

FOREFRONTchurch

**My Story**

## MEMBERSHIP | My Story | Jennifer Mottershed

My name is Jennifer Mottershead. I was born in Long Beach CA and was raised throughout Orange County CA, by my Mom and Dad with my younger brother Jeff. Instead of the typical “soccer family” my parents dedicated their time and money for dance lessons. Growing up I was in a dance company in Hollywood where it took up most of my family and my time. I don’t remember ever hearing about God or really learning about him. We would go to the occasional Christmas and Easter service but had not regularly attended church.

It wasn’t until I was 13/14 years old when our family friends, the Rohrs, invited us to go to church with them one Sunday. It was over the next year that we became closer to our friends and learned about who Jesus Christ was by attending service every Sunday with them. When I was 15 I was baptized with my Mom and brother. At that time it wasn’t really my decision but I did it anyway because my Mom and brother were taking part in this moment. A year went by and we received a call one night that Mr. Rohrs had suffered a heart attack and past away. This was devastating news to our family. The next months and years, for no real reason other than just moving to different cities and growing apart, we stopped going to church and lost touch with the Rohrs family.

During the last couple years of high school we would church hop here and there but never got connected. I went off to college and the truth is I just got caught up in the college scene. I always felt an emptiness inside and a longing to go back to church but those college years consumed me and I fell further and further away from God.

One college degree later I found myself living back at home wondering what my next step in life was suppose to be. During those college years of being lost in my own world my parents had found a church and had been getting involved in a tight niche church family. Living back at home I would be woken by my Mom asking me to come to church and because I am a people pleaser I went for her and not for me. This became a ritual of going out of obligation rather than willingness. At the same point I met a guy who I fell in love with. For the next 2 years I grew in my desire to have a relationship with God but little to my knowledge it would cost me a relationship with a man I thought I was going to spend the rest of my life with.

Our views were different. He came from a different background and was not a Christ follower. The anguish and anxiety I would feel trying to move forward in both these relationships (one with my boyfriend and one with God) eventually came to a halt when one day I heard God for the first time (really it was me listening to Him for the first time) in the shower of all places. It was so clear and loud that I just wept when I heard these words...“He is not the one”. “He is not the one”. I knew I had a decision to make. Do I listen and take action to what God is telling me or do I continue down this road of uncertainty. I knew in my mind that it was better to go through the pain now than to continue in a relationship where this heaviness would consume me. So that next day I broke up with that man that loved and cared for me but I knew I was making the right decision. From that day on I have no regrets in ending that relationship to focus on the one true relationship I had been missing for 25 years.

The last 5 years I have fallen in love again and that is with Jesus. He love and cares for me now and it is He I try to focus on and grow with. Through the loss of my brother over 2 years ago, a fallen family and a move across country He has been there with me every hard and dark step of the way. It was in January of 2009 before I moved to New York I gave my life to Christ for the second time. But this time it was my decision and me standing up for what I believe in and not being a follower of others by a follower of Christ.

I feel extremely blessed that God has put the people in my life that he has. My family pastor and his wife have been such a huge part in my spiritual growth. Also, in the short time at Forefront the friendships I have made definitely have been molding me into a better follower of Christ. This is something I prayed for years ago, to have godly friends, and who would have known I would find them in New York City of all places.

I look forward to see what God has planned for me and to go through this journey with Forefront Church and the community that surrounds it.

## **MEMBERSHIP | My Story | Angela Speakman**

At age 7, God was good, just, loving, kind, and generous. Both my parents were active in the church and church was like a second home for us. By 17, God seemed cold, distant, unfair, uncaring, and devoid of any affection for me. My father had an affair with a woman in our church community when I was 10. When my mother filed for a divorce, the church leaders reprimanded her and sided with my father. My mother left the church and hasn't been back. My father enjoyed a life with a new family.

I spent my high school and early college years trying to earn the affection and approval of my parents, my peers, and boys I dated. I laid down my self-respect for small moments of acceptance. A pattern of self-destruction, binge drinking, and disrespect for my body went on for years as I looked for something or someone to heal me of my feelings of abandonment and worthlessness.

I met my husband, Clay, my senior year in high school and he was foolish enough to stick with me as I cheated and lied my way through the first two years of our relationship. When I was 20, his patience and God's love won out. I walked away from a lifestyle of destruction and into the shelter of God's love and acceptance. I am only now beginning to fully understand the ways in which God protected me from even further self-inflicted pain.

I am full of gratitude for a God who loved me even when I didn't love myself and couldn't return His love. My heart's desire is to use the rest of my life to share His love with others. There are so many hurting and wounded among us and I know God can do for them what he did for me.

I am excited to belong to Forefront because I believe this is a place I can both grow and help others grow. Forefront is a place that spurs me on to serve and to put others before myself. It is my sincere desire to leverage all that I am and all that I have for the Kingdom of God. I believe God has a use for the pain of my past and that He has endowed me with gifts, talents, and resources that are to be used for His glory.