

Welcome to the world, little one

Backpacks were packed, shoes were on, and we were gathering things to head out the door when the phone rang.

It was my little sister.

“You have a new nephew!” she said. She told me that our younger brother and his wife had welcomed their new baby boy—their fifth child—in the early morning hours. He wasn’t named yet, but he was here, safe and sound.

We congratulated each other on our aunthood, made a few intentionally wrong guesses at his name, and then we hung up.

I had fun sharing the news with our boys and later my husband. There’s something marvelous about being the bearer of good news. This little baby’s birth changed the whole day.

Not that I was able to focus entirely on my new nephew. It was so busy at the office that I didn’t even have a chance to call the hospital gift shop to order a large, borderline-obnoxious balloon for the big siblings to enjoy when their baby brother comes home.

As the hours passed throughout the day, there seemed to be complications and challenges—an unexpected doctor’s visit, friends and family who needed prayers, even word of a suicide of a celebrity who had seemed to have an idyllic life. It was, in some ways, a heavy day.

Still, I kept thinking of our new baby cousin and nephew, and I found myself smiling just to know that he is here. This baby, every child, is a gift. There’s a newness and an excitement, a sense of hope and joy that comes with the arrival of a new baby. And that joy touches everything in the day.

When I saw this little one’s picture for the first time, I couldn’t take my eyes off of him. He has chubby cheeks and perfect little fingers, and something about him that reminds me of a couple of his big brothers. He’s just so cute. (Sorry to disappoint,

but the baby photo at the top of this piece is not of him.)

He lives hours away, so I won't get to hold him for a while, but I know he will wait patiently to meet his Aunt Rita. And one day I'll tell him the story of how I remember that first phone call telling us that he had arrived, just as I remember the call announcing every one of his cousins and siblings.

Welcome to the world, baby boy. We can't wait to get to know you.