



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update august 2022

As I sit down to write this update at the end of June, I will admit that I'm a bit overwhelmed by everything that is going on at this time in our lives, in our country and in our world. I think back to 2020, when COVID-19 turned the world upside down, and remember the countless times I heard and even said, "I can't wait for 2020 to be over!" I suppose 2021 was an improvement over 2020 for a lot of people, although not so much for me personally. I then set my sights on the current year. I had, and still have, high hopes for 2022, despite the tumultuous first six months we have experienced with wars, mass shootings, political division, financial uncertainty, astronomical gas prices, inflation and a pandemic that just doesn't want to go away. Yet in the midst of it all, I do find comfort in knowing that God is still on the throne, He's still in control, He's still blessing, He's still healing, He's still comforting and He's still loving! I am so thankful for His unending faithfulness and immeasurable love.

During the past three eventful years, the use of online and digital tools seems to have advanced significantly and allowed people everywhere to keep in touch, keep working and keep learning. It has allowed ministries like Portland Fellowship to continue ministering to people virtually both near and far, motivating us to get more creative in how we use our resources to do life and ministry well. You've probably heard it said that, "there's an app for that." Let me tell you about a couple of apps that I have found extremely useful in the past few months.

In preparation for a trip to a foreign country in July, I wanted to learn the language so I could at least attempt to communicate, rather than just expecting everyone to speak English. Enter the app Duolingo. Every day for the past 111 days (more by the time you read this!), I have completed a lesson on the app, which has done a great (and often annoying) job of notifying me multiple times a day to ensure that I didn't forget to complete my lesson. And I will admit that many times, if not for the notifications and reminders, I would have forgotten to do my daily lesson. It's nice to have the *accountability*.

The second app I downloaded was a pedometer step tracker. I've been trying to walk every day to get in shape for the increased amount of walking I'll be doing on my trip. I have a daily goal on the app, and all I must do is remember to keep my phone in my pocket to count my steps. The first time I reached the goal, I received a notification congratulating me on my accomplishment, including lots of colorful digital graffiti and a tooting horn! It felt good to receive this support and encouragement, motivating me to do it again day after day. I've walked 354 miles since I started in April! *Accountability, support, and encouragement*, all from my phone.

A few weeks ago, I received an out-of-the-blue call from a friend I hadn't spoken with in a while. He said he was driving home from work and felt the Holy Spirit telling him to call me. It was great to hear from him and catch up on life. Since both of us have struggled with same-sex attraction



Eddie is a member
of the Portland Fellowship
Board of Directors.

"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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and benefited from the ministry of Portland Fellowship, it didn't take long for our conversation to get beyond the high level, "How's life been treating you?" to talk about the real journey we are walking in obedience to God. We talked about victories and failures we've had, struggles that often overwhelm, past hurts that seem to rear their ugly heads every now and then to get us off track, and the many times by the grace of God we have overcome the obstacles before us. We reminded each other how much we are loved by our Heavenly Father. We talked for almost an hour, and after the call ended, I was encouraged and thankful that my friend had listened to the Holy Spirit's leading. *Accountability, support, and encouragement of the best kind!*

While phone apps can do their part, as I've described above, they are no substitute for the real person-to-person accountability, support, and encouragement we all need and can have with the people God brings into our lives. Portland Fellowship is a place that fosters seeking out and developing healthy relationships. In one of the early teachings of the Taking Back Ground discipleship program, we learn that we are created by God to be in relationship, both with Him and with each other. While sin has done and continues to do whatever it can to destroy what God intended, we can stand with confidence as the Apostle Paul did and say, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (1 Cor. 15:57) And one of my personal favorites, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship (**relationship, emphasis mine**) with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

As the summer comes to an end, we are wrapping up our summer series, "The Journey", and preparing to welcome new and returning participants and volunteers into the Taking Back Ground program. If you are a PF prayer partner, thank you for your commitment to praying for this important ministry. If you are a PF financial partner, thank you for your generosity that makes this ministry available to so many. If you are a PF volunteer, we thank you because we can't do it without you. And if you are a PF participant, we thank you for your obedience to the call of God and entrusting the ministry of Portland Fellowship to walk with and support you on this journey. "The Lord bless and keep you, make His face shine upon you, and give you peace." (Num. 6:24-26)

In Christ,
Eddie Keener
PF Board Member

Hope Group Online: "Best New Healing Resource"

At the Restored Hope Network's HOPE 2022 conference in June, Portland Fellowship was awarded the "Best New Healing Resource" for their Hope Group Online program. HGO is a wonderful, new online program for family members that walks them through curriculum for gay-identified or transgender-identified loved ones. It includes video teachings on a variety of topics, encouraging testimonies, and PDF's that help participants process the lessons. HGO allows people to be encouraged and equipped, regardless of their location.



While I'm not personally part of PF, I've been helping facilitate a small group for their Hope Group Zoom program. It's the same program as Hope Group Online, but occurs in a regular group format. The videos are very well done and are informative and helpful. The conversations around the accompanying materials have been a great opportunity for family members to process, gain understanding, and be encouraged. Whether someone goes through the Hope Group Zoom program with others, or does the HGO program on their own, this resource is a wonderful option for family members.

— Jeff Simunds, RHN Board Member

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.

events calendar

tuesdays in august summer series

Zoom discipleship program,
"The Journey: From Captivity to
Freedom." 7-8:30 p.m. PST

august 6

KathyGrace Speaking
Dallas Theological Seminary

august 12

In-Person Hope Group
For friends and family of gay or
trans-identified loved ones. 6:30 p.m.
www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

august 4 & 18

Zoom Hope Group Program
[www.portlandfellowship.com/
friends_family.php](http://www.portlandfellowship.com/friends_family.php)

Speakers and personal support
can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates
at www.portlandfellowship.com