

LGBT PRIDE DEVOTIONALS 2023

by LGBTQ+ Christians and their
friends



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Introduction to Pride Devotionals by Rev. Dr. Marian Edmonds-Allen

Welcome to our first Pride Devotional! Many of the authors are veterans of our regular devotional series - some are new and we welcome them with joy. Our writing prompt for this devotional is: write about what from scripture(s) from the Bible inspire and comfort you? And we asked our authors to share a story from their lives.

Our authors are from around the world and from a variety of perspectives and contexts. Each one is either an LGBT Christian or someone who is a friend to LGBT Christians. We have very lightly edited their words so that you will get a true sense of who they are, beloved by God, one and all.

Pride Month is many things to different people. To some, Pride Month is always and only in June - to others, Pride Month is celebrated during a different month of the year.

As a Christian, I have a complicated relationship with the word “pride” - I grew up in church where pride was a sin. And as I grew, I also learned that having pride in my work was important. I realized how proud I am of my children, my family, my country. And later still, when I understood that I am LGBT myself, I learned about Pride month. At the time I felt so very alone, that there wasn’t anyone like me, an LGBT Christian, in the entire universe. But then I went to a Pride festival and found LOTS of people like me, all overjoyed to have found others like them. Christian churches, other faith groups were at the Pride festival, and I learned that faith and love for LGBT is as natural as it is beautiful

Pride month to me is now a time when I notice how people make an effort to come out of their everyday life to make connections with other people - to show support, friendship, and pure love of life.

This volume is a small slice of that vibrant sense of life, love, friendship and support. It is intentionally Christian, because there are many LGBT people around the world for whom faith is paramount. As you will read, that faith comes at a price in a world that often thinks, incorrectly, that God hates LGBT people.

I have found that God loves LGBT people. And I have also found that the most spiritual people, the people who most closely love and follow Jesus, are LGBT.

Pride, then, at least in this volume, is the celebration of the abundant life that all of us have found in our Christian faith, despite all odds. As one LGBT Christian said to me, thinking about the challenges we face, “This is what the resurrection looks like.”

May you be blessed by the words in this volume.

And always remember, because it is true: God loves *you*. Yes, I’m talking to you! God love you, exactly who you are.

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“My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?” Psalms 42:3 (King James Bible).

As a transgender person, I did not have to come out to anyone. The changes in my body as I approached teenage made people give me funny nick names. I look back to my life and I wonder why I had to go through all that yet it was something I had no control about. I had not met other people like me and I wondered why. Even the close people to me were as confused as me. Every time I was called names my heart could bleed in the inside, dry tears and sorrowful prayers to God. as a staunch catholic, I would cry holding my rosary and believing there is a God somewhere who listens to my prayers.

I remember one day my big sister asked me “why did you chose this life? I was surprised because if I was given a choice I would never even in my dreams choose to be born a transgender. This is what Lgbtq persons go through here in Kenya. The society thinks it’s something we have chosen and thus we have to live with the consequences. Some says we choose this life so that we can get donor funds and others say we are paid just to say we are queer. There is something I always ask “who can choose this life where you are always at risk of being killed by mob justice and no one can raise a finger, a life of ridicule where they don’t call you by your name. mostly they call us Sodom and Gomorrah. We live in a society that thinks Gods wrath is upon our country because of people like us. Every lgbtq Christian in Kenya can relate to psalms 42. We are ridiculed when we say we are Christians and we are outrightly told we are blaspheming God.

Being lgbtq Christians put us in a position where constantly we question God. yes, our soul’s thirst for God, we yearn to be included in places of worship but our sexuality limits us.

For the times I have fellowshiped with the lgbtq Christians I have witnessed more tears than in any other congregation. The first time I went into a closed-door night vigil hosted by lgbtq and my life was changed. During prayers everyone knelt down and no one was able to utter a word. They just cried to their God. at the end they would just say the benediction and conclude.

From that day I became part of this group. I am at peace with my God now. My soul has found rest in God.

The apostles were ministering the Gospel, they could heal the sick and cast out demons but no one wanted to be associated with them. They were filled by the power of the Holy Spirit and God was working through them.

I just want to encourage all my Lgbtq Christians, it has not been easy and it will not get easier anytime soon. We have to be vigilant, work together for the common goal. Let us spread the love of Christ.

God bless us all.

Isaiah 56:4-5***"For this is what the Lord says:******"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant—to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will endure forever."***

I was digging in the Bible recently and revisiting the harsh passages that reject LGBTQIA+.

As I absorbed the weight of these verses I wondered if there could be any way to set these passages free, to emancipate them. I recalled how the story of Ruth was an emancipation story where freedom was granted rather than doom.

Ruth was a Moabite, an Israelite ancestor from the line of Lot's son. The Lord declared the Israelites to have nothing to do with them since they had mistreated the children of Israel while they were in the wilderness. (Nehemiah 13:1-2) In the book of Ruth, Naomi's family flees famine to Moab where her sons marry Moabite women. When all the men in the family tragically die, Naomi returns to Bethlehem with Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law. Ruth gleanes the field of Boaz and wins his favor. Boaz does not seem concerned to condemn her Moabite lineage but rather to emancipate her by welcoming her as an immigrant in the land. (Leviticus 19:34) Boaz chose love and redeemed a declaration of doom from the Lord.

The Lord showed me the emancipating passage of Isaiah 56:4-5 as sufficient to redeem LGBTQIA+.

This scripture carries so much hope for queer people, and all people that find themselves unwelcomed in the assembly of worship. It is especially amazing that hope and a future is extended in a touching way to those who keep the Lord's Sabbaths when they are not welcome to worship with the main gathering of worshippers.

What powerful imagery!

The law of the Lord may have forbid them to enter the temple but within the forbidden temple they are restored and given an everlasting name. A name that lasts far longer than King David's descendants.

Now, take this idea of the temple and step into the New Testament with me. Our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has overcome the brick-and-mortar temples we have constructed to contain God's presence.

It's ridiculous to think that we could contain God at all! The Holy Spirit fills our living temples full to overflowing with the presence of the Lord and it spills over into the world around us, emancipating the world.

As a friend to LGBTQIA+ persons and their families, the Lord encouraged my heart that the Lord has the power to emancipate every stronghold used against us as a powerful path to build the Kingdom of God.

Beautiful name of Jesus

Philippians 2:9 “wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name (KJV).

In our African tradition, we give our children names according to the most loved relatives and some are named according to the seasons they were born in. I had a problem with the name given to me at birth because it had no significance, I was named after a clan. This really affected my self-esteem as I grew up because people always questioned the source of that name. I thank God, I survived it all and all that matters to me is that I know a name that is everything to me.

The beautiful name of Jesus has a significance. Paul declared that God gave Jesus the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (vs.9-11).

Most of the time I find myself in difficult times or even having bad nightmares, I call on this mighty name. sometimes I am not even able to pray but calling on the name of Jesus gives me peace. Jesus is our savior and always present in us.

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with a child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is being interpreted is, God with us.” (KJV)

This beautiful name of Jesus lifts great burdens, it comforts the broken heart, it unlocks the closed doors. The name of Jesus stands out as a name above all other names.

I choose to follow Jesus

Luke 9:23-24 And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. for whosoever will save his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (KJV) I long to live a life that is worthy to bear your cross, lord Jesus, I can never suffer as you did, but I wish to give my life to you and follow you for the rest of my mortal days. Forgive me for my selfish thoughts and actions, and aid me in my quest to rid them from my mind entirely. You have shown me the way, are the truth and life. thanks be to God. Amen.

My redeemer lives

Job 19: 25-27 for I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another; though my reigns be consumed within me. (KJV)

Job is my favorite character in the bible. Often when we consider Job, the emphasis is placed on his suffering, in the midst of his pain, Job remained certain of the Lord he served and the relationship he shared with him. This should serve as a reminder to every believer, bringing hope even in the midst of our greatest trials. Job had a very personal relationship with God, he walked with God and served him daily. Job had lost so much that pertained to him physically but he never lost his relationship with God.

When suffering and pain comes our way, we can rest in the fact our redeemer lives. He is alive today and able to provide for every need. because he lives, we can face tomorrow with confidence.

Happy pride to us and may God bless us all.

Psalm 32 Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned. GNB

In this psalm, king David is excited about forgiveness and wants all of us to shout about it. Sin is like a stain in our lives and the only solution is to seek forgiveness from God. no matter what sin has marred your life the grace of God is always sufficient.

When our sins are forgiven, the burden of guilt is taken away and the feeling of being set free is just amazing. Sin makes us suffer physically, mentally and spiritually, all enjoyment of life is lost and we find no purpose to live. We must learn to confess our sins before God, when we do that, we can confidently join in David's joy when he writes that God forgave the guilt of my sin!

I love this psalm because, just like David I had sinned before God. yes, I was raised a Christian and I thought that was enough to take me to heaven because I was baptized and confirmed a Christian and even shared in the Lords table. but every time I could feel the guilt weighing me down because I knew deep down, I was a lesbian.

I despised myself, I did not want to be associated with anyone and to say I was suffering is an understatement. My turning point came when I met an affirming pastor, I just had to be born again, I knelt before God and cast away my sins. The shame I had for being a lesbian and the guilt were taken away. I am so free and happy to say I am a child of God.

My struggle is not new to humankind. The bible also offers me powerful truth that no temptation has overtaken me that is not common to man. My God is faithful, and he will not let me be tempted beyond my ability, regardless of my daily temptation and struggles with same sex attraction as a lesbian, I am made to understand that my temptation are not beyond the reach of God's power. In him there is true hope, freedom, and new life. Sadly though the society we live in will not see this awesome redeemer but instead will condemn me and call me names and show me how sinful and they see me as an abomination.

This pride month I am guided by the book of (John 15:12) where am commanded to love one another as God himself have loved us, the love our God is talking about is unconditional love that should be showed to our dear brothers and sisters in our LGBTQ social life,

(Luke 6:31) reminds us also to do good to others just like we would like others to do to us, let's love one another as family and do just what is good to our members of LGBTQ. let's see value of each other and allow ourselves to just do as Christ has told us to, imagine a world without love, how would it look like?

So, brethren let's love and do good to each other and that will make us stronger together.

Exodus 15:25

Moses prayed earnestly to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood, which he threw into the water; and the water became fit to drink. There the Lord gave them laws to live by, and there he also tested them.

One thing I love about being a Christian, is how our God reveals His mighty deeds to us. Israelites had witnessed God parting the Red Sea for them to cross and they saw how the Egyptian's perished as they tried to pursue them. They sang glorious songs to the Lord for delivering them, but for three days they walked through the desert, but found no water. They forgot how God had saved them, and they started complaining to Moses. God knew they were thirsty, but it took the prayers of Moses for God to intervene. We must learn to call upon the Lord because He is waiting for us to ask. Throughout the Israelites journey in the wilderness, we see a God who provides and cares.

In the New Testament, the first miracle Jesus performed was to turn water into wine (John 2:1-11). This was a glorious miracle of provision. Through the miracle, Jesus showcased God as Jehovah Jireh (God our provider)

Jesus performed many miracles such as opening the eyes of the blind, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead and many more. God provides for us depending on our needs.

John 16:24

Jesus said to his disciples; “until now you have not asked for anything in my name. ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

God answers all our prayers; He loves us and delights in us. The wedding guest at Cana could have survived on water. However, Jesus made their situation sweeter by turning their water into wine. This pride month just ask whatever you want from the Lord, what 'water into wine' miracle do you need to ask God about? Or is providence in the wilderness? Our God is faithful and He delights in providing for us so that our joy can be full in Him.

I am a witness that God provides and I know this testimony will encourage someone who is about to give up. My son was 2 months old when the doctors told me he had a problem in his head and an urgent surgery was to be performed to save his life. I looked at my little bundle of joy and I was so confused. I had so many questions to God.

At this particular time, I had no money and the doctors said it was an emergency that required a deposit of 500\$. I just went home with my son with no hope of where I could get that kind of money. The only thing I had was my faith in God, I knew God makes a way even in the wilderness. In my state of hopelessness, I still trusted God, there was nothing much I could have done but to wait upon the Lord. Three days later, I received a call from the hospital, I was told there was a doctor who volunteered to operate on my son, but I had to buy a pipe that was to be inserted in his head. This was the first miracle, and I said yes to the offer. The pipe was costing 200\$, I reached out to friends and only a few were in a position to help. I sold the furniture's I had in my house and I was able to raise the money. Today my son is alive. He turned out to be epileptic and I love him so much. Through him I see God, the great provider.

Ezekiel 37: 4 He said, “Prophecy to the bones. Tell these dry bones to listen to the word of the Lord. (GNB)

There is hope in Christ.

I remember when we were young, some of us were being pushed to attend masses/prayers. To them it was so boring because the prayers took long and they could use this time to sleep or even watch movies. But one day a tragedy struck and our school bus had an accident while coming back from a trip. 10 students lost their lives and others were injured. This was like a wake-up call because the whole school started attending masses without being pressured. Its normal for us humans to get closer to God when things are not going well with us, our complex life styles have made our Spiritual life fade. In todays reading God has breathed his Spirit into us through the word, giving us hope and new life.

Sometimes we are overwhelmed by the storms of this world, we experience setbacks, tragedy and grieve. We go through the wilderness of lack, we experience dryness in our lives, we lose hope and we find no purpose to live. As I write this, I know what it is like to lose hope in life. I had this desire to serve God but my sexuality contradicted with what I was taught in church, I grew up listening to sermons why Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. Here I was and I knew without a doubt I am a lesbian. It got to a point that I had to stop going to church.

Sunday morning, I would wake up and prepare to go to church but when the thoughts of my sexuality creep in I would just go back to bed and sleep, the only prayer I had was God to heal my sexuality or kill me. just like the Israelites in Babylon.

I went to look for hope into places where God has not promised we will find it. I got into bad company who abused drugs and my life sunk deeper into depression, I ended up like the Israelites in verse 11,” our bones are dried, and our hope is lost.”

It was one Saturday evening call that changed my life. A friend called me and asked me if I could accompany them to a meeting on Sunday afternoon and I said yes. To my amazement it was a fellowship for queer people, they worshiped and praised God and none felt guilty because of their sexuality. I made a choice to be part of this wonderful group and from then my life has changed.

Gods word is a source of hope and it is a means through which we gain hope in life’s struggles, when it all seems like too much, we must remember that God will not abandon us. Our society looks at us (Lgbtq+) through their lenses and all they see is hopelessness, they see sinners who are just waiting for eternal destruction, they see us as the reason many bad things are happening in the world today. They blame even climate change on our existence.

Let us be encouraged by today’s word that the Spirit of God is breathing life into our dead and dry situations. We are going to stand and walk again because we already know what to do, lets breath in and allow the Holy Spirit flow in to our souls.

Romans 8:6 “To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. (GNB)

There is always hope in God’s grace. May the grace of our Lord be with us all.

Amen.

Contributor: [Sontaia Briggs](#)

We are canopy.

Canopy – ornamental cloth or covering, usually held over a throne or royalty.

Covering - the blessed or a blessing.

We humans have many canopies: spiritual, flesh and psychological.

Relationship to others.

Relationship to self.

Relationship to God.

Some would say all three are one, a triune covering.

In life we are always seeking a cover.

Who are you?

What do you need?

I think our canopy journey is innate, it's hardwired into us to cover and seek covering. Our first relationship before our relationship and position in this world was a covering: the womb.

As we developed for this earthly walk we were covered and encased by skin, blood, organs, and veins.

We are inheritors of this earth and those that are vulnerable.

We all share in this canopy experience we all know what it is to be covered.

To claim 'covering' means you belong, you are under protection. Someone speaks for you, you are represented.

We were given our canopy long before the people attempting to define, and steal it away came into focus.

They can't steal your canopy or rescind it, its enfleshed, your skin, you're covering.

Skin covers our body and words cover our hearts.

Our thoughts, dreams and potential; mental canopies.

As the created we hold the potential and hope of the creator.

Human creators: Parents

Spiritual creator: God

Our breath is a promise to those creators, our canopy is a gift to the other outside and inside self.

We are wed in a marriage of potential and protection.

Remember your canopy.

Remember you are covering.

Remember you are royalty.

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, Our God, will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.” Psalms 67 KJV

God wants us to be witness of His great love and salvation. Through us, the nations will know the mighty God we serve. Our Holy God who rules justly will bless us. That is the God I want to serve all the days of my life. I pray today that God will use me as a witness and a testimony to everyone I come across, and when they see me, they see God’s face shining upon me.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, a sinner and a very short man. He just wanted to see Jesus like any other person in that meeting. God had good plans for Zacheus because Jesus saw him, not like any human being who had seen him climbing on top of a tree. Jesus saw someone who needed salvation, they dined together and the whole household of Zacchaeus was saved. There were many people in that meeting but Jesus chose Zacchaeus, the same way God has chosen me and you to be His witness in this world.

Sometimes people question my faith because I am a gay man who is born again. I choose not to listen to them and focus on Christ. He came to seek and save the lost. I am found in the kingdom of God. I am valid in His presence. I was lost and He has seen me and now I am saved. I have hope for a future and above all eternal life.

May God’s blessings locate you wherever you are, may God’s favor be upon us this pride month. To many of us who cannot celebrate, feel encouraged because our day will come to join the world in celebrating pride. For now, lets keep safe and be there for each other.

Happy pride month.

Contributor: [Josphine Wambui](#)

Genesis 1:27

Our God is love. So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. Genesis 1:27

One thing I know is that I was created by God with a lot of love and with his own image, meaning he did not make any mistake creating us LGBTQ Christians, he really wanted us to live and enjoy his good deeds he does to us.

"For you created my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Our God loves us the way we are and he has a good reason why he created us.

Sexual identity and gender identity are components of a person's personality, and such are part of who God made each one of us to be.

For us LGBTQ Christians, we should feel loved by our maker and should not dwell with negative energy from those who want to condemn us for being gay. It's only God who knows why he created us that way. If God is for us who can be against us LGBTQ?? Nobody should.

It is a command to love each other and God himself insists on love of our neighbors as we love our selves. I love it when I see LGBTQ Christians stand with us in Kenya when people come against us including the government. USA especially come to our aid very first without knowing us by names or meeting us, that is the love that we should have. Love without boundaries.

There is a song I like singing when I read or think about God's love to mankind.

Love one another
For love is of God
He who loves is born of God
And knows God.

Loving God, loving each other.
Making music with my friend's
Loving God loving each other
And the story never end.

They pushed back from the table
To listen to his words
His secret plan before he had to go
It's not complicated
Don't need a lot of rules
This is all you will need to know
Loving God, loving each other

We tend to make it harder
Build steeples out of stones
Fill books with explanation for the ways

But if we would stop and listen
And break a little bread
We would hear the master say

It is loving God, loving each other
Making music with my friends
Loving God, loving each other
And the story never ends.

Prayer

God who made me in your likeness. Help me to love myself as you loved me, accept myself and know that I am your creation .And that you created me in your own image and with a lot of love. Help me to see your image in my fellow LGBTQ Christians so that love can be expressed from within me. Give us peace, love for each other and help us do as you commands us to. Send your angels always for protection here in Kenya because we are discriminated and the hate is too much on us. Give us peace and always be there for us for without you we can not make it alone. Amen.

Psalms 148:13 Let them all praise the name of the Lord! His name is greater than all others; his glory is above earth and heaven. (GNB)

As we celebrate this pride month, my focus will be to praise God for all that He has done in my life. I will not focus on the negatives or my past failures. My life has just been a miracle. As a gay man in Kenya, even leaving your house in the morning and going back safe is by Gods hand. Having a healthy body despite my HIV+ status is something that I don't take for granted. Despite the hard economy, I still have something to put on the table. God's grace have been sufficient to me.

I will praise the Lord and I will encourage each one of us to continue praising Him. Even when we are facing challenges in this world. Most of Lgbtq+ persons in rural areas lives in the closet, we live in fear and we cannot celebrate pride. To them that are able to celebrate pride in all corners of our beautiful world, we congratulate you, we are proud of you and we thank God for you. Because of you, we feel appreciated.

Special thanks to Parity for giving us this space, your writings are so encouraging and I feel your love. God bless you as we continue preaching love and praising His Holy name.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, the whole creation praises your name. As humans created in your image, we praise you and make melody in our hearts. Everlasting God you are powerful, the moon, in all its elegant wonder of light at night, thus reminds us of your great light that shines in the midst of our darkness. Let all humankind, Angels, the stars, the ocean, the trees and all the creation that you created dear Lord, praise your glorious name.

Dear God, you are in control of all things, you do good to those who are called according to your will. All humankind share in your glory. We always begin with praising your name and end praising your Holy name. your name is exalted above all. You are the beginning and the end, walk with us as we traverse in this world. Give us grace to be faithful till the end. In Jesus name, we pray trust and believe. Amen and Amen.

Whenever asked to write on a Scripture of my choosing, I think of Psalm 130 first. I can't shake the themes of this passage – the desperate cry, the genuine ask, the unknown waiting while seeming to have absolute trust, the FULL redemption.

I once wrote a paper on these eight verses which opened my eyes to the themes of this Psalm being replicated not only throughout the entirety of Psalms, but Scripture as a whole. The associated themes with my own small life almost seem to minimize this vast truth while also amplifying it proving its reality. There, in those themes, I find myself, I find community, I find a wholeness.

I first remember hearing this Psalm recited between worship choruses on one of Passion's first albums (OneDay Live) back in the day – that day being the year 2000. Something about the way it was incorporated into the worship set cemented it into my mind and I'm thankful it did because I've returned to it many times when I feel like I've lost myself.

Even today, May 2023, this Psalm is still so special to me while also recognizing I am a wildly different person than I was in 2000. I'm more thankful for my faith than I have ever been but it looks so different than what I thought it would be. I'm less wrecked by shame and guilt, more in tune with my self and my spirit, more loving and sensitive, yet also more scars, doubts, and unknowns.

Now what stands out to me is the watchmen waiting for the morning. I was virtually forced to focus on this phrase since it is repeated twice in this short Psalm. Being a Tolkien nerd, I immediately imagine Gandalf appearing at dawn, on the light of the fifth day, after so much destruction at Helms Deep when hope was the bleakest, it was suddenly rekindled in one moment. It didn't erase all the damage that was done but, in a moment, everything was different.

This makes me think of life moments where your trajectory suddenly changes. One day life is one way and then, in one unknown and unexpected moment, everything is different. You do not have a chance to consciously prepare, you do not control it, you do not have a clock, yet it comes and everything is different. I have had a few moments like this in my life – when I randomly met someone that became someone I loved, when a new boss recruited me for a team that became incredibly life giving, when I discovered a new life passion simply because I stumbled upon it one day.

That is how I imagine redemption as reflected in this Psalm. It comes unexpected after a long dark night, but suddenly when the sun rises, everything is different, hope is rekindled. In fact, hope was never fully snuffed out. It's the waiting for that morning light that keeps it alive. It is the flashes of the morning that we experience even while it still may be dark – a grandmother's love, a good meal, a beautiful person, a group fitness class, a hug, a friend acknowledging the truth of who you are and what you feel, dancing at a wedding, laughing with a friend, or any genuine experience with the Divine.

I hope some flashes of light pop up for you during PRIDE 2023.

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” Psalms 122:1.

We used to sing this Psalm every Sunday in church. it became so common that I knew it was a must we sing it. At a young age, I was introduced to Sunday school by my grandmother. Sundays were very special days because no one was supposed to work. It's the day we all took a shower and wore our best clothes. We all looked forward towards Sunday's and thus we could sing with joy and gratitude as we headed to church. It's a place where I felt safe because Jesus was the center stage of every preaching.

I always dreamt of the day I will be a grown up and preach just like Jesus did.

The day came and I preached, but the challenge I faced when I tried to be true to myself, made me ashamed of going to the house of the Lord. People would criticize me to my face and some would call me derogatory names. My outer body was contradicting with my inner self.

I just had to quit and hide. I created my little world where I could just beg God to forgive me for not being the perfect man He wanted me to be.

Today I have a reason to praise God because even in that dark part, God found me and restored my soul through an affirming fellowship in our rural home. I now lead praise and worship and my favorite song remains, “I was glad when they said to me, let us go in the house of the Lord”.

“Dear friends, don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot do any more to you after that. But I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill and then throw you in to hell. Yes, he's the one to fear.” Luke 12:4-5 NLT

Heavenly Father, please help us not to fear man. Help us to realize that even though they may kill the body they have no authority over our soul. Help us to follow you in righteous. Guide our step as we sojourn in this world.

May God keep you all safe this pride month and always remember to go to the Lord's house with thanksgiving and praise.

“Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.”

Song of Solomon 4:1

I understand how it feels to be in love with a woman. I wanted nothing more than to be with her forever. I had same sex attraction as early as ten years old. As I grew up, those feelings never subsided. They grew stronger every day. Most of the time I would find myself having crushes on my female best friends, only that I was ashamed to admit it to them let alone to myself.

At the age of eighteen, I decided to pursue my desires. I entered into a relationship with a younger lady than me, who became my 'first'. The first time we kissed, it felt extremely natural, as if this feeling is what I had been missing all along. I enjoyed this relationship for over a year. This was a time I was willing to forsake all, including my soul, to enjoy their love on earth.

After the age of twenty, my superficial reality was shaken up by a deeper love, that I heard of before but never experienced. For the first time, I was convinced of my sin in a way that made me consider everything I loved (idolized) and its consequences. I started looking how my life has been and saw that I had been in love with everything except God. My eyes opened up, and I began to believe everything God tells the world.

I began to believe that what he says about "whoever lives in love lives in God. And God in them", the book of Ephesians 4:2 says. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" 1 (Peter 4:8). Above all, love each deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sin."

The bible says that God is love, which makes it a perfect source to learn how to love others. Some people are difficult to us, but we are called to love them. Love is patient, so let us take our time to understand them for they are God's loved being. We are also called to love those of us who are lowly because love does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it keeps no record of wrongs. That is why we are called to forgive always, so that we remain clean to and open to others without holding bad memories which brings us enmity. Love always persevere, and never fails forever.

How sweet is this love that we always live to be with always. It feels good when we fall in love and while we are loved back.

I love our fellowship in the rural area of Murang'a headed by pastor Megan because of the love shown to everyone who gets in there. All faithful's feel at home and appreciated while in that fellowship, when one gets a problem, it becomes a problem to all of us.

When we love a person, we don't care what or how other people sees her as, because love covers everywhere. At times, some of our friends can be difficult to understand, but our God always give us wisdom to know how to handle them with love. Just the way God loves us with unconditional love is the same way we should love each other.

The worst curse one can have in Africa and especially in Kenya is being gay. The hatred we experience is immense. Marcus lived a quiet life in the village with his parents. Once he cleared school, he decided to enroll in a technical institute for a plumbing course. While in college, he got an opportunity to be himself. Something he had never been his entire life. Throughout his life, he knew he was different. But being brought up by a pastor and his wife, it never gave him an opportunity to be who he was. In college, he met people of his caliber who had accepted themselves as gay. He fell in love with a young man from Mombasa. After college he got a job in the city and this really excited him as he would be able to live his truth without the monitoring of his strict parents. Numerous times his father questioned why he never got married or had a girlfriend as his mates were already married with children. He always brushed off this conversation.

Being brought up in a Christian background, Marcus always remained a good Christian. He even participated in church activities but he kept his sexuality a secret. All went well until one morning when he got a call from his boyfriend. He informed him that someone had accessed his laptop, and took shots of their conversation and posted them on the social media. Logging in to his Facebook account, his inbox was exploding, cursing messages, enquiry messages and so on. He could not believe that the world was crushing on top of him.

What broke him is a call from his father. He warned him that he will never want to see him again and that to him he was dead. He told him never to step in his home. He even warned him from being seen anywhere in the village. The only place he thought his solace would come from was his church that he had served with so much dedication. When he arrived there, he found the pastor at the gate. He called him aside and told him what a disgrace he was. He informed him how he would go to hell and that he would experience the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah.

He felt hated, rejected by both men and God. He questioned God why He created him different only to destroy him. He turned to alcohol and vowed to never step in a church or believe in God ever again. His boyfriend never abandoned him despite the scandal. Marcus tried to push him away but he remained put. He introduced him to a pastor friend who was gay. He reassured him that God loved him.

He told him of Isaiah 49:15, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will never forget you."

These words put Marcus back on his feet, stopped alcohol and put his life back on track.

Marcus' story has really impacted my life and seeing him go through all that and getting back to his feet and the source of motivation being the Holy book only renews my hope in the Lord and that no matter the rejection I face due to my sexuality, my Heavenly Father will never abandon me. As Psalms 94:14 says, "For the Lord will not reject His people, He will never forsake His inheritance."

Romans 2:1 “Do you, my friend, pass judgment on others? You have no excuse at all, whoever you are. For when you judge others and then do the same things which they do, you condemn yourself.” (GNB)

I would like to celebrate pride month in the best way possible, but it is sometimes difficult to do that due to pain that I have faced in my life as a lesbian. The emergence of homophobic Christians voice is too much in my country. However, with all that's wrong with it there is so much that needs to be remembered and celebrated. The very fact I as a lesbian Christian can write this article in a Christian magazine is worth celebration.

The list of the past homophobic sin includes, killings, social and economic discrimination, being locked in jail, parental and familial rejection. These realities are all symptoms of a world and church that hatefully reject LGBTQ persons.

St Paul affirmed the ethics of first century Judaism, which includes sex being designed for monogamous marriage between a man and a woman, but look at (Roman's 1-2) he has more concerned about the deeper sin of pride.

For Paul, what was worse than the effects of the fall were the pride that makes us judge others. In (Romans 2) Paul addresses those who were judging Gentiles (and gay people among them) and says "you therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgement on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another. You are condemning yourself because you who pass judgement do the same things."

This pride month I celebrate the pride of LGBTQ people what have courageously come out and overcome great hurdles to accept themselves.

Here in Kenya, we shall celebrate with you in our closets, it is not safe for us but we are strong in the Lord. We hold a Christian lgbtq fellowship every Sunday, even if we do it in closed doors, we have seen God doing wonders in our midst. We share our problems with each other and we pray and worship being led by our humbled LGBTQ pastor Megan. I thank God for the strength He gives unto us. praise be his name. Amen.

Contributor: [Adrian Slonaker](#)

1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 1:7, 1 Samuel 18:1-4

I have never understood the need to dress up in our “Sunday best” in order to go to church. Why wear uncomfortable, stiff, itchy clothing in order to worship and talk to God, who sees us at our messiest, most discombobulated and most naked every single day?

Wearing a suit and tie or dress when we don’t ordinarily do so and don’t particularly enjoy it isn’t going to fool God, who is all-knowing. Indeed, “the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7 [NIV]).

And, moreover, “God created mankind in his own image” (Genesis 1:27 [NIV]); this applies even to those of us who feel most at ease in faded, stretched t-shirts and ripped jeans or sweats. Just as God knows that I prefer to wear tie-dye t-shirts and blue jeans, God knows that I am queer. And my queerness doesn’t diminish or detract from the fact that, like everyone else, I was made in God’s image.

While I believe that God is perfect and divine, I also believe that organized religion is a human-crafted tool to help us get in touch with our spiritual sides and encourage fellowship. As a human-made tool, it is inherently flawed, and one of its most egregious and cruel flaws is how various organized religions have supported and participated in the marginalization, abuse, alienation and destruction of certain individuals and groups of people, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Leviticus 18:22! Romans 1:26-27! Sodom and Gomorrah! Or that old chestnut: “God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve!” These are among the verbal weapons so-called people of faith have used against us. Apparently they missed the memo “Do not judge or you too will be judged” (Matthew 1:7 [NIV]).

Today I could theoretically walk into St. George’s Anglican Church in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, the church I attend when I feel the need to do so, wearing kohl eyeliner, a pink blouse, and a skirt vivid with the colors of the rainbow flag. I know that I would be welcome. I could come out to the priest, and I would be accepted without judgment. For all I know, he may already suspect it. Nevertheless, things haven’t always been that way and certainly aren’t always this way everywhere now.

When I was examining and confronting my queer orientation and my gender expression in the late ’80s and early ’90s as a teenager, I knew that most major organized religions would or might have at least a slight issue with my identity.

Fortunately, when I went to university (the University of Chicago) as an undergraduate, the campus Anglican/Episcopal ministry was very open-minded, even if not all the other students at the university were. In those days, the inclusiveness of Brent House was evident in recurring messages assuring us of God’s love for us just as we are.

During one memorable sermon, the priest played a crackly vinyl record featuring Cass Elliot’s 1970 performance of the song “Different” from the film *Pufnstuf* in which Eliot, in campy witch makeup and costume, sings about how it’s worthwhile to be different, even if this path can be difficult and lonely.

God is my Father. God is also my Friend. I talk to Him daily in prayers, just as I have prayed since I was a child. I am not afraid of including queer-themed concerns (even same-sex crushes!) in my prayers, and I ask for guidance. God understands. God loves. As for the Bible, I personally suspect that this supposedly anti-queer rhetoric consists largely of heavily edited, re-edited, translated and re-translated culture-specific insertions more reflective of Near Eastern and

Mediterranean society millennia ago (as well as perhaps the biases of the translators and editors!) than God’s own opinions. Instead, I prefer to read, contemplate and gain strength from this most beautiful, touching and inspiring description of authentic same-sex love (1 Samuel 18:1-4 [NIV]):

“As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.”

Happy Pride and God bless!

A couple summers ago, my nonbinary friend suggested I buy a pride flag to counterbalance some lawn décor on the other side of the street. They'd been staying at my house while I was on vacation and the signage across the road made them feel unwelcome.

In the interest of transparency, I will confess that I didn't see the urgency of procuring this bit of festive fabric. By the time I returned from vacay, Pride month was nearly over, funds were low, and I filed the request away for future consideration.

Months later, I happened across a display of vibrant queer merchandise and, remembering my friend's request, I bought a standard issue rainbow flag. The following June, I displayed it at my front door, and then, later, hung it in my office at the university where I work.

As I noticed people noticing the flag, I began to realize its importance as a signal. This place, the flag seemed to say, is safe space. Conversations started. Students who weren't even mine began to hang out. Community formed.

Awhile back, someone told me about a conversation she had with a friend who had not yet come out. He was wrestling with everything he'd lose if his truth became known. She listened, and empathized and then said, "there's no abundant life in a closet."

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

Abundant life happens in safety, in community, in situations that allow you to thrive. There are not—there cannot be—enough of these spaces. It's hard enough to walk out of a closet that's become a defacto refuge, without stepping into a world that seems to be picketing your existence. I know, now, that's what my friend saw every day that June as they pulled onto my street.

I'm leaving the keys to my house again, this June, in the hands of the same friend—but not before I hang the rainbow flag. Because it's not just a flag—it's a welcome mat for every brave soul who chose to exit the dark, cramped closet in search of the abundant life Jesus promised.

Psalms 143:1

We need to keep on looking up to God for His mercy via prayer. This verse shares a similarity with 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17 which encourages us to pray without ceasing and give thanks, in all situations. This is a proof of God's unlimited love. His mercy is available and lasts forever. For instance, He gave us His only begotten son to die for our sins.

Mostly, the LGBTQ population is fastened to a plethora of issues primarily profiling, rejection, and stigma. Consequently, they seek love, validation and assurance from anywhere and anyone. This desperation mostly lands this community into trouble. My country, Kenya is a prime example where such a toxic environment thrives. The LGBTQ community is hated, demonized, and alienated. Yet still, it is illegal, admissible in local courts of law and attracts a long jail term.

Psalms 143:1 reminds us that God's mercy is supreme. Everyone is free to approach God through prayer. We are all His children without limitation or condition. Much is said about the LGBTQ community that belittles. This scripture reassures us that we have a Heavenly father who sees us as equals. That assurance is not only enough to ignite a spark in one's esteem, but also to resurrect it.

1 Kings 17:17-24

LGBTQ persons doubt some biblical concepts like the widow's doubt about the real intentions of Elijah. God had not sent Elijah to remind the widow of her sin and to kill his son, rather to bring her back to the true God, the provider of life. The widow's diminished spirit was restored. We are called upon to put our doubts and insecurities aside and allow God in our lives.

Elijah's act of taking the widow's son to the upper room indicates that it is vital to go to our places of prayer and cast all our burdens when we do not fathom the sufferings in our lives like Elijah cried for the restoration of the boy's life. God means well for us, and as such, we need to pray with faith that he will change our situations.

In my experience, I was doubtful about the real intention of our LGBTQ Christian community in Kenya. The fact that it is Christian made me think that probably they would be judgmental about who I am. Later, I learnt that it is a shelter for key population like me. The community has made me develop a new desire to upgrade my spirituality and to live by the promises and mercies of God.

Acts 20:7-12

We need to develop a hunger for God's word like Eutychus exemplified through his struggle to stay awake. Even after falling and the restoration of his life, he still braved through the night until the morning. As LGBTQ Christians, we need to prioritize God's word despite the enormous challenges. God's word is a refuge, a pain killer and a cure to our suffering.

Secondly Eutychus participated in fellowship with others. He is aware that where believers are gathered in the Lord's purpose; He shall be among them. LGBTQ members may shy off from fellowships mostly because they suffer from low esteem. This is one of the odds that we need to overcome and present ourselves for fellowship. All of us need to understand that challenges are universal and the best to do is rise above them. Lastly, we ought to recognize that there are numerous benefits arising from God's presence. Eutychus' powerful encounter saw him benefit from Paul's teachings, the bliss of fellowshiping, and the restoration of his life to the amazement of fellow believers.

In Africa and many parts of the world, homosexuality is seen as a taboo or immoral act, enemy to nature but we have never asked ourselves why and where all these homophobic mentalities came up. Under Africa context, during ancient times, homosexuality was practiced among the Hausas of West Africa, the Imbangala of Angola, Zanzibar of East Africa, Herero, Ovambo and Ovahimba peoples of Southern Africa, ancient Egyptians, and Ovagandjeras of Central Africa. Even my own current homophobic tribe Kikuyu, some pederasts called Oneks practiced homosexuality. But the current attitude towards homosexuality in Africa is a result of western hegemony and the revolutionary changes affected by Euro – Christian and Arab-Islamic movements in their first contacts with Africa. This is because of how wrongly the Bible was interpreted.

Many people like to criticize us the homosexuals especially referring to the Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-11) and Leviticus 20:13 which states that we should be killed! But wait, did God really say that homosexuality is a sin? There are some arguments that the scriptures that supposedly condemn homosexual behavior have been mistranslated over time since it was being translated from Hebrew and Greek to English which was when homosexuals were disregarded by people at that time. This is true after homosexuality was banned in 533 A.D, when the Bible had already been translated to Latin in 382 A.D, meaning that scriptures had to change, and homosexuality became a sin after that. True nobody is born a homosexual, but at the same time nobody is born a heterosexual for that matter!

Sexuality is a gift from God meant to be offered to him either in marriage for procreation, union, and mutual delight for undivided devotion to Christ. Sexuality is not a sin, the misconduct and misuse of sex such as rape is sin. Love between two genders either male and female, male and male or female and female is not a sin, it's special before the eyes of God when one is fully hearted to other people. This is clearly seen in John 13:34, Jesus said "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

We stand as homosexuals firm dedicating our hearts and souls to our God who created us for a purpose, knowing our sexualities and have great plans for us all in the future. We love our Lord just as much as he loves us. Romans 8:39 clearly states that, "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I have gone through depression and hate for being gay and true I hated it for the way people condemned it in many ways. I never had anybody to reach out to support me, but I'm glad I found this LGBTQ Christian group that fully support me and guides me to keep moving on. No matter how many people hates me because of our own sexuality, we'll still know that one true almighty God loves wholly and is infinite.

When Israelites crossed the red sea, they witnessed deliverance and were marveled at the Lord's doing. Many had started complaining to Moses and wished they would have died in Egypt than in the desert. But Moses was composed because he trusted who called him, he comforted them by telling them to wait and see the salvation of the Lord.

Moses obeyed the voice of the Lord and the Lord made a way for them in the red sea. They witnessed with their eyes how the Egyptians, their chariots and drivers were swallowed by the red sea. Their enemies were completely destroyed.

Now the Israelites are singing a new song to the Lord, a song of thanksgiving. Many times, we are awed by God when we are delivered from some ugly scenes and we are not able to express ourselves in words. We are just overwhelmed by the goodness of our God.

I love my pastor who usually says "If you cant speak, just sing a song and God will understand."

This reminds me of a situation I found myself sometimes back. A friend invited me to her birthday party which was held at their home. I felt safe to go there because I had known her for sometimes and she was a lesbian like me. the party went well until I excused myself to go to the bathroom, just as I was about to enter to the washroom a woman pushed the door and pulled me in. I had never been intimate with a woman and this woman here was carelessly undressing me. then there was a knock at the door, the woman started screaming that I wanted to rape her. It was such an ugly scene as everyone wanted to know what was happening.

The friend who had invited me took me away from the scene because she knew I was not capable of that kind of a thing. This woman was her cousin and she knew her well, she is married to a man though she is attracted to women and because she wants to retain her marriage she had to act the victim. On this day God delivered me, I even do not try to imagine what could have happened to me. I just thank God that I came out of it safe. Till this day I don't attend events just because I am invited.

I give thanks to God all the time because His love is eternal, what an amazing God we have. The Israelites were delivered and made special people before the Lord and from the tribe of Judah came our savior Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:12 You are the people of God; He Loved you and chose you for his own, so then you must clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. This is a calling to all Christians, to practice all this we must be able to love one another.

Let the world see Christ in us. I thank God today that there are still Christians out there emulating Christ.

May our good Lord bless us all.

It is my prayer that God will continue to bless and guide us always. Amen

You Are Wonderful

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” Psalm 139:14 (NIV)

Take a good look at yourself in the mirror.

Look at your facial features; your forehead, your eyes, nose, and lips...look at the complexion of your skin, your shape, your height. Take in everything that you consider to be an imperfection; what you wish was bigger, smaller, smoother, more defined.

Next, think about all of the talents and abilities that you possess that you can do especially well, things that you required no training in, you just know how to “do” them. Focus on this for a minute, and then smile :o)

Check you out with your unique self! You stand out, you are set apart, and you are special!

No one on this planet looks like you, no one can do the things you do just like you can! That’s because the Divine made you an original, and no two of the Creator’s children are alike!

When God looks at you, God sees a good thing. God sees perfection in everything thing about you because you are made in God’s image! And when you’re operating your given gifts, I can imagine God’s face lighting up with pride while turning to the angels to say, “That’s MY child, that’s MY workmanship right there!”

Family, we all have days where we feel less than perfect and struggle with low self-esteem and self-worth. This is simply a tactic of the enemy to keep us from realizing our true potential and worth in Christ.

Today, I urge you to tell the enemy and yourself that you are beautiful, you are special. You are unique, and you are perfect. Your Heavenly Parent made you, and in every sense of the word, you are WONDERFUL!

The psalmist recognizes how the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt. They had suffered in the hands of pharaoh for a long time but God in His own time delivered them. The psalmist is looking back at their journey and confesses that it is God who delivered them from the hands of their enemy. God walked with the children of Israel throughout their journey. They witnessed the saving grace and providence of God. This is a testimony that we serve a God who keeps promises.

Today I relate to this wonderful God and I cannot imagine my life without Him. If it were not for God's help, I would still be in a valley of despair with little help of being pulled out of it. I was a praise and worship leader in our local church, but no one knew that I had pressing issues with my life. I knew I was attracted to women, but I was pressing the issue down by praying to God for deliverance. I didn't want to go to Hell as we were made to believe that people who are attracted to same sex will face the wrath of Sodom and Gomorrah.

It reached a point that I could not hold it anymore, and I started to skip going to church. I was so stressed, and I had no one to share with. As they say bad morals corrupt good morals, I became friends with my former classmate who was into drugs. Slowly by slowly, I started using drugs and without realizing it, I became a drug addict. Each day I was regretting why I started using drugs. I became a slave of drugs and I had to look for means to sustain my addiction which resulted in committing crime. I was in this valley of drug addiction with no hope; I was powerless. I needed deliverance and only a mightier hand could have helped me.

As I write this today, I am 2 years sober, my gift of praise and worship is restored and I am a happy worshiper with a group of LGBTQ Christians. God with His mercies found me again, He saved me. I will always be grateful to God for being on my side in my time of need.

In the book of Genesis 9:1-17, God blessed Noah and made a covenant with Him. We can always trust in this God. Through faith in God, we know we are more than conquerors' in Christ Jesus. We will overcome the world.

Hebrews 11 reminds us about men and women of faith, it inspires us to emulate their example and encourage us in our battles. It has not been easy for us, I look at my brethren in our queer Christian fellowship and my heart breaks, each one of us has their own battles to fight. By faith, I know our triumph in Christ is worth every tear, every prayer and every wound. Victory comes through trusting God and His word.

Isaiah 41:10 Fear though not; for I am with thee; do not be dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

I was sweating and not wanting to turn up to face the other passengers I was traveling with; I could not help but revisit the past two terrible hours. I was having breakfast with him in the dining space and it was clear we did not want to say goodbye. Having dated him for two years already, Hans and I had become so addictive to each other. I would always convince myself I was more into him considering he was my first love, confidant and the first white guy I ever came close to. As much as we did not love the idea that I had to leave, we had to accept the fact that I had a class to attend later that day some miles away. Left with no choice he needed to see me off immediately and so he did towards the main stage to Mombasa where my college was.

Many things are vivid in my mind but how the matatu touts saw my white boyfriend giving me a goodbye kiss remains a puzzle since Han's car windows were tinted.... He dropped me and me walking to the stare I was received by angry, idle and homophobic touts. Turning, Hans had disappeared towards our weekend home so no way he could help.

At that moment I remember my sword which is Isaiah 41:10. Something I like is that I should not be afraid and also, I shall be assisted. I prayed for the two. Until today I cannot tell the number of bus touts who surrounded me negotiating if they should kill me or rather take me to the police. They made me sit on the dirt and I was not lightly harassed until a guy from nowhere came, still I could not look him up. " Will you guys be here all day talking and attaching other people and we just got to work, go find something better to do" he demanded.

After every tout had left, I looked up to see who the heaven sent was.... oh! It was my newly friend's boyfriend from Mombasa who I later learnt he was the founder of the bus Sacco. On seeing or I can't tell what he thought that I recognized him, he as well disappeared.

I got into the next bus but since the other passengers I was traveling with had witnessed everything, I feared there might be other homophobic in the bus. When we were a few miles to get to Mombasa, the conductor who was with the bus approached me, sat next to me. I was confused what he wanted, if he wanted, I pay for my ticket I would have done it while he is still standing. " You mind sharing what your boyfriend gave you?" He asked me. " There's nothing important in here" I answered not a little bit worried he was trying to play smart.

"No worries, just give me your number then we can meet and I will apologize on behalf of my friend back there on main stage," he explained.

I paid for the bus and without telling the whole story since it can be really long and maybe for another day, later two days after the incident I learnt the conductor in my bus was gay. My friend's boyfriend was used to save me and the conductor to be the guardian angel to my destination. The ISAIAH 41:10 has always been the verse in the bible I look up to for some encouragement, whatever bad thing is about to happen I realize.

I SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID FOR GOD IS WITH ME, I SHOULD NOT TURN AWAY, FOR HE IS MY GOD. HE HAS STRENGTHENED ME, AND ASSISTED ME AND RIGHT HAND OF HIS JUST ONE HAD UPHELD ME.

Psalms 94:14 “The Lord will not abandon his people; he will not desert those who belong to him.” GNB

The worst curse one can have in Africa and, especially in Kenya, is being gay. The hatred we experience is immense. Marcus lived a quiet life in the village with his parents. Once he cleared school, he decided to enroll in a technical institute for a plumbing course. While in college, he got an opportunity to be himself. Something he had never been his entire life. Throughout his life, he knew he was different. But being brought up by a pastor and his wife, it never gave him an opportunity to be who he was. In college, he met people of his caliber who had accepted themselves as gay. He fell in love with a young man from Mombasa. After college he got a job in the city, and this really excited him as he would be able to live his truth without the monitoring of his strict parents. Numerous times his father questioned why he never got married or had a girlfriend as his mates were already married with children. He always brushed off this conversation.

Being brought up in a Christian background, Marcus always remained a good Christian. He even participated in church activities but he kept his sexuality a secret. All went well until one morning when he got a call from his boyfriend. He informed him that someone had accessed his laptop, and took shots of their conversation and posted them on the social media. Logging in to his Facebook account, his inbox was exploding, cursing messages, enquiry messages and so on. He could not believe that the world was crushing on top of him. What broke him was a call from his father. He warned him that he will never want to see him again and that to him he was dead. He told him never to step in his home. He even warned him from being seen anywhere in the village.

The only place he thought his solace would come from was his church that he had served with so much dedication. When he arrived there, he found the pastor at the gate. He called him aside and told him what a disgrace he was. He informed him how he would go to Hell and that he would experience the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah. He felt hated, rejected by both men and God. He questioned God why He created him different only to destroy him. He turned to alcohol and vowed to never step in a church or believe in God ever again. His boyfriend never abandoned him despite the scandal.

Marcus tried to push him away but he remained put. He introduced him to a pastor friend who was gay. He reassured him that God loved him. He told him of Isaiah 49:15, “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will never forget you. These words put Marcus back on his feet, he stopped alcohol and put his life back on track.

Marcus’s story has really impacted my life and seeing him go through all that and getting back to his feet and the source of motivation being the Holy book only renews my hope in the Lord and that no matter the rejection I face due to my sexuality, my Heavenly Father will never abandon me.

Hannah Praying for a son

The story of Hannah is very inspiring, most lgbtq Christians can relate with it. Sometimes we pray and nothing happens, but it doesn't mean that God is not hearing us. At His own appropriate time, he will answer all our prayers and just like Hannah, we shall testify of the Lord's doings. I will share my testimony here and maybe it will encourage someone going through what I had been struggling with.

I struggled with my sexuality for a long time, I had accepted Jesus as my personal savior at a young age but the preaching's in our church made me believe otherwise. My dad is a pastor with an evangelical church, I was raised in the church, and still I turned out to be a lesbian. It is my mum who outed me, when she found lgbt content in my room. I had downloaded sermons by lesbian Christians and I had a file of them hidden under my pillow.

I had started skipping going to church and my parents became suspicious of me, my mother came to my room to search for drugs because she thought I was into drugs. To her disappointment, she found my lgbtq sermons. She also read my diary and knew I was a lesbian. She gave my dad all the evidence. I never expected my father to throw me out of his house but that day he did. I knew he was homophobic, but I never expected that from him. My father wished me dead for bringing shame to the pastor's family.

This is common to many lgbtq youths. Here in Kenya, it is like a death sentence when you are outed while still under your parent's care. Instead of parents protecting their lgbtq children, they throw them out. They care so much about what society will think of them. My father asked me how can he be a pastor, and he has failed to pastor me. He concluded that since I have chosen that path, I should carry my own cross. Most lgbtq youths end up in streets, they are used as drug peddlers and sex workers by cartels. It is so unfortunate we are losing so many innocent souls. I do pray that one day, we shall have a safe space for lgbtq youths.

Happy pride month to you all and may God remember us the way he remembered Hannah.

Pride Month Challenge Accepted: Encountering the Ghosts of Pride Past

After a brief nod to Charles Dickens and the trinity of Spirits Past, Present, and Future in A Christmas Carol, here begins a devotional glance to our collective past.

Humans have an orbital tendency to view the construct of time as beginning with their own personal arrival on the planet. How brave it is to stir up expanded thoughts of those who lived before our story began. For a few minutes let's revisit earlier times. After all, we are the spiritual descendants of so many souls who held their full glittering identity as boldly as they possibly could. It is wholly and holy appropriate to recognize our "family" lineage.

As a very young curious library fanatic I searched for biographies of people who seemed to know the same Queer threads that I intuited so instinctively. I owe them my surety and sanity. Their stories can rest safely in my mouth and pen. Thousands of years in thousands of languages our people have lived and loved just as we do now. Surely the Divine lived and loved through them.

As a lifelong history buff I studied biblical archaeology in Israel for a brief time some years ago. It was a perspective-changing experience.

From Tiberias to Safed to Masada and in the waves of the sparkling Sea of Galilee to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea I touched ancient places that others had helped form. Across time our lives met and momentarily joined in a timeless spiritual journey.

When we read the scriptural stories of Jonathon and David or Ruth and Naomi we LGBTQ folk feel a depth of connection that may elude others. In an instant we know we are not alone nor are we ever displaced. We are not the first of our kind. We will not be the last. When we read biblical accounts of marginalized people we touch the same estrangement.

I remember the thrilling feeling of deep connection with the ancient people and places as I was learning in Israel. Nowadays I often envision the long lists of generations... so-and-so begat so-and-so...as an eternal Pride Parade. Faces of marginalized ancestors who brought me faith in G_d and faith in myself marching ever onward.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 " G_d has made everything beautiful in its time. G_d has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what G_d has done from the beginning to the end. "

*“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”
Jeremiah 29:11*

Many are the times I asked myself so many questions. As a gay man in Kenya, I had reached a point of believing that gays are cursed and hated by God.

I never understood why God created me different from other people, brought me to this country only to suffer, have no freedom to love, have no freedom to express my feelings and even association. Everywhere I turn only messages of hate directed to me and those of my kind. I felt I had no hope and no future. I believed I was condemned to suffer, die and go to Hell.

I resulted to a life of solitude and self-hate. I never wanted to be in any social place as it only made me feel unwanted. Life had become unbearable. I could not concentrate on my studies in school which really got me into a lot of problems with my parents and teachers. They never understood how once a jovial boy had turned to this dull creature. They tried taking me to counseling sessions but nothing came out of it.

I dropped from school and went to the city to fend for myself. Alcohol became my blossom buddy. In one of my expeditions, I met a young man who had been rejected by his family. He told me his story and although my family did not know about my sexual desires, I would relate to his story because if they knew I would experience the same rejection.

He told me that his faith in God is what kept him sane. I would not understand how he would have faith in God, yet the people who were tasked to spreading the gospel and bring the flock back to the shepherd were in forefront calling for our persecution. He told me God is not man.

He introduced me to a fellowship of other people like me. I was hesitant at first until he read for me Jeremiah 29:11. I read the verse more than five times trying to internalize that message. It gave me hope that no matter what other people say no matter the rejection there is God who has good plans for me that are meant to give me hope and a future.

The God who knew me even before I was conceived has a plan for my future. These are the words that have acted as my driving force.

This is a verse I read on a daily basis to remind me that there is someone who has secured my future. Because of this encouragement I have managed to get my life back on track and this verse has enabled me use my story to encourage and motivate other people going through what I have endured.

Contributor: [Zaweria Hunyu](#)

John 13:34-35; John 2:10

And now I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples. John 13:34-35 (GNBI)

Love is a beautiful thing, everyone one of us like being loved, and I also love being loved. That feeling of being in love is just magical. Jesus commanded us to love one another, not a suggestion or good advice or one among many options from which you can choose. As Christians, we are subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, we are not the masters of our own lives because Christ lives in us. By obeying this command, the world will know that we are truly Christians.

We are living in a world where people are so selfish, all they think is about themselves alone. We are living in a cruel world where it is easier to hate than to love. Yet many of us are confessing Christian's. How beautiful can the world be, if all professing Christians can follow this command?

I thank God for you who is reading this, by being part of this great team, means that you have chosen to love not only your neighbor but also strangers. Through my acceptance journey as a queer Christian, I have learnt to love my self-first. loving myself helped me overcome internalized homophobia and I was able to view the world in a different lens. By the grace of God, I am free and born again.

Love like Jesus:

Jesus was patient with his disciples, he loved them despite their immaturity. He walked with them and rebuked them where necessary; he helped them grow spiritually. Our world today has a terrible problem with love, we cover sins in the name of love. We should affirm and approve one another, let us be our brother and sisters' keepers.

I wish I had this kind of platform in my 20s because the mistakes I made with my life would have been preventable. I thank God for the youths in this platform, and it is my prayer that you will continue growing strong in the Lord. It is through this platform that I came to realize that true love exists. I was drowning in my miseries as I believed I was reaping from my mistakes.

One day a hand full of love was extended to me through our prayer fellowship. I experienced love like I never had before. My life changed for the better and now I am a new creation that have the capacity to love and be loved.

I thank God for Parity fraternity for allowing the light of Christ shine in you, thank you for reaching out to the less fortunate Lgbtq+ community and sharing your spiritual and financial resources. God bless you mightily and reward the work of your hands.

“If we love others, we live in the light, and so there is nothing in us that will cause someone else to sin.”
1 John 2:10

Forgiveness

Jesus underlined the importance of forgiveness when he taught The Lord's Prayer. In your Bible read Matthew 6:9-15. Jesus' model prayer is a fantastic outline of all ways we can express ourselves to God. Of the several lines, all of them important, Jesus only underlines the ones on forgiveness.

The prayer itself asks, *“forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

By using the word “debt” and “debtors,” Jesus is helping us to understand that sin creates a debt, something that is owed to the one offended. This is not a strange concept. Revenge and retaliation are all about fulfilling the debt of offense by harming the offender. In older times it was called “extracting our pound of flesh.” When a convicted prisoner has completed their sentence, they are said to have “paid their debt to society.” Jesus, however, links our forgiveness by God with our forgiveness of others.

After the prayer, Jesus explains the lines on forgiveness. ***“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your father will not forgive your transgressions.”***

It is important to note that Jesus is not saying that we are buying God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Forgiveness of our sin debt before God is only redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, our ability to receive and cherish God's forgiveness is tied to our ability to forgive others.

What is necessary for us to realize is the importance Jesus placed on forgiveness. He could have underlined worship, God's sovereignty, God as our sustainer, or God's protecting hand. Instead, he underlined forgiveness; both the forgiveness we receive from God and the forgiveness we are expected to grant to others.

This pride month, I chose to forgive all those who have hurt me for being gay. I will not carry the burden of unforgiveness. My whole family rejected me for who I am but I have found a safe space where we worship God in truth and Spirit. I thank God for Parity for giving me a platform where I can express myself without fear. May our good Lord bless us all.

When I was considering which passage to choose for my reflection, so many passages went through my mind, especially regarding the inclusion of 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples. And I asked myself: Why do I follow Jesus?

And the passage I read came to my mind. In this passage there are a couple of things happening. Jesus has been welcomed into Jerusalem, but we know that welcome is not complete. Some are saying, ‘Who is this?’ I don’t know about you but I think it’s not everyone who is welcoming him. The city is in turmoil, we hear, and people never really welcome things getting stirred up. Jesus is always stirring things up so it is no surprise that he is not fully welcomed.

And I think of our 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities and sometimes wonder how wide and deep our welcome is in the church, in our communities. Are we willing to take the risks to change how we make decisions and how we even do church so that everyone is truly and deeply welcome? Are we willing to create brave spaces so that all the diversity of who we are is not just tolerated but truly celebrated?

In the passage, Jesus then enters the temple, often where the Pharisees feel it’s solely their territory for authority and interpretation of the religious law. And what does Jesus see in his temple? There are moneylenders and people using the temple as a place to make money and also as a place vacant of the real meaning of welcome and hospitality to strangers, the foundation of the Jewish and Christian understandings of healing. So, he flips their tables because he is disgusted with what is happening. And I wonder: Would I have the courage to flip the tables on things that need it in my denomination? Do we have the courage to speak up when our religion and our spiritual practice is being used to exclude people who are marginalized in our churches and society? Do we have the courage to show our righteous anger and make a stand and say, ‘Your misuse of the church for hatred and exclusion is not welcome!’?

As a youth I attended a church with a banner that that read, ‘May the peace of God disturb you.’ It’s by spiritual writer Anthony de Mello. It had a profound impact on me, to remember to be unsettled by what I saw happening in the world, especially to my gay and trans friends in the church.

I still see that exclusion happening and it still disturbs me. As a high school student, I remember someone started a rumour that I was a lesbian. I remember the laughter when people would go past. I remember feeling shunned and somehow less than everyone else.

As I grew older, I discovered my bisexuality as a gift from God and decided to celebrate my own journey and the journeys of others to self-acceptance, knowing God celebrates us as we are. It disturbs me to know that people in the US are being rejected fundamentally for how they identify sexually. Here are [some actions of solidarity](#) to consider in support of them.

After Jesus flips the tables, the passage continues and we hear that the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he cured them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the amazing things he did, they become angry. They are angry that the marginalized are welcome in the house of God. Jesus is challenging us today, as he did then, to break out of complacency and comfort and shake off the privilege that stops us from taking action with the oppressed.

It’s time for the church to deeply and boldly welcome 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples, without hesitation. As a member of the Disciples of Christ, I say I am part of a ‘movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.’ How can I use my voice and power and privilege to say, ‘No more’? Let’s get moving and flip some tables, as Jesus did! Hallelujah!

Psalms 146:2 “while I live will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being”. (KJV)

This Psalms is calling us to praise, not only on Sundays but all the days of my life. Praising God should be our lifestyle. Praising God means that we trust Him no matter what we are going through.

I remember my first day to go to Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. I was invited for an interview and I was hopeful that I would get that job. I had alerted my brother that I will be going to Nairobi and I was hoping he would accommodate me before I settled in my new work place.

I was excited as I left the village, I was looking forward to town life where I was sure to meet other gay people as life in the city is diverse. I went for the interview but unfortunately there were other people more qualified than me, when I told my brother that I did not get the job, he gave me transport money to go back to the village.

I was disappointed because I was hoping my brother would have at least accommodate me till I get a job, but he was not willing to host me. My brother had a stable job and I did not expect a no from him. Humbly I went back to the village and learnt that the only sure bet I have in this world is God.

As the psalmist is telling us: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help”(Psalms 146:3 KJV)

Isaiah 60:18 “The sound of violence will be heard no more; destruction will not shatter your country again. I will protect and defend you like a wall; you will praise me because I have saved you. (GNB)

When we rebel against God, His wrath can befall us like it happened to Israelites, but our God in his mercies still reach out to them when they sincerely repent. What we have observed in this chapter is that God is slow to anger thus giving us an opportunity for us to repent all our sins. We have obtained mercy through the blood of Jesus on the cross and because of believing He is the Christ we have gained our salvation.

Mathew 9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, yea, Lord. (KJV)

Do you believe God is able to change your life? If only you believe great things happen to those who believe. For a long time, I was blind spiritually,

I could not imagine God can save a gay person like me. the devil made me feel that I am very far from the grace of God. but did Jesus longed to heal me, yes! He just wanted me to take a step of faith and walk towards him.

Just like the blind men I never hesitated when I was invited to a Lgbtq+ Christian fellowship, though at first, I just wanted to know how they can be? but at the end of the fellowship my life was completely changed and I said yes to Jesus.

We should not settle in our comfort zone and wait for miracles, lets walk towards Jesus and tell him, yes Lord you are able to restore my life and make me whole again.

Amen

“I look to the mountains; where will my help come from?” (Psalms 121:1 GNB).

As I reflect on this psalm, I can relate with my own life. I was so desperate to live but my main aim as a Christian is to have eternal life. I searched for this loving and caring God.

I fasted and waited for God to cleanse the lesbianism in me but the more I prayed and fasted, the more I was spiritually uplifted and the more my attraction to women grew. I was desperate and I really wanted God to intervene in my life.

I approached my local pastors and all they told me was that I was not saved enough and I should repent and turn to God. I turned to our school chaplain and I was given the same message.

I was so desperate and I knew I was a sinner destined to hell. I hated my existence and all I wanted was to die and be forgotten that I ever existed in this world. I searched for hope and peace, I went to the valleys for fasting, I went to the craves but all this left me desperate.

But the moment I was so tired of searching, my God appeared and gave me hope. He gave me a new beginning; he gave me a future and a hope. He connected me with the right people, who embraced me for who I am, who loves and cares for me.

I am a living testimony that our help and our hope in this senseless world is in the hands of God. I know I have a long journey to go, but my God is bigger than all the mountains.

As you celebrate pride month, may God be with you and remember LGBTQ persons in East Africa. Our legislators are pushing tough laws to criminalize us. We face homophobia everyday but by Gods grace we are still surviving in the harsh environment.

I thank God for each one of us participating in this writing, I love reading your input. God bless parity for making us seen and heard from our rural setup. God bless you all.

I have appreciated the time I have had to ponder on the scriptures that, especially during Pride month, inspire me to claim my place in God's Kingdom and embrace who I am as a beloved child of God.

I found myself reflecting on the last 16 years of my journey here on this planet we call Earth. I grew up in a very devout Utah Mormon household. My father, until the last few years because of his age and health (he turns 88 in the fall), held leadership positions within local church congregations. Growing up as the child of Bishop and then President Hamblen (both leadership titles within the Mormon Church) only added to the importance of following church doctrine. This commitment to the church worked well for many of my friends and family, but, for a queer kid, it was isolating and soul crushing. Accepting myself, without apology or hope for "being made whole", didn't begin until age 40.

Coming out was not without a price. There were many friends, family members, and acquaintances within the church who felt that accepting that I am as God created me to be meant turning my back on Him. I went from someone who taught Sunday School classes and spoke in the worship services of many congregations in the area to one who was deceived and one to be avoided. Pleasant, but short greetings were exchanged with lifelong friends who quickly excused themselves. For several years, my own father could rarely get beyond asking about the weather and, when I visited, the traffic. In coming out, without accepting that being queer was a burden or test of faith, I lost my spiritual home.

And, at first, I was as hard on myself as anyone else. It took me some time before I recognized that no one could take from me my faith in and my relationship with my Savior. I started searching for a home church and resumed my journey of faith. Reading the scriptures took on a new meaning. For more than 40 years, I had poured my heart into studying and looking for an answer that would solve my "issue". When I decided to put as much effort into celebrating and accepting myself as I had once given to condemning myself, I grew in the strength of the Lord. And I grew in loving and celebrating my queerness.

This person I am, with all the qualities and attributes that refuse to fit in either binary box, has allowed me opportunities I would never have without that fluidity. And there is one passage of scripture that most impacted my reclamation of faith: It is found in Philippians chapter Two, verses Five through Seven:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant....(KJV)

And with these few words, I understood that the only thing that will ever separate me from Christ and God is my pride.

Interesting that, during Pride month, I know that when I recognize my place in God's plan is no less or greater than another's, I am blessed with their companionship. What keeps me from a close relationship with my Savior and my Heavenly Father are things that, unlike my queerness, are within my control. Am I humble? Do I recognize that being a Christian requires me to act as Christ did? Do I follow His example? Do I have a servant's heart? Do I look for opportunities to share the healing balm of Gilead that has so generously been shared with me? Do I look upon every person with Christ's eyes?

So, as we take time to join together in celebration of who we are, in our totality, my prayer is that we also allow ourselves to be lovingly humbled by the overwhelming mercy of our Savior and our Heavenly Father. We should, because so many of us have dealt with harsh judgments, be the most generous in extending love and mercy to others.

Happy Pride!

Psalms 31 begins and ends with a petition for God's favor and protection.

Verse 9 opens with cry to the Lord to be gracious, then gives a litany of distress that suggest depression, sickness, and perhaps persecution.

The psalmist seems draw a plight like that of king David before his anointing, he suffered in the wilderness when he was grazing his father's sheep, the psalmist voice complete trust in God the dire circumstances, however great David troubles were, in his trust to God was great, he took careful inventory of his crises but would not dwell on it.

David was probably a mere boy and such had not been thought worth of an invitation but had been left with servants keeping the sheep. The prophet now orders him to be summoned and marks his value in God's sight by saying we will not sit down till he come hither. A divine communication of gifts and graces, to fit him for the power and make him a type of him who was to be the anointed one, who receive the spirit not by measure but without measure.

God used rejection and the wilderness to craft David and he will do the same for you, to use all junks and hurts of life to help drive you, we may think we don't fit within the scope of the promises because we do not love God, as we ought but the context disabuses us of that notion, all who are called by God, saved by God are lovers of God, if you are justified, you love God.

So his promises is for you; he will use all pain for his purposes and glory driving you to him.

Paul prays with joy for the church and its members, when we are growing in Christ and have him self-centered in our hearts and mind, thoughts turns into prayers praying for each other's cultivates a good environment of joy and dependence on Christ for our relationship.

The summary of all these teachings, creates and shows God's love, and teaches us for every gold to shine has to be burned with strong fire, for the psalmist starts by asking for mercy because of distress, broke and torn heart but end with the show of trust to God.

To all the LGBTQ family that lives in desperately, remember that even King David was not worth in the eyes of his brothers but worth in the eyes of God and he became the king.

Let us create the partnership that Paul is teaching us, the good work started by God in ourselves, let us be filled with the fruit of pure love among ourselves.

Romans 6:22 but now you have been set free from sin and are the slaves of God. your gain is a life fully dedicated to him, and the results is eternal life.

Let me start by telling you that I fought it. I fought being gay with every fiber of my being.

I wished it away. I begged it away. I lay prostrate on my face night after night begging a Holy God who required perfection for help. I will be the first to admit that I have never been much of a fighter but this I fought.

I lost - time and time again I lost!

I know that to so many of my friends and family there will not ever be any reconciliation that this is me and that I am exactly who God created me to be. I can understand this, as I am just now allowing myself to come to terms after 40 years of life, at least 25 of which I knew, without a shadow of a doubt that I was Gay.

A Spirit filled Christian, baptized when I was 5, accepted by a God that knew intimately all that I was and all that I would be! Gay! Raised in a strict Pentecostal religion in which nearly everything outside of breathing and eating was a sin that would send me to hell and here I am Gay.

Gay - the supposed abominable, the unpardonable. Oh my God what did I do to deserve this? I don't understand. You're a father. A father doesn't desire to harm or torment his children, and yet here I am - Gay!

Please believe me, I can't remember a time in which I haven't begged God for relief.

I knew what I was taught. I knew the supposed disgrace. I went without everything that I felt was making me this way, and still no relief.

In begging God for deliverance from this I asked Him for a wife, believing that marriage was the cure. If only I would marry and have sex with a woman then everything would be okay. He answered me in part. God gave me a wife yet she wasn't just a wife, He gave to me an angel.

He gave to me what I thought I wanted. She is by far to me still the most beautiful person in the world inside and out. He caused our hearts to intertwine until they seem almost inseparable and yet here, we sit, breaking because despite all that she is, I can't be a real husband to her.

I thank God because we were blessed with two children, who are still the reason I have survived so many difficulties.

Now that I have been able to reconcile my faith in God and my sexuality, I feel free.

I love God more.

Be encouraged in the Lord. It shall be well with the righteous.

The road to my self-acceptance was rocky and was paved with a lot of reaction, coming out as my true gender, and sharing my sexuality was fraught with fear over how my family members would react. When I attained the age of 18 years I decided to move out of my parent's compound and get a life outside our village. I got a job in town where I was employed as a waiter in a hotel.

I worked there and got my first salary that enabled me to rent a single house which I could afford to pay. All this time I was receiving calls from my parents asking me how am doing.

As I was doing my duties in the hotel my boss employed another waitress and I was the one to show her around and how things are done. We became good friends at work and she became my roommate.

Our love for each other grew as waiters and we continued well as we went along. It was a good experience to be with her as a roommate and a work mate. One day we decided to discuss life and how we think about it. Mercy, my roommate, told me she has never felt for men and she is always attracted to women - waa! That made me feel so much, and when I told her that am also a lesbian she couldn't hold her tears of love .

All this time my parents still insisted I go and visit them, so I decided to ask her to go visit my parents. She welcomed my request and we decided to go see my parents the following Sunday.

I called my mother and told her I will go with my friend to visit her. And she welcomed the move, and so we prepared our selves to go. We reached safely and was welcomed with a lot of love.

My mother had prepared chicken for us because I love chicken, I and my Friend enjoyed it so much. As we were taking our delicious meal my mother told me "Nyokabi you know you are growing old so it is good to get married and get me grandchildren." I and my friend mercy looked at each other and smiled.

My answer to my mother was based on (Ruth 1:15-17) "Naomi said to her, Ruth, your sister-in-law had gone back to her people and to her God. Go back home with her. Ruth answered, "Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; whenever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God."

After the reading I broke the news to my mother and told her that the girl friend I was with is my all time friend and a lover of my heart. And I am not willing to leave her since I feel too much attracted and with love with her.

My mother had no more words to tell me but looked at me and nod her head and started crying, meaning she didn't like what I told her. My friend was scared and requested that we go. Since she was new in the area I decided to bid farewell to my mother and left. We reached safely and we decided to continue as we were before despite all the odds.

Prayer:

Loving and gracious God, who made us in your own image and sent your son Jesus Christ to welcome us home; Give us strength to overcome. Protect us in love and empower us for service. Through the power of the Holy Spirit may we uphold them in the promises that each will make this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pride is a time of radical love and acceptance, a time of celebration, celebrating as a community and outwardly denying the messages of unacceptance and injustice towards the LGBTQ+ community.

When I think of the message of love and identifying as queer, I think of my identity as a gift, a gift of sacred identity in a complicated world, and I am inspired to share my identity with messages of love.

One story that speaks on radical love and acceptance I reflect on comes from the Gospel of Luke, where Mary, the mother of Jesus, discovered a change in her identity, as she receives a message from an angelic being, Gabriel. After receiving the message that she was to become pregnant with Jesus, she accepted her calling, she accepted her new identity as mother, yet needed support. So, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and when the two women greeted one another, both were filled with the holy spirit. Elizabeth shared her love and joy by blessing Mary and accepting this new call bestowed upon her. After they shared their love for each other and their unborn children, Mary shared her love for her community, naming her hopes and dreams of justice and equality for her community.

When I first came out of pansexual, and I was able to love my true and authentic self, I was able to say “Here I am” to myself, I wanted to share this newfound identity.

One of the first persons I decided to share my queer identity with was someone I loved, my cousin Kara. When I came out to my cousin, revealing a part of me I was so eager, yet scared to share, there was this voice of fear and doubt deep in the back of my mind, because no matter how sure I was of the love I shared with my cousin, the little voice of doubt is there, wondering if they would accept me. Yet, after I told my cousin of my newly revealed identity, she greeted me with acceptance and love.

She said, “Erin, I love you for who you are.” And after we shared a love for ourselves and each other we shared our hopes for a more inclusive and loving family, a more inclusive and loving church, a more inclusive and loving world.

Our voices have power, power to change minds and share words of love, to speak on actions of justice to our neighbors, our siblings, for our second greatest commandment is to “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. When we are given a new identity, a new calling God has given to us, we are to share God’s message of radical love and justice that God gave to us, inspiring acceptance, comfort, and love in our communities.

Beautiful name of Jesus

Philippians 2:9 “wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name (KJV).

In our African tradition, we give our children names according to the most loved relatives and some are named according to the seasons they were born in. I had a problem with the name given to me at birth because it had no significance, I was named after a clan. This really affected my self-esteem as I grew up because people always questioned the source of that name. I thank God, I survived it all and all that matters to me is that I know a name that is everything to me.

The beautiful name of Jesus has a significance. Paul declared that God gave Jesus the name that is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (vs.9-11).

Most of the time I find myself in difficult times or even having bad nightmares, I call on this mighty name. sometimes I am not even able to pray but calling on the name of Jesus gives me peace. Jesus is our savior and always present in us.

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with a child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is being interpreted is, God with us.” (KJV)

This beautiful name of Jesus lifts great burdens, it comforts the broken heart, it unlocks the closed doors. The name of Jesus stands out as a name above all other names.

I choose to follow Jesus

Luke 9:23-24 And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. for whosoever will save his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (KJV) I long to live a life that is worthy to bear your cross, lord Jesus, I can never suffer as you did, but I wish to give my life to you and follow you for the rest of my mortal days. Forgive me for my selfish thoughts and actions, and aid me in my quest to rid them from my mind entirely. You have shown me the way, are the truth and life. thanks be to God. Amen.

My redeemer lives

Job 19: 25-27 for I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another; though my reigns be consumed within me. (KJV)

Job is my favorite character in the bible. Often when we consider Job, the emphasis is placed on his suffering, in the midst of his pain, Job remained certain of the Lord he served and the relationship he shared with him. This should serve as a reminder to every believer, bringing hope even in the midst of our greatest trials. Job had a very personal relationship with God, he walked with God and served him daily. Job had lost so much that pertained to him physically but he never lost his relationship with God.

When suffering and pain comes our way, we can rest in the fact our redeemer lives. He is alive today and able to provide for every need. because he lives, we can face tomorrow with confidence.

Happy pride to us and may God bless us all.

Each and every time I read the Woman at the Well, I find myself amazed by the various details that often are left out of sermons (not unlike most of scripture!) I find myself intrigued by the lead up to Jesus' meeting of the woman.

Jesus went out of their way into a foreign land to speak with a Samaritan woman. The cultural significance of this is enough to tear down walls. Jesus, as a Jew, was NOT to speak to a Samaritan woman. These 2 demographics simply did not interact according to social class. More so, this was midday which was the hottest part of the day.

Jesus had no business being out at the hottest part of the day, and the fact that this woman was gathering water midday was evidence enough that she had been shamed by society enough to think that she didn't even have a right to gather water at a decent time. As Jesus went out of their way, they met the woman who had no rights, who had been shamed, and who was considered the scum of her people. And yet, Jesus asked her for a drink.

I think often of my own story when I read this. I think of my level of usefulness that quickly disappeared to my denomination as soon as I came out as LGBTQIA+. Pretty quickly, I went from being able to metaphorically gather water at normal times to gathering water midday where no one could see me.

This story of the woman and Jesus is often used to discuss how we need to meet the scum of society where they are and convert them.

Quite differently, I believe Jesus was simply meeting this woman where she was when no one else would. In fact, due to Jesus' social status at this time, she wouldn't have been able to have a full conversation with them had she not been an outcast. Usually, they would have been surrounded by his disciples or by the townspeople. However, since she was alone and Jesus was alone, they could have an intimate conversation about where she's really at. I don't believe Jesus saw this as an opportunity to call her on her sins. I think they saw this as an opportunity to offer her a healthier and more fulfilling life.

In my own story, I've found that when scripture is weaponized is often when we lose the heart and tone with which it is written.

I've found that Jesus isn't just lurking to call me on sins. I believe Jesus very intentionally finds us where we are, at the points in which our vulnerability and normalcy intersect, and talks to us.

The LGBTQ+ community is judged harshly in the society and they are looked down upon.

But according to the bible in the book of (Galatians 3:28) "There is neither Jew or Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

"Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have called you by my name, you are mine."

Isaiah 43:1 "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, o Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

This verse has taken me out of dark spots. Before I came to accept myself as part of the community, I had a really tough time pretending to be someone I am not just to fit in the society. I had a circle of friends who were all straight where they were all with either girlfriends or boyfriends, so I also had to get a girlfriend so as to fit in and avoid questions.

This all happened in 2018 when I was in university. I was not happy since I was in denial and I was doing all this just to impress my friends. I dated this girl for 2 years with no intimacy at all then we later broke up in 2020.

Early 2020 I met a friend who was part of the community and at least I had someone who I could turn to and be comfortable around him by being me. That was when I got the courage to come out to the circle of friends I had. They were so happy that I was able to tell them about my sexuality and one of them already knew who was a guy and he was very comforting and till to date we are all close friends and I can be myself around them and make merry.

This relates to Isaiah 43:1, as much as I pretended to my friends by being straight and they accepted me, they still accepted me for me after coming out to them the same way God accepted me for who I am.

"It is bad for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18), it would be inconsistent with God's loving nature to create people and then condemn them to a life of loneliness. God puts people in relationships that is why it is better to be with someone than to burn with passion. I can as well relate this verse with my life right now. I have been part of the LGBTQ+ community since I accepted myself not knowing if I could get a loyal partner because it was hard to get someone who would commit to one person till March 27th 2022. I met someone special and my heart was contented and I didn't look any further.

I had been searching for a while and I finally got what I was looking for. I needed someone I could confide in and God gave me the perfect match. We have been together for almost 2 years now and we grow closer every day. As according to Genesis 2:18, God made sure that He provided me with a companion and I hope this verse also gives hope to someone else out there. Never lose hope on love because it does exist and it will always win.

In reference to Galatians 3:28 which gives us assurance that we are all one in Christ and that you should not feel left out because He Himself accepts you as you are." For you created me in most being, you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalms 139:13-14). This tells us God knew how we would turn out us part of the LGBTQ+ community and as we know, He is a God of no mistakes and all loving.

Rev 4:11 Our Lord God! you are worthy to receive glory, honor and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were given existence and life (GNB)

Is homosexual natural? Is it an abnormal thing to mother nature and why does that matter anyway? These are some of the questions that homosexuals must go through each day, being demoralized for eternity with a lot of guilt and despair.

Scientists have not yet come into conclusion as to the cause of sexual orientation (heterosexual-homosexual continuum), but they theorize that it is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, hormonal, and environmental influences and do not view it as a choice.

While some people perceive that homosexuality is unnatural, scientific research show that homosexuality is a normal and natural variation in human sexuality and is not in and of itself a source of negative psychological effects.

Definition of natural refers to in accordance with the nature of, or circumstances surrounding, someone or something. In Revelation 4:11 says that “Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.”

According to Bruce Bagemihi, same sex behavior has been documented in over 450 species such as dolphins, elephants, penguins, giraffes and many more. God created nature and with-it homosexuality was amongst nature and no one has the right to judge it but instead we must accept it.

Colossians 1:17 says that” He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” God created sexuality and blessed it upon his children so that we may praise him and have mutual interaction with each other. Homosexuality is natural and we must appreciate it as it says in Genesis 1:31 that God saw all that he had made, and it was very good....

In his hand is the life of every creature, says Job.

We are all human beings no matter the difference in sexuality and we must love one another as much as we love ourselves.

“When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he [Moses] said, ‘Here I am!’” (Exodus 3:4).

There are many moments in the Bible where the phrase 'here I am' is called. It is a phrase found in Genesis, Samuel, Isaiah, and Exodus. In Hebrew, the word is *hineini*: here I am! I am here!

This phrase has always called to me as a queer person, and especially as someone who is transgender. There are so many spaces where we are expected to check parts of ourselves at the door, or risk seeming sensitive, difficult to work with, or as some proof that queer people are seeking attention and confrontation. I have found the opposite to be true of myself: I tuck my chin and shoulders in and smile at everyone, hoping to take up no space and attract no attention.

Attention. That's the word that seems so frightening. I, the queer person, am doing this for attention. 'Quit seeking attention,' people say, or 'I'd be fine with gay people, if they didn't shove it down my throat.' Isn't that the purpose of all these bills and laws about queer people existing in public? If you can criminalize transgender people for existing, you can cease their existence.

Hineini! Attention! Here I am!

When God calls, you have to raise your hand, right? What's the point, otherwise? God, I am here, with my full self, with all of my fears and sins and failures. With all of my love and hope and talent.

Queer people don't live in a safe world. We must survive. I do not say '*hineini*' to say that everyone must always come out of the closet all of the time, in every situation. I don't even wear my pronoun pins or queer shirts anymore, for fear of violence in public.

I say, 'I am here,' to say that I am living in myself. When God says, 'where are you?,' I am saying 'here!' I am 'here' with God, in the same space as God, in a place God can find me. God gave me my name, and queerness, and transgender identity.

Suppose God calls on me, and one of those amazing things is missing?

'Where is your sparkle, child?' God might say. 'Where are you?'

So I come out of the bushes, out of my fear, and out of myself, saying -

I AM HERE!

My name is Philoy, that's what my friends call me, born in Kenya.

I came into realization that I was a queer when I was barely ten years old. I had interest only on males and I really got depressed of that. I had no one to talk to or reach out for advice and help because I was taught that it was an immoral act.

My family is religious family, Christian family and I am proud to be born in such a family. I sometimes used to cry alone in my room regretting and cursing God as to why I was gay. In fact, I hated myself and wished that I should never have been born into this cruel homophobic land.

As I grew up and joined high school and, in that school, gay students used to be beaten, if found, nearly to death and it was traumatizing. I was scared and never spoke anything of it as I saw these horrifying scenes. I finally finished by God's grace and finally joined college where I got to meet and see gay people and learnt about the LGBTQ group that really fought for our lives and rights in Africa. I was relieved to know that I was not alone in this and that there are people like me fighting for our rights.

I hated religion for I heard and got preached of how gay people get to be mistreated in the name of our Lord. I did some research about our bible and later came into realization of how misinterpreted and mistranslated of the scriptures that disowns our people based on their sexuality.

I got saved and believed that God was my strength no matter what other people say.

Psalms 86:15 says, "But you O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."

Proverbs 8:17 says, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." This scripture clearly states how much love that God gives to those love him and we as homosexual should not be afraid of loving and seeking him no matter what because He is above all and created us with a purpose. For those who judge us shall be judged and the measure they use, will be measured to them as well (Matthew 7...).

I am happy to be in this group of Christian queer and the support they show towards me is irreplaceable.

“Are you gay?”

I yelled standing on my small brother’s room as he sat on his bed. He was in college at the time and I wanted to use his laptop. The screen saver was rainbow and so I was curious because my brother has been so feminine all through his life. he loved it in the kitchen and always kept clean. We all thought he would out grow it when he grew up but the feminine side outshined any trait of masculinity. I loved My brother so much because we were the only kids.

I feared for his life if he turns out gay. I was so disappointed when he confided in me that he is gay and I should never let anyone know. But I had to do something to change my brother, I had to act like the big brother. I looked for a pastor who we started fasting and praying for my dear brother to change, I visited a psychiatrist who gave my brother weekly appointments. Instead of witnessing change, my brother started to withdraw from us all, he had very few friends and I feared for the worse. I didn’t want to lose my brother but also, I didn’t want a gay brother.

I started doing my research on sexuality and gender orientation. Google became my friend and I started to understand my brother more. We had not seen each other for six months. I tried to call him but his number was out of service. I was scared as I started to think of where I can locate him. I went to his school and I was told for a month he had not reported and his phone has been off. I remembered he had a good childhood friend and thought of locating him and to my relief, I found them together.

I was so happy to find my brother alive. I heard read many stories of gay kids committing suicide, others turning into drugs but my brother was safe in his best friend house. He was surprised by my change of attitude but I assured him that no matter what, I will always stand by him. He introduced me to many of his friends, he even invited me to their Sunday fellowship. I was amazed at how this beautiful soul loves worshiping God. I have made so many friends with them and they have been a blessing to me.

I chose to be an ally not only for my brother but for the entire Lgbtq+. We hate what we don’t know because of our fears and ignorance. Let’s make the world a safe space to all.

John 13: 34 “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

I wish you all a Happy pride month.



Rev. Dr. Kim Purl has a heart to find pathways to reconcile LGBTQIA+ non-affirming church bodies with LGBTQIA+ persons in their communities.

She is one of the hosts at [Holy Dialogues](#) where diverse discussions on sexuality and faith are explored. You can also find more about Kim at [missouripastor.org](#).

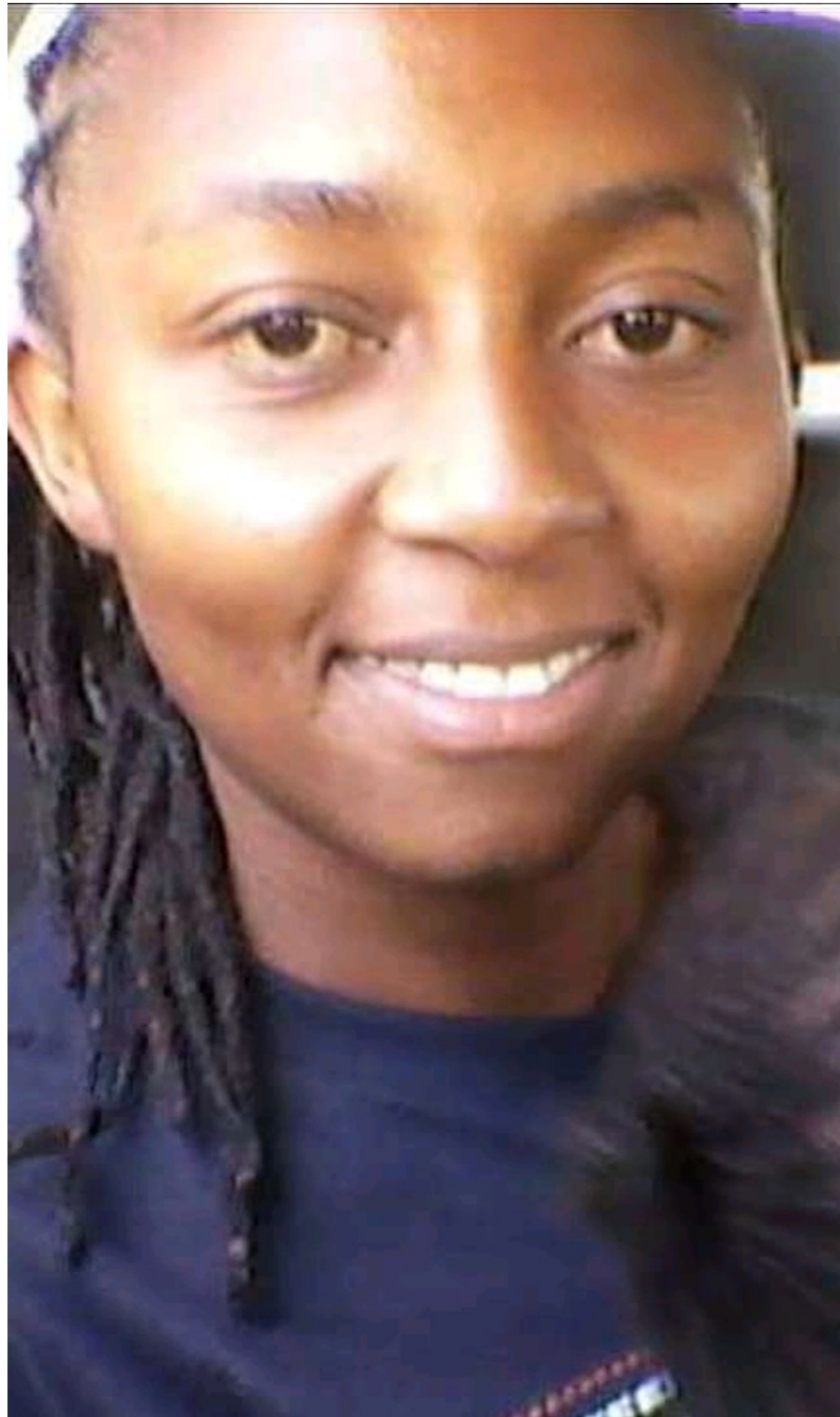
She resides in rural Missouri where she serves as pastor, friend, wife, and momma.



Sontaia P. Briggs is the founder of YouUniversity, an online ministry uplifting and affirming the gifts of youth and young adults, as well as providing in-person college access/success coaching and counseling.

A consultant working with nonprofits and churches, Sontaia authors youth and young adult programs and workshops.

She is a sought after LGBTQIA inclusion trainer and motivational speaker who has worked with PARITY NYC, Blanton-Peale Institute and Counseling Center, Park United Methodist Church and NMAC Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Sontaia holds a Master of Public Administration from Rutgers University and a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry from New York Theological Seminary.



My name is Marie Nganga, and I am a Kenyan of African origin. I am 38 years old. I am a Christian lesbian woman. I love God with all my heart and I love serving God through humanity.

I have a passion for writing and studying the Bible.

I am a woman of faith and I look forward to the day when all of the LGBTQ+ community will feel safe at the Lord's table.



A Kenyan gay Christian

Author:
Liggera Edmonds-Allen



Liggera Edmonds-Allen (they/them) is a recent graduate from the School of Drama at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Their work revolves around transgender activism and queer joy. They love poetry, theatre, and going to the aviary!

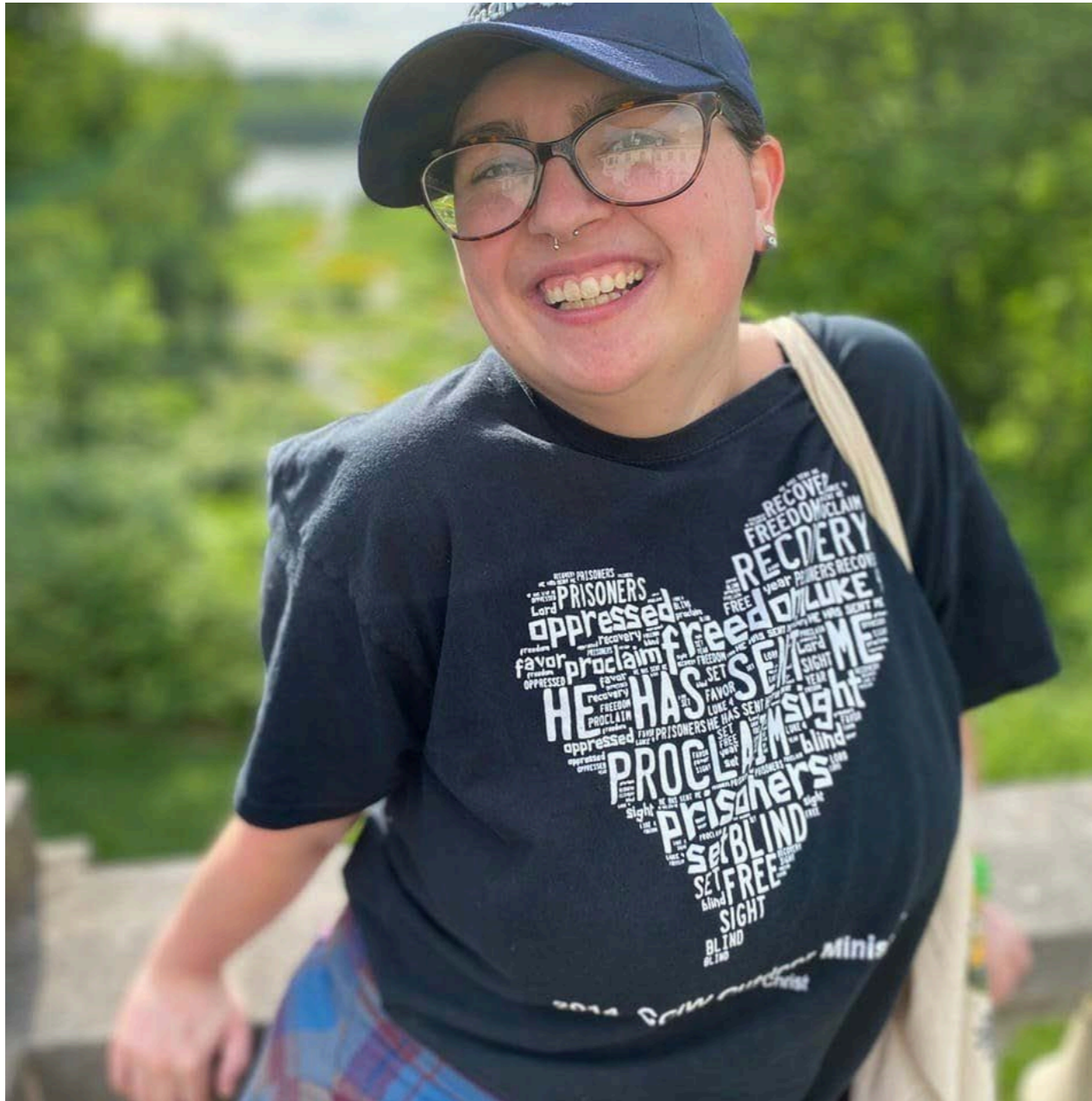
Author: Jay



Kenyan Christian gay man. 28 yrs.

Still smiles though the thick and thick.....happy always.

Author: Erin Gresham



My name is Erin Gresham, pronouns are she/her/they/them. I am a student at Phillips Theological Seminary and plan to be ordained through the Illinois/Wisconsin Region.

Central Illinois is where I will always call home, born and raised in a small town called Mackinaw. At Mackinaw Christian Church is where I went to church, and it is there I was taught the stories of Jesus and the meaning of the church, acceptance, affirmation, liberation, and love.

I currently work at First Christian Church in Lynchburg, VA as the Christian Education Intern, teaching and guiding youth through scripture and our call of justice and love. I also serve on the AllianceQ Council. This work is meaningful to me because acceptance, affirmation, liberation, and love is what my theology stems from, it is what my faith stems from, and I feel called to spread that message in my work and in my life.

Author: Wilfred Nyokabi

Wilfred Nyokabi

29 years

Kenyan/ African

Lesbian

Christian



Zaweria Hunyu

Kenyan. African, Kenyan/kikuyu

Non-binary

Lesbian

Born again Christian

Business woman

Teacher



Rev. Susan “Sue” A. Webley (she/her) is an award-winning ordained minister and entrepreneur on a mission to Encourage, Empower, and Educate.

She is an Associate Pastor at Rivers of Living Water Ministries, UCC under the leadership of Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Vanessa M. Brown. She is also the National Minister of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM) led by Presiding Prelate Bishop Yvette A. Flunder.

Radical inclusivity and the intentional creation of open and affirming spaces are at the core of Sue's belief system and work. As a writer, she is the editor of the anthology *At the Table: Words of Faith, Affirmation, and Inspiration for LGBT Believers of Color*, created to bring messages of hope, love, acceptance, reconciliation, and restoration to those rejected for walking in their authenticity. In community, she sits on the board of the LGBT Faith Leaders of African Descent, an advocacy and educational organization designed to "oppose discrimination, exclusion, or intimidation of LGBT persons in church communities," and Parity, formed to assist congregations and faith organizations in becoming more LGBTQIA sensitive and celebratory."

Sue also proudly serves as an advisory committee member of the Murray Rustin Social Justice Institute of the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference, created to forge healthy dialogue and practices around sexuality in black church spaces between the LGBTQ and non-gender conforming community and clergy persons. Under her Kara Solutions brand, Sue has provided key administrative, production, and tech services for individuals, faith-based and community-based organizations, helping them embrace and navigate the digital space since 2020. She is the host of *INSPIRE!* by Kara, a weekly broadcast created to encourage, empower and embolden individuals to make change in their personal lives, their communities and the world.

Forever a Brooklynite in her heart, Sue currently calls Chicago her home.



My names are Daniel Kihara. 45 years old. Non- binary.

Born again Christian who is saved only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am a small-scale farmer, and I live alone with my fur babies.

I believe in serving God through humanity.



Stay away from those people who try to disparage your ambitions.

My name is Philoy.

A Kenyan gay Christian.



Cynthia Vacca Davis is an adjunct professor with a trunk full of ungraded papers and snack wrappers.

If you come to her house, expect dogs at the door, wine on the table, and medium roast in her Industrial Bunn coffee maker. She is serious about beverages. She loves cameras, New Orleans, and stories. She overuses the word “community” because she thinks you can never have too much of that.

Cynthia is the author of *Intersexion*, a story of faith, identity and authenticity published by Lake Drive Books.

You can reach her at <https://www.cynthiavaccadavis.com>



28 yrs old gay christian. Kenyan of African origin. I desire to be able to live my authentic self one day before I leave this world.



My names are Nancy Wanja Mwangi.

I am from Kenya, and I love nature.

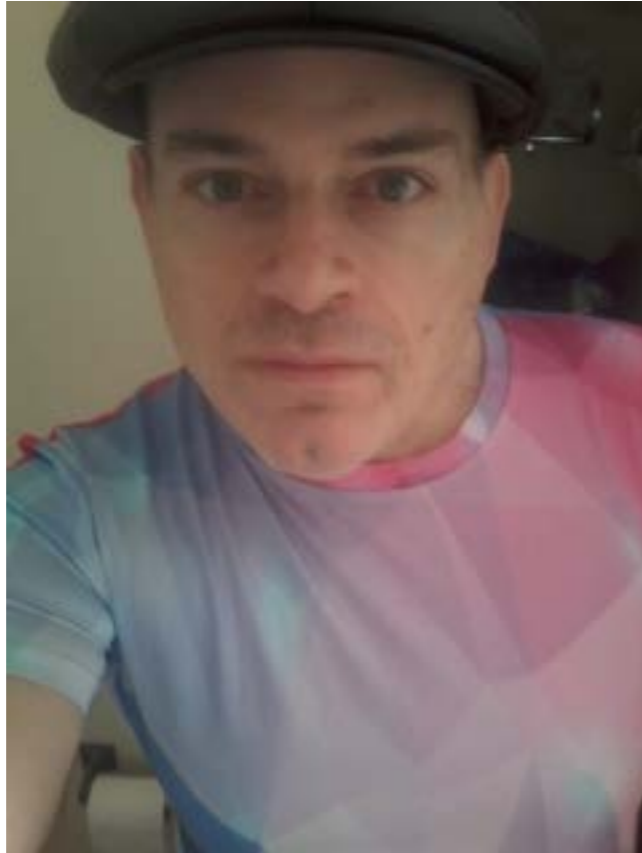
A single mother of two boys and a born-again Christian lesbian woman.

I am a human rights activist and I advocate for LGBTQ+



Call me Mitch. A Kenyan gay man who once felt hated and rejected.

But by meeting people like me who had found their shelter in God, it renewed my faith and trust in God. I feel like a new being and will use any avenue I have to spread the word of God and to encourage those of my kind that God loves us all.



Adrian Slonaker resides in downtown Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada in an apartment shared with a multicolored plush unicorn called Blaze.

Having completed university studies in linguistics and literature, Adrian works as a language consultant.

In precious moments of free time, Adrian enjoys swimming, rock 'n roll records, naps during thunderstorms, horror films and extremely spicy vegetarian dishes.

Adrian's theological background and beliefs are somewhat eclectic and syncretic, with elements of Anabaptism (Mennonite), Anglicanism, Reform Judaism and Unitarian-Universalism in the mix.

Adrian also writes poetry, stories and essays and has been published extensively in journals and anthologies. In addition, Adrian is a fan of iced non-alcoholic beverages, especially if they are bright blue.

Author: Jemima Mugo



My names are Jemima Mugo.

I am a 25 years old a born again Christian lesbian and Kenyan.

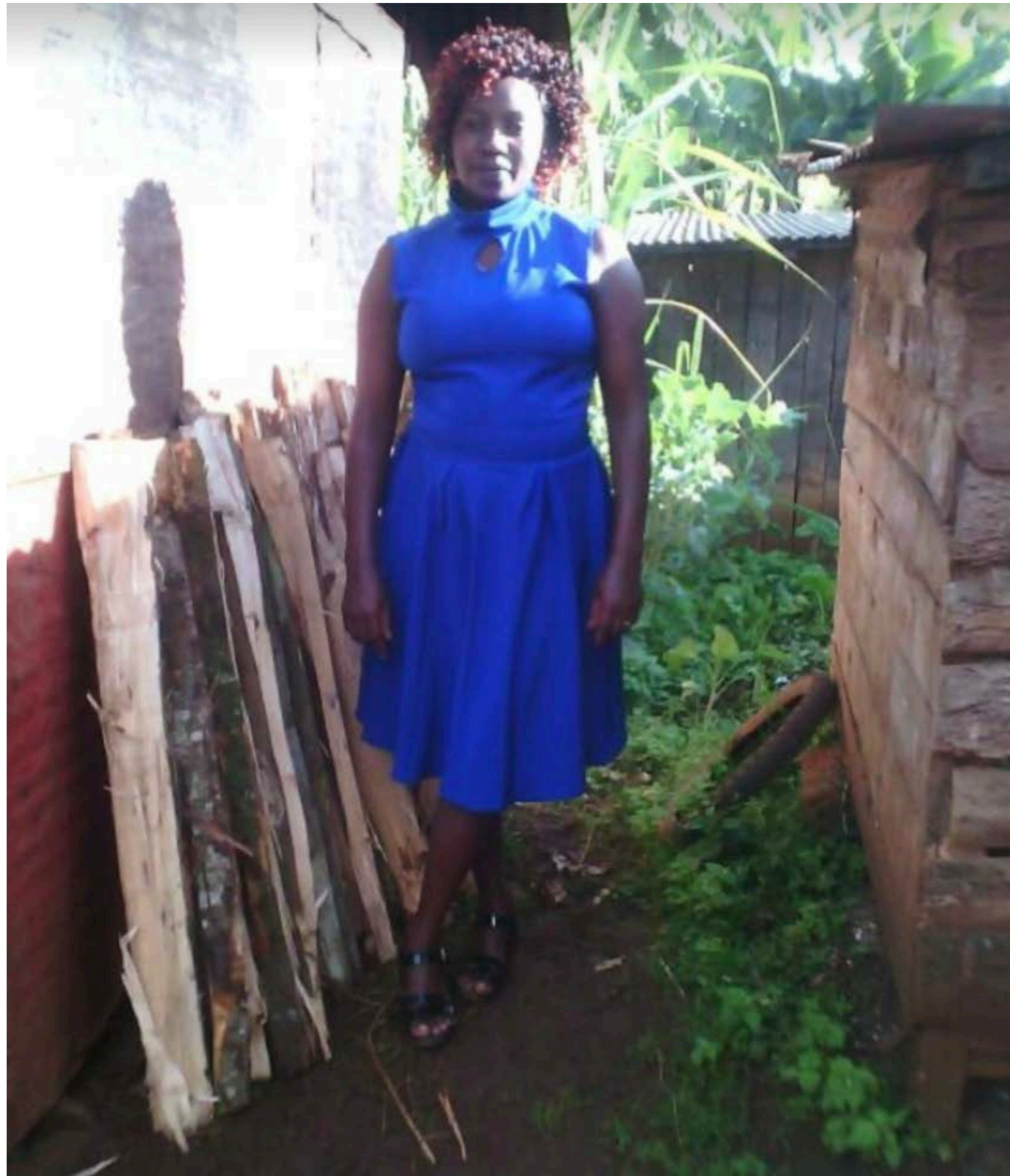
Author: Pine Cone Jesse

My name is Pine Cone Jesse, an African of Gikuyu descent hailing from the slopes of the famous Mount Kenya.

I am a bisexual Christian who believes that my nature is not an accident or a mistake, rather a unique person created differently for a unique purpose.

As a person born and bred in a homophobic country, I thrive on challenges for which I constantly set goals to overcome. I always look for opportunities to improve my overall quality and those of others.

As the adage goes “no man is an island” I subscribe to the continuous endeavor of playing well with others in sharing wisdom, intellect, and other aspects that surpass self. I am always eager to learn to nurture my human brain whose nature is constant hunger for knowledge.



My names are Faith Mbogogo.

I am a 24 year old born again Christian and lesbian from Kenya.

Author: Vicki Thomas

Growing up in an evangelical denomination in which her father was a pastor, Vicki's spiritual journey has been an on-going process of learning and unlearning her way back to the heart of God.

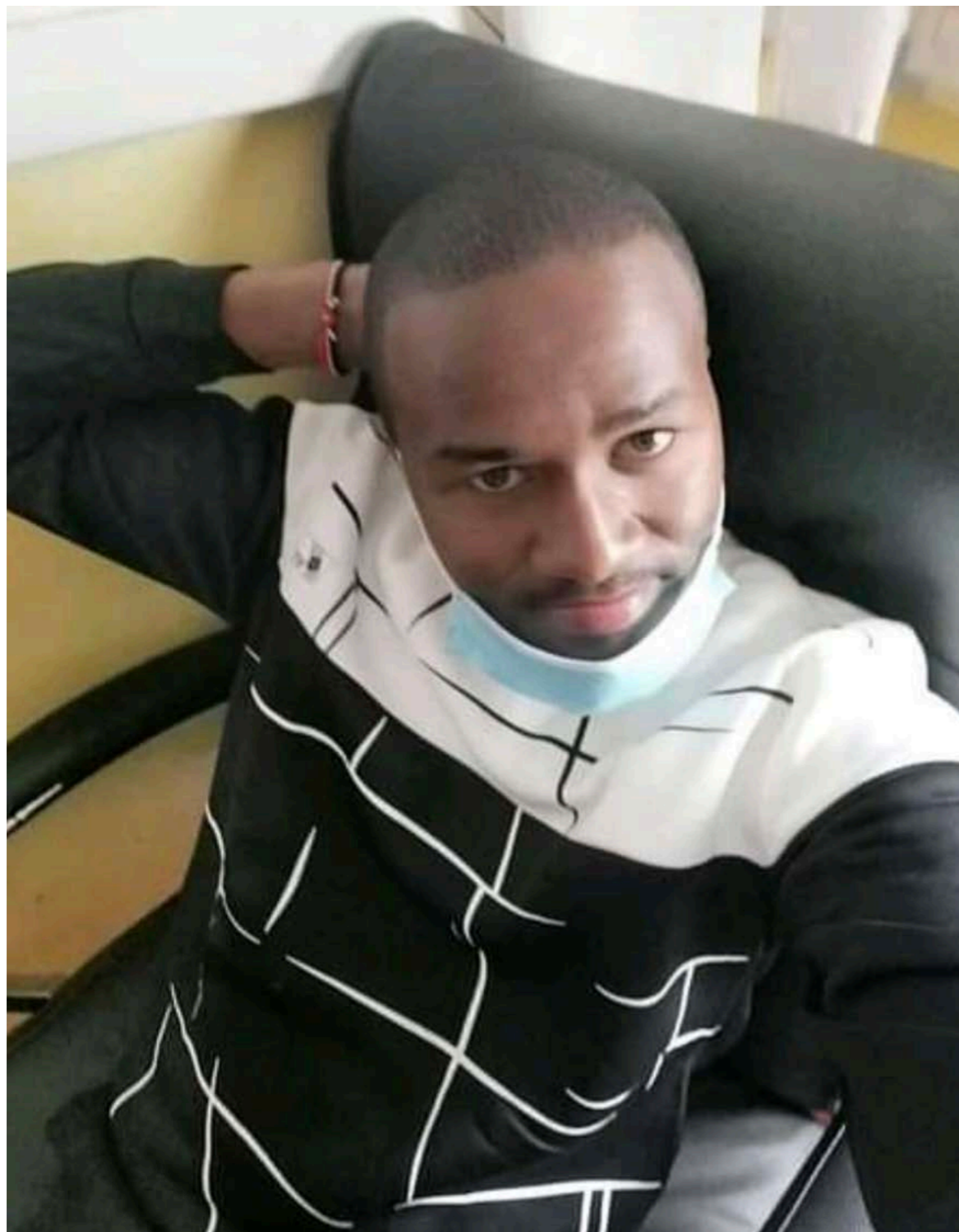
Her professional background includes working as a therapist in the fields Neuropsychology & Clinical Counseling, and as an Instructor at a Christian University. She is a trained Spiritual Director and has served as Chaplain to Pastoral Staff within the Nazarene denomination.

Vicki's passion is helping people awaken to the beauty of their own unique soul; and to offer them a safe, loving space in which to experience unconditional, healing love.

She enjoys journaling, listening to neuroscience podcasts, doing yoga and attending silent retreats. Above all, she loves going deep into the roots of Christian Mysticism where she finds encouragement to live in the freedom for which Christ has set her free, and longs for others to know that freedom as well.

She & her husband live in Alpena, MI, close to the beautiful shores of Lake Huron, where they enjoy hiking, spending time with their two beloved grandchildren and their two adorable shelties.

Author: Stephen Maina



My Names are Stephen Maina.

I am Kenyan aged 26 years.

I am a born again gay Christian.

Author: Boniface Waweru



I am a gay christian and I love God.

I have 30 yrs and I fellowship with pastor Megan in Kenya.



My journey began in Ogden, Utah and I love hailing from the "rough" part of Utah.

I grew up a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints (often referred to as the Mormons). At the age of 21, I left home to serve a proselyting mission for the church to southern Germany.

My faith foundation was shattered when, at age 40, I could no longer deny my orientation and gender identity. When I walked out of the closet, I also thought I was walking away from God.

I struggled reconciling my relationship with God and I am grateful He never gave up on me. I will always be grateful for the wonderful people at the United Church of Christ congregation I found during this time.

It was in that chapel I was reintroduced to God, who loved and accepted me, just as I was. My faith journey continues and I am so grateful for experiences, such as this, that allow me to rejoice in the word of God and worship Him.



A Kenyan heterosexual man who is an ally.

Human rights activist and a Christian.

Author: Samuel Thirikwa



Samuel Thirikwa

Kenyan

Gay

30 years

Author: Rev. Dr. Darlene Brewer



Rev. Dr. Darlene Brewer is a feminist theologian and ordained minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada and the U.S., serving the congregation of Wyndholme Christian Church in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Darlene Brewer has worked in urban chaplaincy drop-ins and centres, churches, and universities, as a teacher, mentor, program coordinator, and minister. Two of her true passions are teaching and ministry.

She is delighted to occasionally teach online courses for Atlantic School of Theology and through her own work with Forest Streams Retreats & Workshops.

Darlene was born in Newfoundland and Labrador. She loves walking, visiting the beach, and getting to know people.

Author: Jacklin Wambui

My names are Jacklin Wambui from Mukurweini and I fellowship with Pastor Megan whom I was introduced to by Nancy our youth group patron.

I was so lonely and am happy with my new family now.

Author: Rahab Wambui

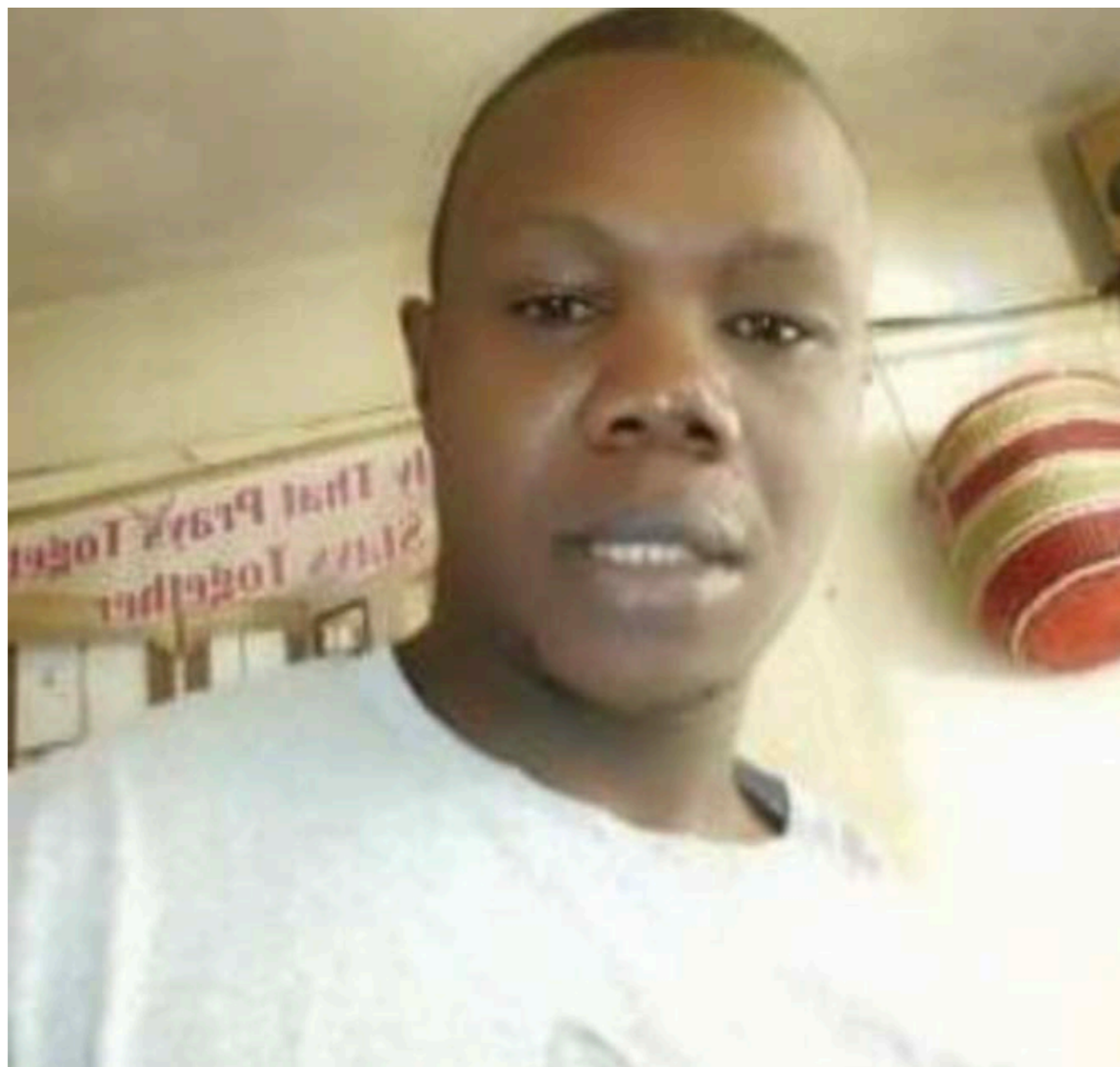
Rahab Wambui

Kenyan

22 years

lesbian

Author: David Mwaura



My names are David Mwaura. I am 30 years old.

A Kenyan of African origin. I am a born again gay Christian man. I love God and I love serving Him.

Author: Elizabeth Moraa



My names are Elizabeth Moraa. An African of Kenyan origin, I am 20 years.

Pursuing studies in theological studies because I want to know God More.

I am a Christian. And I love God with all heart.

I have struggled with my sexuality for so long but Now at I am at peace because I have reconciled with myself as a transgender woman.

Author: Ash Nobles

Hey hey! I'm Ash Nobles, my pronouns are she/they, and I find the greatest joy in getting to know the most intricate nature of humanity.

I have a couple too many theology degrees and am a Licensed Professional Counselor. I work with individuals in active psychosis, schizophrenia, and so much more.

I have found that God dwells in the ashes of humanity, in the people that have been burnt by life... in mental wellness, I have found particularly that God is with the individuals in acute mental illness that try to kill me just as much as a packed church on a Sunday.

This, my friends, is where I find great delight..the God of the ordinary, unusual, and all around beautiful.

Author: Dorcas Kiki



I am Dorcas Kiki, a Kenyan transgender woman who loves God with all my heart.

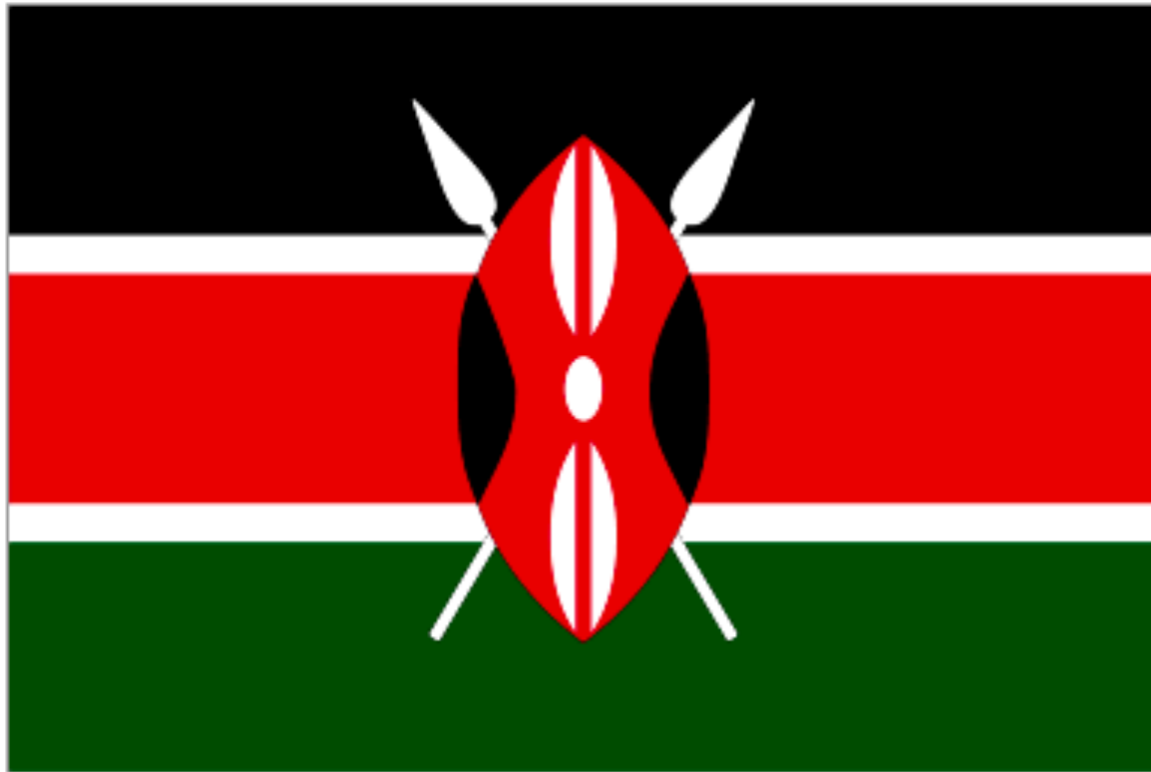
Author: Lisa Whitesell

Lisa was born and raised in Oklahoma. Retired professional musician and teacher. Cresting at the time of her retirement, she taught public school music for 28 years along with adjunct teaching at an urban community college for 18 years and more than 30 years of service as a part-time minister of music in suburban mainline denominational churches.

Lisa describes her experience of the Holy as being grounded in biblical roots and polished by writings of mystics from many faith traditions. Inspiration from experiencing great art, literature and music send her spirit soaring.

A fierce lover of dogs, mountains, trees, and all bodies of water, Lisa is blissfully married to the kindest woman in the universe.

Author: Josphine Wambui



I am Josphine Wambui aged 38 years from Kenya.

I am part of the fellowship which is led by our Pastor Megan.

I must confess the hope and love we get in that fellowship is just wonderful and may God keep us together as each others keeper.

I am a lesbian Christ is my personal saviour and I believe in God's protection and powers.

Author: Monica Wambui



I am Monica Wambui, Kenyan citizen, aged 26 years,
a Christian lesbian.

I love worshipping God, and I am born again.

Author: Xwaka



29 yrs. Gay christian. Kenyan.

I love God and humanity and I believe that the only impossible journey is the one you never begin.

Author: Lucy Wanjiru



I am Lucy Wanjiru, A Kenyan of African origin.
born again Christian lesbian woman.

I love God and I trust Him with my life.

Author: Jimmy Abyad

Jimmy has lived and loved in the Washington, DC, area for 17 years but his hometown is Tucson, Arizona.

His day job is a pretty basic federal employee that aspires to be like Leslie Knope. Otherwise, his days are spent enjoying people, food, tv/movies, music, languages, and teaching spin classes (come visit me at VIDA Fitness)

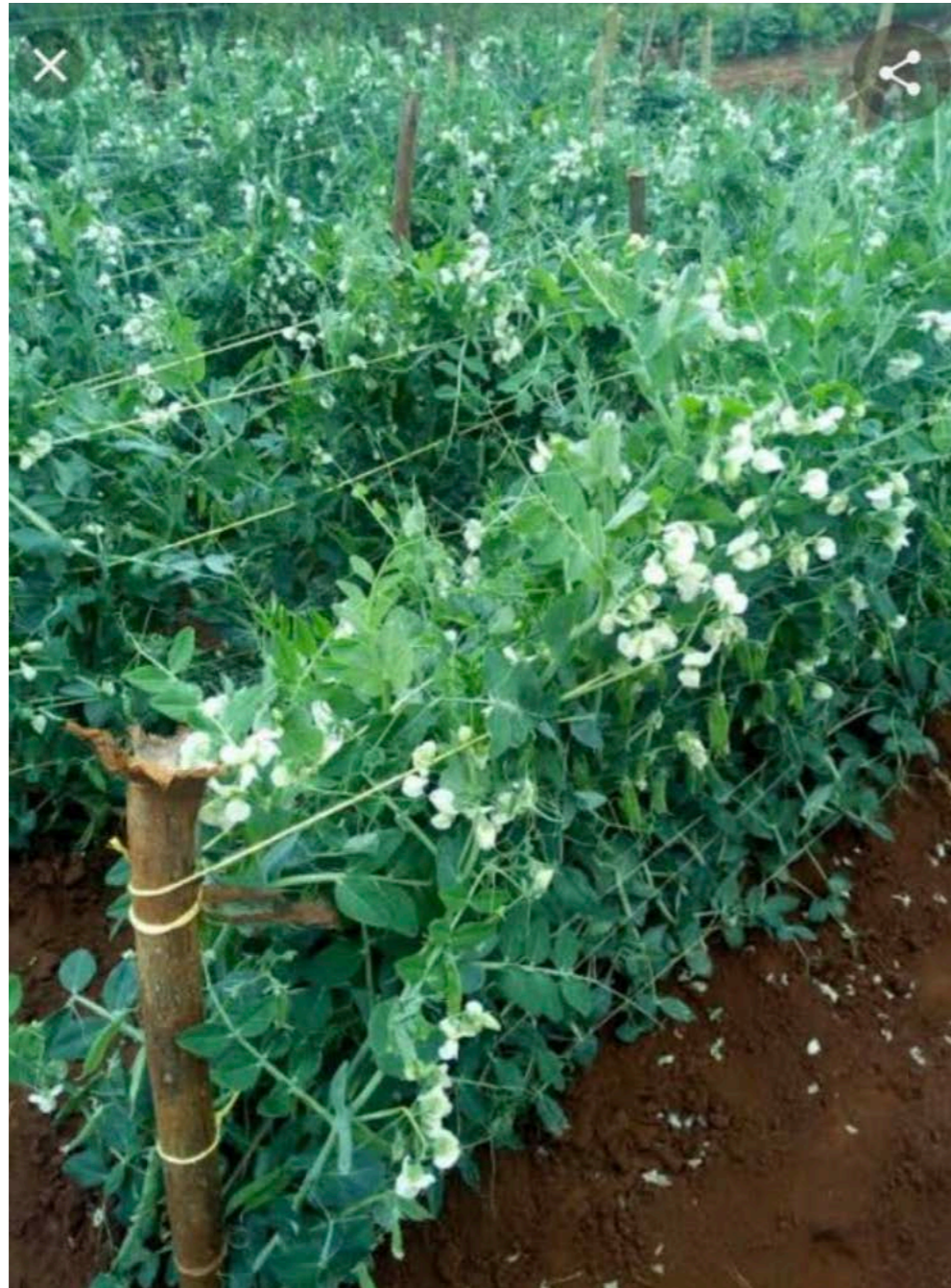
Author: Jane Wanjigi

My names are Jane Wanjigi, 45 yrs Kenyan.

A lesbian woman who loves God with all my heart.

I love traveling and meeting new people.

Author: Rufus Mugo



I am a 40 year old farmer from Kenya.

I am a born again Christian and I am transgender and I believe God loves me the way I am since He is my creator.

Author: Paul Moran



My name is Paul Nderitu
Gay man from Kenya.
I love Jesus.

I enjoy traveling and outdoor activities.



Rev. Dr. Marian Edmonds-Allen is the executive director of Parity, an NYC-based national nonprofit that works at the intersection of faith and LGBT concerns. She is the director of Blessed by Difference and is an author and speaker.

Marian attended Western Theological Seminary and Eden Theological Seminary and has served in many pastoral capacities, including church planting, parish ministry, and chaplaincy. Marian is married, has four children, and is a passionate skier and outdoor enthusiast.

Thank you for joining us during this Lenten Season!

If you have questions, comments, need help - or would like to write - please be in touch. We always want to hear from you - that is the spirit of Holy Dialogues. Be in touch by emailing marian@parity.nyc

We also have wonderful Converge Groups for you to be part of.
Everyone is welcome. EVERY one.

Remember, God loves you!

