

These are my birth stories...I hope that by reading them, you can see the difference between a medical birth with interventions and a non-medical birth with no interventions.

Birth Number One (Toxemia, Induction, Epidural, C-Section)

Caitlin Arianna's Birth Story

Dear Baby:

You were born on Friday, April 26, 1991 at 1215!

On Wednesday, the 24th, Doctor Moore started my induction. She used Prostin Gel on a Diaphragm to make my cervix dilate. I started contracting and they lasted through most of the night. Then Thursday, the 25th, she added Pitocin to my IV at 0645. By 1200, still had no pain, minor contractions and not much else! I was 3cm.

By 1800, I was 5-6 cm and Dr. Moore was thinking of breaking my water. Captain Sue Wenn was my nurse now. And at 2130 Dr. Moore broke my water. All of a sudden the contractions were INCREDIBLE!

I asked for Nubaine, a painkiller. They gave me some and it was terrific for a bit! Then I had a cervical block and finally an epidural. The epidural numbed everything except my uterus!

By 0700, On Friday the 26th, I was only 7cm.

Four different doctors were attending my labor, Dr. Moore, Dr. Fisk, Dr. Dunn and Colonel Jones (Head of OB).

By 1100, I had made no progress and was begging for more pain med. Dr. Moore came in and told me that she'd like to do a C-section. I signed the consent form and so did Dad.

They took me into the Operating Room and started to prep me. The anesthetist used my epidural to numb me, but it didn't work well, I could feel the incision when they cut, but they couldn't give us more painkillers because we would have gone toxic. Then they pulled you out. Dr. Moore said, "it's a Caiti!" - the pediatrician said you were OK. I got to see you. Purple, Blue and Gray – You were beautiful!!

Then, they gave me general anesthesia. The last thing I remember is a yellow mask over my face! Then I woke up in recovery. 4 ½ hours later, they wheeled me to the Post Partum ward.

I asked to see you. So, they brought you to me but I did not have a band that matched yours so I could not hold you. A half-hour later, they brought the bands and you. I waited – very impatiently – while they put my band on. Finally, I had you in my arms and you were the softest, most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

Birth Number Two (Induction, Epidural, Shoulder Dystocia, Episiotomy, Vacuum Extraction, Broken Collar Bones)

Brenna Colleen's Birth Story

Dear Beautiful Baby Brenna:

You were born on May 3, 1996. We survived everything I can think of this pregnancy. A move across America, settling in a new home, being flooded out of our new home in a national disaster situation and actually being rowed out by firemen! You are already a mover and shaker even before you are in my arms.

We had a wonderful OB, Dr. Girolami. He and the nurses at Meridian Park Hospital in

Tualatin, OR took great care of us. Dr. Girolami agreed to induce me early on the morning of May 3 so daddy and Nancy Dodson (my dear dear friend) and Caitlin and I all headed for the L&D around 6:30 am. The doctor came in and broke my water and a few hours later I started to feel contractions. I distinctly remembered just how hideous labor with Caitlin was so when the nurse walked in and said, "there are eight women in labor and you are the first in line. If you would like an epidural you may have it now or wait until the anesthesiologist takes care of all the other moms!" - I jumped up and shouted "bring it now!"

It took the anesthesiologist about six sticks to get the epidural in. It didn't hurt at all when the epidural was going in, although I did have pain in my back for about six months after Brenna's birth. We laughed about how much tape he used to make sure that the catheter was not going to go anywhere. I wanted to make good and sure he would not have a reason to come back.

Everyone took naps, Caitlin and Nancy went to have breakfast. Sean slept on the sofa in the room, Nancy would sleep on the sofa, Caitlin and I sat in bed and played cards or watched TV.

The nurses started pitocin at some point because I was not contracting very often. At around 1:00 pm, they checked me and I was only dilated to 4. We all thought this baby was just going to take her sweet time! Our friends came and went throughout the day and called often to check on us. The nurses checked me again around 3:00 and I was only at 5 centimeters of dilation. I was starting to think that maybe I wouldn't have a baby today that it would be tomorrow morning. Around 4:00 pm, I felt incredibly nauseas but I was having no pain and I didn't really feel the pressure of the contractions because my epidural numbed me completely and totally from my chest down!

Dr. G came in at 5:00pm to tell me goodnite and that he was on his way to a party with his wife but would be on call for me when the baby decided to make an appearance. He decided to check me once more before he left and I was completely done and ready to push. I was shocked! Our pastor showed up right at that moment and Caitlin chose to sit with him in the waiting area and watch the movie, *Babe*.

The nurses asked Nancy to hold one leg and Sean to hold the other while they coached me to push and Dr. G put on his gear. I could not feel to push. I gave it a few weak tries and just said forget it. The doctor used the vacuum extractor to pull your head down farther and then I gave a few more pushes, enough so that I could see your head in the mirror. Your head was delivered! O MY GOSH! The joy I felt at the knowledge that I could deliver a baby from my body, the joy that you were finally here; that WE DID IT was just the most amazing feeling ever. I was overwhelmed with pride and happiness. Sean was standing next to the doctor, ready to help deliver but Dr. G realized that your shoulders were not coming out no matter what. He cut an episiotomy and pulled and you were born. You just looked up at everyone and smiled and cuddled into my breast. You were AMAZING! At that moment, Dr. G's wife rang in to remind him that they had a party to go to and he cried and told her about our beautiful baby and that he was on the way.

Then everyone left and it was just you and me kiddo and I cuddled and kissed you all night long. I don't think I slept a wink.

The next morning the nurses took you for a bit so that I could get a shower and they held you up at the desk and realized you were not able to move your arms. When the pediatrician came by to check out all the babies that day, she came to my room to examine you privately and then took you away for some x-rays. Your collarbones were both broken-the result of my not pushing and being on my back for the entire labor and delivery. I felt horrible and you didn't feel too great about it either. It took about 5 weeks for you to fully recover and in the meantime we pinned

your sleeves on your chest so that your arms were crossed and comfortable. It was very uncomfortable for you to nurse so I pumped and pumped and pumped breast milk for you and we rocked and you drank from a bottle. You were and still are one of the most amazing creations I have ever witnessed. You were 7 pounds and 14 ounces and beautiful from head to toe. Your name means "girl who is the beacon on the hill" and you are truly a beacon of light in my world.

Birth Number Three

McKenzie Reagan's Birth Story

So, here's my story...I had had no cramps, no contractions, no nuthin' all day long, I had cooked a huge pot of chicken soup and had just gotten done eating a bowl full and a big ole peanut butter sandwich - I laid down on the bed to get a nap and water water everywhere...

(5:45 PM)...so, I screamed for Sean to come here now and tell me if I had just wet myself or if it was the real thing...he checked and decided this was it..you should have seen the grin on his face - he was so excited...He called the sitter, I called the midwife...she said that if it were really my water that it wouldn't stop leaking and that I didn't need to go to the hospital unless I started having regular contractions - otherwise to just come see her at her office the next day...

(6:00 PM) contractions started up and started getting painful and coming every 4 minutes...the sitter arrives and we get the suitcase and head out...

(6:15PM) The car phone rings, it's the sitter - did you mean to take the camera bag?? We turn around and head back, get the bag and start over...contractions every 3 minutes

(6:45 PM) The fastest tunnel is totally clogged so we have to go the long way through Downtown Norfolk...I am very uncomfortable...We are finally back on the highway that we needed to be on in the first place but couldn't get to because of the traffic and Sean keeps saying just 10 more minutes and we will be there (as he drives right by the exit for the hospital)

(7:15 PM) We finally get there, park, I get out and water is all over my legs and I am aching pretty good but the contractions have backed down to 5 minutes apart...We meet our doula at the top of the elevator and we go into the Maternity Center - they don't even ask if I'm sure, they just usher me into a Labor/Deliver/Recovery/Postpartum Room and hand me a gown.

(7:30PM) Remember Glenda the good witch??? Well, her evil twin decides she is my nurse for the night!! Anyhow, it wound up being a great thing...She hooks me to the evil monitor and tells me 10 minutes is all I have to stay...half an hour later she traipses in as I am ready to rip her eyes out and says she can't see any accelerations in the baby's heartrate, we wonder, "are you blind???" because right then, McKenzie's hr went from

139 to 157 and back down to 142...

(8:00 PM) She checked me and said I was 3, posterior and thick (hello?? wasn't it just Friday that I was 4, posterior and getting very thinned out??) anyhow...She assures me that she will call Laurie, the MW, and let her know we are there and what is going on...Now, I know that Laurie isn't going to come until I am in active labor and that is great with me, I figure I am doing super with Anita, my doula and Sean my fabulous husband...

(11:00 PM) Between 8 and now I have been in the shower (which I determined was some kind of evil torture device) and in the rocking chair and darn near breaking Sean's back leaning on him and squatting against him...Sean actually looked at me and said that I was the sexiest, most beautiful woman he had ever seen and you know, it meant the entire world to me for him to say that as I am aching and moaning and breathing and feeling Mc move down inside me...We are farther than we have ever been before!! We are going to do this!!

The evil nurse comes in again and makes me get in bed and checks me and I am now 5 and totally anterior and thinned out and I am really, really uncomfortable - but I can moan a very loud OHHHHH sound and I am making it through each contraction...our doula just kept putting hot compresses on my belly and Sean just kept encouraging me (although during this bed visit, I turned my head and bit him during one contraction...we all laughed so hard after that it pushed Mc even farther down (but what the evil nurse didn't know was a good thing)...so, FINALLY the nurse lets me get up again and we are up and we go to try the shower again...Again, it just isn't what I need and I am just plain hurting by now...I turn around to lean on Sean and everything goes "bye bye"...I can't see, it's totally black, I feel myself sagging against him and he is calling Anita for help...they get me to the rocking chair where I promptly throw up all over God's creation (Glenda's twin was nowhere to be found) and it is all over from that point...

All I can do is breathe out, I can barely inhale...I am begging for Laurie - somebody find the evil nurse and make sure she calls Laurie...I beg the housekeeper that comes in, find my midwife...Sean and Anita just keep me calm and help me breathe (although they are worried because my lips are white - but I really, and truly could not inhale)...Then evil nurse walks in and says Laurie's on her way and I ask for some oxygen and she TURNS AROUND AND WALKS OUT!!...I am having contractions that last for at least 1 minute a piece and are coming with only about a 20 second break in between...It was so incredibly intense...Sean is doing this fabulous fingertip massage on my belly and Anita is using hot compresses on my perineal area and my low belly and it feels so good.

(12:00 AM) I have lost it, I am begging for drugs, the epidural...somebody find my midwife, somebody find my nurse, somebody find the anesthetist (Nancy walks in and says "he's right down the hall, he has the drugs and as soon as Laurie says it's ok, he'll be right here)...then she left again, I told Sean I was going to walk naked down the hall

and get the anesthesiologist myself!!...I don't know what is going, on - why is this hurting so much if i am not near the end?

(12:20 AM) Evil Nurse comes back with some Nubaine...I can feel the baby in the birth canal - maybe just barely coming through my cervix at this point...evil nurse makes me get up and walk to the bed and refuses to let me squat or lean on Sean while I contract...Just get in the bed if you want the drugs (could anyone lower the bed??? no, I have to climb MT Everest while I am in labor)...From nowhere this other woman comes in our room and tells me that I need to be quiet and keep my mouth closed while a contraction is happening...HELLO???.the only way I could survive was to open my mouth and moan as loud as I wanted to and every time I did that, I could feel the baby drop farther down...but, when I would do her little suggestion I would scream bloody murder...she got the idea and left after about 1 contraction...

Evil nurse gives me the nubaine and suddenly this feeling I have NEVER felt before in my life comes over me and I am not sure if I am throwing up or what..but, this groan that comes from deep deep in me lets loose and the baby is coming down!! One push..."DON'T PUSH, Are you pushing???" yells Evil Nurse..."Hell, I don't know" I yell back..I have never done this before...She runs (the first action we have seen from her all night) and slams her fist up inside me...pushing the baby back up...

Laurie walks in calmly as she can and I am just screaming because I am in agony and what the nurse just did didn't help a darned thing...She makes me open my legs which I had been holding shut like a vise (I yelled at her to get it out and she said, "now honey, you are gonna have to relax and open your legs up...she doesn't have a handle and we are gonna have to push her out). She and Sean take one look and see this beautiful brown mohawk hanging out from my vagina, not much more pushing needed...Laurie puts Sean's hands in the right place, tells me to push again and out comes Mc's head, then she showed Sean how to unwrap the umbilical cord and lets him play with Mc's hand because it is coming out with her head (not nearly as scary as he thought that would be...remember that was one of his big fears about doing a UC)...another push Jen (her voice is so gentle and calm, Sean is crying...Nurse Ratchett is nowhere to be found again (thank God)...out she comes...no rips, no tears, no hemorrhoids...Laurie just stood back the whole time and told Sean what to do and let him do everything...Mc came out and when she didn't breathe at all or start changing color for over a minute we passed her over to the ped and her air bag...it took about 5 minutes of oxygen for her to even make a wiggle and we were pretty nervous...but eventually she let out a hello and then she calmly went back to sleep...I delivered the placenta, got up and went to the bathroom and snuggled in with my husband, my baby, my doula and my midwife...it is 1 AM...and all is well in my world...

We later find out from Laurie that the nurse did call her at 11 to say I was 5 and that things were going slow and so Laurie was tucking her kids in and getting her bag together to head our way...the nurse never told Laurie about my fainting or the throwing up or how fast and hard the contractions were...probably because her total

time in our room that night was less than an hour...anyhow, the only reason Laurie got there when she did was that Evil Nurse Ratchett called her to say I wanted an epidural and Laurie jumped in her car and gunned it over to me...she was hoppin' mad too because she missed out on my labor...2 more pushes and she would have missed out on my birth..

I think I spent all of yesterday just crying because I felt so cheated again, I really lost it between 11:45 and delivery, I couldn't breathe in, I couldn't not moan very very loudly and I couldn't sit still...I was so sad because I knew that it would not have felt so frantic if Laurie had been there or if my nurse had just said to me, honey, everything is ok and you are doing great and the baby will be here soon...all I had was my doula and my hubby...Then it hit me...all I had was my doula and my hubby...and God planned it just the way we needed it...we got through the Labor and it was really beautiful...I would have moaned and groaned and not sat still if I was at home so, why should I have been any different at the hospital??...Laurie got there just in time to help Sean deliver (which was his biggest fear about homebirth)...she stayed long enough to comfort me and watch me bf and then she went home to her son - it was his birthday too - It finally really sank in last night that we did this all by ourselves, we didn't have a nurse for help - she was never around and we didn't have a midwife to help - she hadn't been called...it was all us...us and God and it was beautiful!!!! I have never felt so whole and complete...Thank you all for your prayers and your blessings during my L&D...I could feel them coming through...

We had to stay for 48 hours because I was GBS positive and the ped wouldn't release the baby until 12:01 this morning so, we escaped then...Sean got me home and put me to bed and sat up with Mc all night long lovin' on her...He says that next baby we are having a waterbirth at home...he will never make me go to a hospital again to birth a baby

Birth Number Four

Delaney Quinn's Birth Story

On October 17, I called my doc's office and made an appointment. Now, I am ONLY seeing Dr. Howard at that office because he is the ONLY doc there that actually believes that birth is a completely normal and natural process. Anyhow, I couldn't get in with him so had to make the appointment with Dr. J - a young doctor fresh out of school. I honestly thought he would be some snot nosed kid who wouldn't listen or understand and would treat me like an idiot but I was hurting in my hips and belly pretty bad and needed to be seen.

Sean and I go to the appointment at 3 and Dr. J checks me - I am dilated 3-4 and he went ahead and stretched me to a full four - at this point I was a week overdue and I wanted anything that would make labor start. He told us that he was very certain that

if he broke my water that we would have a baby that evening and did we want to go over to the hospital and get things started? I am really hesitant to go but I told him I wanted to talk with Sean and pray about it and I wanted to talk with the MW before we made any decisions. We get home, talk with Robin (the MW) who says it's great with her but she can't be with us until 11 pm and we prayed. Now if you guys will remember I have had a feeling all along that we would have a problem AFTER the delivery and need help so after Sean and I prayed and talked about how my BP was up again and so on, we had the feeling that we really should be at the hosp. Sean called the Doc back and asked if we could wait to come in until about 8 or 8:30 that night. Doc says that is great with him.

Well at 8PM, the hospital calls and asks if we are really coming because they have 12 women in labor and are holding the room with the Jacuzzi tub for me and they only have 6 rooms and I need to get over there shortly. Right as we get off the phone with them, Cathi Wimmer (from the board) pulls up - she has just had a feeling that something was going on. We arrive at the hospital at 8:30. Cathi waits out in the waiting room because Sean and I wanted to have some private time until labor really sets in.

At 9pm, Dr. J breaks my water and off we go...I go out of the room and my plan is to walk around the floor well, I make it up one hall and by that point I am faint and nauseous so we head back for my room...contrax are coming every 3.5 minutes and things are really starting to get intense. My friend Anita had arrived and was walking with us and since things were already getting busy she just stuck around. We get back into my room and I head straight for the rocking chair. Sean is doing effleurage on my tummy and Anita is applying hot compresses. Cathi, bless her heart, is still in the waiting room and things are just getting too intense and I won't let anyone leave to go get her - although I keep telling them to call her (how goofy is that)...

At 10:30 Robin arrives and promptly gets my hiney into the Jacuzzi tub - the doc has come in a couple of times to just check up on me and make sure I am ok (he didn't want to do any checks or anything - he was just making certain that we were all ok). I get in the Jacuzzi and the pain eases off a bit for about a half hour and Robin monitors me every now and then with the handheld Doppler. Sean is talking in my ear and rubbing circles on my belly and holding my hand and telling me how great I am and all I can think for the ENTIRE labor is what an incredible MAN he is - how he does love me, I was overwhelmed with his love for me. The contrax really pick up and they are about a minute apart and a minute long so yes, pretty continuous. Once again, true to form, I throw up all over everything in the room and we know we have about 45 mins till baby is here (I am just thanking God at this point because I know it is almost over but then again I am terrified that it can't really be going this fast and something must be going crazy with my body). Robin checks me while I am in the tub and she said the baby's head is just on the other side of the pubic bone. I am squatting the best I can in the tub

and bearing down just a little and begging Sean and Robin to please get her/it out..LOL..

At 12 midnite we get out of the Jacuzzi and I take one step and have a contraction, another step and have a contraction, another step and sit on the toilet – Robin and I are convinced we are having a toilet baby! At this point, I ask everyone to just pray for me because it is so painful I just can't think anymore, the contractions are just so very powerful. Everyone, Robin, Anita, Cathi (who thank God just happened to come and ask how I was doing and the nurse brought her back) and Sean gathered around me, laid hands on my belly and prayed for the baby and me. I could feel the angels settling around me, things became calmer in my spirit, and I felt renewed. Robin asks if it would be alright if she checks me and I get one leg on the bed and one off and she tells me I have an anterior lip and that she can hold it back for me and that will probably get me to ten real quick.

She holds the lip back (no one mentioned that would hurt REALLY bad I might add..LOL) and I push past it. She says ok, you are complete...and my body is already bearing down to deliver the baby...I am leaning against Sean, half standing, one leg on the bed, one off and am pushing – Robin goes to tell the doc we are pushing and to grab cord clamps and she says, "Jeni just give me one contraction, just one" and I tell her there is no way, the baby is coming right now...it was so beautiful!!!!!!!!! So she literally runs out of the room and I am yelling to Sean that her head is coming – he checks and she isn't out yet and he is desperately trying to get gloves on. Then I yell, her head is out and he looks down and sure enough she's out up to her ears...Robin gets back in the room and realizes the baby is literally going to fall out any sec and she and Sean roll me onto the bed (Dr. J has come in and is standing in the corner with his hands in his pockets totally calm – when he realizes D's head is out {I think he was in total shock because he is usually called when there is 15 mins of pushing involved not when the baby is coming NOW} he walks over to the foot of the bed and just stands near Sean.) Sean is trying to find the cord that he knows is wrapped around D's neck but he can't get hold of it and Dr. J reaches down and unwraps it and then helps Sean to deliver the shoulders and then it is over, she is out and beautiful...I sit up and look between my legs and there she is!!!! The most beautiful, deep purple baby I have ever seen in my Life!!! Dr. J very, very gently and just barely suctions her nose and mouth and she starts to spit and fuss. He says to Sean, "the cord is done pulsing will you cut it" and then I am holding my beautiful, vernix covered, 41-week princess. Her official time of birth is 12:12 AM on October 18.

She immediately starts nursing and Sean and I are crying and rejoicing and Anita and Cathi and Robin are doing the same and so is the DOC!!

About 15 mins later Dr. J sits down to find out if my placenta has released and he is very gentle but it isn't released yet...15 mins later he tries again and still nothing, 15

mins later still no progress – after a full hour of him just sitting at my feet while I happily nurse my baby and we are all chatting about baseball, and the placenta has still not moved – I bear down and he peels what is attached off the wall of my uterus (ouch!!). And it is all over and I am in love with my baby and my incredible husband who held me and lifted me up and talked me through this whole labor – this incredible phenomenal overwhelming freight train of an experience that is labor and birth!! How alive I feel as a woman, how alive I feel as a mother, as a lover, as a friend, as a Christian!!! I am just enveloped in a golden glow – I have never ever in all my life felt such love and fulfillment!

My blood pressure is at 180/120.

I know that so many of us have had bad hospital experiences and bad doctors but I truly believe that the Lord sent Dr. J to us this day. I had been praying for the Lord to let the baby come on the Sunday prior to her birth and He just kept saying for me to wait on Him. There were many circumstances that led us to be with Dr. J on Tuesday, not Wednesday and I believe they were all God! I truly believe that if it had been any other doc, I would have been strapped down, monitored, questioned (grilled!), and given the once over treatment. I certainly would have been having vaginal checks on a regular basis and he did NONE – Robin checked for the baby’s position once in the tub and she checked for the lip once on the bed and that was all. I know I would have been yelled at for delivering her head while standing, Sean would have more than likely been shoved out of the way so that they could “save the baby”, and certainly the cord would have been cut immediately and she would have been harshly suctioned. There is NO doctor who practices there who would have waited a full hour for my placenta to release, they would have either yanked it out to start with, given me a big dose of pit OR taken me to the OR (Robin was honestly waiting for him to say, “prep her for the OR”. She wouldn’t remove my heplock until 3 hours after delivery when she was certain I wasn’t going to hemorrhage).

I just want you all to know that Sean and I truly believe that God Himself set it up – that when He was saying for me to wait on Sunday, he was saying to wait for the perfect timing that was to happen for us on Tuesday. This beautiful girl was conceived to my supposedly barren and infertile womb – a womb that is supposed to need fertility drugs to function at all!! And I believe that God’s hand was with me all the way through this pregnancy, labor and delivery!! I believe that it was God’s plan for us to be at the hospital and that He told us that is where we needed to be on Tuesday when Sean and I were praying, that He lined everything up just right because there are so many things that should have been done differently but were instead done just the way we wanted.

Birth Five

Gearod Sean's Birth Story

Cathi arrived around 330pm on Tuesday, the 21st, to spend the night and take care of the kiddos. We stuffed ourselves on Chinese food and gaga'd over how beautiful Cathi is and how she is just glowing from her new marriage! What a HUGE blessing she was to come over for us!

Why did we choose to go to the hospital? I don't really know. My blood pressure was up, I was spilling protein, seeing dots, my hips were on fire and Sean felt like we needed to go and he actually wanted me to stay for 48 hours (which I talked him out of), Robin was leaving for 3 weeks, it was Dr. J's last day on call for a week (and he is the only doc who will "allow" Sean to deliver the baby), so it was a whole bunch of little things that added up.

We woke up at 4AM on May 22, 2002 so that we could be at the hospital around 5am to start the antibiotics to cover the GBS for the birth of our baby. We were pretty tired because we had gone to bed after midnite - finding it really hard to settle down because we were so excited.

We arrived at the hospital at 5am and I was checked in and an IV started so that I could receive antibiotics for the GBS. I received the first dose at 6am. Sean left to go to McDonald's so he could have breakfast and sneak me some food as well! Robin, my doula, arrived at 8 (and Sean was still gone). It wound up being pretty funny because Robin had had a dream the night before that I had delivered in the tub and Sean was nowhere to be found so when she walked in and saw that he was missing she just started laughing! I called Sean on the cell phone and he had lost track of time, reading a book and eating a biscuit - when I tracked him down, he was in the drive thru line at McD's. He brought me back a Cheese and Egg biscuit which was SO yummy and I ate it down as fast as I could!

My next dose of antibiotics arrived at 10 and so did Dr. J. He checked me and said that I was dilated to 6 and at about 30% effacement. He had some trouble breaking my water (Teflon bag theory) but it finally gushed beautiful and clear. The nurse, Kay, monitored me for about 15 mins and then pushed me out of the room to go take a walk. I stood up and water gushed everywhere! You could watch the roundness of my belly go down as water would gush out. Robin was rolling on the floor as I was just standing there spewing fluid - and heaven help me if I laughed, because laughing just made it even funnier and gushier! Robin and her assistant, Tiffany, hung out in the room while Sean and I started walking. I with a towel rolled up in my undies...lolololol...oh how sexy childbirth is!

About 12, Tiffany left and had lunch. Then Robin had lunch and then Sean had lunch and I ate off all their plates - and I had the privilege of eating all the lovely delicious jello that the hospital kept sending my way. . I was still not contracting at all. I tried the birth ball, squatting, hands and knees but nothing! Not even one contraction (ok maybe

the occasional one but certainly nothing spectacular.)

Dr. J called up to the floor and asked if I would like some pitocin – thankfully Kay and Robin were there for me and asked him if he was insane? LOL!!

I crawled back in bed for my 2 o'clock dosing of antibiotics and Robin was rubbing my belly because we could really feel where the baby was at this point and she felt that his head was crooked over to one side. I was getting frustrated because it had been 9 hours since I arrived and NOTHING was going on! I asked, "What do we do now to get things going?" She said either I take a nap for an hour or she and Tif would leave and I could make out with my husband! WAHOO!! Robin left and returned with a bottle of olive oil – she rubbed it all over my belly and prayed for labor to begin, then she anointed Sean's hands with it and prayed for him. Tiffany and Robin left, leaving orders for me to try hands and knees to realign baby, nipple stim, smooching and talking. Soooooo it took about 10 mins and I felt 2 pops in my pelvis and then big contrax started up (the pops were his head moving into position which I thought was really cool). We continued the nip stim for another 5 mins and then I moved to the birth ball and had Sean go get Robin because the contrax were hard.

Robin came back and got the water for the tub ready and I got in. What a wonderful thing water is! The contrax were really hard but not such a big deal that I would want drugs for them and I remember saying that I just couldn't understand why anyone would want drugs for birth. I think I was dilated 7/8 at this point. Baby was still up high something like -2.

Sean had Tiffany call Cathi at the house and the girls came on over which just overwhelmed me so much that I sobbed and sobbed and sobbed in the tub, it was like a flood gate had opened and all I could do was cry. Just seeing all four of their beautiful faces and knowing they were going to be there for the birth of their brother was so incredible to me!

I stayed in the tub for a long time – until I just wasn't comfortable anymore at all no matter what I tried.

I was feeling a little nauseous which is usually a great sign that I am near the end so I honestly thought that this was about over..LOL!!

I don't remember the sequence of things from there on out – I just remember that labor got really incredibly hard and that I couldn't breathe or move. I went to the birthball and the bed and the birthball and the bed again. I was begging for drugs – just anything to take the edge off because it was so intense. Caitlin was giving me warm compresses for my belly at some point and I was so proud of her for helping out. When I started vomiting I knew it was near the end for real but the pain of Gearod's head pounding on

my cervix every time I vomited was way too intense. All I could say was out, pain, hurt, and help. Everyone kept saying Lean on the Lord, Give it to Jesus and they were all praying so hard and rubbing my back and my belly, I got up on my hands and knees on the bed and pushed back against Robin's hands which hurt so badly but I could feel the progress. Worship music was playing, I was moaning and sobbing and begging anyone to make it stop. I FINALLY was able to cry out to God to just help me – which I had not done yet and I think that made all the difference. Everyone in my room was a Christian and was praying so hard and once I finally just gave it up and said Lord I can't do this myself things started to move really fast. I only remember that the pain was so intense that I would lay on the bed and arch my back and moan all the way through the contraction and then just keep moaning because it felt like it never ended and then another one would start up. It was so hard.

Dr. J came back in around 7:10 and checked me and said I was complete and I said, “so, I can push, right??” – when everyone said yes, I just started pushing even though I had no urge yet. I pushed and grunted and pushed and grunted. Everyone kept encouraging me to roll over but it was just so intense that I didn't want to move, I just wanted the baby out!! Sean helped to move my leg so that I was on my back (and in my mind I am thinking I cannot believe I am in a bed on my back pushing out a baby and then I thought well duh you got on the bed, and then I thought just get it out!!) and he could see the baby coming out. Dr. J got gowned up and got Sean gowned up and gloved – which they didn't do last time. I just kept grunting the baby down – finally folks were yelling don't push, don't push. And I was thinking WHAT! STOP PUSHING!!???!! But I guess it was important to do because Robin told me to just breathe for a sec so I did. Then I pushed out the head and the shoulders and the rest of him and I was too tired to care about anything else. I heard him cry for a second and then Caitlin cut the cord. Someone placed him on my chest, but I was really too exhausted to care. I just looked at him and looped an arm over him and thanked God that it was over.

The placenta came out very easily right about then and I asked the doctor if that meant I was truly no longer pregnant and he said yes and everyone laughed but I was so sincere – I didn't want any part of ever being pregnant again or feeling labor and birth again either! I didn't even want my dream of being a midwife anymore – I never ever wanted to see another labor room from any angle!

Sean took Gearod and held him and loved on him with the girls and I was gushing a bit too much blood so I wound up with 2 bags of Pit to try and stop the bleeding. I had hardly any afterpains and he nursed like a champ from the very beginning. I had no tears or skids or anything, the only damage was to my emotions. I was torn up about how hard the labor was and I felt such enormous guilt about just not caring when he came out.

I think I cried about that guilt for about 2 days and then Sean and I talked it out and I

realized that God himself was with me the whole time and that it was such a holy thing to be given the privilege of birthing a child. And that it was ok to be exhausted, that I was not pushing Gearod away, I looped my arm over him to comfort and love on him even in the midst of the exhaustion.

Now, that I am a week away from it all, I realize what a beautiful, precious time it was for Sean and I. We were together and it was so intimate and close a time for us. He held me all the way through, he was my rock and gave me such strength during pain that I didn't think I could handle, he prayed for me and talked to me and kissed me and loved on me and I felt more connected to him during those four and a half hours than I ever have. Robin was such a blessing, just knowing that she was there and would protect us and that she was praying so hard for me made me able to hold on a little bit longer, knowing that she loved me and cared enough to know my wishes and respect them even though it would have been MUCH easier to just give in and shoot some Nubain in my IV - what strength it must take to not do that when your good friend is hurting. Having Tiffany's quiet spirit bring the juice and the ice and the jello at just the right times was also such a great blessing, she wasn't there and then suddenly she was..! And knowing that my kids were ok and that Cathi had things under control was such a great blessing and relief to me. I wanted them there so much and I was so worried that they would be a bother but they weren't.

This was a wonderful birth and a healing birth and Gearod is the greatest gift!

Birth Number Six

Moira Eowyn's Birth

I had gone to the sofa to try and sleep around 0330. I was channel surfing when Brenna got up to use the bathroom. I told her to get her hiney back to bed because it was way too early. Then my water broke. I yelled, "Brenna, are you still awake" and she said she was so I asked her to go get Sean.

She told him that I needed him and he said, "yeah sure, I am on the way" and promptly fell back asleep.

Then I called Brenna back and asked her to please tell Daddy that my water had broken.

That got his attention.

Sean called Robin.

I started moaning through contractions which were far apart but serious.

Robin arrived around 0500.

She took a peek to make sure that the cord wasn't hanging out because I was terrified that the cord had prolapsed and I wouldn't move from my position on the sofa until she checked me.

Then I wanted a shower because I was COVERED in fluid. Robin helped me in the shower and then we headed for the birth ball in our bedroom.

We were all joking and laughing and then BLAMMO all of a sudden, things got serious. Robin was doing dishes and we were laughing and then all of a sudden it felt like the baby just slid down and got ready to come out. Something completely changed in my body and I wasn't sure what it was but I was in the middle of a contraction and my moan went from low and deep to that "this is serious O my goodness, primal" birthing scream. Robin asked me what was different and I told her I thought the baby had dropped VERY low and I wanted in the tub.

So I got in the tub.

At this point it was about 0630.

The contractions kept coming stronger and harder. Sean would lay his hands on me and pray everytime that a contraction would start. As he would pray, I could feel the pain lift off of me just enough so that each contraction was bearable. It was truly the Holy Spirit. I would want to run from the pain but I would consciously tell myself, "NO, don't run, this is how the baby is coming" and then Sean would pray and the contraction would be over. It was beautiful.

I leaned forward in the tub and started pushing. It was my first time to push while on my hands and knees and it felt awkward to begin with - but then it just felt GREAT! Pushing is SO great! I felt her moving down the birth canal - and then she was OUT! This was around 0730.

As Moira floated out, Sean passed her to Tiffany and I leaned back into his lap. We waited for her cord to stop pulsing and then we got out of the tub.

I delivered the placenta on the birth stool.

Then I got in bed and enjoyed my friends and my family and my baby. All of the kids were here with us and everyone who is important to my life was with us. It was AMAZING.

God was SO very very apparent at this birth! I was able to let my body do what it needed to do and I was able to lean on the Lord instead of fighting the pain and going with the urge to run from it. I am so glad we stayed home this time.

The hardest part of the labor was that Sean would move in the tub during a contraction and it would make my belly sway - and that is NOT what you want to have happen when you are in labor and on your hands and knees.