

Parents

A Bimonthly E-Newsletter For CenterPeace Parents Volume 15 Sept/Oct 2022

THE 2022 CENTERPEACE CONFERENCE IS ONLY WEEKS AWAY!

Staci Frenes is a songwriter, author, and speaker who has spent the last 25 years singing and speaking in churches, conferences, women's retreats and other faith-based venues. She has released ten albums of original music, and her songs have been placed in multiple films and TV shows. Her latest book, "Love Makes Room: And Other Things I Learned When My Daughter Came Out," reflects a season of deep, profound changes in her faith and family life. This memoir and accidental guidebook for Christian parents and other loved ones of LGBTQ+ people is about coming to accept and understand her daughter's gay orientation within the context of her deeply-rooted Christian faith.

Staci and her husband Abe live in the San Francisco Bay Area and have two adult children, Zach and Abby.



post-conference workshop for parents
of LGBTQ individuals

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 Saturday, November 5

 Following the main conference from 1:30-5 pm

FEATURING SONGWRITER/AUTHOR/MOM STACI FRENES!

\$50
\$85 per couple

Wilshire Baptist Church
Dallas, TX

 REGISTER NOW!
centerpeace.net/conference

CenterPeace CONFERENCE

November 3-5, 2022
Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

Featuring:



Jeff Chu



Sally Gary



Matthew Vines



Joel Hollier



Justin Lee

[Register now](#)

WHAT MY PARENTS NEEDED

Originally published Sept 7, 2022, on the [CenterPeace Blog](#)

By Sally Gary

When I first came out to my parents, they needed someone to talk to. Someone who understood their perspective – someone who understood their world that had taught them that being gay was wrong, that it was a choice, and that surely I was confused, had been led astray, and needed help. They needed someone to talk to who understood that in the unspoken recesses of their minds, there was the shameful conclusion that they must've done something to cause me to be gay.



My parents & me on Mother's Day, 1998, about a year after I came out to them.

What my parents needed most was someone who could help them understand that these things they'd been taught to believe were not true – that being gay isn't a choice and that they hadn't caused me to be gay. My parents needed someone who would listen to their feelings and help them navigate what was a very new and frightening territory for them.

What my devoutly Christian parents needed most were other Christian friends to walk alongside them, listen to them, reassure them, pray with them – all the things that we do for each other in the Body of Christ when someone is facing something challenging, right?

My parents needed CenterPeace. CenterPeace provides a whole network of opportunities to get plugged in with fellow Christian parents and learn more together about supporting LGBTQ+ children of all ages.

CenterPeace provides resources to help parents understand that we've learned things about the development of our sexuality that we didn't previously know.

The CenterPeace Conference is a prime place for parents of LGBTQ+ individuals to connect. The main conference will feature singer/songwriter and mom of a gay daughter, **Staci Frenes**, as the opening keynote speaker on Thursday night. And Staci will share even more of her story and what she's learned about parenting an adult LGBTQ+ child at the Parent Workshop on Saturday, November 5, after the main conference!

The Parent Workshop is an additional opportunity for moms and dads to share, to ask questions, to be with friends who understand the unique challenges of resolving faith and sexuality that face parents of LGBTQ+ children. **Dena and Aaron Edwards** will host the workshop and moderate the discussions that we hope will be a primary part of our time together.

You'll meet folks who have been part of our parent network for a long time, who remember what it was like for them when their child first came out. They remember the array of emotions and how isolated they felt. How torn they felt, believing they had to choose between loving and staying in relationship with their child, or loving and being right with God.

What a life-changing relief to find out they didn't have to choose between their child and God!

My parents needed friends like that to talk to. My mama and daddy needed spaces like the CenterPeace Conference and the Parent Workshop to connect with other parents and develop meaningful relationships. In a place that was familiar and life-giving and most of all,

Spirit driven,
Spirit led,
Spirit filled.

"The Missing Peace ... what we're all looking for" is the CenterPeace Blog, written by Sally Gary. To read more blog posts, please click [HERE](#).

TEN PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTING LGBTQ+ KIDS, A SERIES

By Chris Albrock

SERIES INTRODUCTION

When we learned our son was gay, we had little idea what to do or to say - to him, to each other, to our family, or to our Christian community. We were straight, cisgender parents raising our children in a Christian church within a Southern culture that officially condemned something central to our son. One thing we knew: we loved him. Beyond that, we had more questions than answers.

In the years since, we've learned repeatedly that we are not alone. Through our participation in, and now service to, CenterPeace, we have met many with journeys similar to ours. When a child or grandchild comes out in a conservative home, parents and grandparents often stumble. Even with the best intentions, we make a lot of mistakes. At retreats and conferences, Kendra and I have shared our story and received the stories of dozens of parents and grandparents raising LGBTQ+ kids. Through online cohorts that draw parents from around the country, I've listened to dozens more of these journeys.

"One thing we knew: we loved him. Beyond that, we had more questions than answers."

I have used my own experiences, along with those of others, to create Ten Principles for Parenting LGBTQ+ Kids. Consider them milestones along the way. There are more than these ten. But these may be sufficient to get the trek moving in a healthy and loving way. I offer them as a father who has made more mistakes than I'd believed I was capable of making. Some of these principles emerge from those mistakes.

I hope you'll learn from me, and from the many remarkable CenterPeace parents who exemplify them.



These are the Ten Principles I came up with as starting points for parenting and loving your LGBTQ+ child well. We'll unpack them in the articles to follow:

1. Treat your child as a person to be loved, not a project to be fixed.
2. Your LGBTQ+ child's peers are family to be received, not foes to be rejected.
3. Your journey with your LGBTQ+ child may involve exiting one or more existing communities (of friends, family or faith) and entering one more new communities (of friends, family or faith).
4. Your LGBTQ+ child's sexuality is a central, but not complete, perspective on their identity.
5. Your journey with your LGBTQ+ child will bring not either grief or gratitude, but both grief and gratitude.
6. In your journey with your LGBTQ+ child you don't have to abandon the Bible and God in order to affirm your child.
7. For parents of LGBTQ+ children, the parenting models which have shaped you may not be sufficient to sustain you.
8. For parents of LGBTQ+ children, the images of God which have shaped the journey behind you may not be sufficient for the journey ahead of you.
9. You won't understand everything and you can't fix everything. And that's OK.
10. Welcome to Holland

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

In a world often characterized by exclusion, division and intolerance, how can ordinary people learn to live with the extraordinary love of Jesus? This question feels especially important for queer Christians and their friends and allies. Five hundred years ago, the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola, wrestled with this very issue. In response, he created the Spiritual Exercises, a series of practices, prayers and readings designed to guide participants into transformative lives of love.

In their original form, the Exercises required a 30 day period of isolation with every day fully devoted to only to this journey, or a 9 month period in which participants spent part of each day in the Exercises. In a new abbreviated form, Chris Altrock will lead you through a 100 day experience of the Exercises.

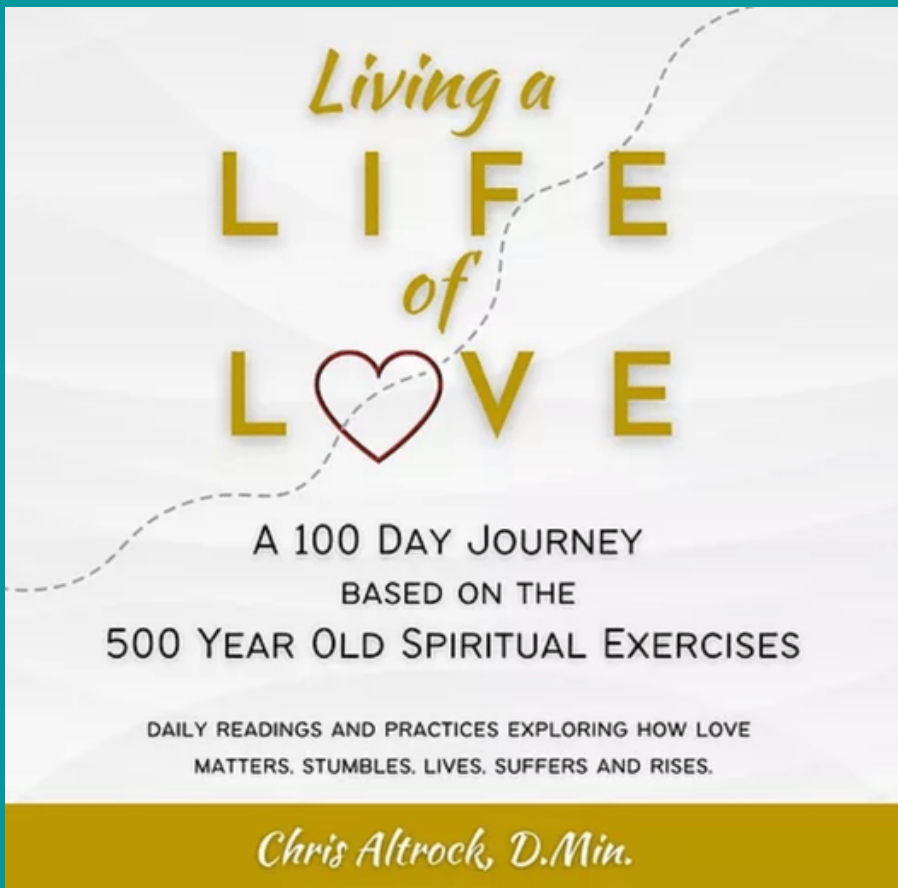
Each day you'll receive a brief devotional which includes a prayer, a text/ topic to ponder, and a short spiritual practice. Most participants will be able to complete this in 20-25 minutes/day. Once a week, for 60 minutes, you'll gather with other participants on Zoom to reflect on the past week and how you experienced God's love and/or how you expressed God's love during that week.

These Exercises are made up of five sections (Ignatius called them "Weeks"):

1. We'll spend days 1-20 experiencing how love matters, seeing ourselves, and all people, as beloved and God as one who loves. (Nov. 10-29, 2022)
2. The next twenty days, Days 21-40, focus on the truth that love stumbles, giving us the chance for an honest assessment of the ways in which our own love of God and love for others falters. (Nov. 30-Dec. 19, 2022)
3. In days 41-60 we will explore how love lives in the birth, life and ministry of Jesus. (Dec. 20, 2022-Jan. 6, 2023)
4. During days 61-80 we will experience the way love suffers as we follow Jesus during passion week to the cross. (Jan. 9-28, 2023)
5. And finally, in days 81-100 we rejoice in the ways love rises as we walk for twenty days by the side of the resurrected Jesus. (Jan. 29-Feb. 17, 2023)

Your daily devotional time begins Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022 and runs through Friday, Feb. 17, 2023. Our Group Spiritual Direction sessions meet weekly on Monday nights at 8 PM EST Nov. 14, 2022 - Feb. 20, 2022 (with Nov. 28, Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 off for holidays).

This is an ideal way space for reflecting on 2022 at year's end and for launching 2023—all in a safe and supportive community rooted in the story of Jesus. Click on the logo or [HERE](#) to register!



CenterPeace

A place to belong

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