

# THOMAS & TIANNA





# hi there!



We're Thomas and Tianna, and this is our little girl, Janelle. If you could see our faces in this moment, we think you would catch a glimpse of how deeply we care and how humbled we are to sit in this space with you.

We don't pretend to understand what you're feeling, and yet, we imagine there is a mixture of emotions - maybe some hurt and fear. We want you to know we feel those with you as we pray for you and think about what this must be like. We are in your corner as you embrace your courage and take the time you need to sort through your options. No matter what you decide, our heart for you remains the same.

We also want you to know that we love being parents, and we're humbled by the thought of loving another child! We cannot wait to watch their story unfold and surround them with unconditional love. It's the same love we can tell you already have for your child as you navigate the decisions ahead of you.

You have a story. We have a story. This child has a story. If our stories collide, our hearts will hold so much space for you. And even if they don't, our hearts are *still* for you. We pray God gives you peace and confidence. Your voice matters most in the days ahead, and we are praying you feel loved.

thomas and tianna

# A SNAPSHOT *of who we are*



If there were just a few words we could share with you about our family, we would want you to know that we are intentional, joy-filled, and supportive. We are each other's people! We're all about making memories and enjoying the silly, little moments.

Another thing you should know is that we laugh a lot, and we love BIG - always praying our love for Jesus overflows into our love for each other and those who enter our home.

A handful of other highlights about us:

1. We value creativity and imagination! You'll rarely find us sitting around. Instead, we'll be building forts, digging in the mud, roasting marshmallows, running at the park, fishing, hunting pretend bears with squirt guns, going on bike rides, and other crazy ideas.
2. We have intentional conversations - about the good and the hard.

“We loved you before we knew you. Even when there was just hope of you, we loved you...”



3. We live in the tensions of joy and sorrow, weakness and rejoicing, hard and hopeful.
4. We love our extended families and spend as much time with them as possible. They love and support us in so many ways.
5. We value healthy living. We eat well, exercise, and believe in caring for our bodies!
6. Our home is known and loved by many. We value friends and family feeling welcomed, and we have them over often!

As a family, we face the hard and embrace the beauty that is born out of brokenness.

# OUR LIFE TOGETHER



“NOT FLESH OF MY FLESH OR BONE OF MY BONE  
BUT *heart of my heart* AND SOUL OF MY SOUL.”



**AUG 2016**

We met on a college camping trip and quickly became friends.

**APR 2017**

A pan of caramel rolls is all it took for everyone to know: we were together.

**APR 2018**

Thomas proposed with Taylor Swift songs, a poem, and a ring.

**DEC 2018**

We said "I do" in the church Tianna grew up in during a snow storm.

**MAY 2020**

We excitedly welcomed our daughter, Janelle, into the world.

**MARCH 2022**

After a very difficult year, our desire for adoption began to grow.

We met on a college camping trip and spotted each other from across the campfire. There was immediate interest on both sides, but we were friends for a year before we started dating. Our first date consisted of making caramel rolls for Thomas's whole wing of boys (he was a Resident Assistant). We both knew soon after we started dating that we wanted to spend our lives together. We had so much fun, shared the same passions and convictions, desired to live our lives for Christ, and shared the same love for family.

On April 8, Thomas proposed on our college skywalk during an ice storm. We shared a home-made meal, dreamed about the future, and danced to Taylor Swift (lol). Thomas got down on one knee during one of those T-Swift love songs (the one he promised his sister he would propose to when he was 12 years old), and Tianna said, "Yes!" We were married 8 months later in the worst snowstorm of the year, which was only fitting after an engagement in an ice storm. We have only grown in love and thankfulness over the past five years after living many trials and joys together. We are truly best friends, and we thank God for the gift of one another.





## more about TIANNA

**WHO I AM.** I'm 26 years old, 6'0, relational, thoughtful, and laid-back. I love gathering people around a table of good food and am intentional about how I make others feel.

**WHAT I DO.** I have a Bachelor's degree in K-12 Special Education and teach one day a week at the local Christian school. However, I'm primarily a stay-at-home mom, which I love most!

**WHAT I LOVE.** Writing // Sunshine // Game nights // Mangos // Family days // Athletics // Decorated Christmas trees // Hot tea // A good smoothie // Comfy clothes // Coffee with friends

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ME.

Anyone who knows me will tell you I'm an old soul, I carry a humble yet confident assurance of who I am, and it takes a lot to rile me! I also love God with my whole being and desire to be more like Him. I understand life is fragile, so I love big! When I need to relax, you'll find me behind the piano. Words are my love language, and I enjoy using them to bless others. I adore being a stay at home mom and hope to write kids books someday!



“My wife is one of the most thoughtful people you will ever meet. To know her is to love her.”

(Tianna in Thomas’s words) “There is no one I think more highly of than Tianna. She is thoughtful, intentional, and encouraging. She loves Jesus and desires for others to know his love, too. Tianna is the friend others call when they need a listening ear and the one they turn to in some of life’s most difficult moments. I’m amazed at how often she writes someone a card or drops them a note just because she’s thought of them. When Tianna speaks, others listen, and they trust what she has to say because every word is genuine.

I also love how chill and full of life Tianna is. She encourages Janelle to jump in mud puddles, dig in the dirt, and crack the eggs. She isn’t bothered by bigger messes, more laundry, or paint stains as long as they result in memories. In fact, she encourages the messes. Tianna’s number one priority is quality time. This is true in her friendships, in her relationship with our daughter, and in our marriage. Her favorite kind of evening is a quiet one spent playing a game, talking about our day, and praying together, and I cannot imagine anything better. My favorite thing is when she laughs until she cries, and she does it often. To know her is to love her. Tianna is calm, caring, present, and the absolute best wife I could have ever hoped for.”

“I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED AS A PERSON WHO REJOICES IN HOPE AND REMAINS STEADFAST THROUGH EVERY SEASON.” -Tianna





## more about THOMAS

**WHO I AM.** I'm 27 years old, 6'1, enthusiastic, and caring. I love meeting new people and making them feel welcomed. I am always up for some friendly competition or fun.

**WHAT I DO.** I have a Bachelor's degree in Education and work as a high school math and Bible teacher. Teenagers are so fun, and I love helping them wrestle with hard questions.

**WHAT I LOVE.** Date night // Playing hockey // The Edmonton Oilers // Hiking in the mountains // Fishing // Snowboarding // A good book // Getting together with friends // Campfires

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ME.

I was born and raised in Canada and love going back to visit! I'm also a twin! My brother passed away when we were 7, but the connection we shared has forever shaped me. I like to laugh, make jokes, and have a good time. I love the Lord and hold firmly yet humbly to what I believe. I love being a husband and a father and greatly enjoy making memories - after all, what's a Saturday without sledding, visiting the park, flying a kite, or going fishing?

“When somebody talks to Thomas, they feel heard and loved. He embodies the heart of Jesus.”

(Thomas in Tianna’s words) “Thomas exudes joy. He is the guy in the room with the biggest grin, and by the end of the night, he’s probably connected with the most people. There are many individuals who have told me that Thomas is their best friend, and he’s been the best man in more weddings than I can remember. All of these things show how well he loves others. He is a steady and safe place, and he makes others feel genuinely cared for. In the best *and* the hardest moments of life, Tomas listens well, gives big hugs, and reminds me that tears aren’t a bad thing. When Thomas is in your corner, you will feel supported in a way you have never felt before.

He’s also an incredible dad. Janelle’s favorite time of day (and mine!) is when Thomas walks through the door after work. He genuinely LOVES playing with kids and can often be found playing with babies, building forts, playing doctor, or making piles of pillows to jump in. I often wonder whether Thomas or Janelle is having more fun. Thomas lights up the room. He is so much fun, and at the same time, he is so intentional. He is the best balance of both, and we love him so much! Of one thing I am confident: Thomas will be an involved and intentional father, and I am so thankful we get to partner together in life and parenting.”

“I WANT TO BE A PERSON WHO LOVES WELL, WHO SHOWS UP, AND WHO POINTS OTHERS TO THE HEART OF JESUS.” -Thomas



# our daughter JANELLE



Janelle is a heart-melter! She is three years old, full of joy, and so excited to be a big sister. She is a social butterfly and simply LOVES life! She is almost always laughing, singing, or being goofy. She likes to play, swim, jump into a pile of pillows, go to the park, and be with her cousins and grandparents. She's adventurous and brave, and her joy is contagious.

Janelle is also as tough as she is tenderhearted. She walked through a season of health challenges and always blew us away by her positivity and joy through it all. She is quick to give a kiss, wipe away a tear, shower Daddy with hugs, and randomly tell Mommy, "You my mommy and I your Janelle. I just love you!" She brings us so much joy, and we love watching her grow.

We didn't know how deeply and unconditionally we could love until we became parents...



What we love about being parents...

"As a mom, I get to have built in buddies all day long! I LOVE watching the discovery and excitement of a child and getting to be their comfort, calm, and safe place." *(Tianna)* // "I love being a dad and making memories. I get to show Janelle the outdoors, teach her to fly a kite, and go on adventures. We get to be goofy together, and I get to see the world again through her eyes" *(Thomas)*

. Our hearts explode with pride, joy, and excitement as we watch Janelle grow. Being parents truly is our greatest gift as a married couple.

# coming to ADOPTION



The desire for kids was in our hearts before we met, and as long as we've known each other, we've desired to adopt. We both had dreams of having a large family and excitedly welcomed Janelle a year and a half after we were married. We had hopes of having another child shortly after, but the season that followed was filled with grief, tears, trust, and a whole lot of crazy.

We were excited to purchase our first home and found what we believed to be the perfect house for our family. It didn't take long and all three of us were experiencing strange health symptoms after we moved in. To make a very long story short, we doctored for months without finding answers. Eventually, we figured out there was black, toxic mold in our home. After our house was tested, we were told to think of it as if it had burned down with all of our belongings inside of it. The mold had saturated everything.

We left the house immediately. Soon after, we were excited to find out we were expecting our 2nd baby, but we lost that baby a couple of weeks later. Our hearts were broken, but this is also when God really began stirring our hearts toward adoption. We have always desired to honor a birth family and child well through the complexities of adoption, and we believed God was opening that door.



# FUTURE BIG SISTER

Fast-forward a year. We are living in a new, clean space and are healthy again. Our church rallied around us during these difficult days - providing us with a new place to live, furnishing it, bringing us meals, and helping us sort through our belongings. Despite being healthy again, we have a strong desire to adopt, to honor you, and to walk this road faithfully. We trust that something beautiful is unfolding, and we are humbled to be considered as part of this story.







# THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

We live in a simple yet cozy, two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment in a small but growing city. The apartment is new, clean, bright, and we love it! While we have our eyes open for a house when the right one comes along, we are currently content to be where we are. The space feels just right for our growing family!

We also love it's location and small-town feel. We appreciate the slow pace, friendly people, and knowing someone wherever we go. Our doctors know us by name, neighborhood kids are often found playing together on one of the many outdoor swing sets, and you can almost always find a family out on a walk. Neighbors here truly look out for one another.

A couple of other things we love about where we live and the people who surround us:

- We experience all four seasons and love each one! *(Yes, even the snow!)*
- Our town is part of a farming community and we visit farms owned by friends often!
- There is also an indoor climbing space for kids, a huge library, an interactive play space, an indoor/outdoor pool, and an ice rink that have all been a hit with Janelle!
- But more than anything, we love the diverse community we have here. Our area is growing in diversity with a large Hispanic population, and the local college brings in International students - many of whom we are still friends with from our college days! We love sharing life with our Korean and Asian friends as well as another friend who moved here from Senegal. We also interact often with other families who have adopted trans-racially and are grateful to have them in our lives.

Home is a place where many feel welcomed -  
in moments of joy and moments of trial.



# this is REAL LIFE

A few of our favorite things to do as a family:

- Skating and playing hockey.
- Sledding and building snowmen.
- Cooking or baking together.
- Spending the day with extended family - often filled with football, street hockey, sledding, building forts, and games of tag.
- Visiting the zoo and feeding animals.
- Going on family walks.
- Fishing or enjoying lake days.
- Snowboarding and skiing.
- Playing games with friends.

WHAT A DAY IN OUR LIFE LOOKS LIKE

Because Tianna stays at home, we love being able to enjoy slow mornings. We read books, take our time eating breakfast, and sometimes we wear our jammies 'til lunch! When the weather is nice, we love to meet friends at the park. And in the winter, you can often find us at the library, pool, or indoor jungle gym. Our afternoons are spent resting, reading *more* books, baking, and probably visiting friends!

We genuinely enjoy being together and making each other laugh. This is the simple life we love.

Some of our other favorite rhythms and routines:

- You will often hear music playing in our home and it's not uncommon for a silly dance party to break out in the kitchen or the living room.
- We have made it a goal in our family for each of us to have one-on-one time with Janelle at least once every day; it's our "special time" of doing something together that she chooses, and we are looking forward to continuing this with any children we have in the future.
- We spend a lot of time with family and friends and love playing games or hosting activities.
- We do chores together as a family - Thomas always has a way of making it fun!
- Thomas plays hockey on Wednesday nights in the winter and we both play sand volleyball once a week in the summer. We also love a good spikeball tournament when we're able!
- About once a month we drive an hour north to Tianna's parents' house to spend the day with "Grandpa and Grandma" and all of Janelle's cousins.
- Sundays are chill with morning church, lunch, a nap, and some playtime together before heading to night church. We also always FaceTime "Oma and Grandpa" in Canada before supper.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE'LL EVER DO IS LOVE ONE ANOTHER.



# we love OUR FAMILIES



## A bit about Thomas's family:

- I am the youngest of 5 siblings who are all married. Together, we have 16 children who are 8-years-old and under!
- My parents met in college and have been married for 36 years.
- All of my family lives in Canada, except for 1 brother who lives in Indonesia with his family.
- My family enjoys spending time together and is deeply committed to following Jesus.

## A bit about Tianna's family:

- I am the youngest of 4 siblings who are all married. Together, we have 11 children who are 12-years-old and under!
- My parents married when they were 18 and have been married for 41 years.
- I am very close to my parents and siblings and consider them my best friends.
- When we're together, you will often find us playing a game of football, hockey, or tag.

Our families play a significant role in our life, and they're so excited to join us in loving another child!



A few other fun family things:

1. We spend 2-3 weeks in Canada with Thomas's family every summer! His parents live on an acreage near the mountains and we love going hiking, fishing, and picnicking all together.
2. We spend a week at a lake resort up north with Tianna's family each year. It's full of water games, minnow races, ice cream cones, and daily baseball games.
3. It's tradition that after an evening meal, all the littles pile on Grandpa and Oma's lap to read the Bible and sing songs.
4. Tianna's parents host a "cousin camp" once a year; it's a two-night sleepover for all the cousins at Grandma and Grandpa's!
5. We have big family gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas, as well as time to freeze peaches in the summer and the most epic egg hunt on Easter Sunday.



# we promise

## TO LOVE AND SUPPORT YOU

Thank you again for taking the time to get to know us. Our heart for you is big, and we know that there are no final words we write that will capture the weight of this moment. If there is anything we've learned over the past few years, it's that life doesn't always look like what we thought it would. It can be full of joy, difficulty, and uncertainty, and we can't promise that hard things won't happen. But we've also learned that some of the hardest and most unexpected situations can produce the most beauty and growth, and we fully embrace it.

Should you choose our family to join you in loving this child, no matter what situation or circumstance may come our way, we promise that we will...

- Share the story of Jesus with our children, His love for us, and His redemptive plan for the world.
- Provide consistency and stability in our home to the best of our ability.
- Affirm our children in their strengths, encourage them in their weaknesses, and foster the interests of their hearts, all the while reminding them of our love for them.
- Have fun as we play in the mud, dig in the sand, catch the fish, ride the bikes, build the forts, sled in the snow, and make sweet memories together.
- Raise our kids in community with support from family, friends, and church members.
- Honor our child's past, heritage, culture, and all the beautiful and messy pieces of their story.
- Speak of you often in our home with love and respect.
- Continually remind each other that Christ goes before us in his grace and faithfulness.

If our lives should cross and openness allows, we rejoice in and anticipate this story that is being written. We hope you turn this final page knowing you are loved, and we are praying for you. As we said earlier, no matter what you decide, we are in your corner, cheering you on!

WITH LOVE,

*thomas and tianna*

