

9/11/17

Twenty six weeks and counting....As many of you know, we have a little girl on the way. We have chosen the name ***Alaina Elizabeth Fitzgerald***. Alaina is Irish for "dear child", and she will certainly be that. Elizabeth is a family name on both sides; on Brian's, Alaina's Grandma's middle name, and on Katherine's, Alaina's Aunt's first name. This name means promised or consecrated to God. We are asking that you all pray for her as much or more than you did for Joseph. Alaina has a condition called Thanatophoric Dysplasia, they believe Type II. We found out at 20 ½ weeks and it was a shock to all. Please do not Google it, as many websites are not kind. Instead, please look at this site, which we feel is the only appropriate website use to learn about the condition: <http://www.buttonsandbutterflies.com/2011/04/thanatophoric-dysplasia.html>

This condition (TD) is a type of skeletal dysplasia which is not inherited but happens when a specific gene mutates. Her limbs and rib cage will develop at a much slower rate than the rest of her and will be very small. Some bones in the head are also effected which influences brain development. The small ribs are the key, as they will prevent her lungs from developing and making it difficult for her to breathe after birth. We were originally told she would live 1-2 days, but of the cases we know personally, it was only 30-90 min. The prayer we ask from *everyone* is for the miracle that we can take her home so she can pass peacefully with her family in her own house as did Joseph.

The only way I (Brian) can bring myself to conceptualize is like this. Joseph sees what loving brother's Patrick and Theodore are to each other. I believe he wants that same love with him in heaven, and thus he has asked for Alaina to join him up there to play with him and love him like only a sibling can. Katherine feels that God (unfortunately for us) sees us as "strong" loving parents who will give any child what they need in order to get to know their family no matter for how long. Her genetic counselor told her that Joseph told God/Jesus what a great mother she is, and that she and her family are the perfect pick for Alaina.

I know what every one of you is saying, and I agree that this is just not fair and not right. Katherine and I have cried those statements many times since we found out a month ago. Most of the incredible doctors, nurses, and genetic counselors, not to mention the amazing people who have helped us from Isaiah's Promise, (<http://www.isaiahspromise.net/> please, feel free to designate them for your amazon smile donations), have consistently said this is lightning striking twice. If only we were that lucky. The odds of someone being struck by lightning twice in a lifetime is 9 million to 1. The odds of parents having one child with Trisomy 18, and then having a second child with Thanatophoric Dysplasia, are 200 million to 1.

Once again, Katherine has to have a C-section. She will be delivering at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, MD with the support of the Never Alone program that provides support and special procedures to mothers in these types of severe birth cases. One of the best things they do is allow is your clergy to come into the surgery room for baptism, and this is our plan. Her current birth date is set for November 29, 2017. There is a chance that starting after Halloween her head will be begin to grow too large for a C-section and she may have to be delivered earlier (Prayer # 2 would be for her to make it to 37 ½ weeks).

We take a little solace in the fact that she will be greeted in heaven by her big brother, and will be just as loved with him, as she will be with us. Thanks for all of your love and support the past year, as we could not have made it without you, especially as we approach what would have been Joseph's first birthday this Friday. We will also need you again in the next year, so please keep those good thoughts and prayers coming, as we will need every single one of them. We will do our best to keep everyone updated and informed.

Love,

Brian, Katherine, Patrick, Theodore, our sweet Joseph, and our little Alaina