



### Lindsey's Story

I delivered my first two babies at home. My kids tend to come early, however, and my labor with my second was long, difficult, and complicated. When we conceived our third, my husband and I decided to seek out obstetric care that would strike a balance between the spiritual and emotional support we'd experienced with our home births and the extensive medical resources available to mamas and babies in a traditional hospital setting.

My sister delivered her son at Vanderbilt with the Vanderbilt nurse-midwives and was blown away by her experience. Her water broke without warning at 34 weeks and while her baby spent almost a month in the NICU, her birth experience was without intervention, in keeping with her birth plan, and as calm as an emergent preterm delivery could be. She sang the praises of the wise and adept women who cried with her, counseled her, and made space for both grief and celebration as she watched her tiny baby struggle and then thrive. She urged me to contact them, and I'm so grateful I did.

My pregnancy with my third was a bit of a roller-coaster. From abnormal first trimester screening tests to a preterm labor scare at 29 weeks, I wanted to feel safe and seen as much as I needed the expert monitoring and medicine available to me at Vanderbilt. The midwives listened to my fears and concerns. They worked with me on devising a flexible birth plan. They allowed me to have agency and ownership over my body and my baby while still providing inviolable medical care. They never patronized, never minimized, never catastrophized.

My labor and delivery with Mira was calm, joyful, and dare I say fun? Having given birth without any pain medication twice, I opted to have an epidural. I was well-informed about all of the ways my hospital birth would be different from my previous ones. I always had a choice in my care, my questions were thoroughly answered, and both my physical and emotional comfort were considered throughout my labor and delivery. I was part of a team.

At 1:48am on August 30th 2018, Mira Willow was placed on my chest. We guessed at her weight, giggled at her chunky thighs and full head of hair, and marveled at what my body had done for a third time. And I must say that napping and eating popsicles during the hardest part of labor felt like kind of a vacation. Modern medicine is pretty amazing. And so are the Vandy nurse-midwives.

~ Lindsey M.