February 20, 2009, 8:07 p.m.

Weight: 7 pounds, 11 ½ ounces

Length: 21 inches



PARENTS IN AWE—THE WONDER AND GLORY OF PARENTHOOD SEEN IN PICTURES



Completely drained, Laurel got an unexpected burst of energy once Athan was in her arms. During the roughest part of labor the midwife assured her that this would happen. Both of us were quite surprised to discover that it was so.



Though everything was over around 8:07, the fact that Joshua was now a daddy didn't really hit him until he got to hold Athan about an hour later. At that point, a non-premeditated smile swept across Joshua's face.

IRRESISTIBLE CUTENESS

cute little ears with detached lobes

Neither Laurel nor Joshua has detached lobes. However Laurel's dad has them—score one for Grandpa Lloyd.

no more cord

After four days, the once mushy gray umbilical cord shriveled to raisin size and color before falling off. No word yet as to the nature of the belly button (iny or outy?).

long digits

He seems to have Joshua's extraordinarily long arms, fingers, & toes.



a normal sized head

Thankfully, he doesn't take after his daddy here. He's even lifting it up some already. Shocking for a two week old! Overall his facial features resemble his Uncle David's.

big dark eyes

Like his daddy, his eyes are large and dark. However, they are not brown. Right now they are a dark grey/blue.

a button nose

Athan's most surprising feature is his lack of a pointy nose. With a pointy nose on both mom and dad, we figured he too was doomed. But he seems to have the Webb nose instead. Good for him.

HAPPY GRANDPARENTS

Grandma and Grandpa Nickerson have been very happy to have Athan around. Though we will one day be on different continents, God has given the grandparents a special time right now. We will be basing with Joshua's parents for a couple months later this year.





ATHAN'S FIRST FEW DAYS IN PICTURES



FRAGILITY AND ABSOLUTE TRUST



The stunning reality of Athan's absolute dependence on us for everything is both wonderful and intimidating.

Feeling him move around in my arms and then sensing him completely relax without any concern of harm coming to him is a glorious picture of our relationship with our Creator.

Just as Athan is absolutely dependent on us, we must depend absolutely on God .

But unlike God, we are not perfect. We are bound to make mistakes. The responsibility of caring for Athan is nearly overwhelming. But although often a bit scared, we count ourselves privileged to care for him.

KIND GIFTS AND WORDS HAVE COME FROM MANY

Leading up to Athan's birth, many people shared words of encouragement and liberally gave gifts to welcome Athan into the world. We are learning how delightfully true your words were. And the many gifts have been very helpful. Thanks to everyone.





Our Birth Story

An Active Observer's Perspective

BIRTH CLASSES

Long-term

Our mission agency encourages us to be life long learners. In preparation for Athan's arrival, we took a 12 week childbirth course.

Worth it?

The classes weren't just helpful for Laurel. They also helped me prepare to help her. They opened my understanding in ways that I never expected and adequately prepared me to be the labor coach that I needed to be.

OUR BIRTH EXPERIENCE

Labor Begins

On Thursday, February 19, 2009, at 6:30 p.m, Laurel's water broke. After a brief visit to the birth center, we were assured that the baby was coming soon and that everything was fine. Even though Laurel was in labor, she wasn't feeling regular contractions, so we went home to sleep.

2:00 a.m.

Laurel woke up to periodic contractions at 2:00 a.m February 20. Unable to sleep, she made herself two early morning burritos. "What else was there to do?"

12:00 p.m.

Intense labor didn't start until about noon. By that time we had returned to the birth center, and I was expecting our little one to come at any moment.

5:00 p.m.

As it turned out, the moment wasn't quite as soon as I had anticipated. Athan took his time engaging, and Laurel didn't feel the need to push until a little before 5:00 p.m.

8:07 p.m.

The pushing, while often a relief to women in labor, was perhaps the most difficult stage of labor for Laurel. Athan was a bit crooked in the birth canal, causing an unusually high degree of pain for Laurel's hips and legs.

But Laurel was amazing! She worked through both the pain and extreme fatigue, bringing Athan into the world at 8:07.

WHY THE BIRTH CENTER WAS RIGHT FOR US

Spectacular Attention

We chose not to use a hospital, opting instead to use Labors of Love, midwifery center. The care and attention received from the midwives there was absolutely amazing. We had two midwives and a nurse there with us the whole time.

Natural Childbirth

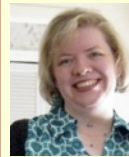
We are thankful that God allowed us to have a natural childbirth. Although we realize that medical intervention is sometimes necessary for safe births, we rejoice that our midwives helped us through naturally.

Our Midwives



Linda Weaver

Linda was with us for every step of the process. She was calm, patient, kind, and thorough. When things got really difficult and we began to wonder if we were going to make it, she confidently assured us that Laurel was doing great and that we would soon see our baby.



Amy Bixby

Working with Linda, Amy was with us for all of active labor. Her presence was especially comforting the night after birth. When we were terrified that Laurel's postpartum bleeding was a sure sign that something was deadly wrong, she calmly helped clean up and assured us that things were fine.

What We've Been Reading



INA MAY'S GUIDE TO CHILDBIRTH

Though a little new-age in the testimonial section, the book was a helpful and positive look into the norms of natural childbirth.



HUSBAND COACHED CHILDBIRTH

Though, Joshua only made it 1/3 of the way through this book, what we read was helpful in anticipating the normal stages of labor.



ON BECOMING BABYWISE

Moving beyond birth, we are now reading about feeding philosophies and establishing a routine for our newborn.