

Speaker 1: [00:00:16](#) [inaudible].

Speaker 2: [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.

Speaker 1: [00:00:32](#) [inaudible]

Brittany : [00:00:33](#) Hello everyone. Welcome to Project Zion podcast. This is Brittany Mangelson and I will be your host for today and we are going to be bringing you another episode in our Chai Can't Even series where we talk with young adults in Community of Christ. So the interview that I'm bringing you today is one that I've been wanting to have for quite some time. And in true millennial fashion, we just keep saying, Oh yeah, we needed to get to this and we'll do it. And then we reschedule. And then we are now finally here, which I'm really excited about. We've got on Emma and Ryan Pitts and I'm just gonna turn it over to them to introduce themselves. I'm again, really excited to have them on. And I do want to mention though that we've never done a double interview before where I've interviewed two people at once with this kind of conversation. So we're just gonna kind of ping pong it back and forth and see what happens.

Ryan: [00:01:25](#) We are doing what has never been done before!

Emma: [00:01:25](#) Pioneers!

Ryan: [00:01:25](#) Next generation.

Brittany : [00:01:37](#) So yeah, thanks for being. Thanks for being on project Zion.

Emma: [00:01:40](#) Yeah, thanks for having us. I'm Emma Gray Pitt and I'm 27 if that matters. Ryan and I live in Bayonne, New Jersey and I work as a designer at The Nnot. K. N. O. T. it's a wedding magazine in New York city. So I've been working there for about a year and a half now.

Ryan: [00:02:06](#) Hello. I'm Ryan Pitt and I serve as the mission center president for the mid Atlantic Mission Center. And so my jurisdiction includes the Southern portion of New York state out into New York city in long Island, the Western part of Connecticut, all of New Jersey, isle of Delaware and the Eastern half of Pennsylvania. So it keeps me busy and I've been with the church officially as an employee since 2016.

Brittany : [00:02:37](#) Awesome. Thank you. Thank you. And I must, I guess do a little confession that I like hardcore stocked Emma for the longest time on social media because I mean, you work in New York city, you, it just seems like you have such a cool job and life and I yeah, from afar have been fan girling for literally years.

Emma: [00:03:03](#) Appearances can be deceiving.

Brittany : [00:03:09](#) I definitely know how that goes. But coming from, you know, my perspective and good old Saratoga Springs, Utah, I think your job and life looks pretty great. Ryan, I guess I can say the same for you, but I have no desire to be a Mission Center President. (laughter).

Ryan: [00:03:23](#) So you haven't been stocking me?

Brittany : [00:03:29](#) Yeah. I don't know.

Emma: [00:03:32](#) He's pretty limited online anyways.

Ryan: [00:03:36](#) It's true.

Brittany : [00:03:38](#) Yeah. It's been a while since I've seen you on Instastories, so you know, but really thank you guys for agreeing to be on the podcast and this is going to be a fun conversation. Yeah. All right. So with these interviews we always just kind of start at the beginning, whatever the beginning looks like for you. But in general terms, I'm curious to know whether you guys grew up Community of Christ and if you did, did you attend Camps? How involved were you and if not, how did you find the church?

Emma: [00:04:13](#) I'm gonna start. Okay. So yes, I was born into the Community of Christ RLDS a tradition. My grandpa worked as the historic sites director at Nauvoo on the RLDS side. So growing up we often would go, it was our tradition to go there for Thanksgiving and we'd stay in the Nauvoo House, which was when I was really young. So I don't have a lot of memories of it, but it was really cool. That's kind of where I got my start. I did not attend camps. I attended reunion, but I tried one junior high camp, I think it was, and I was a pretty introverted, quiet kid and people already kind of had their friend groups. And so it was like nothing that anyone did wrong. It just wasn't my scene. I wasn't ready to jump into that. So I stopped going to those.

Emma: [00:05:08](#) But I always attended reunions. I really enjoyed that, that kind of intergenerational. I liked working with the younger kids and having my family around me. That was a comfortable setting for

me. And then SPEC came around when I was a sophomore in high school and since I hadn't gone to camps, I was vehemently against going to it. Um, and I wasn't, I did gymnastics, I was athletic but not like team sports. I was very like just my box. And so I was nervous about, you know, not being able to perform on the teams or whatever. So I had a pretty big argument with my mom about not wanting to go to that, but you know, she went out, she to her credit, did all the research, like helping me feel more comfortable with it and finally was like, just give it a try. And I did and I loved it.

Emma: [00:05:59](#) I it totally, you know, while I, I was fine going to my home congregation, I just did it because that's what we did. But SPEC is really where I caught the bug, I guess for myself and was like, yes, this is something I want to be able to continue to be a part of. And funny story, although nothing happened, Ryan was at that first spec and we were in the same delegation. So our first words were exchanged. But yeah, so that's just kind of where I would say my personal, although I was baptized at eight, like everyone tends to be, that's where my personal desire to be a member of the Community of Christ started.

Ryan: [00:06:42](#) Yeah, I'm pretty similar with, with my upbringing in the church born into the RLD S tradition and grew up in the community of Christ tradition. I was baptized at the age of eight with the Los Fresnos congregation down in South Texas. The little blue church by the Exxon station was its nickname, or at least that's what I heard my dad say a lot about it. When he would explain what church he goes to. And I, on the other hand, grew up going to camps. I went to junior camp as a third grader, and I don't know if I ever missed a summer of church camp, whether it was at Camp Sionito in Texas or at Guthrie Grove in Iowa. Once we made that move when I was nine years old. So I went to camps, I went to retreats and went to mission center activities.

Ryan: [00:07:50](#) I participated in Vacation Bible schools when I could. I even went to vacation Bible schools of other faith traditions, which I really didn't know that I was doing that at that age I suppose. Took advantage of opportunities like spec. I went on church historic site trips that drove me or put us in a charter bus. And we drove from Lamoni Iowa to Palmyra. And then we worked our way back West. And I would say that I've had a lot of congregational support, not just with the beginnings with Los Fresnos, but growing up in Lamoni, the Bloomington congregation had been incredibly supportive of my faith journey. And, uh, I still cherish those memories, uh, and those relationships to this day. So when we go back to Lamona and visit it's always really special to catch up with those people who

were foundational and supported my journey as a, I grew up in, into community of Christ.

Brittany : [00:08:59](#) So that actually leads right into what I was going to ask. I'm just curious about being mentored in your congregation or as a kid. Did you have any opportunities to learn or serve? I mean, learn in the ways of like figuring out how the church worked. I mean, were you able to learn about your discipleship in community of Christ?

Ryan: [00:09:23](#) So I'll go, I'll go first this time. This is a bit cliché, especially with my responsibilities with the mission center, but I always enjoyed congregational business meetings and mission center conferences. Now that I get to preside over those from time to time. And I really enjoyed seeing how the business of the church operates and to hear the passions of the congregants who are gathered and, and to hear where they want those different money different funds to be going and how they want to support youth programming or how they want to try a new new ministry or even the, the process of approving priesthood calls as a congregation or as a mission center. It was really special cause growing up in Lamoni, it's a small town maybe 2000 people on a good day and regularly you would see people that you go to church with it at the grocery store or you're going to school with the same people you go to Sunday school with on Sundays. But to hear them talk about their faith, but also the affirmation of one another was incredibly powerful for me. And I really enjoyed seeing that side of people and being a part of that. So it, it, from the start, I always had an appreciation for the way that the church operates on the administrative side.

Emma: [00:11:10](#) Yeah. I think that this is where Ryan and I diverge a little bit because I didn't grow up in a place like Lamoni or some people have the experience of growing up in independence. Um, I was born in Florida and baptized there and then immediately after that we moved to Iowa, but to Northwest Iowa. And so, you know, I definitely felt mentored or supported by the congregation members in both of those areas. But a lot of that I attribute to my own family and specifically my mom, although I was born into the church, my mother through my grandpa is you know, her family goes back in the church, but my dad was not a church member. He was baptized before I was born, but I has never been a priesthood member specifically. And I really think that that has created who I am, that I had my mom who is, you know, really smart but also, you know, knows the church.

Emma: [00:12:13](#) And so I got that kind of tradition through her. But my dad, you know, appreciates the church. He supported my mom. He

always came to church with us, still goes to church, but like he had a more skeptical view of a healthfully skeptical view of church and the ways that we invest our thoughts into them and our time. So I think that that really gave me a strong balance growing up to both, you know, feel the emotional element of church and feel like part of that community, but also, you know, step back and think about the true logic or applications of what we were doing and, um, whether that made sense.

Emma: [00:12:52](#) I kind of forgot what the original question was! Mentorship. That's what it was. So yeah, a lot of my mentoring has come through my mom as a, um, she being an evangelist now. Um, she has, you know, been able to listen to me and help guide me on those more spiritual discussions. And I had something else to say, give me a second...

Ryan: [00:13:28](#) As you're thinking about that. Um, and then one of the most significant invitations that I received, uh, was when I was in senior high, the mission center, youth minister Dee Jones invited me to be a part of a strategic planning team where we sat down and scheduled the following year's activities. And it wasn't until we were in that setting, when I had input on what we were going to do. We, we were going to have a lock in or we were going to go take a high adventure trip to Wyoming or whatever the activity was. I got to be a part of that. And I'm only 16, 17 years old, that that was a huge responsibility. And, and even in my position now, when I look at the team that works on the, on the calendar, it is a really big project. And so that is, we'll probably hit hit on this a little bit later, but that invitation to be part of the collaborative leadership is incredibly powerful and dynamic within itself. I just love, love that atmosphere.

Emma: [00:14:52](#) I remembered what I was going to say [laughter] that my mom was especially a strong guide in moving from senior high and to young, young adulthood and into college that like I already mentioned, she really saw the benefit of spec and knew me well enough to be able to explain that to me and to convince me to try that out, which was obviously transformational. But she also, you know, when I decided to go to college in Washington DC, she sought out the pastor. She got me connected with him at World Conference, which is an incredibly awkward meeting. But like that mattered that I had a face and that she, when they drove me out to college, they went to the first service with me. And, uh, you know, I don't want to downplay my dad's involvement at all. He won't care, but but she really made, created those stepping stones for me so that I could do that for myself, but not feel like I was just out there completely alone having to make these new connections and new places.

Brittany : [00:15:59](#) I really appreciate hearing both of your stories because for me, not growing up in the church, I'm always curious how it was for people that did grow up in the church or you know, if they converted at a younger age, et cetera. Cause I, I mean, my ministry with Latter-day Seekers, people are leaving a faith tradition and trying to envision themselves in a new one. So I think that sharing how it is to grow up in the church is important. And I can already see some of those elements of, of my kids being empowered and feeling like they're part of the broader community, uh, which, which excites me. I mean, they'll like randomly bring up Janne' Grover because they've met her a couple of times and they know that she's a leader in the church. And so it's just always interesting to me to kind of get that perspective from people who grew up in the church as far as mentorship and who is important and really feeling empowered as a kid to get to know church leadership, whether that's on a congregational level or a world church level, et cetera, um, to really be part of the community.

Brittany : [00:17:07](#) So

Ryan: [00:17:08](#) yeah, definitely. Yeah. Yeah, it is a uniqueness that we share in, in the church. It would really, I think I would have a very different outlook on the, the church leadership structure itself if I did not have personal relationships with those individuals, even outside of church employment. Even now, I remember the First Presidency, Scott Murphy and I played in a praise band together when I was in senior high at a reunion. I was playing the guitar and he was on the drums. And that's something that I will always remember.

Ryan: [00:17:50](#) I don't know what he talked about. I don't know any programs he tried to start. I don't know any, anything about what he did when he served as mission center president for Lamoni Heartland. But I remember he was in the band. And that's been one of those core memories that just just sticks with you.

Emma: [00:18:10](#) Yeah. And we were actually just speaking with a seeker a week ago. And that was something that kind of occurred to me was that, you know, while I may disagree with church stances on certain things, that sometime certain times that's something that I appreciate is that when you get one on one with some of the church leadership, you don't just get the same line, the same boxed PR script. Like they're willing to go a little bit deeper with you. And you know, and while they can't necessarily do that on the world conference stage, but when you're able to get to them one-on-one, they're more willing to speak really how they're feeling and their own, you know,

struggles with how to lead an international community is really insightful and really beneficial I think.

Brittany : [00:18:59](#) Yeah, for sure. I feel like I, yeah, I feel like I could talk about this for so much longer, but along and keep the focus on you guys. So as far as the timeline goes, you mentioned SPEC that's where you technically first met. I'm curious to know, and I always ask everybody, did you go to Graceland? What was your church involvement like when you were in college?

Ryan: [00:19:28](#) Yeah, so I did go to Graceland. I graduated in 2012. Roy's boys for life and I graduated with a degree in healthcare management and a minor in church leadership. So I had the opportunity and it really was a privilege to study with incredible thinkers in the church. One that comes to mind, Bob Mesle, who is a part of the the religion department at the time, Tony and Charmaine Chavla Smith, Jack Ergo just to name a few of the phenomenal individuals that, uh, I spent 1824 credit hours with and, uh, outside of the classroom, the church leadership minor provided opportunities for me to connect with other Community of Christ students at Graceland at the time. And we would have occasional retreats that we would go to. We would have weekly meetings. Our campus ministers at the time phenomenal. Dave and Dustee Heinze, really did a fantastic job at providing opportunities for relationships to grow and those relationships continue to this day. And then out of the church leadership minor experience, I then had the opportunity to participate with the campus ministries team and held various responsibilities on campus for formal worship settings, but also to be a part of student leadership and work with various roles and job descriptions across the campus, both at the student level and, and the faculty level. So it was a great opportunity to be a part of that and to experience the interconnectedness of the church that Graceland offers

Emma: [00:21:38](#) As I let slip earlier. I did not go to Graceland. I was a, I wouldn't say nerd, but I was pretty weird in high school in that, you know, I was really, really, really focused on that 4.0 and I had a emotional breakdown in the bathroom when I got an a minus in Spanish the last semester of my senior year. So like I really,

Ryan: [00:22:03](#) (Speaks Spanish)

Emma: [00:22:07](#) I don't know what that means. I was really focused on you being rewarded for that and going out and making something of myself, like I just wanted to achieve. And I think that that's what led me to not go to Graceland. I think part of it also was that, not saying the Graceland isn't a good school. That gets touchy

with Ryan, but you know, I want it to go somewhere with a little bit more name recognition.

Emma: [00:22:36](#) And I think part of it was that on was an Iowa, that's a really silly thing, but I want it to go away to school. So I think if I would've lived elsewhere, it might've been more of a draw for me. But I ended up going to American University in D.C. Also partly because I wanted to study journalism and graphic design, which is kind of what I'm working in now. I ended up dropping the graphic design major, although that's really what I do now and studied journalism and religion. And so in that way, sometimes I wish that I would've gone to Graceland and gotten a little bit more of the taste of Community of Christ. But I also really appreciate specifically like I had a really awesome Islamic studies professor that really got me interested in that and just other ways that people experience God. And that's always been kind of a side passion of mine that I've had less and less time to delve into, but always something that I'm interested in. And that I think continues to draw me to our church physically because we like having those conversations.

Brittany : [00:23:46](#) I mean I feel ya on the wanting to get out or you know, I mean, and there's been a lot of people that I've interviewed that say we love Graceland, but the pressure was so strong and we just always knew when we were a little kid, we weren't going to go to Graceland. We had that little rebellious streak in us. I think that is totally fair and normal.

Emma: [00:24:06](#) Well, and it also really helped that this is really just chance. It wasn't something I specifically looked for. But American University is only a mile from the Community of Christ congregation in DC. So it was an easy walk. Um, and then also people started driving me, which was much appreciated, but that also made it easier. And I can't say that if that hadn't had been the case, if I would have been more or less likely to go cause I didn't have a car at that time. So, um, but that helps. Yeah.

Brittany : [00:24:41](#) This is a question again that I ask specifically because of my background, but I'm always curious to know growing up in Community of Christ, you guys did end up marrying, spoiler alert. So you did marry someone in,

Ryan: [00:25:02](#) We ended up married. If that wasn't clear already,

Brittany : [00:25:06](#) but I'm wondering if you felt pressured to date someone in the church or did you think like when you were thinking about your



future partner life partner, was it a priority that you wanted to marry someone in the church or you know, that kind of thing?

- Emma: [00:25:22](#) I guess I'll start. I didn't really feel any pressure or, um, see myself marrying someone in the church necessarily. I think that helps because my mom didn't marry someone in the church, so I saw that that could work and be healthy. But, and I also didn't anticipate getting married as early as we did. We got married when I was a year out of college, so I was 22. Is that right? Bad at math 23 and I was feeling so, um, if you would've told me that in high school, I would have been really shocked by that. But life happens and I'm happy with it. But yeah, I dated other people in high school, but there was no one my age in our church. So I guess that also contributes to there being oppressed because there weren't any options. But then, uh, Ryan's two years older than me, so he was already at Graceland and he was working as a lifeguard at Guthrie Grove, which is the campgrounds in Iowa.
- Emma: [00:26:26](#) And I was there at a reunion and that's how we ended up crossing paths for real and having some elongated time to spend with each other. And that just kind of worked out. But you know, looking back like yeah, starting a family with someone that not share your religious views, you'd have to find a really special someone, um, that would be open to that and open to raising your kids that way. Cause that is something that I would say is important to me now that I, um, you know, we don't have kids, but if and when the time comes, like that will be important to me. And so I am thankful that we don't really have to argue about that subject. Like that's just a given. Yeah,
- Ryan: [00:27:08](#) we get to argue about others.
- Emma: [00:27:13](#) So I guess I'm thankful for that, but it's not something I sought out specifically.
- Ryan: [00:27:16](#) Brittany, I have to be honest, I never thought about this question before. That's why I love it. I don't think marrying somebody in community of Christ was a priority. Although it doesn't surprise me that it ended up that way just because of how much time I spent in community of Christ deck at Community Christ activities and being part of a, of the movement, whether it's attending congregations, going to Graceland, working as a lifeguard at, at a camp ground. I just knew that it was going to be, a part of my life. And so when Emma and I were started dating as we continued to date and I realized that can be a, it is important to her to some extent, not the most important thing in your world, but that was, it brought

some sense of peace, I think knowing that that would not be, uh, an issue that we would have to work through should marriage be, So it wasn't necessarily a priority, but it was certainly helpful and some, some real difficult and painful complications that I know a lot of people work through and sometimes they don't. So it is a nice, convenient quality that you bring to our marriage.

- Ryan: [00:28:48](#) I'm always here for your convenience.
- New Speaker: [00:28:48](#) Laughter
- Brittany : [00:28:53](#) I just have to say that I wish that people could actually view this podcast. I mean we're all just like giggly little school kids.
- Emma: [00:29:05](#) No, but I also think that that helped our relationship go deeper, quicker. Like not too quick, but we already knew we were able to talk theologically, like right away, like what do you believe? And like have that level playing field. Um, whereas like I dated someone before that didn't think that gay people should be married. And I was like, why? And he said, my pastor says so. And I was like, that's not a discussion. It helped that we, you know, we're open to that. And I think that personally that's what really attracted me at first.
- Ryan: [00:29:46](#) I also had much longer hair. I think that was helpful.
- Emma: [00:29:49](#) That was actually unhelpful!
- Brittany : [00:29:54](#) Well now I need to see a picture of you two when you were dating.
- Ryan: [00:29:56](#) Oh the ear piercings really compliment the hair,
- Emma: [00:30:02](#) No way! If I stalk your Facebook page. Will I find this? I don't know if they're on Facebook, but the best part is he got them done at Claire's.
- Ryan: [00:30:19](#) Icing.
- Emma: [00:30:19](#) Oh the Offshoot of Claire's..
- Ryan: [00:30:23](#) My buddy Trent helped me, so if you're listening to this Trent, thanks.
- Ryan: [00:30:27](#) Oh my word. That's amazing.

New Speaker: [00:30:31](#) You should have been there when my dad found out.

Brittany : [00:30:35](#) I bet that was a party. How old were you?

Ryan: [00:30:37](#) Yeah, I, I, I went right back to campus afterwards.

Brittany : [00:30:44](#) Oh gosh. That, that just made my day. Oh, okay. So I am curious, and again, I kind of alluded to this, but one of the reasons why I wanted to get you both on is because of your careers. I mean, I think it's pretty awesome. Uh, obviously that Emma is a designer in New York City. I've already confessed my intense internet stalking of your work and of your life in NYC and then Ryan to be a Mission Center President. Right? Actually. So if I'm doing math right, you're 29. Is that correct?

Ryan: [00:31:28](#) 30.

Brittany : [00:31:29](#) Okay.

Emma: [00:31:30](#) We're like two or three years apart. I'll turn 28 in January.

Brittany : [00:31:38](#) So, but to be a Mission Center President at 30 is also kind of a big deal. I mean that's, it's a, it's a big leadership role in the church, a significant leadership role in the church. So I'm wondering as you graduated college, as you started your careers how did the church influence that? Did it influence the decisions that you made as far as career choices? Do you feel like some of maybe the, the characteristics or qualities you were bringing into your work were impacted by the church?

Emma: [00:32:15](#) Sure. I think that the church introduced some hard questions for me in a good way that, you know, I always was drawn to magazines and but when you think of the top names in magazines, they're not necessarily, or they weren't at the time titles that were advancing human thought. You know, when you think of Vogue or like the other fashion magazines, like that's what I love. It's like, not necessarily the fashion, but just the design of those. But I also recognize that I wasn't sure that that was a conversation that like, felt important or worthwhile or again, like making the world a better place. So that always was something I kind of struggled with, like knowing that that's what I wanted it to do. And obviously I wanted to do as good as I could, but also, you know, wanting to be true to what I believe and make a difference in the world.

Emma: [00:33:20](#) So I kinda struggled with that for a while. I can't really say I made any conscious decisions. You know, I did go into design, I

ended up getting an internship with a, uh, like community magazine in Bethesda, Maryland, which is just outside of DC, which is actually really great magazine. Like they hit on some, they cover some tough community issues and have some good conversations in that. And so that kind of, you know, helped me see that, okay, there I can work for a magazine that has a greater purpose. It's helped bringing people together, help people have important conversations. So you know, I kept going off with that, but I actually, you know, although I wanted to work in magazines, I never saw myself in New York because everyone's New York story has that, they moved there with no money and they lived in a closet and like I just wasn't into that.

Emma: [00:34:18](#) You know, I need a little bit of space, but Ryan ended up getting the job with the mission center up here, which is actually what took us out of DC. And I kind of took six months to regroup and figure out what I wanted to do and ended up getting a job with another smaller magazine in New York. And that's kind of what took us out here to this area specifically. And then I ended up getting this really awesome job with the not, which is just, you know, I didn't really anticipate it, but it's, they're having really cool conversations and I'd say that this is happening across a lot of magazines. Recognizing that there has to be a bigger conversation than just fashion and beauty and spending money. Um, and that especially in weddings, you know, I've kind of been able to bring my religious studies influenced back into that.

Emma: [00:35:15](#) You know, as traditions through religions or traditions through cultures really impact a lot of what people do on their wedding days and can create some stress on wedding days when cultural traditions don't line up with where you're at or where your future spouses at, melding those traditions. It's just a really awesome conversation. It's, it really boils down to like two people having a day that celebrates them individually and together. And so getting to see all the different ways that people do that and empowering through them through that. And especially in my role, you know, finding the imagery that shows others that they can be empowered in this as well. And that there are other people that are going through the same things that they are going through and this is how they did it and it looked great and it felt great. And so you can do that too, I think has been an unexpected plus.

Emma: [00:36:10](#) But I really enjoyed that.

Ryan: [00:36:13](#) Did you want to talk a little bit about the diversity well too as far as you know, different, um, sexual orientations and genders.

Emma: [00:36:23](#) Yeah. In general, like that's been a big push at The Knot I'd say like that sort of was starting to bubble up. Like my first week that I was there, they had a panel with some people that were planning on our platform who were doing same sex weddings and in different areas of the country. And I think that's something that the knock kind of fell into. You know, when they first started was that they were in New York based company and New York in general is a little bit more progressive and you have access to so many things. So you know, whereas a same sex couple in Kansas City for example, doesn't have the same access or the same assumptions, especially when you're going to vendors.

Emma: [00:37:08](#) That's something that we hear a lot is just like vendors not knowing what words to use like bride and groom. If there's two women, are they both brides not necessarily like, and just learning how to not make, basically that's what it will sound too. It's not make assumptions when you're going into a conversation with someone. But we also hear that, you know, there's a flip side to that. And I, I get that there's no, um, necessarily hard feelings on either side or no ill will meant. But it is tough for couples who don't fit the traditional model to keep having to tell their story over and over again. Every time they reach out to a vendor and not knowing how they're going to be received. Like just the fact that you would go to someone and be like, can you bake my cake by the way I'm marrying someone of the same sex? Is that okay with you? Like that's something that as heterosexuals, we don't think like just make my cake like and make it pretty. So I've been exposed to a lot of things that I hadn't thought about and I think that that has been for me really cool and I appreciate that The Knot is constantly trying to bubble up things that we have thought about yet and bringing in new voices that can tell us about those things that we haven't thought about yet. And you know, we're never perfect, but that's been fulfilling for me. Like I feel it's like I'm in the right place.

Brittany : [00:38:41](#) Yeah. And to be part of the process and the conversation and the visual representation of that diversity I'm sure is really fulfilling. Another thing that I hear millennials talk a lot about in this series is we want to be part of something that matters. We want our work, whether that's our hobbies or our vocation or our careers, to have meaning in it and feel like we're making a difference. So it sounds like you've found a really good way to merge your personal values, your personal morals, what you want to put out into the world, and then you found a creative way to do that. So that's really cool. Thanks. What about you Ryan?

Ryan: [00:39:26](#) Well, so after I graduated from Graceland, Emma was still studying at American university in DC. So I loaded up the 1996 Jeep Cherokee, drove it to Arlington, Virginia, and moved into my first apartment and in the big city. And I initially moved out there with the job as a door to door sales rep for Verizon and it was not for me. So those of you, well, if you're good at it then you're really good at it. You're going to, you're making a ton of money. But I was just not good at it. And I remember feeling so anxious because it was a commission job. And I watched my bank account just get smaller and smaller every month. And I went in one day and said, I'm, I'm done. And, uh, went back to my apartment with a mattress on the floor. No internet, barely had cell signal cause it's like this world war two, uh, fortress, Arlington, Virginia.

Ryan: [00:40:39](#) And had a tough decision to make me, you know, am I gonna try and make this work or do I need to pack up my bag and head back to Iowa? And I went to local library, got on the internet and started applying for jobs and ended up finding a position with an oral surgeon in Bethesda, Maryland. And as a patient scheduling coordinator for this oral surgery practice. And I worked for the oral surgeon for three years, moved around a little bit within, within the practice itself. Started doing the front desk stuff, but then moved to more of the operational element. And I learned how small businesses operate. I was keeping track of accounts receivable. I was keeping track of our expenses. I was doing a lot of the accounting work. I was doing it, I was doing interviews for people when we had different jobs come up.

Ryan: [00:41:46](#) I worked closely with not just our doctor but the doctors of other practices. So I was doing some marketing. I even did some treatment planning when, when needed. So really a Jack of all trades to make this thing work. But as you indicated earlier, Brittany, I didn't, my heart wasn't into it. Yeah. I was bringing in a paycheck finely and it was paying for a comfortable lifestyle in the DC area and we could go out and do things that we wanted to do. And at the same time I felt like I was betraying myself and putting all this time and energy into selling a product that I really didn't believe in it. You know, morally I wisdom teeth is fine, you know, you get them taken out, but I just didn't have a, it didn't have a mission behind it that I felt like I could allow myself to put 120% into.

Ryan: [00:42:52](#) And so I started looking for, for awhile and at one point the mid Atlantic posted the job description for mission center president. And, uh, at the time I just graduated with my master's in health administration and I was ordained a to elder just a month or so

prior to the job being posted so that I was qualified. They wanted a master's degree and they wanted someone melchisedec priesthood. So I put my application together. Uh, and so where it would go, and you know, as I'm looking back at those three years with the oral surgeon, I'm realizing how helpful those small business skills have been in running a mission center, keeping track of accounts receivable. You know, watching the money come in and watching where the expenses are going and being a part of the it, uh, with, uh, you know, whether it's zoom conferencing or audio visual stuff. At reunion or registration forums being done online.

Ryan: [00:43:58](#) Those skills really translated well into what a, I'm able to do with the mission center. And that's just the technical professional side. The church leadership program that I graduated with from Graceland required two years of volunteer experience with a congregation or mission center after you graduated from Graceland. And so I reached out to the pastor of the DC congregation, told them I have this two year obligation to be part of the congregational leadership at whatever capacity. And a while I was developing professional skills that with the oral surgeon, I was learning the more intricate details of congregational leadership with the D C congregation. Uh, and so people like Wade Wallace and Florence Gubanc, are people who really took me under their wing and gave me an opportunity to learn and to be a part of the, the leadership. And right before we moved to the mission center I had the opportunity to serve as a co-pastor with Florence Gubanc and Jeff Naylor, who now serves on the Presiding Bishopric.

Ryan: [00:45:24](#) So it was really a, a blessing to have that invitation and to feel invested in because I think when, when you feel invested in by, whether it's the church or your employer or whatever, I think there's a new depth that's discovered with them. And I that was a driving factor for me. Yeah.

Emma: [00:45:51](#) Yeah, Cause that was your first time, you know, really getting outside of Graceland and so feeling like you're a continually invested in was bank I think as you went to that.

Ryan: [00:46:01](#) Yeah. My transition drive to college from home was a five minute drive. Yeah. Right. Uh, it, my dad taught at Graceland and I took a class from my dad business ethics, um, and I could go and see my mom whenever I wanted. So it was, yeah, that transition from Lamona to Arlington was a big transition. But I think, um, I landed in a spot there in Arlington where people were willing to invest in me.

Brittany : [00:46:32](#) Thank you both for sharing. That was, well that wasn't what I was hoping you would say necessarily, Cause I didn't want to put words in your mouth. I was, that's why I was hoping I would take it because I think that it is, it's so interesting to see kind of the fruits of labor from our parents and from church members who are our parents age, you know, in the generation before us who mentored us, who let us, who helped empower us as kids. And then to see how that comes to fruition into young adulthood. And as you are setting out in your careers and figuring out what you want your priorities to be and really shaping and forming what you want in your life and your life's work to be. So, thank you.

Brittany : [00:47:21](#) So people our age seem to be walking away from organized religion. So I'm wondering what think the benefits of a faith community are, is there relevance there? Why, why is maintaining an identity within a community important?

Emma: [00:47:41](#) I think this is a really tough question, obviously, or we'd all just be successful, but I think that, you know, no matter whether it's through your faith or through other means, everyone needs a community. And we're even seeing that as people walk away from faith, that they're finding community in other ways because they still need it. And that's fine. Like I firmly believe that people should be able to find community wherever works for them. For me, uh, I think that the value of a faith community is that like just kind of shared understanding of the things that matter most. Your values, your morals. Just being able to walk up to someone and know that there's already that shared understanding creates a really safe space that I don't know that you can find anywhere else. And that has helped me personally open up to try out new things, to test myself, to venture even to where I was uncomfortable. But just being able to try that and to know that I was safe with the people around me has really helped me grow. And I think that that is, it's a family, you know, it's something that no matter if you just agree with them, you know, hopefully you want to stick around and you see the greater purpose. And I think that just having a greater purpose to your life is meaningful.

Ryan: [00:49:10](#) Yeah. And I really don't have much to add to that except in the last 10, 15 minutes. Emma and I've been talking about the high points in our careers up to today. Um, I guarantee you there are so many low points within that path. Like the, the uncertainty, am I going to find a job or, you know, whatever the, am I going to be able to pay my rent? That, those are questions that, that I had asked. And there are people in Community of Christ who were willing to, uh, not just, you know, send thoughts and



prayers, but they were willing to be there and to do whatever it took to, um, to support you. And that, that's something profound within this small, quirky church of ours. Um, there is a deep concern and passion for one another and life happens and, and life happened to me. Uh, and I don't know where I would be without that affirming and compassionate support from people. So I, I think that's a setting, you know, that the theological connection to one of the most incredible stories of the last 2000 years aside, right? It's, I, it comes down to being seen as a person, uh, who has joys but also challenges and, and being loved during both.

Emma: [00:50:54](#) Yeah. And we were talking about, but before this, you know, the value of routine and I think that I didn't realize it in the moment, but looking back, you know, when I was in college, was it like something I was jumping up, excited to do on Sunday morning was going to church, but I needed to, it's what tethered needs a home because I was so far away from home. Like it was the one thing during the week that like,

Emma: [00:51:21](#) I don't know, it just felt familiar to me that I could just show up and sit and yeah, I'd have to enjoy the awkward small talk, which has never been my favorite thing, but it just felt right. Like that's where I needed to be. And so no matter what else, what else was going on, like there was just a consistency, especially when you're a college student and like you're having to make all these decisions about what you want to do. And um, you know, that's the first time where you really have to take ownership of your life. And it helped to have a morning where I didn't have to make any decisions. It's just like going, and this is what I do on Sunday mornings.

Ryan: [00:52:02](#) And even, you know, in the, in the larger scale, I know that there are people who won't go to, uh, attend Sunday morning worship regularly, but they won't miss reunion. Right? They won't miss speck or boy, they're not going to miss world conference. So there, there is something, something there and mysterious about the routine of that a routine that can be found within a faith community.

Brittany : [00:52:33](#) I really liked that you lifted up the routine aspect. That wasn't necessarily something that I had thought about before.

Emma: [00:52:39](#) So that's something that gets a bad rap. Like I, I will say you, you shouldn't just be in it for the routine, but in those low moments when all you can do is the routine, I think that it's really beneficial.

- Brittany : [00:52:53](#) Yeah. Well there's something to consistency into ritual and to habit. Just becoming part of who you are that I think is, is beneficial and something that should be explored by people because I think that especially when it's a community in a routine, in a community that is founded on something that you believe in, whether it's seen during principles or the mission initiatives or the story of Jesus, or how all of those interplay and intertwined together. There's something about, at least, I mean I'm speaking for myself, but about the transformation that I still go through, even in the routine, even when it's feels very mundane, there's still something about me that I feel a is just more aware of and I guess more intentional, I guess. Even if it feels routine so
- Ryan: [00:53:48](#) Well and it becomes, something becomes a sacred part of you, right. Then suddenly when, when you share it with somebody else or invite somebody else to, to be a part of that, it not only can be transformative, um, but it's creating a new sense of connection with that individual when you, when you share something so sacred and special to who you are. Yeah. Puts you in a space of vulnerability I think. But leads to just some, some incredible moments.
- Emma: [00:54:33](#) Yeah,
- Brittany : [00:54:34](#) I agree. I really, yeah, I liked the way that you articulated that. So thank you. And I guess kind of going off on this and you know, maybe you'll think, Brittany, we just give you this answer, but I'm wondering what keeps you then going back to church? What keeps you engaged in a faith community?
- Emma: [00:54:57](#) I think that that's something that's actually become harder for me over time, especially as life has settled down and we kind of are doing okay and like I don't have as much existential dread about what I'm doing or whatever, that it can become harder to choose it. Cause it's like, well I don't really need this. Why do I need to go show up for small talk that I don't really like? But I think that what keeps me coming back is knowing how much that meant to me in my lower existential dreading moments and wanting to be there for others. And also, you know, we're in an older congregation now so I kind of want to step up as a younger person and allow those people to step down a little bit more and just enjoy their Twilight years and know that the church is in good hands and feel confident in that. But yeah, it, that is a very, very hard question. Like, you know, cause as millennials we get asked that like how do we get millennials involved in, I honestly don't know the answer. I dunno cause there's just so many things that go into it. But for me it's just the

tradition, my family connections and wanting to offer what was so important to me when I was struggling

Ryan: [00:56:27](#) And then being in the presence of others who are making that connection or continuing their relationship. We've been with this congregation only for a couple of years now. But the folks who continue to gather have been there for decades. Uh, and just to see how their, their relationships have grown and to be a part of that is really special.

Emma: [00:56:53](#) Yeah. And I think also when I feel most invigorated is at things like world conference when I'm able to get together with other people like me who do want to challenge things and look forward. And I think that that's maybe something we could do better in our local congregations. And that's hard to talk about broadly, but just constantly moving the needle forward because life is constantly moving forward and making sure that we're being as inclusive as possible. Um, is a conversation always worth having and one that I'm excited to have. And so I love when we're able to get together and have those moments that it's something I wished we could have more often, I guess.

Ryan: [00:57:38](#) Yeah.

Emma: [00:57:40](#) Thank you. So now the flip side of that, I'm curious to know what you think the hardest thing about being a millennial in Community of Christ?

Ryan: [00:57:51](#) Yeah, we are in an age where if I don't know an answer to a question, I can pick up my phone and Google it real quick and have an answer within seconds. Or I can get online and see what my brother is doing back in Western Iowa. You know, things just happen so fast. And I sometimes wonder if the, if really the church is willing to change at speed and how it approaches things. But at the same time, are millennials willing to change the speed at which they approach things, right? We want instant results. We, we have passions and, and values and we see things that we're interested in. We see Gretta marching in New York city and we want to join with her and, and cry out that the earth is suffocating and we want action now. We want responses now we, you know, and so when they're, there's just this, we're in this age of things happening quickly and we're so connected and we're passion, passion driven and mission driven. It can, uh, the faith community, whether that's Community for Christ or, or another tradition, um, can't, can that faith community adapt and he can't, can those passions that do align with enduring principles of the church, a sacredness of creation, for example, can the, the, the two

movements find some sort of harmony? And that, that's a question that I often think about. Um, I don't necessarily try to think about the church as an institution, but think of it more as a living, breathing movement. So is, is there a way that, uh, the incredible efforts that are going on that are fueled by powerful leaders, inspirational leaders, can, there'd be a sense, uh, of synchronization, um, that goes around. And those are my initial thoughts to the question on, do you have anything more to

- Emma: [01:00:23](#) Oh, I have.
- Ryan: [01:00:23](#) Alright. Let's hear it.
- Emma: [01:00:29](#) No I think the same long lines as you were. Um, just that we are so instantaneously connected and we have so many avenues available to us that it's so easy to walk away from something that isn't feeding you and go find another community. And I think that's something that's hard for me to deal with sometimes. But it's even harder if you're talking to someone that doesn't have this background in community of Christ. Like, Hey, you might disagree with someone and it's worth it to stick around. And that's a really tough concept in this world of unfriending and like muting and just not dealing with something that you don't like. And, and that's tough in itself. Like there are things to be said for, you know, taking things out of your life that are unhealthy for you. But there's also a lot of benefit if you're able to engage with that healthfully and in a positive way.
- Emma: [01:01:30](#) And if you're able to get gauge and mutually challenging conversations that help to advance where you're at. But man, that is really hard and because it's a 50 50 game, like you can be all there, but it also requires the other person. I'm coming there with a sense of calm and a is a desire to be there. And I think that that's something that I seen most challenging within the church. Like in deciding to stay in some of our smaller congregations, you know, when you don't have another option and also outside the church trying to communicate to others why it's worthwhile to be a part of a religious.
- Brittany : [01:02:22](#) I think it's really interesting that you brought up the fact that we live in a culture that is so fast paced and so it's so easy for us to, like you said, you unfollow, unfriend the things that we don't agree with. So it's really easy to get caught echo chamber. Yeah, and I've mentioned this on the podcast before, but part of what drew me to Community of Christ was the process of how change is made because it gives you an Avenue to have a voice and it, it's as fair as we can make it, et cetera, et cetera. But I've

also confessed on the podcast that sometimes my tendency of having that instant gratification or I'm just going to unfollow what I don't like and um, kind of bleeds into how I interact with the church sometimes because I want to see change happen in certain ways or I want to see policies get reversed, et cetera, et cetera.

Brittany : [01:03:15](#) And I can, um, it's difficult because I can bring that angst to these conversations with people sometimes. And so it's something that I always have to check myself with. Yeah. This idea that there is a process and it's a marathon, it's not a sprint, so calm down Brittany.

Emma: [01:03:36](#) Like I think that's just in general, like it's speaking to the U S specifically, but like we used to just be able to have these pockets of different political beliefs and they never really came to a head because they just existed in different parts of the country. But now because we're online, like they're all bleeding into each other and really coming into some strong disagreements. And I think that we see that internationally as well. Like, I don't think that they get aggressive, but there's definitely ways that we disagree and, but because of our age where nothing is separate, we're having to really have those conversations. And it feels tough cause it feels like in some places we can advance as fast as we can, but it also feels like, you know, we don't want to alienate.

Ryan: [01:04:26](#) So yeah, big challenge. And not just the, the millennial generation, but just the, the, the era that we're, uh, that we're in right now with this postmodernists thought. We tend to have our own truths, right? What's really, really important to me needs to be the focus of the church. What's really, really important to, uh, you know, you needs to be the most important thing in the church. Um, and so that, that is where a lot of that tension can come in. So I'm appreciative that we have a common understanding of faithful disagreement where we can come from those different perspectives. But at the end of the day, we still follow this, this man who lived in the backwater region of the world from a backwater part of that region of the backwater part of the world and lived radically and with a passion and compassion. Um, and when you boil it down, that's that, that's the heart of a community that follows Christ.

Emma: [01:05:45](#) Well said.

Brittany : [01:05:45](#) That was well said. I appreciate it.

- Brittany : [01:05:50](#) Okay. So we've talked about why you are engaged in the life of the church. What are the hard things for you personally? And this question kind of goes along with that, but as an institution, as a church, as a movement, I know Ryan, you said he didn't like to think of it as an institution, which I actually really liked. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on the challenges that we as a church are facing today?
- Ryan: [01:06:17](#) I'll kind of state the obvious. Demographically. We're, we're, we're aging. As a church, not just Emma and I and I, and I think there's real, um, I think there's potential that there's untapped potential in that reality that we're facing. I also think it gives us a I'm not gonna use the word ultimatum, but I'm going to use the ultimatum we, the time to act as now as, as president Veazey so generously shared couple of years ago in a broadcast to the church. Um, the time is now to start doing things differently and reaching out to people differently. We need to experiment. We need to really take a step back and help our ourselves identify opportunities for mission and opportunities to meet people where they are. And to not expect people to come to our church, but to move the message of our church to where the people are and being real with them and meeting them in places that you may not even expect. Meet somebody in, in a bar or meet somebody new on, on, on the bus. We can get so locked into the routine.
- Ryan: [01:08:02](#) That's one of the dangers of religious routine is when we create these man made rules for ourselves when we are so much more than the restrictions that we place on ourselves. So the challenge that I see before the churches are, are we willing to take that step or are we really willing to, to do what it takes to share the message of Jesus Christ, the gospel of joy, hope, love, and peace to people who may not be experiencing that to people who may not have, uh, the right documentation on their passport or may not be in love with the right person that they ought to be a in love with. We have to take that radical message of hospitality and inclusivity and live it authentically. Because I can guarantee you that millennials will keen in on any sense of being manipulated or bait and switch or, Oh, they're just doing this because they want my money. They'll sniff that out 18 miles away. But being interested in what they are doing and investing in them, um, being supportive. I think if we're willing to do that, I think the church as a movement will become something that it's never been before. And the question that I ask is, are we willing to let go of the church we know.
- Emma: [01:09:48](#) All right, I'll follow up. But I kind of alluded to it before. I, I don't see this as a bad, but I think that one of our greatest challenges

is our international context. And it's also one of our greatest opportunities, but it's just, especially as we're all online now, just the act of communicating to that broad of cultural understandings is a huge undertaking. I don't know that we've gotten it right yet and we'll have to continue to trying to do that and how to communicate and how to have those conversations in both ways that are progressing us forward, but also keeping people safe. Um, but I also think generosity is a huge challenge. That obviously we as a church face and like can only really speak to the U S millennial context, but that's something that we've talked about a lot is that it's, you know, it used to be just like give 10% or give 10% of your excess. And that's so challenging to think about now specifically because people of the older generations generally had pensions, and so their was taken care of. Whereas now pretty much everyone is on the 401k model. And so it's just this idea that, I mean the world is telling us, put all of your excess into your 401k.

Emma:

[01:11:26](#)

Cause you don't know like who knows how long we're gonna live. And it's so, it's just like there's no guarantees anymore. And so really figuring out what your excess is, but also saving in a responsible way for yourself and your family and your children is really a challenge. And I don't think that we've got into those nuances yet. Um, of what that looks like. And you know, cause like in a perfect world, we should just give everything and then the church would take care of us, but is that realistic? Et cetera, et cetera. So those are just really challenging conversations. And you know, talking about generosity outside of money, um, it's always a challenge because the reality is that to keep, if we think of church, does the institution running money is needed there. And it's also needed for, you know, projects that we do that are great in the world where they, where that money is needed. Um, but that's just a big conversation to how to be responsible with money. Also be generous with your monies. That's really challenging.

Ryan:

[01:12:36](#)

Well, and the church has done a spectacular job at moving towards this concept of whole life stewardship. Um, and it's not just stewardship is not just an extension of discipleship, but whole life stewardship is central to discipleship. We were disciples because we give, we give of our time, our talent, treasure and testimony. Um, and I think the, the, the church has done such a good job at providing avenues just like pretty, you'd said earlier, avenues for change. You know, through Theo democracy, but there are avenues to explore whole life stewardship. This is gonna sound really mission center presidency, but the community of Christ bylaws allow for change in the church. It allows for us to be a spirit led people.

We have scripture that calls us to be prophetic people and to be led by the spirit in these new and challenging but exciting times, so it's not like we have to erase the entire board here. We have the skeleton to do what we need to do as a church are, are we just in a position and will we decide to allow, allow the scale of the body to move the way it's designed to. I think that's, that's going to be critically important. Not just a and not, I'm not talking in like 20 years. I'm talking in tomorrow. It's no president Veazey made it very, very clear. It's not time to act in 20 years, not in 10, not in five but now. Now is the time to do it.

Emma:

[01:14:40](#)

Yeah. I think what gives me the most hope is having conversations like these with other young adults and older people as well and younger people that they want to make that change and they're passionate about sticking around until they see that change come through and that is the most awesome thing. I think that's what Christ calls us to and what Christ would be proud to see. Cause that's what his life was about, was about seeing change through and constantly reminding people of their own need to change. And I think that when we're focused on that we're doing what we can and it also gives me hope, just the message of our church that whether the institution itself exists forever, at least that that message will keep going forward and keep creating positive influences in the world. Whatever that looks like.

Brittany :

[01:15:43](#)

I really appreciate, I keep saying that I really appreciate, but I know that I've heard, uh, a lot of church leaders and disciples in Community of Christ. They really similar things that we have the framework, we have the foundation, we have the principles, we have the values, we have the process. That we don't have to reinvent the wheel. That we don't have to start at square one, that we don't have to lose our history. We don't have to go through this rummage of what didn't work. I mean, what we have is good enough and it's just a matter of empowering our community to really see that and then to take Christ mission out and to be invitational and to get the message in a way that's relevant to the world today. So I really liked the way that you all tied that back into mission because really that's what gives me hope in the future as well because I do think that our message is relevant and it's needed and it's timely and the way that we do community together is something that I am really intrigued by and passionate about. So. So thank you. So I'm wondering if either of you have any other thoughts that you would like to leave us with before we say goodbye. I just want to thank you really quick though for this conversation. It's been really good, but I also want to throw it back to you in case I miss something.



Or in case you had something just burning on your brain that you needed to get out, this is your chance to do so.

Emma: [01:17:23](#) I actually did have something to say after what you just said. Um, that I thought of. Um, and I think that's something we do really well in community of Christ. Um, and something that I love is that we are forward looking. Um, we're always looking to what's coming next, but I do think that that comes at the expense of our history, which I'll admit is not like a huge passion of mine is history. But, and looking at specifically I'm on the finance board. I got wrangled into Adam doing my best try this world. Yes, but I was reading some of my grandpa's old books about the construction of the auditorium and up the temple and the financial struggles that happened along with that. And as part of that I had never heard about before. And that was just really comforting to me and inspiring to me that the kinds of things that people gave up.

Emma: [01:18:25](#) And I do think that that's something that we've lost touch with in our kind of indivil individualistic world. That if it's not affecting me, I shouldn't have to give something up. Like but kind of coming together as a community and seeing, you know, this is something that we want to see through and we see as important and we will do literally whatever it takes to make that happen was just a really incredible story for me to get back in touch with. And I wish that we could share that more widely and remember, and that gets back to me, you know, wanting to stay involved in church to be there for the next generation because I'd see if those people hadn't stepped up, we wouldn't have that beautiful temple to walk into. And that's really gets to me. And now every time I see the temple, it's, I think of that story. And so I think that that's an important thing for us to remember that while there are some things we don't necessarily need to rehash in our history, that there are some really awesome things that can help as we move forward and help us be more grateful in this moment for where we are.

Ryan: [01:19:41](#) And I've been thinking about this a lot recently. Um, but to know, I know this is ironic considering this as a podcast, but not for people not to rely on technology to save the church. Um, we've the church recently produced guidelines about serving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in online settings and, you know, really, really exciting stuff. And I encourage people to take advantage of, to stay connected, but there is a real desire for people, millennials, to be together in person. There's a reason why yoga studios and CrossFit boxes are popping up all over the place. It's because there is a desire to be together, um, and not to take that characteristic of this generation for

granted, but then also not to be afraid of inviting people to the sacraments of the church because that is such a critical piece of Community of Christ. Um, so continuing to find ways to be together and, and to celebrate the sacraments as a community, I think will really provide some powerful moments of ministry and transformation.

- Emma: [01:21:28](#) Yeah.
- Brittany : [01:21:30](#) Thank you. You too. This conversation was really exactly what I was hoping it would be. So, yeah, I just wanted to thank you for the work that you're doing in this world and in the church. And like I said, I, I have, I'm just going to keep internet stalking you is what it comes down to.
- Emma: [01:21:53](#) I'm the same way, like seeing your kids on Instagram and I'm like hi at World Conference and they're like, Whoa.
- Brittany : [01:22:03](#) I have to say, it was probably a half an hour after we arrived in the auditorium and so many people had come up to my kids, not me, but to my kids asking, which one of you is Sophie and which one of you is Lilly my daughter Lilly finally turned to me and said, mom, how do all these people know who I am this moment? Or I'm like, am I exploiting you on the internet? I can't decide.
- Emma: [01:22:29](#) They're not like regular kids. They're like, cool kid. The suspenders,
- Ryan: [01:22:37](#) Yeah, I'm bringng suspenders to the next World Conference. I love it.
- Brittany : [01:22:41](#) I know she was the youngest person in suspenders at world conference. She was not the only one, but she was the youngest one. Too funny. Well, thank you again and uh, we'll see on the internet.
- New Speaker: [01:23:04](#) Yes, thank you.
- Ryan: [01:23:06](#) Thanks, Brittany
- Music : [01:23:13](#) [inaudible].
- Josh: [01:23:15](#) 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 are there, give us a five star rating. Project Zion Podcast is sponsored by Latter-day

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Speaker 1: [01:24:11](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 6: [01:24:17](#) [inaudible] [inaudible].