



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

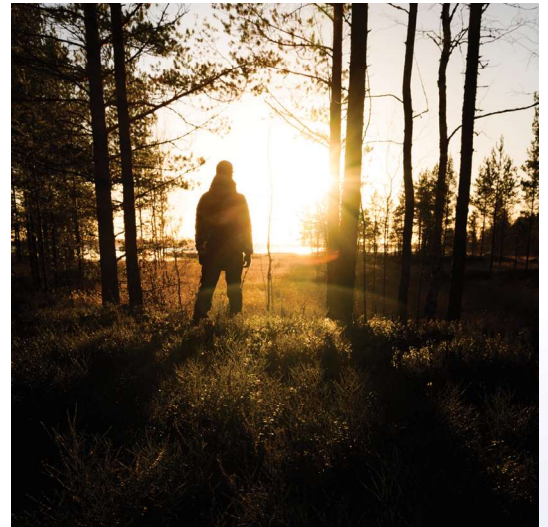
update august 2019

This past June, the United States and many other countries around the world celebrated Pride Month and World Pride Day, marking the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising in New York City and a half-century of LGBTQ+ liberation. Throughout the month of June, millions of people attended celebrations held throughout the country, featuring parades, concerts and parties, with countless public figures, politicians and celebrities lending their voices to support and promote a message of diversity and inclusion. Every morning, I happen to watch an early morning news show on one of the major networks, and every day during the month of June they included a feature story related to Pride. Most major online news sites followed suit. Many of these features were stories of individuals “coming out” to their family, friends, and coworkers, and stories of the love, acceptance and freedom they experienced to finally be able to “live their truth”.

These stories got me thinking. As someone who lived a gay lifestyle many years ago, I have plenty of my own coming out stories. I remember coming out to my parents, although it was less about me coming out and more about them finding out. It was not something I planned to share with them, or anyone else for that matter, and it certainly didn't result in acceptance and freedom to “live my truth”. As someone who was raised in the church and understood the biblical teachings regarding sexuality, the last thing I wanted was for people to know my biggest secret. I even found it difficult to come out to people who were gay and open about it. It became somewhat easier to tell people as I embraced a gay identity, but as someone who is very guarded and controlling, I never became truly comfortable with the concept of “coming out”. I always approached it on more of a need to know basis...if you didn't need to know, I wasn't going to tell you.

Twenty-five years ago this past Easter, I had a completely different type of coming out experience. That Easter evening, I had an encounter with God that was unlike anything I had ever experienced. God was asking me to make a choice to either continue down the path I was on, which would lead me away from Him, or to come out of the lifestyle I was living and be obedient to His will for my life. I knew it would be a life-changing and potentially life-saving decision. There was a battle for my soul, and at the end of that battle, I chose to come out of the darkness and into the light of God's grace and mercy. At that point, I had a new story to tell as I claimed my new identity in Christ.

The Bible is filled with coming out stories—people going about their lives and then encountering the one true God who called them out of the darkness into His light. A Samaritan woman came out to the well to get some water and met a man named Jesus, who asked her for a drink of water and changed her life forever. A man named Lazarus became ill, died and was buried. Four days later, Jesus arrives and proclaims that He is the



“He has sent me to bind
up the brokenhearted, to
proclaim liberty to captives,
and freedom to prisoners.”

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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resurrection and the life, weeps with the family, asks to have the stone removed from the tomb, and shouts, "Lazarus, come out!" And out came Lazarus, alive and well.

Jesus Himself has the ultimate coming out story, when on the third day after His crucifixion He walked out of the grave, winning the victory over sin and death once and for all and making a way for all mankind to be reconciled to the Father. Regardless of what our earthly struggles are, we are invited to come out of those struggles and experience His love, His acceptance and His freedom to live in His truth.

The men and women who come to Portland Fellowship each have their own coming out stories. Most, if not all, of these people are here specifically because they had the courage to come out to someone, to be open and transparent, and were met with love, encouragement and the grace of God. We read in 1 John 1:7 that, "...if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." Year after year, we witness the healing power of Jesus changing the lives of people who have chosen to come out and walk in the Light.

As summer ends and we prepare to welcome new and returning participants and volunteers into the Taking Back Ground program, we thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement and financial support of Portland Fellowship. Because of your generous partnership, and by the grace of God, we are able to continue to be here to minister to all who come through the doors of the PF house.

In Christ,

Eddie Keener
PF Board Member

Summer Support Group

On Tuesday evenings in July & August, we are offering a Summer Support Group to current and incoming Taking Back Ground participants. The group will run from 7-8:30 pm. You can register on the PF website, and new participants must complete an intake.



Fall Programs: Taking Back Ground + URC



We are currently accepting applications for Taking Back Ground and Upper Room Community. TBG is our two-year discipleship program for Christians submitting their unwanted SSA to the lordship of Jesus, and the URC is our nine-month intensive residential discipleship community program.

To learn more about these programs, or to request an application, please visit www.portlandfellowship.com or call the PF office, 503-235-6364.

events calendar

august 9

Hope Group

For Family and friends of gay or trans-identified loved ones. Dinner will be provided.
6:30 pm at the PF house.

august 11

Patrick Speaking

Patrick will be sharing about PF at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Happy Valley, OR.

august 19-22

PF Staff Writing Retreat

PF Staff will be prayerfully working on writing some new materials.

Speakers, counseling, youth support and personal support can be arranged through the office.

Portland Fellowship is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com