



# the fellowship message

"Proclaiming freedom for the captives." ISAIAH 61

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## Faith Through Every Season by Becky S.

Listen to Becky's story: [www.pfhope.com/stories/beckym4a](http://www.pfhope.com/stories/beckym4a)

*For a long time, I struggled to put my story down on paper because I didn't feel like I had anything spectacular to share. I used to think a testimony needed to include a dramatic turning point. However, I have realized that my testimony is not about a single defining moment, but about confidently declaring that God has been faithful, gentle, loving, and kind to me through every season of my life. Because of His consistency, I know that I can trust Him no matter what.*

I grew up in a Christian home, attended church regularly, and went to a Christian school. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was in kindergarten. Life felt safe and predictable. My faith was real, but it had not yet been stretched or tested. Years later, when my husband and I adopted our twin boys from Russia, my faith began to grow in new ways. It truly was a "flying by faith" experience. We had no pictures and very little medical information, yet we sensed the Lord asking us to trust Him completely. On the day that we signed the adoption agency paperwork to begin the process of adoption, we began praying for our future children; we later learned it was the exact same day the birth mother also relinquished her rights. What a kind gift from God, reminding us that He was present and at work even in the unknown!

Bringing two babies home, each with lifelong challenges, stretched me beyond anything I had imagined. Parenting often felt overwhelming, and the strain within my marriage added to the weight I was carrying. It wasn't until later that I began to recognize how faithfully God had been walking beside me, often protecting me and building resilience and determination in my heart. He was shaping me into the kind of mother my boys needed, someone able to keep moving forward, to look for glimpses of goodness even in hard places, and to know that He had entrusted their lives to me for a reason.

In the years that followed, I experienced deep heartbreak, two divorces, financial and emotional devastation, and the grief of losing a close family member to cancer. Each loss stripped away pieces of the life I thought I was supposed to have. For a long time, I was simply surviving, trying to make it through one difficult chapter after another. Yet even in those painful seasons, God was



Becky is a leader with PF's Hope Group discipleship program.

at work, teaching me perseverance. *“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed. . . struck down, but not destroyed.”* (2 Corinthians 4:8–9)

Then, in August 2022, one of my sons told me he was gay. The pain I felt that night was unlike anything I’d ever experienced. As I cried out to God, heartbroken and devastated, He revealed something humbling: that the deep grief I felt for my son was a glimpse of how He grieves when I walk in sin. In that moment, God also reminded me that none of these circumstances had taken Him by surprise. He sees it all, He knows, and His heart breaks with mine. Even in His grief, His love for us remains the same. Those truths began to settle my heart. They didn’t erase the pain, but they helped me find compassion and reminded me that the Lord is not done writing my son’s story, nor mine.

That same night, after my son came out to me, I called a close friend who told me about Portland Fellowship and their Hope Group, a support group for friends and family of loved ones struggling with same-sex attraction or gender confusion. Shortly after this, I attended a dinner they hosted, still very raw. I’ll admit, I wanted them to “fix” my son, but I quickly learned that’s not how it works. Through the encouragement and authenticity of that community, I discovered this journey was really about God transforming my heart and deepening my relationship with Him.

I continue to grow in my understanding of God’s love for me. I was recently reminded of His promise in Romans 8:1: *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* This is something I cling to when Satan tries to discourage me. It helps me walk confidently, knowing my identity is secure in Him.

Through Hope Group, I’ve also come to understand that my son’s sexuality is not what this is all about. This is a relational issue. God is giving me an opportunity to see my son as a whole person, not to fixate on just one part of his story or to view him as a problem to solve. I have learned that I can accept my son without approving of his choices.

I can love him deeply, set healthy boundaries, and still stand firmly in God’s truth.

Joining the leadership team at Portland Fellowship has become an unexpected gift along the way. These are not simply people I see each week; they have become trusted friends who encourage me, speak truth into my life, and remind me of God’s faithfulness when I feel weary. Often, I arrive at Hope Group tired after a full day, knowing it will be another late night, yet I always leave strengthened and grateful for the time spent together with my group. What began as a place where I came seeking support has grown into one where I now feel privileged to serve, walking alongside others navigating similar pain.



Becky with her young adopted sons.

As I continue this journey, I am learning that waiting on the Lord does not mean putting life on hold. I don’t want to remain stuck in fear, shame, or sorrow. Instead, I want to grow in contentment and trust, believing that God is still

writing a story of redemption in my life and in my sons’ lives.

God has taught me to notice His kindness in small, everyday ways. A few quiet moments with a hummingbird on my patio; the beauty and delicacy of the flowers I plant; or simply looking up in awe at the sky. These reminders often move me to tears and help me remember that His love is present even in ordinary moments.

I am thankful for Philippians 3:12–14, where Paul reminds me to press on toward the purpose Christ has for my life. When I am tempted to dwell on past failures or future fears, his words help me refocus my perspective. I want my life to reflect God’s kindness, so that my sons and others around me can see His love in practical ways. I hope they recognize that no matter how many mistakes we’ve made or how hard life becomes, God is always waiting to welcome us into a relationship with Him. Though our choices have consequences, He can use even those for His glory and our good when we choose to walk with Him. And, no matter what season comes next, I know He will be faithful. *“The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made.”* (Psalm 145:13)

## Mentors Who Shaped Us: *Patrick Silvis* by Jesse Merkel

*This year, we are sharing how God has used mentors to shape and transform those struggling with sexual and relational brokenness. We pray these reflections will bless and encourage you to become a mentor yourself, so that God's grace can flow through you to others.*

When I was in college, I was first introduced to Portland Fellowship (PF), where I completed the two-year Taking Back Ground program. A few years later, God led me back to PF to participate in the Upper Room discipleship program, a one-year opportunity to go deeper in the healing process.

That year looked different than most. While the Upper Room program typically includes four or five participants, I was the only one. Yet, it became clear that this was the time the Lord had appointed for me to return. I'm reminded of the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke 15, where the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to pursue the one. I'm deeply grateful that PF chose to move forward with the Upper Room, even for just me.



*Jesse & Patrick at the 2020 TBG Retreat*

After moving into the PF House, I began meeting weekly with Patrick Silvis, the program's leader that year. As I shared my story, I reflected on my childhood, both the joys and the challenges. I was raised by two caring parents and had a good childhood, but frequent moves made it difficult to form lasting friendships. Living with Cerebral Palsy also created barriers in connecting with others. Over time, I coped with loneliness by withdrawing, immersing myself in movies, and keeping to myself.

One conversation with Patrick stands out. I shared how I had once opened up to my youth pastor about my unwanted same-sex attraction. The youth pastor responded kindly by email, saying he would pray for me and sharing a Bible verse, but there was no follow-up or continued support. As I shared this with Patrick, he simply listened and responded with empathy: "Wow, I'm sorry to hear that. That had to hurt."

Moments like that revealed Patrick's gift for listening with grace and care. I felt truly heard, which created a safe place to process difficult experiences. Today, as a youth leader myself, I often think of his example, listening well, asking thoughtful questions, and paying close attention to each person's story.

Patrick also modeled what it means to bring biblical truth into mentoring. I began to recognize how often I allowed fear, worry, and circumstances to steal my peace. I believed lies like, "I've blown it, God won't forgive me." Patrick would gently challenge me: "Ok, that's what you're believing, but what does God say?"

Patrick taught me to replace lies with truth grounded in Scripture. As 2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us, God's Word is given to teach, correct, and train us in righteousness. One truth I came to hold onto was this: God willingly forgives those who truly repent. Lamentations 3:22–23 says, "Because of the Lord's faithful love, we do not perish, for His mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness!"

Patrick never judged me for the lies I believed; instead, he consistently pointed me back to God's Word. He encouraged me to write Scripture on note cards, paired with truth statements, and place them around my room. One read, "He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion." (Philippians 1:6). Underneath, I wrote: "Christ is not done with me."

Now, eight years later, I remain deeply thankful for the year Patrick invested in me. I'm also grateful for the continued connection we've shared, as well as for the many others at PF who have helped shape my growth. God used their faithfulness to bring healing, truth, and hope into my life—and that impact continues today as I seek to offer the same grace-filled presence to the students and people I now serve.

## May - June Calendar & Services

tuesdays in april

### Taking Back Ground

Discipleship for Christians with unwanted SSA / gender confusion.  
6-8:30 p.m. PST

tuesdays in april

### Hope Group

Discipleship series for friends & family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones.  
6-8:30 p.m. PST

tuesday may 26

### TBG Graduation

Leaders, participants, friends & family celebrate the Taking Back Ground participants who are completing the 2-year program.

june 12 & 13

### 2026 RHN Conference

Restored Hope Network's annual conference, featuring teachings, workshops & testimonies, will take place in Colorado Springs, CO. [www.restoredhopenetwork.org](http://www.restoredhopenetwork.org)

friday june 19

### Hope Group Dinner

A night of food, testimony, and prayer for friends & family of gay or trans-identifying loved ones.  
6:30 p.m. PST

[portlandfellowship.com/friends\\_family.php](http://portlandfellowship.com/friends_family.php)

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### Additional updates:

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

### Speakers, counseling and support for youth

can be set up through the office.

## Christian Living Opportunity: PF House Community

We currently have several openings for residents in the PF house community. The Portland Fellowship house is a great opportunity for Christian young men who are looking for low-cost, intentional communal living. Residents must agree with and believe in the mission and vision of PF.

For interested parties, please feel free to share the info below, or email/call us in the office for more promotional materials.

## Christian Community

### Room Available

**\$600/month** (Utilities Included)

1831 SE Madison - Portland, OR

Call: (503) 235-6364



- Christian men in their 20's or 30's
- Private rooms, shared living spaces
- Must agree with PF mission & vision
- Pastoral recommendation required

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

[office@portlandfellowship.com](mailto:office@portlandfellowship.com) | 503-235-6364

## RHN HOPE 2026 Conference



The HOPE 2026 Restored Hope Network Conference will take place June 12 & 13 in Colorado Springs, CO. This is a Christ-centered conference for those dealing with unwanted LGBTQ issues in their lives. Whether you are a struggler, overcomer, family member, counselor, pastor, or layperson, this event is for you!

[www.restoredhopenetwork.org/conf](http://www.restoredhopenetwork.org/conf)



**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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