

Intro Music : [00:00:16](#) [inaudible].

Josh Mangelson: [00:00:17](#) Welcome to the Project Zion podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Intro Music : [00:00:32](#) [inaudible]

Brittany: [00:00:33](#) Hello everyone and welcome to another episode of the Project Zion podcast. This is Brittany Mangelson and I will be your host for today. Today we are bringing you an episode in our Chai Can't Even series where we talk to young adults in Community of Christ. So today we have on Caitlin d'Esterre who we recently had on to talk about the Mom Project. We had her on a What's Brewing episode, but today she's going to be talking about what it's like to be a millennial in Community of Christ. So Caitlin, welcome back! I'm really excited to talk to you today and to just get to know you a little bit better on a personal level and to hear about your experiences with community of Christ.

Caitlin: [00:01:08](#) Thanks. I'm really excited to be back. I'm really excited. As soon as we finished our last one, we were like, we got to do this again. So I'm excited that we're here now. So this is great.

Brittany: [00:01:22](#) Seriously, I'm excited. And we were just chatting pre-recording and I was thanking Caitlin for just how easy of an interview she is because we're both very go with the flow kind of people. It's very millennial of us, if you will.

Caitlin: [00:01:33](#) Yes.

Brittany: [00:01:34](#) So yeah, we're just gonna we're just gonna dive right in.

Brittany: [00:01:37](#) Sounds great. So Caitlin, my first question for you and the first question that I usually start these interviews off with is just questions about your childhood and growing up in Community of Christ. So have you always been a member of Community of Christ and what was that like for you? Did you attend camps as a kid? What was your involvement like when you were a child?

Caitlin: [00:02:02](#) So I am born and raised community of Christ. My mom found out when my grandma was doing genealogy stuff probably like seven or eight years ago. Uh, that we are actually, I am an eight generation RLDS. I guess that my mom's mom's side of the family actually got chased out of Utah by the Danites. So we go back a ways and apparently we've been rocking the boat for a really long time. And it's funny cause now that I'm doing a little

bit more work with seekers and when I tell them that story, they're like, oh, like what part of Utah? What year was that? Like, do you know, like what band of the Danites that was? And I was like, I need to know more about this story.

Caitlin: [00:02:44](#) So I apparently have some very interesting history with the church. But yeah, so both of my parents, um, are community of Christ, both also lifetime members. And growing up in Calgary, I always had Sunday morning church. We went all the time when I was a kid. And my mom grew up in the church in a very small town in Alberta called Caroline. And so they would have a traveling ministers that would go up there once a month and do a Community of Christ service up there. So even though they were too close to like a permanent congregation, they still had Community of Christ, um, like mission work that happened up there. And so, uh, I think that was a bit of a different experience for me from my mom having a kind of home congregation. And then my my grandpa Ball, Bill Ball, he worked for the church for a really long time too.

Caitlin: [00:03:36](#) So I have really deep roots in Community of Christ and to the point where when I was a kid and I would talk about Graceland, other kids would think that I was talking about like where Elvis is from, like where Elvis is houses and I was like, no, like the university don't you know about that? Cause I just thought that everybody was part of community of Christ but you know, you grow up and you figure out that that's not 100% true. So grew up going to church every Sunday and that was like my early experience of it. And my mom and dad obviously had lots of friends in the church and so we would go camping with them, we would get together a lot of my parents like permanent lifelong friends for Community of Christ. And so we grew up doing a lot of stuff with them, being friends with their kids.

Caitlin: [00:04:20](#) Um, mission conferences. I can't remember what they were called before. Mission conference. Oh, LDI. Labor Day Institute I think is what they would call them. We would have it every fall in Calgary. So we had a big enough house that all the other families would come and stay at our house, so that was really fun for us kids cause all the kids would stay in the basement or we camp out in the backyard. And so that was fun. And then when I was eight and old enough to go to camps, I went to camp for the first time and then I did camp all the way up. I became a counselor as soon as I could cause I thought that that was just the coolest thing ever. Then I've started being a director in the last few years and I'd been the camp nurse for a few years now as well.

Caitlin: [00:05:02](#) So I've just kind of been doing everything all over the place.

Brittany: [00:05:07](#) So I know that this is a podcast and people can't see my facial expressions, but when you started talking about the Danites,

Caitlin: [00:05:15](#) Your eyes went really wide!

Brittany: [00:05:16](#) They really did. They bugged out of my eye sockets even more than they normally do. I've got really big eyes. Wow! What a family history and legacy. Yeah. So I'm curious, I mean, and I know that you said you didn't know a whole lot about that story, but did your family like literally flee up to Canada from there? I mean, is that when they.

Caitlin: [00:05:40](#) So my family from there, to my understanding, my family went from Utah to Montana. And so the area in Montana that's just so of glacier park, there's a whole stand of the mountains and hills there. And there's an area called Reese Creek, and that's actually named after my great, great, great grandparents, I think on my mom's side.

Caitlin: [00:06:11](#) And My middle name is Reese after like, that's the namesake for them. So they were in Montana for a really long time. And it's funny because my, my dad's side of the family is American, but my mom's side of the family has a longer American legacy. Then my dad's side does cause my dad's side landed in Canada and then came down to the states, whereas my mom's side of the family landed in America and then went west and then went north and then went to Canada. So yeah. So it's kind of kind of all over the place. But they did, they did land in, in Montana. And then my Grandma's Grandpa, I believe was the one who gave to Canada. So I still have family down there in Montana, but they're quite distant at this point, but I guess that he kind of like gave it all up to move to Canada and so, yeah.

Brittany: [00:07:07](#) Wow. What a story.

Caitlin: [00:07:08](#) Yeah, real American pioneers.

Caitlin: [00:07:14](#) Oh Man. So Caitlin, I'm wondering, growing up in Community of Christ, how was that as far as congregational life goes? Were you mentored by other people? Did you see, uh, maybe women in leadership that, you know, quote unquote looked like you, did you have an understanding that you were going to be engaged in the life of Community of Christ for the long haul and do you feel like you were supported in what you wanted your ministry to look like?

Caitlin: [00:07:46](#) There's a lot in that question, so I'll try to unpack it.

Brittany: [00:07:48](#) Yeah, sorry about that.

Caitlin: [00:07:48](#) No, that's OK. In terms of seeing other people who ministered like me or who looks like me, my mom was actually one of the first four women ordained in Alberta. Um, after ordination of women came through, she was actually pregnant with my older sister Whitney when she got pregnant or when she started, when she got ordained. I just said she was pregnant, so, you know, can't be double pregnant. But anyways, so, uh, so that was something that's come to mean a lot more to me as I've gotten older. Because when you're a kid, you don't think about that there was a time where that didn't happen because you can only really process your reality as it is. You don't really think about what it was like before. I remember asking my parents one time, just to put this in perspective, I asked them when did life start being in color? Cause like all the old pictures are black and white. So life used to be in black and white, right? And they're like, no, life was always in color. It was the film that was black and white. So like I definitely had that very like childhood developmental, this is the way that it's always been. So, you know, but anyways, so we had my parents and another family family were very, very active in the church when I was young, like up until the point that I was probably about 10, maybe 12.

Caitlin: [00:09:11](#) Um, and they got a lot of congregational life things going. We had a group called Friday night singers and um, it was like this little choir. They would get together on Friday, practice everything for Sunday. I think usually we would have supper or something together. We had young peacemakers club, we had just like tons and tons of stuff. There was always kids stuff in the services and that was a really, really great time for our congregation. Unfortunately the leadership at that time kind of adopted the position of this isn't the way that the formal leadership of the congregation wants to go. And so if this is what you guys want to do, then you're going to kind of have to do it yourself. So you're going to have to do it on your own time, your own budget. Um, you know, and there's not going to be a ton of support.

Caitlin: [00:10:01](#) And unfortunately that caused a really big fracture in our congregation. Um, so my family and this other family that was doing all this congregational life stuff, they, we all stopped going to church for a while. So from the period when I was, like I said about 10 or 12 until I was 14 or 15, um, didn't really go to church very much. We still did home church, we still went to camps. We still did lots of that kind of stuff, but, um, that was a

really big, as a really big deal for our family. And that was really hard. Like at the time, you know, you hear, you just kind of hear what your parents are saying or what the other kids are saying or whatever. And so you get this kind of biased view in your mind of what happened. And then as you get older, like you hear the different sides of, of kind of what happened and you get a little bit more insight and you know, your understanding that, that the leadership is trying to have a cohesive front and that they're trying to, you know, not overburden anybody and things like that. But maybe the way that it was handled wasn't the most effective. So that was, that was a big struggle. And then when when my parents got divorced, that's when I started going back to church because I really missed that support system and I really needed something that, that was kind of mine that was on my own terms because at that point my parents weren't ready. Well, my dad wasn't living with us anymore, but my mom wasn't ready to go back and my sisters weren't ready to go back yet, but I decided that I wanted to go and it was close enough.

Caitlin:

[00:11:44](#)

We lived close enough to the church that I could walk there. So I just walked there every Sunday. And then, um, you know, started getting really involved again in terms of mentorship, like I've always had people tell me, you know, that I'm an old soul, that I'm a leader, that, you know, they can see the future of the church and me and all that kind of stuff. And when you're young you're like, oh, that's so cool. Everybody thinks I'm so great. And as you get older, you're like, oh, that's actually a lot of pressure. So you're like, what, how do I, like, what do I, what do I do with that? So, you know, I did, I did a ton like I did a ton of deaconing and I like planned services and I spoke and I, um, you know, did a lot, a lot, a lot of stuff and lots of outreach stuff.

Caitlin:

[00:12:28](#)

And, and things like that. So I think that there were a lot of mentorship opportunities, but I think that one area that might have been a little bit lacking was kind of asking what I wanted to do. Whereas at that time we were still in a fairly traditional place of like, this is what a service looks like, this is what church life looks like. Here are the things that we're going to do and here's where we're going to kind of slot you in. Um, and so I started to kind of forge my own path of how things could look different. And I was really fortunate we had some new families moved to the congregation when I was in high school that had different and innovative ways to worship and wanted to invent new and innovative ways to worship. I have congregational life. So from those people, I kind of got some more, some more mentorship and felt a little bit more comfortable kind of doing things my own way because I do like to do things a little bit

differently. So, yeah, I think, like I said that there was a lot in that question, but I hope that I kind of answered some of it at least.

Brittany: [00:13:30](#) No, for sure. For sure. You did. I think it's interesting that you mentioned that people were telling you that they see the future of the church in your eyes. And at first it's like, oh, that's exciting and I can get involved and do all the things. And then you realize like, oh, that means I actually have to actually do all the things and there's [inaudible] with that and yeah. And if you're working in a congregation that has a more traditional model, and if you want to maybe break out of that, uh, (cough)

Brittany: [00:13:58](#) Sorry. Uh, if you want to break out of that's scary. I mean, and you know, you have to really wonder if that's where you want to be and how much maybe you want to push against tradition while being young. I mean, yeah. That's a vulnerable place to be, I think.

Caitlin: [00:14:18](#) Totally, totally.

Brittany: [00:14:21](#) So, Caitlin, you mentioned Graceland as a kid that you would talk about etc. So does that mean that you ended up going to Graceland?

Caitlin: [00:14:29](#) So I did not go to Graceland. My Dad went to Graceland actually. So, um, my dad has, um, has a legacy of Graceland as do some of the other, um, gentlemen in our congregation. And, um, I did go to Spectacular one time. I got horrendously sick. My older sister got sick and like, so it was just, unfortunately I didn't have the magical SPEC experience everybody else had, but you know, it was still fun. The funny thing is, is that, is that Graceland kind of became a loaded thing for me because I felt that there was a lot of pressure from the church and a lot of pressure from my dad to go to Graceland. And I was like, no, I don't want anybody else making my decision. So I'm like not going to go to Graceland. And so after you go to SPEC, um, any teenager who's gone to SPEC will know this.

Caitlin: [00:15:15](#) Graceland sends you like a ton of mail because they're like, here's your admission package. Here's like all the stuff that we're doing here, we want you to come to Greece and which is fabulous. And they have tons of amazing ways to get students to go to Greece. But I just remember being like, I shouldn't even open this because if I opened this and they're going to know that I opened it and they're just going to send me more, I just put it all in the recycling because I said I'm not going cause I'm not going to what everybody else is telling you to do. Because

you know when you're a teenager you think that you know, you have so much control over everything and you just want to be your own independent person.

Brittany: [00:15:51](#) I can relate to that 100%. That's literally the reason why I didn't go to BYU.

Brittany: [00:15:58](#) So you didn't go to Graceland, but you are a nurse, so you did go to college obviously. So I'm curious to know what your church involvement was like during university years.

Caitlin: [00:16:13](#) Yeah. So when I was, um, starting my university path, I actually started at the University of Lethbridge in political science because when I was in grade nine, I had a math teacher who told me that I was not good enough at math to ever make it in any sort of medical fields at all. Cause I wanted to be an obstetrician or a midwife or something like that. And he was like, nope, that's just never going to happen for you. So I was like, oh, okay. Well I also really like politics and like social systems and things like that. So I'll just go into political science and I loved it. And uh, Lethbridge has a really lovely, very small but like very robust congregation.

Caitlin: [00:16:52](#) And so while I was down there, um, people would pick me up and drive me down there cause it was on the opposite side of the city, which in Lethbridge isn't very far, but it's far enough that you can't walk. Um, and uh, so I would go there every Sunday pretty much that I could. And then I was helping out a lot with the kids cause at that time they had a lot of, um, kids that were kind of like elementary, junior high type of ages. So that was really fun for me to be involved with the kids. Like we put on the Charlie Brown Christmas pageant and like we did other stuff with them and tried to figure out ways that they could be involved. And I got to do lots of singing and speaking and things like that, which was, which was cool. So that was one area where nobody really knew me from like a day to day perspective. Like I'd gone to camps. Um, I did a lot of camps with the pastor at the time and knew him very well and he was very willing to just kind of let me do whatever. Um, that was a place where I got to really kind of explore how I wanted to minister. And then, um, so two and a half years into that degree, I started university right in 2008, so right when the economy, like completely took a nosedive. And so then when I was two years into it, they said, so the university has to make some cutbacks, the political science department is going to be hit really hard because it's very small. Um, so they were going to kind of get rid of all of the specialty courses, the human rights

courses, the international development, things like that, which is really where I wanted to focus my degree.

Caitlin: [00:18:22](#) So I was like, this isn't really gonna work for me. So nursing has always been my backup plan, but I'd never really looked into it because I was like, oh, I'm not good enough at math. I'm never gonna make it in Blah, blah, blah. Um, but as soon as I looked into the program requirements, I was like, no, this, this is what I'm meant to do. Like I knew everything about the program. I was like already shopping for scrubs and like, like stethoscopes and like all this stuff. So I just knew that that was where I was gonna go. So, originally I was going to transfer into nursing at the U of I, but I ended up transferring into nursing at the University of Calgary. So I moved back home. There was a year gap, so I worked for a year, did lots of the church at that time. And there was an interesting period of time in there because there was, I guess some confusion about which congregation was my home congregation.

Caitlin: [00:19:17](#) There was a pastor who in Calgary who called several other young adults to the priesthood all at once. And I wasn't in that group. And that was, that was really difficult at the time because I was like, I have, you know, I'm involved all the time. I do everything that I can. I have done camps, I've done outreach weekends. I've like done all this stuff and like y, y you know, that jealous side of you that's like, why are these other people getting calls and I am not, and, and all this stuff. And, and so that was really, that was really hard. That kind of rocked me a little bit. But my mom and I had a really good conversation about it and she did a good job of explaining to me that priesthood is not about recognition. It's not a, it's not a reward.

Caitlin: [00:20:11](#) It's not, it's not something that you get after you put in your dues sort of thing. Like it's an additional call to serve. It's something, it's calling you to then go above and beyond what you've already done. And, and that helped it to put it into perspective for me, because I'm very much the type of person where like I give everything 110% if I can't do it well, there's no point in doing it, which isn't a super healthy life perspective as I'm learning it, as I get older. But, so that was, that really helped me to put it in. And so I, I kept doing what I was doing and all that. And during university, because I was on the accelerated nursing stream, I had to do courses all through summer. So for I think two years I missed camps because I just couldn't go.

Caitlin: [00:21:06](#) And then in my last fall semester, right before, um, what we call final focus, like a final clinical group. Um, I got a message from Rachelle Smalldon, and Alfredo Zelaya-Martinez, who, um, he's

from Ontario and he's like very involved with their camping programs and SPEC and everything. And Rachele said, hey, you're in nursing school, right? And I said, yeah. And she's like, well, do you want to come out and be our nurse of at the senior high camp in Ontario? And I said, well, I don't know if I can do that. Like I'm not technically a registered nurse yet. And she's like, oh no, it'll be fine. Don't worry about it. I was like, okay. So with a week's notice, basically I get on this plane to go to Toronto and I get picked up from the airport by a gentleman that I've never met before.

Caitlin: [00:21:54](#) But it turns out that like, I know his son from when I went to his SPEC and his, um, student to be daughter-in-law is one of my mom's best friend's nieces and like all these little connections and stuff. And so we'd drive four hours to the middle of nowhere basically to get to this camp. And the funny thing was that I found out afterwards is when I got there and I like met Alfredo, cause I had never met him before cause the year that I went to Spec was when his first, um, his daughter was born, so he was not at SPEC. And so I met him and I said, hey, nice to meet you, blah, blah, blah. And I guess that right after that he went to Rachele and said, this isn't, this isn't the right person. And Rachele was like, yeah, that's Caitlin. He's like, no, we need Natalie, Natalie's, the nurse in new Rochelle.

Caitlin: [00:22:38](#) I was like, no, Caitlin is the nurse. So he was thinking that it was going to be my younger sister who was coming. So he thought that he had gotten the wrong sibling, but it turned out that I was there and it was fine. And um, and that experience was really what helped me get reengaged with camping and with the church because it was such a different way of doing things. It was much more focused on community and using interchangeable words for God. Like I'd never heard anybody refer to God as like the divine before in like in, in the way that they address God. Um, I'd never heard love spoken of in so many different ways, like talking about it in terms of community and supporting each other and um, showing up for people and they just had such a different way of operating camps.

Caitlin: [00:23:34](#) And I was just like, oh my gosh, like this is, this is really amazing. And that's where I learned about, um, Community Place and all kinds of other things that they were doing out there. And I was like, this is really, this is really cool. And so when I finished nursing school, I was like super gung ho to get involved with camps out here in Canada West. And I kept going to Canada East for senior high camps and things like that. So that was kind of like my university experience. So it kind of went from being super gung ho involved to like this experience happened where

I wasn't called to the priesthood when I thought maybe I could have been or should have been in some of my friends were. And then kind of taking a bit of a step back for school and then just getting thrown head first into it and like seeing that it could be different. So those were definitely formative years for me.

Brittany: [00:24:26](#) Well, and it sounds like going from maybe a more traditional congregation when you were growing up to then eventually winding up in a place where you could rethink what church looks like, what community looks like, what God looks like was probably really good and really exactly what you needed, so that's great. So then from there, I mean, you've continued to be involved with the camping program, right? I mean, I, I see you on Instagram all the time.

Caitlin: [00:24:54](#) Yep!

Brittany: [00:24:57](#) Um, and so talk to me, I guess a little bit about the campaign and tradition in Community of Christ. Why is it meaningful to you? I don't want to say like more than a traditional worship service or less than a traditional worship service, but why do you find value in the camping experience?

Caitlin: [00:25:18](#) Yeah. What's been very interesting about my camping experience is being married to someone who did not grow up, um, with very much religious background at all, especially not in community of Christ is I've had to um, kind of learn how to explain it, which it's very difficult to explain. I think that why camps are so valuable is because you get this like little cluster of people together for like a week or five days or however long it is and you're just separated from everything else and you really get a chance to be present with each other and explore life in a way that is so different from when you are in a group of people that's not there intentionally. Like I think, I think the intentionality is really important about camp too because everybody's there because they'd want to be there. Like, maybe for some of the kids, like their parents told them they were going to camp, but at the end of the day, the kids hopefully know that they're gonna have fun.

Caitlin: [00:26:22](#) Like, okay, cool, let's go camp. It's going to be great. And I think that having adults around that care about you is also really important. I remember when my parents were getting divorced that, that the counselors especially were so helpful to me because of the counselors had gone through divorce parents like, and my parents divorced. Like not to say that any divorces easy or nice or anything like that, but my parents' divorce was, you know, very emotional and messy at times. And, um, there

was a lot of, a lot of processing and dealing that had to go with that. And I found that the counselors were some of the most invaluable people in my journey because they were able to actually give me advice of how to, how to deal with that and just how to, how to be a teenager in today's world. But also it's a really tangible way I think for people to give back. I think that's another thing that's really appealing about camps, especially for adults because it's a way, it's a way to give back. Like yes, it's a huge, huge cost of time and energy and all of that, but it's, it's a really easy way to give back and see kind of the fruits of your labors.

Caitlin:

[00:27:40](#)

And camp is where I really truly experienced the feeling of God. I guess I would call it because we had one closing service where we kind of did, um, a spirit walk in the woods at camp. And um, I kind of said when I drove in to camp that week, I kind of said a little prayer and I was like, okay, like if this is really real cause I've been really struggling like being a teenager first of all. And then second of all, like your parents were getting divorced and like all this other stuff. And I just said, you know, if this is really real, like if you're really up there, if you're really looking out for me, like I'm open, but I need you to show me. And so as we were doing this spirit at walk, I remember the last station was where one of the staff members washed our hands and it was symbolic of like, you know, washing away your sins and what, like things that you wanted to get rid of was the way that they specifically put it.

Caitlin:

[00:28:40](#)

Like we're washing away things that you'd want to lead at camp. And so I just remember thinking about like I want to leave like all this pain, all this frustration and all of these negative emotions here. And I remember like I just had this feeling of like fullness and like vibration in my chest for like two weeks afterwards. And that's where I really felt like where I really felt the spirit for the first time. And I think that it's really, really, really difficult to get that same experience when you're just in kind of regular life because you're just not tuned in as much. I think that the camp grounds that the church owns or like any, any place that has kind of a spiritual legacy or you know, is kind of a secret place to people. I guess that the Irish called them thin spaces.

Speaker 4:

[00:29:33](#)

So there are places where the barrier between us and whatever's on the other side is thinner. And I think that campgrounds are often one of those thin spaces and because you're kind of unplugged from the rest of the world, it's a lot easier to tune in to what's going on. And it's a lot easier for you to be reflective. And when you're around people who are also

looking for the same thing, it's a lot easier I think. And also camps are just really fun. Camps are so fun and you just get to go and be nutty and I just have this personality. I really like being loud and I don't mind, you know, being a little bit crazy and you know, getting, getting things done and looking like a fool just so that the kids feel comfortable looking like a fool. And camp is really what taught me those things.

Caitlin: [00:30:30](#) I just, I, it's so hard to put into words, but the people, the people that you meet at camp, you just, you just connect with them at a deeper level. I think. And you, you leave there being better friends than you would have if you had spent like the entire year together at school? Almost like, I remember thinking that like, oh my gosh, there's so much to cram into camp. Like it's only five days of so much pressure, but I might not know what my camp friends favorite subway sandwiches or I might not let know what kind of like, what their favorite color is, but like I know them, like I just know them in a different, in a different way. Um, and it's a really long standing tradition in the Community of Christ. And honestly, I think that it's the best thing we do. I think that retreats and camping are the best things that we do. And that's something that's so near and dear to my heart that that's just so important to me. Like that's one thing that like I will never let go of. Like, I will fight to the death to make sure that we still have that.

Brittany: [00:31:37](#) There's a lot to unpack in that response. I loved it and it reminded me, I recently, uh, and I even hesitate to bring this up because I can't remember who said it or exactly what they said, but basically they took the hours of togetherness in a traditional reunion setting and compared that to the hours over a year and worship setting and in a regular run of the mills congregation and you get more time together at a week of reunion than you do in like a full year of congregations.

Caitlin: [00:32:10](#) It takes like, cause I remember when I was writing down my volunteer hours, like when I was in high school, like a junior camp, like a kids camp is 120 hours. So there's 52 weeks in a year. So that's over two years of somebody services for the same, yeah.

Brittany: [00:32:28](#) And there's something to say about scrubbing toilets with someone in your congregation or you know, at a kid's camp or whatever or looking with or doing an activity or doing playing sports or swimming or whatever it may be at camp that you're engaged with together. There's, there's a different level of conversation. There's a different level of relationship that's built. Yeah. It's really important.

Caitlin:

[00:32:55](#)

Yeah. Yeah. And like just one last thing on there as a, as a director and someone who organizes camps now, like I don't have any kids, much less kids that are old enough to go to camp. So and I focus more on the junior high and high school aged campers in CWN and I don't do it because I'm getting any benefit out of it. Like I'm doing it because I think that it's so important for these kids and that's why all of our staff do it as well. Cause we don't have any parents on our staff. Um, when we do our camps and that's fine, but all of these people do it because it's so important to just show these, these kids in these campers that there are adults out there who just like will genuinely care about them and who want the best for them and are there to support them and there to help them with their struggles. Because when you're a teenager, it's so easy to feel like you're alone. And if you don't have a local congregation or you don't feel like your congregation is accessible to you, it's really nice to know that there are still people in the church who are connected to you in that way, who can become part of your community as part of your support network for the rest of your life, you know, and that they're there for you when you need it.

Brittany:

[00:34:12](#)

And that reminds me that there's so many competing voices telling kids that they're not worthy or they're not this or that or whatever. And um, I think it's really important for youth especially to have a place where they can just come and be. And I think that that's reflective of our identity as a church to just come as you are and to just be able to be accepted and loved in a community, just exactly how you are, not needing to be apologetic for that or anything. So yeah, it's really, really important, which I guess kind of brings me to my next question. Um, in general terms and I guess, you know, you could bring it down to Community of Christ as well. Uh, but I'm curious to know what your thoughts are on the benefits of religious communities in the world today, especially being a millennial, being a young adult. A lot of our generation might be walking away from traditional church services, but I still think there's a strong need for community and shared values. So I just want to hear your thoughts about that.

Caitlin:

[00:35:21](#)

Yeah, I totally agree about that. The community, the like-minded community with shared values. I think that's a huge, huge thing. And something, you know, that I'd even seen in my husband being someone who was not raised in any church, again, a much less Community of Christ is that feeling of just acceptance come as you are. Like we're here for you no matter what. I remember the first time that we went to potluck and like we were both, like he was working in, I was still in school. And so we just decided that we were gonna go last minute to

potluck. And he's like, well, but we didn't bring anything so we shouldn't eat. And I was like, no, like, sure, we've probably should have brought something, but like we could still go and we can still eat. Like that's not going to be a problem.

Caitlin: [00:36:09](#) And he's like, well, are you sure? Like I just, I just feel really bad and I don't know that we should do that. And I was like, no, I promise you nobody is going to say anything. And of course, like in traditional community of Christ fashion, like they send all the leftovers home with us. Like nobody said anything cause they knew that we were like poor students. And so I think that that's one thing that a lot of millennials are missing is they have never had that type of a community other than people of their own generation. I think something that's really great about millennials is we're very keen to find our own families. But I think that those families often consist of people who are around the same age, like I host friendsgiving every year. But all of those people are around kind of my age.

Caitlin: [00:36:53](#) Right? Um, whereas we haven't really got them that intergenerational thing quite right. And um, I can't remember if I said this in our last podcast, but it's church kind of, or it's kind of like a real family because you didn't really pick all of those members, but somehow you still all have to kind of get along. And so I think that that's something that's super important too, is millennials, we relate to each other in a very similar way. Like you've been trying to get this podcast set up. Like we were both on Facebook messenger, we were figuring it out and like, we're both pretty easy going about like, oh, this day didn't work. Okay, then let's try this. Or like, oh, it's today, but like, let's try a different time. And that works for us. But if you're trying to do that with someone who's like 65, you know, if they're going to be like, holy crap, you guys are so flaky.

Caitlin: [00:37:42](#) Like what are you doing? Right? And so I think that that church and religion helps you kind of bridge those intergenerational gaps. Like we, it happens a lot in like business meetings and things like that where you can tell that we're just not seeing eye to eye. But then if you take the time to kind of step back and say, I see where you're coming from and why you would be offended by this or think that you know, we're being flaky or whatever. But like, here's our reality. Like I think of a recent example where we were talking about scheduling things and you know, with millennials it's hard because you might get 10 people that say yes, but maybe only seven of them are going to show up. And somebody was like, well, if you see you're going to be there then like that's your word and that's a promise.

Caitlin: [00:38:28](#) And all this stuff. It's like, yeah, but we get like a dozen invitations to stuff every week, you know, and you work a ton and a lot of us have young kids and so some days you just, the day off you're like, I'm really tired. And I just really don't want to. And then this, this older person was like, hold on, are you just like get a babysitter or whatever. And it's like you have to pay a babysitter minimum wage, which in Alberta is \$15 an hour. So if you want to be gone for two hours, that's an additional \$30 on top of whatever else you're going to be doing for this activity. You have to find someone that you trust. Are they going to be available? Like just all of these things. And then this person is like, oh yeah, that would be difficult. Like when I was, when I was a young mom, like we just had people that would come over to our house and just like do it.

Caitlin: [00:39:11](#) And it's like, yes, that's probably when families could survive on one income and live pretty well. So the moms weren't necessarily, you know, working odd hours. And especially for me being a shift worker, it's like, yeah, try and try and figure that out. You know? So it's just different life experiences. So I think that's one thing that's really poignant about religious communities is that it's not necessarily people that you pick and it's an intergenerational group. I think the community in general is super important, but I think that diversity and community is almost as important. You know, I think that I've always, one of the most valuable things about churches, I've always had interactions with people that were significantly older than me. Right? And so I've just grown up relating to people who are 40 50 60 years older than me. And when you're little, you're just like, oh hey grandma so and so, you're not really my grandma, but I call you to do that.

Caitlin: [00:40:06](#) You know? And then as you get older, you start to have more of an adult relationship. And sometimes it's a bit harder because you aren't seen as an adult in everyone's eyes. Like you're still seen as that little baby that they've known there, like my entire life kind of thing. But then my mom and my stepdad are like, oh, they still see us as children too. So it's really not that big of a deal. But yeah, you're just kind of forced to, to deal with these people and to figure it out. And I think the other thing is that you're constantly reminded that there are things that are bigger than you out there. And I think Community of Christ is very good at that. There are so many things that community of Christ does that pulls our attention to issues in the world. Like I think about world hunger, I think about World Service Corps, I think about World Accord, like all of these different things that pull your attention to hey, we've got a pretty good here in North America.

Caitlin: [00:41:00](#) We've got our issues, don't get me wrong, but like remember that there are these other things too that are important and just tying you back into the global community. So I think, I, I've never gone to another church. I don't know if other churches do that as well. I, I'm very hopeful that they do. But that's one of the things I think is so great about community of crisis that it keeps pulling our attention back to like our global ministry and our global commitment to be a world citizen and its church is a really good way to link people into that, into something that's bigger than themselves, which I think that millennials want to have purpose and they want to have a goal and they want to have something that they can work towards. And churches in the past, don't get me wrong, I am a sketched out by many, many church things and church affiliated charities and things like that.

Caitlin: [00:41:54](#) Like I'm very, very wary of those because there have been a lot and there still are a lot who do not have completely altruistic intentions and the Christian Church has done a lot of harm in the world historically and still, even today. And that's not something that we should ignore. That doesn't mean that we should also keep all Christian churches with the same paintbrush. Um, but it's something that you do have to be diligent about. And I think that's one huge reason why a lot of millennials have kind of stepped back because they see Christianity in general as this bad thing in terms of LGBTQ rights and recognition and you know, abuses of power in developing nations and like and, and, and, like all of these things. And so I think to those people, I would say a lot of bad things had happened and a lot of bad things still are happening, but there are some really good churches out there.

Caitlin: [00:43:09](#) There are some really good churches out there and there are lots of really good people in those churches. And so you just kind of have to have to find one. And Community of Christ is one of them. Like we have, we still have our growing pains. We still have things that we need to do and need to work on. But I think the Community of Christ is one of the good ones because one of our basic values is the worth of all persons. And I don't think that you can go very wrong when that's kind of one of the tenants that you're working with.

Brittany: [00:43:41](#) So Caitlin, I love that you brought up the intergenerational aspect of the church. I think that for me, that was honestly one reason why I still wanted to be engaged in church life after I found Community of Christ and, but it's not necessarily something that I think I could have articulated. But in thinking about it, you know, I wanted my kids to be able to have a

community that wasn't just their school or wasn't just our neighborhood where we live in a suburban town that everyone is basically my same age. The kids are all their same age. Um, I think that that, uh, generational diversity is really important. And especially when we were talking about, you know, hard issues like church policy and are we going to take a stand on certain political actions that are happening or, you know, just topics. How do we discuss what the Gospel means in the world today? That conversation changes when we cross generational gaps. And so, yeah. That's something that I hadn't really thought about much, but I really do think that that was part of why I wanted to be engaged in church life. Because when you think about it or when I think about it, uh, I can't think of other communities that do that in the same way that church does. Maybe that'll look different and going into the future, but I think for right now, you know, it's really important. So, yeah.

Caitlin: [00:45:15](#) Yeah. I totally agree.

Brittany: [00:45:18](#) So my next question is shifting gears maybe a little bit. Um, but I want to know what you think the hardest thing about being a young adult in Community of Christ is.

Caitlin: [00:45:30](#) Okay. Oh, so I just talked about how great intergenerational stuff is, but it's also probably the single hardest thing about being a young adult in community of Christ right now. I think part of that is because there are not a lot of us. Um, we are a small but mighty group, I think. Um, but there are not a lot of us, a lot of us have left the church for whatever reason or just aren't, aren't there as much. And there are lots of reasons for that. Our generation works really, really hard and you work a lot and a lot of us have young kids and a have schedules that interfere with a weekly commitment at the same time on Sunday mornings. I know that's a big time for hockey and like dance competitions and like all this other stuff. So there's not a lot of us and I think that it's hard when you're trying to toe that line between pushing people to do better or to do different and you also don't want to offend people. And that's something that I feel really strongly about. I don't think that it's okay to just go in and stir up the pot for the sake of stirring up the pot. I think that if you're going to go into a situation and be sensational and try and get people to see things in a different way, I do think that it's really important that you have the right approach about it and that you are understanding and tactful and kind about it as much as you can be because people will, nobody likes being told what to do and nobody likes being ordered what they're supposed to be doing. So I don't think that it's good for young adults to go in and have this, what seems to other people to be

a radical message and just be like, this is the way it is. And like if you don't like it, then you can lump it kind of thing. Not saying that most young adults are doing that, but I think that that line is very, very fine or it feels very fine in my mind at least. And I remember there's been a few times that we've had discussions in our congregation or something and I'm like, oh, can I really say this?

Caitlin: [00:47:49](#) And I don't know. Like is that too controversial? And at a certain point, I don't really know when it happened. It probably has been within the last like four or five years in amongst us transitioning out of our rRanch Lands facility into our temporary building and getting some new leadership in there and the demographics of our congregation changing a little bit. I think that's when I started to feel a bit more comfortable with kind of being a bit more honest and transparent. Like I remember when we were talking about World Conference 2016 when the cohabitation proposals were going before the World Church and we were talking about all different aspects of it and I was like, you know what? I'm just going to say it. And so I said, you know the hardest thing about this for me is that it really all comes down to sex.

Caitlin: [00:48:42](#) And some of the older people looked at me and I was like, no, really it does. Because essentially what this, what this policy is saying is that if you're declaring to the world that you are having sex with someone, Aka you're living together in not in separate bedrooms, that's the only thing that makes it different than being in a married relationship. You're just publicly declaring that you're having sex before marriage and they're like, oh no, no, it's all these other things too, and blah, blah, blah. I'm like, no, because the same person, if you, if you put it in a different frame, the same person could be having sex with multiple different partners, but because they're not living with any of them, then nobody can comment on it, right? Because that would be, that would be taboo and an invasion of their privacy. But then if this person comes out and announces that they're living with one person, it doesn't matter if they bought a house together, it doesn't matter if they're engaged, doesn't matter if they've lived together for more than six months, which in Canada means that your common law, which means that you have the same rights as a married couple in the eyes of the law.

Caitlin: [00:49:51](#) Like you're just declaring that you're having sex with this person and that's all that changes it. And I remember several members of the congregation were just like staring at me with these giant eyes and then someone came up to me afterwards and they're like, there would never be any judgment on you as you were

having sex before marriage. It's just that, you know, the optics of it and all this stuff. And I was like, okay, sure, go ahead and tell me that. And like, and cohabitation is a totally different issue that we could talk about forever. But like that's just one of those examples where it's, it's hard to be that person kind of giving that bit of truth, but I feel like that's kind of where our generation is poised to kind of make a difference. And I remember in the process of selling the church, there were several, sorry, selling our church building, not actually selling the church.

Caitlin: [00:50:44](#) Just to be clear about that, I'm selling the physical building. I remember I felt really compelled to get up and just say, I don't want this building to be my problem in 15 years when we have to sell it because we've incurred so much debt by trying to keep it and just being like that point blank about it. And that's really, really hard. And I have always been, I'm a, I'm a pretty confident person. I like to think that I'm well-spoken and I'm fairly intelligent and you know, I don't mind ruffling some feathers, but I think for people who aren't that confident and who aren't that secure in themselves and in their community either, like in their congregation, I think that would be an impossibly difficult situation to be in. So I think that that's probably the hardest thing is that we're in a position where we kind of need to be truth tellers and we kind of need to be reality checkers.

Caitlin: [00:51:36](#) But that's also kind of an unfair position to be in is to call people out and say, Hey, this model that you had for what you thought the church was going to be in 30 years, but we're 30 years later and it's not working that way, so we have to change what we're doing. And I'm very, very lucky to be in a congregation that is mostly open to that and the leadership is open to that. And the leadership is really interested in what I have to say and what other young adults have to say because they truly recognize that we are the future for better or for worse. And in order to keep us engaged, they have to listen to us, right? Because my, my parents' generation has inherited the church from their parent's generation and tried to slowly but surely kind of change things along the way. But I think that my parent's generation is very aware that there are a lot of problems that they are not necessarily problems but, but things that they need to fix or change or rework before we inherit the church because millennials are not willing to inherit something that is so different than what we would want it to be, if that makes sense.

Brittany: [00:52:57](#) It makes a lot of sense. And I think that you are speaking truth in that, you know, it's kind of our job, if you will, or we are poised, we are in the position to speak to the future and to use

our own colloquial words, look beyond the horizon and kind of, you know, try to try to guide our community to that place. But it does brush up. It's hard at brushes up against policy and brushes up against culture. It brushes up against tradition and having to be the person that is speaking to those things and maybe saying, is this really benefiting us? Is this doing more harm than good? It's a really tricky place to be in. And I definitely have felt that tension in my own ministry. Um, and you know, just feeling like, oh, we have such a good thing going on, let's help make it better, or let's spread it more and let's not get bogged down by certain things.

Caitlin: [00:54:03](#) And to make it seem like it's not a criticism either. I think that's super important to not, to not be critical of like you thought it was going to be this way and it's not so like you all failed, you know, that's not it. That's not either. Right? We have to work, we have to work together and we have to figure it out together.

Brittany: [00:54:24](#) Yeah. Well, and this reminds me of a conversation that I was recently having with another young adult minister in the church who I won't publicly call out, but he was helping me, um, kind of see the changes that our parent's generation have gone through. And on some level, I know this, like I really have really tried to get to know Community of Christ and to see the changes over the last several decades, but then to just, we started naming all of these things that their generation has had to work through. And it really made me stop and kind of pause my millennial angst for the church because I was able to say, okay, they actually have done a lot of work. And I know this, again, I know this on a very intellectual level, but again, just kind of spelling it all out and seeing the cards that they were handed with and knowing the impossibly hard decisions that they've had to make. Not that I, maybe I sound more angsty than I am, but you know, I, I was, I was telling this friend, you know, I just, I want us to just be able to get along and to not get blocked. Like I hate it when mission gets blocked by policy that is maybe outdated or tradition or, you know, all these things that I've named and I just, some kind of like a, let's just bulldoze through it and we'll clean up as we go.

Brittany: [00:55:53](#) That's not always, that's not always a helpful approach. That's my own weakness. But I was able to understand maybe some of the hesitations or I guess the wisdom in maybe slowing down when you look at the larger picture of where the church has been and then where we're going. So it was, it was a good conversation for me to have, cause he was kinda like, okay Brittany, but also look at what the church has been through and it's like, I know this but still!

Caitlin: [00:56:24](#) But I still just want it to keep going forward. And I, I so identify with that, I'm like, Hey, we could do it, so why aren't we doing it? Can we just do it?

Brittany: [00:56:36](#) Oh Man. Yeah. I, I can definitely have that attitude as well. And I think when I'm at my best self, I'm able to just slow down and breathe and chillax a little bit. But every once in a while I'm like, we must do the thing because this is unjust and we must abolish this!

Caitlin: [00:56:53](#) Patience is not one of my God given virtues at all.

Brittany: [00:56:59](#) Yeah. It's not helpful.

Caitlin: [00:57:01](#) Whenever someone has described me as patient, like you know, sometimes in like when you're doing like group exercises, like I think especially at camp where you're, you know, find someone who you would describe as patient. Whenever someone picks me, I'm like really, really picked me cause I don't think I'm not at all.

Brittany: [00:57:23](#) And I don't know if anyone has ever picked me in a situation because everybody I'm not patient. I want to just get to the end goal immediately. And yeah. It's not helpful, and another thing that I have to keep reminding myself is that we are a global church and so what feels very unjust to me in the United States or in the Western world might be, you know, somebody in a different part of the country might see it very, very differently from me. And what I see as an injustice they see as a justice issue and maybe whatever policy or discussion that we're having, maybe they see it as protecting the most vulnerable. I mean, I know that in the conversation about intoxicants and priesthood, I mean that was one of the things where world different world views of different people. It wasn't even a generational thing. It was a where are you from thing, that really caused a lot of that debate and conversation because the way that somebody in a certain part of the world sees it is different from the way that somebody else in a different part of the world sees it. And so yeah, community is hard.

Caitlin: [00:58:32](#) It is hard. It is hard.

Brittany: [00:58:35](#) But I guess bouncing off of that, what gives you hope for the future? I mean we've kind of talked about the things we really like and then things that are frustrating and then moving us into the future, what, what gives you hope?

Caitlin:

[00:58:49](#)

I think that what gives me hope is first of all doing camps and seeing some of the up and comers. I feel like such an old person when I say that because I've always had people telling me that like, oh, the future of the church is in good hands because you're here. And I'm like, it's so much pressure. But anyways, no, but I do see, I do see these kids coming up and what I've come to realize, and I think that maybe, maybe the older generations would benefit from this as well as I've come to a more realistic view of who is going to stick around and who is going to be a leader and who is not. And that group who's going to stick around and be a leader is much, much smaller than the entire pool. And I think that that's true of many groups, but the kids that we're getting at camps now aren't church. They don't really have a local congregation or not really involved in local congregational life. And so I don't think that they're necessarily going to be the leaders of tomorrow, but there are some kids who I'm like, yeah, you're totally going to be there. You're going to do it and you're going to be awesome. So that's one thing that gives me hope.

Caitlin:

[01:00:07](#)

Um, another thing that gives me hope that is the, it's a direction that our theology has been going in the last like five to 10 years. Like when we established the Enduring Principles, when we established the Mission and Initiatives, um, when we started getting a more cohesive way to describe our church, because I think any Community of Christ person will tell you that it can be very difficult to talk about church in general, especially for millennials because as we've talked about, not a lot of millennials are involved in churches and things like that for lots of reasons. And so first of all, you have to convince them that your church is not a quote unquote bad church. And then second of all, you don't fit under like Anglican or United or like, you know, all of these things. So you kind of have to explain it a bit more. And so I think that that's one thing that's been really helpful is it's helped me understand the church a bit better and it's helped me be able to explain my church a bit better as well. And the, the reason, the ultimate reason why that gives me hope is because the more that I learn about our church and where the theology is going or where the doctrine is going and things like that, the more that I am reaffirmed that this church is what I hope it will be. And I understand that there's always a bit of a disconnect between like theory and practice as a nurse. Like you go through nursing school and they're like, this is what being a nurse means. And then you're actually in nursing, you're like, I never write down by nursing theory ever. I don't write down my care plan. Like I just do it as I, as I do it. Right. But you're, you're always gonna have that bit of a disconnect and like you said, we're a global church and so it's interpreted

differently everywhere. But it's really affirming that the church is moving towards a direction where worth of all persons and all are called are really the center stones of what we're doing.

Caitlin: [01:02:11](#) And the nine, of course, I'm not going to say this right, but like the nine, um, tenants of scripture interpretation when I learned or the use of scripture sorry, right? Uh, when I learned those when I was in my priesthood courses, I was like, this is so great because it's talking about how you don't use scripture to harm and it's important to put it in a context of the time and the culture that it was in and like all of these different things and I'm like, we have this in writing? Like that's so amazing because that's what I've always like these nine things are what I like how I feel about scripture, but I didn't know that that's how the church at large or like the direction from world church is to use scripture. Right? Because that's one thing that I've always been really, really, I don't know, passionate about is the right way.

Caitlin: [01:03:10](#) But I've always been very, very concerned with how scripture is used because you do see that in a lot of ways of the Bible being used to support an argument. And the Bible is like statistics. You can make it say whatever you want it to say. Right? And that's where a lot of people and millennials have issues is they're like, well, the Bible says this, like how can you believe in a book that says this? And it's like, well, let's take a look. Like, let's back it up a little bit and let's look at what else is going on in there. And the fact is that this book was written like 1500 to 2000 years ago and some of it even earlier than that, right? And we look at like, we talk about outdated policies for the church, like even policies that are like 25-30 years old aren't really applicable anymore, right?

Caitlin: [01:03:56](#) So you take a book that's like 1500 to 2000 years old, some of it older than that, of course there are things that aren't going to be relevant anymore. Um, so I think that that's really important and I think that we need to be more aware of those things because like my, my pastor didn't even know that those things though, that those documents existed, right? And we have lots of people that don't know that those documents existed. So I think the better that we know ourselves, the better that we can move forward in a meaningful way. And the ultimate thing that gives me hope for our church is that it's slow and it's very subtle, but I know that changes are happening. Like I see that changes are happening. And I think that whoever you were having this conversation with, um, about all the changes that we've seen in the last like 30, 40 years is totally right.

- Caitlin: [01:04:56](#) Like we, it's the same thing as, um, you know, I thought that the church had always been this way when I was a little kid because I just always thought that there were women in the priesthood. And like when I was 22, that's when we had in Canada, the, the national conference about LGBTQ and priesthood, you know? And so I think that we have grown up in a time where there were already big shifts that the church had gone through and we've lived through a major shift. And so we think that things maybe are going to happen at a faster pace than what's realistic and what is safe for the church. And there are so many people that are like at church headquarters and also like around the world that are so passionate about what this church means and what it can be that I think that we're in very, very good hands.
- Caitlin: [01:06:03](#) I think that there are lots of people who are pushing the church to be something better who are pushing people to be better and that are working towards what our mission is and what our goal is. I think that for a long time we were just trying to figure out who we are, what makes us distinctive from the Latter-day Saints like from, I know we're not supposed to call the Mormon Church Mormons anymore apparently.
- Brittany: [01:06:34](#) Well, you're not getting pushback from me.
- Caitlin: [01:06:38](#) Um, I feel like for so long we were, we were so focused on what made us different from the Mormons and we spent so much time on that, on that quest of like defining ourselves and what our identity is and all that kind of stuff. And now I think that we're in a really, really good position to move forward with our own identity being who we are and like actually focusing on mission because it's important to figure out your identity before you, like you have to figure out your mission statement before you actually go and do like work towards that goal.
- Caitlin: [01:07:16](#) But I think that that's what we're in right now I think. But there's like, there are certainly challenges that the church faces with that. Um, there are big challenges that we're facing now and that are on the horizon, but I think that with the way the generations are going to shift in the next few years with the way that our global culture is shifting right now, I think that it's going to be the next 15 years I think are going to be really interesting for the church. I think like no matter how things go the next 15 years are going to be very, very interesting. Very interesting.
- Brittany: [01:07:53](#) Yeah. I agree. And I just want to reaffirm some of the things that you've said. I know that when I was first encountering Community of Christ, I was really drawn to the process of how change happens and the process of how revelation happens and

how policies are changed how people have a voice. Uh, and I think, you know, kind of going back to my conversation with my friend in realizing all the changes that the church has made, I uphold and celebrate the process that those changes went through. And yet I still have my own millennial angst when it's something that I care about in contemporary times, you know, I want to maybe bypass that process. Yeah. That's so not good. It's really hypocritical of me to want to do that and maybe want to not consider other voices, et Cetera, you know, and I am thinking of very specific circumstances and things that I would like to see changed, but I have to uphold the process that I fell in love with and I have to give that grace and that space for dialogue and conversation and to continue the journey together as a diverse community and uphold the worth and the voice of all people. So when I hear you talk, it sounds like, you know, you've kind of wrestled with some of those same things as well and just having to remind ourselves like, okay, the thing that we like about the church, the way that it works and functions, we need to actually let it work and function. I know that I, I'm involved with young adults a lot as well. Uh, and it can be kind of a frustrating conversation amongst ourselves because we, we do see that, you know, the message that we have, we are 100% on board with, but these things that we feel like maybe blockades with mission and spreading our message and things like that, um, it's, it's our natural tendency to want to just like pull those through them and break them down. But again, for me, it was the process that I really fell in love with. And I recognize that this was a church that was open to change and open to further truths and the reality of God's universal love and boundless grace. Um, but that, that doesn't come easily. And you know, for our parent's generation, realizing that they went through trauma, they get us where we are today and families were split up, friendships were broken. I mean, there was a lot of, of hard, hard work that went through. And again, I celebrate that. And yet sometimes I can find myself thinking like, well, why can't we just get over this? Like why can't we, yeah.

Caitlin:

[01:10:41](#)

Like it's, yeah, when you're, when you're on the pro and the vet, like when you're like, yes, we should do this, blah, blah blah, then then the democratic process doesn't see like the common consent process doesn't seem so important. Right? Which is terrible, but it's true. I know. And then everyone just agree with me and then, but then when you're on the side that like doesn't agree, you're like, thank goodness for the common consent because like, oh my gosh, this just absolutely can't pass. Right? And we naturally have our own biases. And so we think that like, what we think is right is obviously the truth. Like, obviously

that's what's right, but then you think about it, that was one of the biggest things for me at World Conference was like sitting there and I'm like, everybody who is voting differently than me right now, or who feels oppositely feels just as strongly about this as I do. And they are just as convinced that they are right and that this is the the will of what God is telling them, right? Like this is, this is what they feel the interpretation of, of what God is trying to get us to do is, and, and that forced me to kind of think about, like if we are all created in God's image, then that's part of the human experience. Like that's part of part of experiencing the Divine as well. And that was something that I wrestled with really, because I think about people who, who don't feel the same way as me on like a certain hot button issues that we don't have to get into.

- Caitlin: [01:12:12](#) But I'm just like, how could you not see it this way? But then I, but then I was able to think about it in terms of they're just showing a different facet of the issue and they have reasons why they feel that way and that's their life experience. And that's just as valuable as mine. And as easy as it is for me to discount that and be like, but you're wrong. Like obviously my way is right. And you're obviously wrong. That's like you say, that's not a good way to look at it. And it's not good to bulldoze, but it's so hard because you just wanted to go faster because you're like, no, obviously this is the way that it should be.
- Brittany: [01:12:49](#) Yeah. And I just wonder, I mean, it'll only be a matter of time before I'm like, Whoa, Whoa, church we can't be doing this!
- Caitlin: [01:13:00](#) Yeah, this is too much.
- Brittany: [01:13:03](#) So Caitlin, this has been a great conversation and I am 100% sure that we could keep talking about this forever.
- Caitlin: [01:13:11](#) All the things, yes.
- Brittany: [01:13:12](#) For literally ever. But I'm going to ask you one more question that I usually end these episodes with and it's just, is there anything else you'd like to leave us with? I know we covered a lot of ground, but is there something that you were hoping to say or to get out that you weren't able to, that I didn't ask or anything like that?
- Caitlin: [01:13:31](#) I think that the one thing that I would like to say to millennials is even though I've said that this is the thing that I'm worst at, but we all just need to be patient. Um, there's been a lot of opportunities in my life where I have just needed to be patient.

Like I talked about when I thought that I had been looked over for a priesthood call, I was just ordained to the priesthood last year and that was the right timing. If I had been ordained when I was, I can't remember when that situation happened, it happened when I was like 19 or 20. Then my husband and I lived together before we got married and that wouldn't have flown and that would have ended up in a situation that would have been very difficult to, to deal with between myself and the church. And so I'm very grateful for the, the way that that happened initially. And then for the wisdom of the pastors who, where in leadership positions in between that initial time and then when I actually got called for them to be patient and wait until I was at a point in my life where, you know, I could effectively serve in the priesthood. So patience is hard. But I think that that's one thing that we, that we could stand to learn. And also when we are being just as bullheaded and stubborn and obstinate as we think that other generations or people who don't agree with us are being, it's not helpful. It's not helpful. And I'm not saying that we need to overexplain ourselves, but I think that it's very important for us to explain where we are coming from because I think that a lot of misunderstandings that happen between generations are between different, like people with differing political ideologies or theological ideologies, I think that a lot of that misunderstanding just comes from a place of us not taking the time to explain where we're coming from, from a place that is more than I'm right, you're wrong.

Caitlin:

[01:15:42](#)

And I think that that goes on both sides, but I, I really believe in, if you explain yourself, and if you, if you're the one that always takes the high road, like eventually that will pay off. So even if she bought someone who's in your face, they like, you're wrong. I'm right. At least if you have something that you can back your position up with, I think that that always puts you in in a better frame. And it gives somebody something to think about. You're not going to change somebody's mind just by telling them that they're wrong. You're not gonna make someone see things your way by saying, well this is better. Like why? Give them like give them some reasoning behind it. Like why is this not compelling for you? Why doesn't this identify with you? Why do you want to try doing things a different ways? And I also, encourage people to, to speak up and to be brave. If you're a congregation or if you're like whatever your church life is, whether it's camps or retreats or congregational life, whatever. If it's not looking in the way that you want it to speak up. Find somebody in your congregation that you can talk to who can really help you meet your vision or help you introduce something new to the congregation. You know, try and find that person that you think

can help make that a reality. And the first couple of times that you do it, you not get very good participation. You might not have people come up to you and be like, oh, that was such a great service. Well done. And you might never have that because people, everybody has a different idea of what church looks like to them. But I encourage people to try something different because you never know.

- Caitlin: [01:17:27](#) You never know. Like I've introduced people at Church to the world of Youtube and the fact that you can find videos on just about everything. And now lots of people use youtube in their services, which is great and older people really do want to hear from us or they don't want to just hear what's wrong. They want to hear our ideas, they want to hear what we're doing right. They want to hear what we, what we want. But again, we have to be tactful. And like I said before, we're a small but mighty group and I think that there are really great things down the line for us, so I think that it's just important to kind of stay focused on what's keeping you here and not necessarily on what's trying to push you away and with those things that are trying to push you away, if you can find a way to manage it, that's not so heartbreaking, that's not so hard and things like that. I think that that's always helpful.
- Brittany: [01:18:24](#) Well, Caitlin, I just want to thank you so much for coming on. Like we've said, you know, we could continue this conversation forever, but it's, it's been good and I think that, you know, hearing your story and hearing your perspective has been really helpful for me and hopefully for other people. So thank you so much.
- Caitlin: [01:18:43](#) And thank you for having me. Yeah, we can, we could go on and on and on, but you know, we'll have future podcasts for that for sure. Well thanks so much for having me Brittany. And Yeah, I hope that my story identifies with some people and also makes people remember the good stuff or find some of the good stuff that Community of Christ has to offer.
- Brittany: [01:19:02](#) Yeah, for sure. Thank you so much.
- Caitlin: [01:19:05](#) Thank you.
- Outro Music: [01:19:11](#) [inaudible]
- Josh Mangelson: [01:19:14](#) Thanks for listening to Project Zion podcast. Subscribe to our podcast on apple podcast, stitcher or whatever podcast streaming service you use. And while you're there, give us a five

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Outro Music:

[01:20:21](#)

[inaudible].