



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Celebrating over a Decade of Ministry by Jason Thompson

*Some people love change. They are energized by fresh faces, new routines and different challenges. As for me, I enjoy familiar faces, somewhat predictable outcomes and the refining of what already works well. As such, when I came back from vacation this past summer and heard some big news that would include a significant change at Portland Fellowship, my heart stopped for a moment. Yet, I am confident in the Lord's leading and blessing as we say goodbye to one of our beloved staff members, Drew Berryessa.*

Almost 15 years ago, Drew came into my office wanting to learn how to "help others" with this issue of homosexuality. It wasn't but a week later when he came back admitting that he himself needed support in this area of his life. Before I met him, Drew had already surrendered the idea of pursuing same sex relationships, but his desire in coming to Portland Fellowship was to invite the Lord into deeper areas of his heart and allow the Lord to transform his life.

Drew holds the distinctive honor of being one of the first interns in the Upper Room Community. It was in that newly formed program where he tackled many of his emotional and relational wounds. He then went on to volunteer as a small group leader and soon thereafter became a staff member.

Drew and I have gone through many different roles in our relationship. He came in as a participant and is now leaving as one of my closest friends. We have been through the joys and trials of ministry together, and we have blessed and encouraged one another, both in our personal lives and in the lives of our families.

Because of his intentional commitment to press into the healing process and give back all he has learned, Drew has become my favorite transformational story in all my years of serving at Portland Fellowship. I am deeply grateful that the Lord brought Drew into my life and that we've been able to serve together for more than a decade.

Drew has not only blessed my life, but has blessed the lives of countless others through Portland Fellowship. The following reflections are from just a few of those who have been lovingly impacted by Drew:

*"Years ago, Drew and I both worked at the same phone company. I felt camaraderie with him even back then, knowing we shared the same heart for ministry. Fast forward to today—now he is being called to do something different beyond Portland Fellowship. I am grateful for Drew and the work he has done here. It has not gone by unnoticed by us or the Lord. I don't have the words to adequately thank him for the things he spoke into my life and the changes encouraged by him. It will be hard to see him leave but I understand this is not 'good-bye,' just 'see ya later.'*

*I am excited though to watch Drew enter into a new season of his life with the Lord. I know the Lord has fashioned him for such a time as this and I have watched Drew be a weapon of warfare in the Lord's hand. I am confident it will only continue to be that way. Drew is mighty in spirit and is a lover of truth; precious is his heart. He will be missed at PF and remembered as the man he has become. Drew, though your office maybe occupied by someone else, you cannot be replaced. I will miss you. See ya later."* — **Kathy Grace Duncan, Board Chair**



Drew Berryessa served PF faithfully and passionately for over a decade.

“God bless Drew for his tenacity—I like to think of him as the spiritual bulldog of Portland Fellowship. While some people give up on God, loved ones, or their own journey, Drew doesn’t quit. Personally, I will be forever grateful for Drew’s ferocious love and commitment to me and my journey through TBG and the Upper Room Community. Sometimes I felt bad for the man; he had to listen to me for an hour every week, and let’s face it, anyone who can survive that deserves an award.

In all seriousness, I am so humbled by the way Drew has served the Lord and loved me, even at my worst. Thank you, Drew, for being the literal hands, feet and arms of Christ to me. Your investment at PF will continue to bear fruit for years to come, both in my life and in the lives of many others.”

– **Patrick Silvis**

“My friendship with Drew began in 2008. At that time, it was mostly Drew speaking life over me and calling me into a deeper healing in my walk with Christ. His wife, Suzanne, became one of my best friends. This is a family that loves deeply and unconditionally. Through the years our relationship has grown and I have always been personally blessed by his teachings, mentorship and leadership. I will never outgrow that. His gifts have touched my life in a dynamic way, and I am so grateful.

Drew has played an incredible role in my life journey, and working alongside him has been such a gift. He has not only invested in my discipleship process, but that of my husband’s as well. He personally mentored Brian and I, and even married us in 2010. It is because of Drew’s recommendation that I work at Portland Fellowship. So many of my dreams have come to fruition because of the leadership of Drew Berryessa. This is incredible. There aren’t many people that can say that about their co-workers and friends.

Drew has been a part of my entire Portland Fellowship experience, and this will be the first time that my life at PF exists without him. He will be tremendously missed. However, I have deep anticipation in my heart for what is to come, knowing and believing that whatever we can imagine, perceive, or dream will be exceeded by the plans that God has prepared for Drew in this next season. I Corinthians 2:9.” – **Cynthia Beaudry**

“Ahh yes, Drew. Where would I be without him? That’s a question I don’t care to explore because my world is decidedly a better place with him in it. After all, how often do you find someone who cares enough to love even the parts of yourself you think are unlovable? Drew gave me time, tears and tools to bring my whole self to the cross, walking with me every step of the way in my greatest times of need. He shared in my burdens and helped me understand the path I was walking when I was blind to it. When I reflect on his time at

Portland Fellowship, I can say that time spent with Drew has always been rich: full of love, deep in emotion, filled with laughter and levity, and overflowing with wisdom, healing, understanding and grace. Above all, Drew is rich in Christ and a man passionately dedicated to revealing the love of God to people. What a grace he has been to me and countless others. I love you, Drew, and I thank you for everything. God bless you.” – **Cole Atkinson**

“Drew is truly a gift from the Lord. This man loves and trusts Jesus in a hope-filled, encouraging and honest way. He has taught me what authentic surrender and hope are, and he’s encouraged the pursuit of my true identity as Christ’s Beloved. Drew has cried with me as a father cries with his daughter, rejoiced with me in my victories and encouraged me in my doubts, fears and frustrations. I admire how this man of God loves his family, his wife and his friends deeply and without abandon. He is courageous! I cannot tell you how many times Drew has made me belly laugh and feel included as a daughter of Christ. I am so excited for God’s plan and work in your life. Love your face, Drew!”

– **Julie Kirchhoff**



The Berryessa Family  
Olivia, Lanie, Suzanne, Drew and Bailey (“Squish”)

So why is Drew leaving? Over the past year, Drew has been cultivating a passion for taking all he has learned and making himself available to build up the Church, and equip it to understand and respond to the issue of sexual brokenness from a fully Biblical foundation. After much prayer and discernment, Drew is creating a new non-profit organization called **A Living Letter Ministries**, which will focus on educating and training churches on Biblical sexuality and discipleship.

Portland Fellowship’s mission continues to be ministering to those struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions, and now it is a great privilege to stand alongside Drew and his family as they respond to God’s calling to address the broader issue of sexual brokenness in the Church with Biblical truth and love. We welcome you to learn more about Drew’s ministry and invite him to speak at your church. For more information please visit [www.alivingletter.org](http://www.alivingletter.org).

Thank you, Drew, for your faithful service to the Lord at Portland Fellowship. I will truly miss our day to day, heart-filled, passionate conversations as well as all the joy and laughter. While you will be deeply missed, we joyfully send you out, anticipating great things in this new season as you trust the Lord’s calling in your life. – **With the Love of Christ,**  
**Jason Thompson**

## welcoming our newest staff member

As Drew ventures off to minister to the churches around the country and hopefully the world, Portland Fellowship has the privilege of bringing Patrick Silvis to our leadership team. If you have not met Patrick, we pray you will soon.



Patrick arrived at Portland Fellowship in 2012, seeking guidance and healing for his unwanted same-sex struggles. Through the powerful love and discipleship of the community at PF, he has been able to surrender his needs to the Lord and has experienced tremendous healing and growth in his identity in Christ. Where he once thought he had to earn the favor of God and man through helping others, Patrick is now excited to offer himself as the good gift that God created him to be.

Patrick will be working on program development which will include The Hope Group, Taking Back Ground and assisting in the 2015 Upper Room Program. He will also assist in the daily operations of the ministry. In the longer term, Patrick will help refine PF's communications and materials, strengthen church partnerships and create new connections with the Hispanic church.

Patrick holds a B.A. in World Languages and Cultures (Spanish) from Mercyhurst University and certificates in Cross-Cultural Leadership and Missions Mobilization from Latin America Mission (now a branch of United World Mission). He most recently completed two years of the Upper Room Community internship and PF's 2-year Taking Back Ground program.

*"It is a pleasure to be able to serve the Lord through the ministry of Portland Fellowship. I am so grateful for the love and support I've received here, and I'm excited to be able to give back a portion of the grace that's been given to me." -- Patrick*

## hope group expansion

In the very near future we will be launching **Hope Group Online** through the Portland Fellowship website. This is a brand-new resource for friends and family of loved ones who have embraced a gay identity. This video and curriculum series will offer biblical teaching, encouragement and community.

The online program will feature video teachings presented by Drew Berryessa, PDF files for personal and group reflection and a forum to connect with other believers wrestling through these difficult issues. We are excited to be able to offer support to friends and family outside the Portland metro area as well as local families. Topics include:

- **When A Loved One Says "I'm Gay"**
- **Dealing with Grief**
- **Roots of Sexual Brokenness**
- **Family Dynamics**
- **Forgiveness and Relinquishment**
- **Boundaries**
- **Biblical Sexuality**
- **Our True Identity**
- **Hope and Faith in Christ**
- **Turning your Grief into Action**



In addition to our monthly Hope Group meeting at Portland Fellowship, in January we plan on launching several **Home Groups** for friends and families to meet and connect on a more regular basis. The desire is to offer safe places for those hit with this news to gather for prayer, encouragement and support. If you are looking for more community and support, please call or email the Portland Fellowship office to plug into a group near you, or go online at [www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com). We welcome your prayers as we plan, develop and implement these programs.



## nov - dec calendar & services

nov 7-8

### Jason teaching

Jason Thompson will be teaching an elective at Multnomah Seminary.

nov 14, dec 12

### the hope group

Join our family and friends program, at 6:30 pm for a time of prayer, encouragement, support and a great meal (food provided). Ron and Heidi Perry will be sharing in November, and Anne Paulk in December.

monday evenings

### living waters program

Living Waters: A discipleship group for men and women. *This program is currently full.*

tuesday evenings

### solid ground

Support program for men and women who have completed a Portland Fellowship discipleship program. 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

dec 2

### Jason speaking

Jason Thompson will be speaking to a Human Sexuality undergrad class at Multnomah University.

### counseling available

Portland Fellowship offers sliding scale counseling. This year we welcome Cori, an intern from Multnomah Seminary. If you would like to make an appointment with Cori, please call the office.

### additional updates

[www.portlandfellowship.com](http://www.portlandfellowship.com)

Please take advantage of your online profile. If you don't have a username, please email or call us to access your record.

**speakers, counseling and youth support** can be arranged through the office.

## with great thanks...

**“Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action.”**

~W.J. Cameron

If you could SEE just how much of an impact you as a donor, a supporter and friend have had on our ministry, we would have to take you on a tour through the ins and outs of Portland Fellowship. We would show you Monday night, a room packed full of men and women gathering to be disciplined deeper in their relational and sexual wholeness through the Living Waters program. You'd see how because of your partnership, we are able to open the doors and provide leadership, prayer, support and intensive teaching.

We would introduce you to each of the interns. They have each chosen to commit a year of their lives to live in intentional community, to have their hearts softened and their character molded more into the image of Christ. I wish you could see each of their warm smiles greeting you,



knowing that you have played a part in their healing journey through your prayer and partnership with us.

We would also give you a tour of Tuesday evenings and show you our Alumni Group: Solid Ground, men and women STILL walking in their faith and seeking Christ. Your support to our ministry enables us to have the time and resources to continue our online programs, [reachtruth.com](http://reachtruth.com), [takingbackground.com](http://takingbackground.com), AS WELL as develop a NEW program, an online support for families. This is incredible, and our hearts rejoice as we anticipate that many more will be reached through this new support program.

We can't forget the Hope Group, our in-house support program offered to the families of gay-identified loved ones, as well as all the calls and personal connections with people who are hurting and needing hope. All of these ministry interactions, programs and resources YOU have been a part of whether you SEE it or not. Your help to us in any form (prayer, love, referrals, donations) makes you a partner with us in God's kingdom. And in this season of Thanksgiving we are reminded to celebrate the gift God has given us through you. You are a gift. We are so thankful for you. Incredibly so. Thank you so much for being a part of Portland Fellowship!



**PORTLAND**  
fellowship

The Fellowship Message is a monthly publication of Portland Fellowship, a ministry proclaiming freedom from homosexuality through the power of Jesus Christ

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