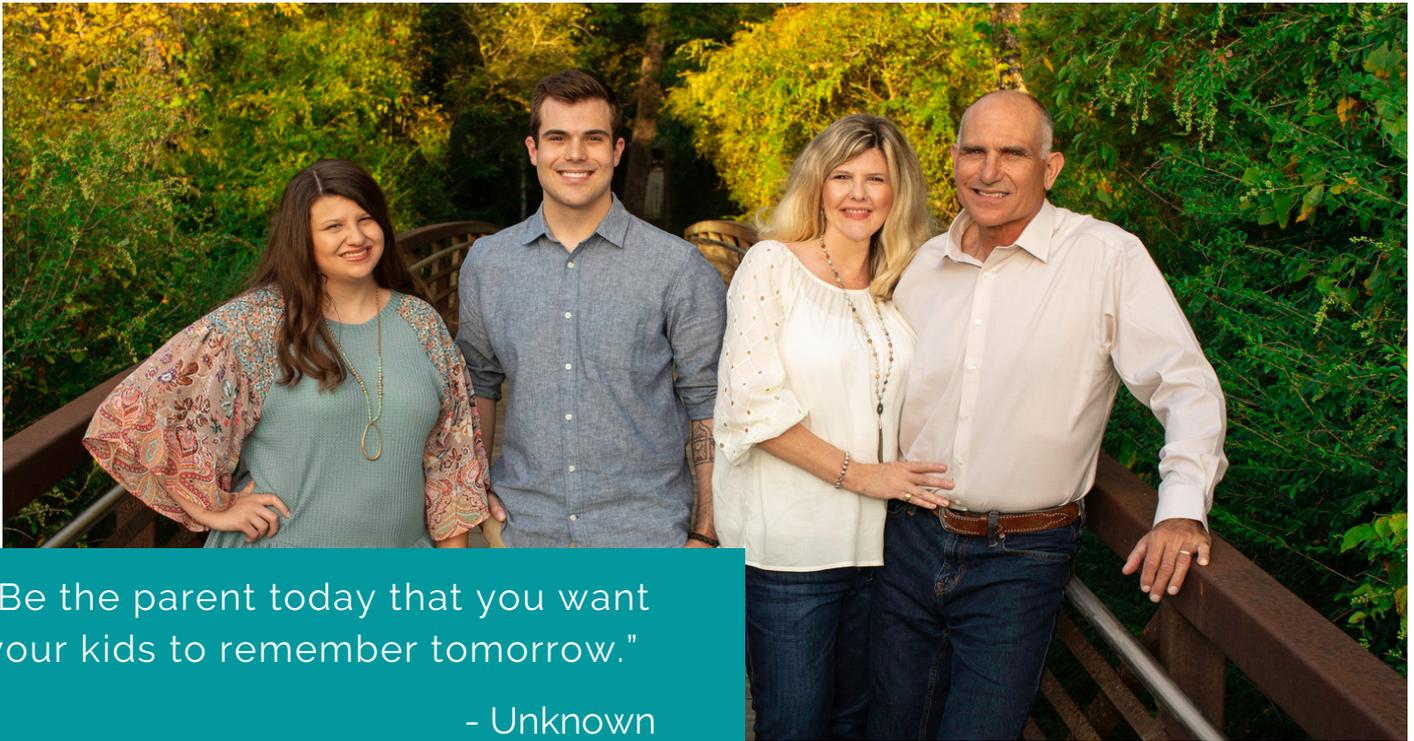




E-Newsletter For CenterPeace Parents Volume 1 June 2021



"Be the parent today that you want your kids to remember tomorrow."

- Unknown

WELCOME TO THE PARENTS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first edition of the CenterPeace Parents newsletter. If you are reading this, you are on a journey like no other. One you didn't choose and one that can be very challenging for those who have grown up hearing traditional beliefs from the pulpit. Beliefs that get challenged when you discover that the living, breathing piece of your heart known as your precious child is gay. Or transgender. Or anything other than a gender normative straight kid. I know. This newsletter is for me, too.

Let this first and foremost be a reminder that you aren't alone.

There are many other parents who share your faith upbringing that share your feelings. Who, too, have struggled with reconciling their faith with their child's identity.

Our goal is for this newsletter to bring you comfort, knowledge, love, resources and a confidence that there is hope. There is always hope.

- Dena A. Edwards, editor



Meet Sally Gary, founder and executive director of CenterPeace.

[Read Sally's recent blog post on Pride](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS



PeacePrints Retreats

A safe place for parents to express their feelings with fellow believers in Christ

- July 9-10, 2021 - Virtual (Zoom) - [register here](#)
- Oct. 15-17, 2021 - Nashville TN
- Mar 25-27, 2022 - North Texas

Parent Support Groups

[More information](#) on local groups

Tapestry Retreats - for LGBTQ+ Christians

These retreats are for any adult LGBTQ+ Christian who wants to find community and a deeper connection with God. [More Information](#)



DAWN & LAW DOMASIG

Questions swirled in my head. Where did I go wrong as a Mom? Who can I share this with? How many friends would we each lose if they knew our son was gay?

We were caught in the "second closet" of isolation and fear, not knowing who would be safe to tell. A long time minister and friend pointed us to CenterPeace. A parent support group was just starting up and, desperate for connection, we made that first meeting. Sitting in that living room, raw with emotion and pain, we heard other families' stories and felt such relief to have found a safe place to tearfully share our own.

Reading Sally Gary's book "Loves God, Likes Girls" helped me understand my son's journey. Old beliefs were torn down as my heart opened to hear the heart of my son. My son didn't make himself gay, nor did I make him gay.

Being gay isn't a choice, but loving others is. I chose to love, to listen, to learn, and to embrace others. God transitioned my heart from a place of loss to a place of strength; from a place of judgement to a place of grace and compassion; from a place of hopelessness to a place of hope.

Our son is the same loving, gentle, kind, and compassionate man. We have a strong and loving relationship with him and, after tearful apologies for hurtful mistakes we initially made, hearts have been healed. We continue to do life together because we are family.

I am not the Mom of a gay son. I am the Mom of three adult children, one of whom happens to be gay.

- Dawn Domasig



SO WHAT IS PRIDE REALLY ALL ABOUT?

Until 2018, in my mind Pride equaled an R-rated movie: "language, some nudity and sexuality." I had received and taken in the subtle and not-so-subtle tutelage that all gay and trans people were wild, promiscuous party animals. So like the good girl I was raised to be, I avoided all Pride-related activities and only used hushed tones when I had to speak of them.

When our son Easton came out in 2016, I was afraid of many things, one of which was the idea that now he would succumb to debauchery like all of the other gay people. It didn't take long for us to realize that he was the same young Christian man he always had been. So we were shocked when he said he was going to Pride in OKC. I was afraid for him, for his safety, Afraid he would be taken advantage of by the "more savvy" gays. He wasn't of course, and came home exuding joy and happiness. And LOTS of glitter.

"Isn't that how church should be? A place of unconditional love and acceptance?"

By 2018, I had come full circle in my faith journey, and not only attended Pride, but walked in the parade, hugging everyone I could reach along the way. I was still nervous but as I walked past the throngs of people bedecked in rainbows and smiles, I realized that I had been duped. Were there scantily clad folks? Yep, One of my favorite memories from that day was a young person walking up wearing nothing more than shorts and a black net body stocking ... over very VERY white skin. The mom in me took over. After holding that teen in a big long hug - I try to never let go first - I asked them to wait while I ran to get my



["Everything You Need to Know About Pride Month" in this People Magazine article](#)

sunscreen. They rolled their eyes as they dutifully held their arms out for a full coverage spray. But they came back hours later to thank me. I don't flinch anymore at the outfits on display at Pride.

Pride is the one place where LGBTQ+ people can go and completely be themselves. No filters, no judgement, no fear of violence against them. They can be the most outrageous version of themselves, and still be accepted. Isn't that how church should be? A place of unconditional love and acceptance?

Many people at Pride events have been hurt, are hurting now. They have been abandoned, judged and condemned by the same people who used to be treasured church family. The wounds are deep. Regardless of where you are on your journey, you can look through the eyes of Jesus beyond whatever exterior might be deemed immodest by others and see the hurt and need of the people in front of you. You can be the literal arms of Jesus and embrace those willing. Until they let go.

- Dena A. Edwards

PRIDE FLAGS EXPLAINED

Entering Pride Month (the month of June) is akin to walking into Starbucks for the first time. The plethora of sexual and gender identities can be overwhelming at best. The flags illustration shows the meaning of a few of the most common flags you might see. Don't worry, you don't have to remember them all, or even understand the different identities. But familiarizing yourself with a few will help you feel less foreign in the LGBTQ+ world. And your child/loved one will appreciate the effort!

“Many persons do not want to believe that there are gradations in these matters from one to the other extreme.”
- Sexual Behavior of the Human Female (1953)



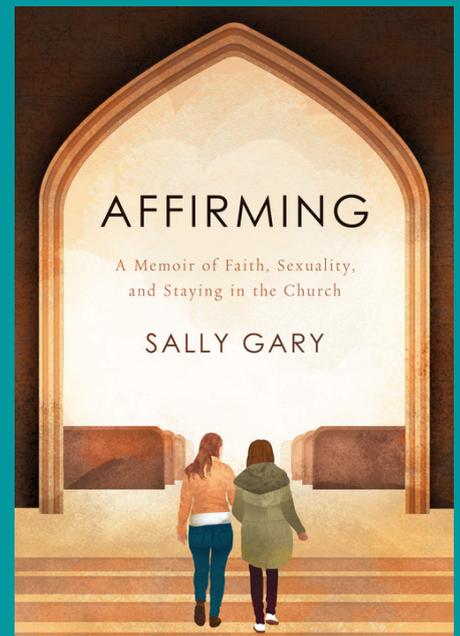
BOOK REVIEW: "AFFIRMING" BY SALLY GARY

How do I reconcile supporting my gay son with my understanding of the Bible? I know what my heart says but my head is just not there. I love him and want to be loving towards him, but how do I do that? For me, that journey took me down a path of discernment, only to find God was there all along.

In her second book, "Affirming: A Memoir of Faith, Sexuality, and Staying in the Church," Sally Gary tells her own story, weaving a tapestry of discovery that leads to her affirmation of same-sex marriage. With life events from her childhood to adulthood, she reveals elements of God that she learned and experienced along the way which added brick by brick to the foundation of her understanding.

If you find yourself in doubt about your faith in the midst of loving an LGBTQ+ child or relative well, or you are suddenly confused about human sexuality when it used to seem so clear, or even if you are struggling to stay in a church that just doesn't seem to care, then "Affirming" is something you should read.

- Gil Vollmering



[Buy this book on Amazon](#)

A recommended reading list can be found on the [CenterPeace Resource Page](#)



CenterPeace

A place to belong

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