

WE'RE THE RODE FAMILY

# Jill and Gretchen (and Petunia)



## LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE

"Is it hard to be different?" five year old Jill asked her mom one day. "What do you mean?" her mom replied. "Because daddy, the boys, and I all have brown eyes and you have green eyes." "Oh, it's not hard to be different at all," Jill's mom said. "Besides, eye color doesn't make a family, love does."

Love makes a family. This was the message that formed Jill's childhood and adulthood as an infant from South Korea adopted into a white family living in Minnesota. Feeling blessed to have a great adoptive family, Jill has always dreamed of forming a family through open adoption.

Gretchen grew up in small town Minnesota, getting tucked in each night with stories from her dad when he was home and books from her mom when her dad was away with the Air Force Reserve. Either way, each day ended with a kiss and "I love you" as the light was turned out. Because love makes a family.

When we met and fell in love while working as chaplains

at a hospital in the Twin Cities, we knew we would be a unique family. Two Lutheran pastors. Two women, one white and one Asian. But, we love each other and we know that, above all else, love makes a family.

We often wonder what Jill's birth mother thought about as she made an adoption plan. We imagine it was a truly difficult decision, but that she ultimately loved Jill enough to give Jill the life she wanted for her. While we have no idea what is going through your head as you consider adoption for your child, we hope you find the peace, comfort, and answers you seek as you read through our adoption profile.

We can't wait to become parents, and give your child a life filled with love, adventure, and connection to all the people that love and support us. We look forward to sharing our love for your child and your love for your child as we remind them over and over again that love makes a family.

—Jill & Gretchen

## About Jill



- 1) Jill is a **sports fanatic**! Growing up in Arizona (after moving from Minnesota) didn't keep Jill from supporting the Minnesota teams her dad and two brothers liked. Jill loves to root for the **Twins, Timberwolves, and Vikings**, in addition to cheering on her alma mater, the **University of Arizona Wildcats**.
- 2) Jill lived in **Thailand** for 5 years teaching English to Thai kids. During her time there, she learned how to **speak fluent Thai**, made lifelong Thai friends, and ate delicious Thai food on a daily basis.
- 3) Jill has **traveled to 17 countries**. Highlights include crawling inside the Great Pyramid in Egypt, eating delicious bratwursts in Germany, and fishing in the Panama Canal.

## About Gretchen



- 1) Gretchen **loves to read**! When she moves to a new place, the library is almost always her first stop. Gretchen will **read almost anything**, but especially enjoys fantasy books that stretch her imagination.
- 2) Gretchen **finds cooking relaxing**. She loves to be alone in the kitchen with some tunes and a few ideas, sometimes inspired by our favorite cooking competition shows.
- 3) Gretchen is always in favor of **a good road trip**. Growing up traveling with her family, she has been to 45 of the 50 states! She loves learning about history by visiting state capitol buildings, trying local cuisine, and **finding unique roadside attractions**.



## We love...

**PETUNIA...**our cocker spaniel rescue pup who joined our family 4 years ago. Petunia is gentle, curious, and very loving. She gets along well with children, especially when they drop food on the ground. We love walking with Petunia, although she prefers snuggling on the couch between us.

**GATHERING WITH FRIENDS...** at our home or someone else's, there is always an abundance of food and laughter. Our friends - many of whom have children already - are excited and eager to love and welcome a new Rode!

**TRYING NEW THINGS...** having both lived abroad (Jill in Thailand and Gretchen in Chile), we love traveling and exploring different cultures, foods, and environments together.

**BOARD GAMES...** we play with friends or on our own. We've even been known to host board game championships with prizes for the winner!



## Two Pastors

We are both pastors in the ELCA Lutheran Church. We serve at different congregations, both working primarily with children and youth. We love serving our faith communities and working to share the message that God loves us all and calls us to make the world a better place by loving our neighbors. Our two churches offer many programs for young families, including baby music, Sunday School, and fun family outings to go apple picking. Our child will be surrounded by other caring families who will help them learn and grow.

## Our Home and Community

We live in a rambler-style home in a neighborhood with a playground at the end of the street. Our home is a mile from beautiful Lake Como and the Como Zoo, and is not too far from the Minnesota State Fairgrounds! It's a quiet and friendly neighborhood with schools that are diverse and well-ranked. As a multiracial couple, it's important to us that our family be in a place that isn't all white.

## Our Family

Our families love to spend time together! Every summer, Gretchen's family heads up to her grandparents' cabin in Northern Minnesota to swim, bike, eat hotdish, and play board games. With Jill's family spread out between Idaho, Pennsylvania, and Arizona, family gatherings happen a couple times every year and always include tennis, card games, entertaining the little ones, Jill's brothers teasing her, and lots of food! Having Gretchen's parents and brother close by allows us to get together often to try out a new restaurant and catch up on life.

Both families cannot wait to welcome a new baby! Between Jill's two brothers, we now have 5 nephews and a niece, so our child will be embraced by many cousins. With Gretchen's family, as the first grandchild, our child will be surrounded with love and far too many gifts at holiday times.



# A Letter to Our Future Child



Dear Kiddo,

We know that someday, hopefully in the not-too-distant future, we won't be able to imagine our lives without you. While you are still only a dream in our hearts, we want you to know a few things:

- We love you already, even before meeting you.
- We'll make mistakes along the way, but we'll never stop loving you.
- We'll make sure you know the history of who you are and from where you came.
- We promise to support you with love and a community of family and friends who will love you too.
- We'll teach you about faith and always remind you that God loves you just as you are.
- We'll encourage you to become the best version of yourself and teach you to follow your dreams.
- We promise to give you more books than you would ever want, teach you to cheer for Minnesota sports teams, and share with you all the best ways to adventure in the world.
- We'll live a life of honesty, hard work, and kindness.
- We'll work together to make the world a better place.
- And we'll remind you how loved you are every day, because love makes a family.

We can't wait to meet you!

—Jill & Gretchen



We love our nephews and niece!

