

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.

Robin: [00:00:34](#) Hello and welcome to Project Zion podcast. This is your host Robin Linkhart with another episode in our Fair Trade series where our guests share about their journey of faith and what brought them to community of Christ. Today our guest is Brittany Mangelson. Brittany's a convert from the LDS church. She officially joined Community of Christ in January of 2015 she currently serves in the opposite elder is a member of the salt Lake city community of Christ pastor and leadership team and since July of 2018 Brittany is serving in a new full time ministry position and community of Christ called Social Media Seeker Ministry Specialist. She is assigned to the USA field and she is pioneering a new paradigm of ministry and mission in service to Community of Christ and to our world. Hey Brittany, thanks for being with us today and taking a turn on the other side of the microphone so to speak.

Brittany: [00:01:45](#) Thanks Robin. I must say that I'm always really nervous when the mic is turned towards me, so we will see how this goes. But, uh, I'm really happy to be here and I love PCP, so I'm happy to share more of my story.

Robin: [00:01:59](#) So a lot of our Project Zion listeners know that Brittany is one of our primary host on PZP. She's also the project manager. So she has had a big presence in Project Zion since the beginning and normally is hosting interviews. So I really appreciate her willingness to do this for us today. Brittany, today I want to invite you to tell your story from the beginning in chapters. So I know that you have shared this story before, but it was years ago when you were still relatively new in your transition into Community of Christ and we're interested to hear that story from a new perspective that gives you a little bit of distance. So as I invite you to do that in chapters, let's start with birth and take us through your high school years.

Brittany: [00:03:00](#) Okay. So, yes, I have shared quite a bit of this story before in little bits and pieces here and there as I've interviewed people and then in a few podcasts that are related to my faith transition story. But I do think that I have given my life a fair bit of reflection and thought and I've really tried to figure out exactly how I wound up in the place that I am today. And I feel like with a little bit of time I've been able to grow a greater understanding and a different perspective. So that's what I hope

to share today. So basically, uh, I was born and raised in Provo, Utah. This was 1988 so that meant that in the 80s in Utah, specifically Provo, there were a lot of large families. Everyone around me pretty much had 4 or 10 brothers and sisters.

Brittany:

[00:03:51](#)

So there were a lot of kids and the entire community, my entire community was LDS. Basically any meaningful relationship that I had was centered on the LDS church. So the congregation that I grew up in or the ward that I grew up in had a lot of children, had a lot of youth. I'm the fourth out of five kids, so my older siblings always had their Mormon friends around. My teachers at school were Mormon, my neighbors were Mormon. It was really the only thing that I ever knew. I remember going to Southern California to visit my grandparents. And that was one of the main family vacations that we went on, the main time that I would get out of Utah and just seeing people that were obviously not Mormon, it was really alarming for me. I mean, that's how insular my community was.

Brittany:

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Everyone looked like me, everyone sounded like me. And anytime that I was faced with something different, there was a lot of fear and there was a lot of just unknown because my world view was so small. So I had a small and steady group of friends all through elementary school and high school. I had a group of women, girls at the time who were all born within two weeks of myself. And so we were pretty tight in the ward and we did girls camp together and all the youth activities. And then I had my other small group of friends that were kind of my school friends. And again, we stayed with each other from early elementary school all the way through high school. So one interesting thing about my experience is my neighborhood was adjacent to a set of apartment buildings that were filled with young married BYU students.

Brittany:

[00:05:41](#)

And so these couples were in our ward and these couples were usually the ones that were assigned to teach the primary or the youth in in different capacities. So by the time I got to young women's, the youth program, a lot of my leaders were only to five years older than me. So I idolize them. I mean, these were people that were basically my older siblings ages and I felt like they had quote unquote made it as far as Mormon standards go. So they were generally from out-of-state. They'd come to BYU, they had found their spouses, they got married early, they started having children. Maybe they dropped out of school and were having children. And this is what I was surrounded by. This is what my own mom did. This is what my grandma did. You know, this was just what was ahead of me.

Brittany: [00:06:30](#) I really didn't have any concept of a life outside of motherhood and probably young motherhood. So my goal for college was to, uh, find a spouse, start having family, a family. And if I did get an education, then it would be something that I would quote unquote fall back on if something were to happen to my husband. Or if I needed to go to work for an emergency. But I had no career aspirations. I had no, I had no, I had no concept that that could even be a thing. I mean, I didn't even understand that there were people in the world, um, that didn't have, motherhood is their one and only primary goal. So there's an old children's hymn or primary song or a little girl is singing about how she wants to be a mother and it, I'm not going to sing it, but she basically says four little five little six little babies of my own.

Brittany: [00:07:25](#) And that's, that's the culture that I grew up in. And so I didn't really think anything outside of that because there were very rigid, strict gender roles and I saw that it had worked for other people, or I perceived that it was working for other people who were in my ward. And so that's just, that's just what I bought. I mean, hook, line and sinker for me, that was the gospel. So when I left for college, I really didn't have any direction or aspirations beyond just finding a spouse and getting my family that I wanted. And so all of my decisions, I feel like we're just kind of with that, um, expectation and goal and desire, just kind of as the undercurrent.

Robin: [00:08:12](#) That's a really interesting story. So you're born in 1988 Provo, Utah. And you do have a large family. Do you, are there five kids altogether?

Brittany: [00:08:22](#) Yeah, I'm one of five.

Robin: [00:08:24](#) Alrighty. And just a really dominant LDS culture that you grew up in. As I listened to you describe the young adult couples that lived in the apartment complex near your ward building, you talked about, um, dropping out to have kids. Would that refer primarily to the, to the women? Did the men continue to stay in college?

Brittany: [00:08:47](#) Yeah. So the men would have stayed in college and the women would have dropped out and then would have been seen as a support role for their husbands. And the expectation was that they would move if, you know, if the husband did graduate and found employment other places, the wife would just kind of follow along and continue to raise the family without much career aspiration for herself. So,

- Robin: [00:09:12](#) So you grew up and of course growing up in Provo as a unique culture within a culture, but you grew up seeing, as you say, perceiving this, um, gender role for women working out. Well, and not only do you have young families in your congregation that, that are post-college days, but you have the bridge population between high school. And, and the already established and career families living closely and also serving as young women's leaders and, and they made quite an impression on you.
- Brittany: [00:09:48](#) Yeah, and I, I mean, I will say that I was, I mean obviously it didn't work out for everyone. I mean, I'm sure that there were a lot of miserable people and there was divorce that I didn't see or marital problems that I didn't see. But from my perspective, every, it seemed to work the system, the plan seemed to work for everybody. And so I really didn't give it a second thought and that I just saw myself living into that. I remember being in young woman's and just getting so excited because I knew that one day I would be called as a young woman's leader and I just wanted to be like those who had nurtured me. And I mean, it did work. Like it, it, it brought me a lot of happiness. It brought me a lot of security. And so I didn't necessarily see it as a bad thing or a challenging thing because I just assumed that it would be smooth sailing.
- Robin: [00:10:42](#) Okay. So you're going to graduate from high school and you're bringing all of that with you. Now. We want to hear about college starting a family and just go ahead and take us right up through your story to the time before anyone in your family first connected with Community of Christ.
- Brittany: [00:11:00](#) Yeah, so because I grew up about a mile South of BYU, I never really wanted to go there. My older sister was at Utah state and that was about two and a half hours North of us. And so I applied to go to Utah state and I will say that I did make this a matter of prayer because again, I went to college to find a spouse. And so I believed that God was leading me through that and that it was a point of personal revelation to know where I was going to go. So I applied to Utah State and I got a small scholarship. And so from there it was just, I mean the decision was made. So it was really scary though because most of my friends stayed in Utah County. I had a lot of friends that did go to BYU or UVSC, it's now called UVU and a lot of them lived at home or they moved out together.
- Brittany: [00:11:54](#) And so there was a sense of jealousy because here were all these friends that I had and they were now living together or continuing to go to church together and experiencing college

together. And I was really the only one, there were people from my high school that went to Utah State, but no one that I was really, really close to in high school. So even though I had my sister there, she was four years older than me and she was engaged. And so here was my senior sister who had a fiance and then her little freshman sister moves in and um, she specifically moved into an apartment complex with me that kind of had a, uh, younger reputation. It wasn't dorms, but it was basically as close to dorms as you could get. It was really close to campus and just a, a younger crowd.

Brittany: [00:12:41](#) So she moved in there because she knew that I would be able to find a support system there because she knew she wouldn't be around much cause she was a senior, she was graduating, she had work, she had a fiance. So in a lot of ways I felt pretty lonely the first year or so. And I actually contemplated moving back down to Provo. And I ended up applying to UVSC or UVU because I just, it was just out of my Provo bubble and I was so homesick. Uh, and you know, Utah state is a primarily LDS population as well, but a lot of the professors are not. And so I started taking classes that challenged some of my views and realize that maybe I wasn't as politically conservative as I had once thought. And it was just this beginning of just a challenge to my naive little world.

Brittany: [00:13:38](#) But all the while I remained active in my singles ward. I held a calling. I did baptisms for the dead and the Logan temple. And I really just did the Mormon thing. And it was good for me because unlike students at BYU who were required to go to church, or they're required to go to different activities, um, I wasn't my church attendance and my church experience was completely on my own shoulders. I could have stopped going. I didn't have to stay engaged in the faith community. And yet I chose to because again, it was working for me and I knew that if I wanted to find a good spouse that could take me to the temple, that that's what I needed to do. And so that's what I continued to do. I did date pretty casually. I didn't necessarily have a boyfriend that first year because it was mostly just filled with school and work and church and trying to figure out how to live on my own.

Brittany: [00:14:36](#) So I ended up, I mentioned that I did apply to go to UVU the next year, but I kind of just had this random, I mean, I, at the time, Oh, well, I don't know, maybe it was divine intervention. I don't know. I just had this where it, yeah, I just felt like God was screaming to me, you need to get back up to Logan. And it just randomly happened. I'm kind of in the middle of my day and I ended up calling my old roommates that I lived with, with my

sister to see if they had room in their apartment for me. And sure enough they did. And so within a week of making that decision, I was moving back up to Logan and I moved next door to Josh, who is now my husband. So he had another roommate named Josh. And so he was called tall Josh because he's 6'5.

Brittany: [00:15:29](#) And we didn't start dating immediately, but I was pretty taken by him immediately. And he's, he's really quiet and that really intrigued me and we're very different people and I feel like he had this perspective that I had never considered just on a lot of different things. Um, and I've just really enjoyed our conversations and um, he just kind of became my best friend. And, uh, we eventually started dating really a few months after we met, which was pretty quick. And then we kind of dated on and off to various degrees of seriousness throughout the school year. It was really difficult though because when you are casually dating your next door neighbor and then he brings home other girls and you bring home other guys, there's just all sorts of raging jealousy that happens and it was happening on both ends. And um, we finally got to the point that we just decided to break up.

Brittany: [00:16:25](#) And it was more his decision to break up before the school year ended. And long story short, we ended up getting back together that summer and then we were engaged by the next September. So about a year after we met is when we got engaged. So we were married a few days before Christmas in the Mountain Timpanogos temple, which is in American Fork, Utah. And we continue to live up in Logan and attends you trust state. And I had several friends who got married around the same time and around all of our year anniversary, everybody started to get pregnant. And I felt a huge amount of pressure to start a family because we lived in a ward with a lot of young married families that were just like us. And again, I'd had this model of young woman's leaders who just immediately started getting pregnant and having babies. And so I just felt a lot of pressure to start a family.

Brittany: [00:17:25](#) Even though we were super poor, we are still in school and we really had no business having to baby, but that's what we were supposed to do. And I truly believe that delaying having children was selfish and it was not of God. And that if I wanted to follow the commandments and to fulfill my purpose in life, that I needed to start having a, so we got pregnant about a year after we got married. We did not expect to get pregnant with twins, but that is what happened. And it was incredibly overwhelming and we were so stupid and so naive and dirt poor and completely overwhelmed. And yet that was also part of the

story. You know, everyone had their story of being really young and poor and living off loans and there was kind of like an endearing, nostalgic feeling about that.

Brittany: [00:18:20](#) And so looking back, I think that I should have been panicking a lot more than I was, but since that was just kind of what everybody else did, there was just this sense that it would all work out and that we would be blessed because we were continuing with church and going to the temple and paying tithing and doing all the things. So we really had some pretty naive faith going on because we just assumed that it would all work out. One thing that I did not realize though is how difficult motherhood would be for me. So I didn't realize that this perception that I had was a fantasy and that maybe there was more going on behind the scenes with these young woman leaders than I had realized. And I did not expect that. So here I was 20, I guess I was 22 by the time I had my twins.

Brittany: [00:19:11](#) So pretty young. And when I tell that to people, especially people in Community of Christ, I usually get an audible gasp or reaction that I had twins at 22 and it was really, really difficult. And at the time I could kind of recognize it just as justifiable, overwhelmed because I had newborn twins. Uh, but I didn't know how to articulate anything about postpartum depression or feeling overwhelmed because again, if this was my whole purpose in life, it shouldn't cause me depression. It shouldn't make me sad. I shouldn't feel overwhelmed. This is what I was meant to do. And so I started feeling really guilty and really inadequate. And I also recognize that there were people around me that wanted babies that couldn't have them. I had a friend who had a pregnancy loss, a twin pregnancy loss, and we were due around the same time.

Brittany: [00:20:05](#) And so I had this really deep sense of survivor's guilt. And so then when I was completely overwhelmed with motherhood, then I felt that much more guilty. I felt like I wasn't worthy and what, what, what was I doing wrong to not enjoy this as much as I should've been. So I recognize now that I really just needed help and I just didn't know how to ask for it. Uh, I got a lot of attention for having twins. People are fascinated with twins and it's, it's odd because I would get questioned or get comments all the time of, Oh, I don't know how you do it. And yet I wasn't doing it and people couldn't recognize that and I didn't know how to articulate that. I needed help. So I was drowning and just feeling like all these life decisions that I had made to lead me up to this point.

Brittany: [00:20:54](#) Um, it was really hard for me to not feel resentful towards those decisions and resentful towards God because here I was doing everything right and yet life was really, really difficult and nobody was talking about it. You know, I had babies, young families all around me and yet everybody seemed to just be having this perfect life. Things like blogs and Pinterest and Instagram and Facebook were really starting to pick up. And so for the first time, young families I think were on the internet posting of all their fun adventures and you know, these picture perfect lives and no one had really articulated that maybe that's not reality for people, that maybe social media can be a highlight reel. Um, but I just felt like nothing that I was doing was good enough or worthy enough and I wasn't able to have this picture perfect life, even though people assumed that that's what was happening.

Brittany: [00:21:51](#) So I started to hate myself and resent my babies and I felt very selfish and very unworthy. And it was, it was really difficult. One thing that also compounded the complexity of it was that I jumped back into school two weeks after I had my twins. So I had had a C-section and uh, brought everybody came home four days after my C-section. And within about a week and a half I was registered for classes and was taking school online. So I was going part time. I think I was taking two classes at that point. Um, and I was staying up all night trying to do school and trying to take care of these babies and just push through it. And on some end that really complicated the situation. But on another aspect of that is that I think it kind of saved me, it gave me something to do it to get out of my head of motherhood and things like that.

Brittany: [00:22:53](#) But I also now see it as a huge red flag to what was really going on and like, why did no one stop me and say, you are insane. Like, what are you doing? Everyone just thought I was super woman, but I was really dying on the vine. So, uh, we survived somehow. And I think both Josh and I were just kind of waiting for these promise blessings to come because while all of this was going on with motherhood, Josh had graduated, he was looking for a job. He went to school for technical writing. So editing, but this was at the start of the recession and companies were laying off their editors and writers. And so there was really no work for Josh to do. And so here we were doing everything right. Uh, and the Mormon script just wasn't working out for us because Josh had been conditioned to believe that he was the provider for the home.

Brittany: [00:23:47](#) He was the presider everything financially and temporally, uh, all of our needs that way, it needed to be fulfilled by him. So he

was under enormous pressure, uh, having these two babies that neither of us were really ready for. And here he was now with this family of four, and he needed to keep a roof over our head. He needed food on the table, and he really, really struggled because he was very, very underemployed. I think he was, he would have to correct me, but I'm pretty sure he was making like eight, 15 hours or something when the twins were born and he was working part time, uh, he couldn't even find full time employment. So here we were sinking into debt and I was thinking into my own mental health and pits of motherhood and we were still just trying to do the Mormon thing and we were still paying tithing and we were still going to the temple and we were still fulfilling callings.

Brittany: [00:24:42](#) And um, it just felt like all the things that we were doing weren't actually bringing the blessings that we had been promised. And then when I would think of that, then I would feel guilty and selfish. And it was just this whole spiraling of, of just feeling inadequate, unworthy, and just stressed. So it was, it was a very difficult time. So as Josh was getting more and more stressed about money and we were just continuing to pay tithing and sink into debt, we, well, I guess he kind of, that's what started him on his faith transition. So he was starting to learn more about tithing and how it's presented in the LDS church. Uh, he really started deconstructing temple stuff and he shared his story before as well, but he basically made the connection of Freemasonry to the LDS endowment. And so he really tried to dig through that, um, all while studying tithing.

Brittany: [00:25:40](#) And then as he was going through all of his deconstruction and studying, I was starting to connect with various groups online that were supportive of women, different twin mom groups, different LDS mom groups. And I was introduced for the first time, uh, to women who the Mormon script wasn't working for. And that blew my mind that there were other women actually out there like me, that this did not come naturally to, that harbored a lot of resentment. That were starting to realize that man, we've now set ourselves up with no little to no education and now we've got these humans to take care of. And what if something goes wrong? And I guess that was probably my budding seeds of feminism, Mormon feminism that were starting to come out. And it was, it was difficult to reconcile and it was difficult to not feel resentment towards the church because they had shaped and formed so much of my life decisions.

Brittany: [00:26:36](#) And so when it wasn't working out it was easy for me, I guess to place blame on my upbringing. So from there, both Josh and I

took various steps of deconstructing our faith. And when I was very quiet about mine, I wasn't necessarily talking to Josh because I didn't really think that he would understand where I was coming from because he wasn't a Mormon woman. So this idea of motherhood not bringing me as much joy as I thought it was going to it was just not something that he really connected with. But Josh on the other hand, was really quick to share his side of his deconstruction with me. And so he would start talking about tithing and how he saw the church, the LDS church, not using their funds wisely. And you know, City Creek had just been built and all these things that were really, really a struggle for him.

Brittany: [00:27:28](#) He would openly share them with me. And I was devastated. I was angry because even though many aspects of the church weren't working for me, I still held onto the belief that if we continued faithfully, then it would all work out. And so I very, very distinctly remember the first time that he told me that he didn't think that the temple, the LDS temple was true or that it was of God. And I was so mad and I felt terrible about it now because here's like this most vulnerable part in our relationship. And he, um, he shared very openly and very honestly with me and I just shot it down. My girls, I think at the time were about 18 months and we were at what we call the pumpkin walk up in Logan and it's kinda this little fall festival. And he just brought it out of the blue.

Brittany: [00:28:20](#) And I was, I think now I can sense a lot of my anger was because number one, and I'd shared this before on the podcast, but I really had a hard time with the temple. It psychologically messed me up a lot. And a lot of it had to do with motherhood and just my role as a woman. And so, because I had worked so hard to make it work and I'd made so many decisions on the truthfulness of it and my belief in the truthfulness of it for Josh to just say, actually, I don't think it's a God anymore, it just felt like such a slap in the face, such a waste of all of these years and years and years of preparation and work. And it was scary because if Josh didn't believe in the temple and in eternal families, and more than what did that mean for me where we just throw ways and uh, you know, so it was, it was really difficult.

Brittany: [00:29:11](#) There was a lot of tears. I probably yelled. It was, it was really, really bad, but over the next couple of years we would have more conversations, uh, kind of the typical Mormon faith crisis and, uh, you know, just history questions, book of Mormon stuff, more feminist things for me, I was really following groups like feminist Mormon Housewives. Very closely and seeing this

energy start to swell within Mormon feminism. And I was thinking that there really could be a place for me because there were women, scholarly women, educated women that were challenging the status quo. And Josh, his faith in the LDS church was just slowly diminishing. But he remained active for me. And really that was what was keeping him going was just I think the fear that I would leave him or that our marriage would be over if he left. And so we were kind of in this limbo stage for a couple of years and it was difficult because again, people saw me as the hero and they saw me as the person with the inactive spouse.

Brittany:

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And the only reason why Josh would have been considered inactive because of his work schedule. He works a lot of Sundays. And so they saw me as this hero that was bringing these tiny twins to church by herself. And I was the one that was spiritually holding the family together. And there was a lot of patronizing praise, I guess, that I was getting. And people again had no idea that I was dying on the vine. And so long story short we ended up getting interested in Community of Christ because Josh had reached out to John Hamer, I think he had heard him on Infants on Thrones. And again, I was very much against it. I, I was going to stay LDS and I was going to be part of the change and the Ordain Women movement had gotten going and they were doing the actions on temple square, just asking to go to the priesthood session.

Brittany:

[00:31:16](#)

And I was not part of it, but I was following it very, very closely online thinking, see, look, the church is changing. We don't need to check off this new church. The change is happening in our own church right before our eyes. And I think we all know how that ended. They excommunicate ex-communicated Kate Kelly and uh, really just squashed the conversation. They wouldn't have a conversation actually with ordering women. And that was kind of what rattled me into the reality of our situation, I think. And by that point, Josh had started going to community of Christ. And again, I was still not supportive, but yeah, Kate Kelly's excommunications kind of what I want to say, knocked some sense into me, but that's terrible. But that's, that's what it feels like now. Just the reality that I do. I don't think the LDS church is going to change. And so that's what slowly opened me up to considering community of Christ as a viable option. So I'm this second chapter that you've described to us really covers a lot of ground of you and Josh entering marriages, faithful, true, believing Mormons. He was a returned missionary, which made one more gold star for him as far as being a desirable companion, a spouse in the Mormon faith.

Robin: [00:32:40](#) It's really fascinating to hear you talk about this sense of fantasy that you brought with you into this, uh, journey in college and then marriage and this fantasy meets reality. And in the midst of that, this naive faith that you describe as you continue to do all the things that good LDS members do, the birth of your girls, and then this key point where Josh reveals to you who's his new, uh, understanding of the temple that just clashes with everything at that point and, and how frightening that must have been for both of you. And then two years of kind of a limbo period where the faith crisis journey you each are on is slightly different for each of you and different things about history emerge. Uh, your introduction to feminism through feminist Mormon Housewives and then ordain women and you're bringing us right up to April of 2014. I think that was the second action at the temple square with ordain women. And it sounds like Josh is just hanging on by his fingernails and continuing to be active in the ward for your sake, for the sake of keeping the marriage together. Um, and it's about that time where everything hits the fan and Kate Kelly is excommunicated. So I think we're right up to like June, 2014 and I think that's a good place to start. Chapter three, Brittany. So you take it away and tell us what happened next.

Brittany: [00:34:36](#) All right. So like I said, Josh had been in communication with John Hamer and then you Robin, to find out what was going on with Community of Christ in Utah. And I had my son in March of 2014 and so I was kind of taking my unofficial maternity leave from church and I maybe extended it more than I would have, well for sure more than I extended it with the twins because I was just, I mean, I would come home every day just in tears. Because of what I was hearing in church, I just disagreed with so much of it.

Brittany: [00:35:15](#) And so Josh had been invited to reunion a family camp with Community of Christ. And somehow he convinced me to go. And I still remember him handing me the pamphlet, the little flyer that he had been given. And I was sitting on the couch looking at it, just thinking, I just don't even know if I have the energy to try to figure out another. And I could kind of see my Exodus from the LDS church, but I thought it would be a slow burn. And I just thought we would become nonreligious and fall into the spiritual but not religious camp. And I was starting to become more okay with that. And so he hands me this flyer and he was really excited about it. And I just thought, why not? I mean, maybe, maybe we can go to a little bit of it. And he had work.

- Brittany: [00:36:02](#) And so we were only able to catch, I think the last day and a half. But I somehow told him, sure. And he convinced me, even with a newborn baby and toddler twins. And so we decided to go and I can't remember if I had said yes before Kate Kelly's excommunication or after, but I went to church one more week after Kate Kelly's excommunication and it was excruciating. It was awful. Like I think I just cried the whole time and I was a primary teacher. I taught the seven year old kids and I had a teaching partner and luckily she was on rotation to teach that Sunday. And I think people probably just thought I was hormonal and sad because of my baby. I don't, I don't really know. I was just an absolute mess and Josh wasn't at church that Sunday cause he was at work. And I remember taking my girls out of the children's program out of primary because we were learning a song about the family and gender roles and it was basically the family proclamation put to music and suddenly my baby needed to nurse and I'm using air quotes because that really wasn't true and everyone needed to go to the bathroom.
- Brittany: [00:37:18](#) So I took all the kids and we just kind of wandered the hall and ended up on a couch somewhere. And I just remember sobbing. Ooh. And I had a church leader come up to me and say, and I, I don't mean to put him down with this, but, uh, he just kind of put his arm around me and just said, I find so much strength in your faith and you continue to bring your kids week after week after week, even without your husband. And I know how hard this is for you. And I'm just so proud of you. And I wanted to slap him. I was so mad because he had no clue. I mean, nobody, nobody had a clue. And any year I was doing everything that I thought that I was supposed to be doing. And I, I really was just waiting for it to work out.
- Brittany: [00:38:19](#) And I was waiting for somebody to just change how the church treated women. And I was waiting for the church to be someplace where I felt like I could raise my kids and it just didn't happen. And they had just excommunicated the woman who was trying to get the conversation started. And to me, that was just such a blow. And I realized that if I had the platform or if I had the bravery or if I had the following that Kate had, then I easily would've been excommunicated. I just thought if you really knew what I believed, if you really knew what I thought you would want me out of this congregation, you wouldn't, you wouldn't be proud of me. You would want me out. Um, you have the authority to actually kick me out. And so that was just, that was a turning point for me.
- Brittany: [00:39:11](#) And I went home and I knew at that point I knew that we were going to go camping with this random group of people up this

random Canyon. And I was so nervous about it. And but I just thought, look, this is, this is what we're going to do. Um, God, if there's something worth sticking around for, like, I need some sort of sign, I need, I need something. So we packed up the kids, we drove up Ogden Canyon and we went to reunion and I very, very specifically remember those first few moments. Um, Andy Feurnick who we've had on the podcast before, met us in the parking lot and Josh had met Andy a couple of times because they had been to church. And so, you know, Josh was excited. He was nervous and we made our way up the, the little camp and ended up meeting the Bryant family.

Brittany:

[00:40:07](#)

Seth and Jen, I am actually not sure if Seth was there because everyone was up having morning worship, but I know we met Jen and Lincoln and Danny and quickly found out that they were a former LDS family. So it was like, okay, you know, this is, this is safe. This somebody who under would, would understand us and know where we were coming from. And we just started chatting and then everybody came down. And I just remember being so overwhelmed because here's however many people were there coming down this little path. And we were just sitting at the picnic tables and I was scared out of my mind and I had my baby strapped to my chest and my girls were probably already running around and getting into trouble. And I was just so scared. I was so nervous. I was so just broken and I was very distrusting and I was, I was a wreck.

Brittany:

[00:40:59](#)

Um, I met you, Robin, and I think actually we had met briefly before, um, cause the salt Lake congregation had hosted a fireside with Kate Kelly. Kind of this evening chat with her. And so we had briefly met, um, but this was the first time that we actually got to sit down and talk and, um, instantly connected with you and you know, you had twins and, and so we had a lot to talk about. And Lach Mackay was the guest minister, which was perfect for us because so many of our questions and doubts were grounded in history. And so that was the first time that we had been able to openly talk about doubts with someone who had remained faithful, who acknowledged historical problems within the restoration. So before I was either running into really bitter, angry ex Mormons who just wanted to toss it all out the window, or I had been talking to very faithful latter day saints who were saying that the things that I was asking about were anti-Mormon lies.

Brittany:

[00:42:02](#)

So it was these two opposite extremes. And I never come in, come in contact with anyone who was able to find a middle way to acknowledge the issues in the churches, the collective churches, the restoration history and issues with the book of

Mormon and temple and just all the things, and yet still find value in the story and to still find value in a faith community. So that was really shocking to me. Uh, it was also shocking to me too, and this is gonna sound so silly, but to realize that the gospel had nothing to do with being a parent and nothing to do with becoming a mother and having babies for eternity and feeling like the only role that you have in life is to be a parent. So I had to completely figure out what the point of the gospel was because if there were no temple endowments, if ceilings weren't a thing, if this idea of eternal progression and exhaltation was not going to be something that I carried forward, then what was the point of church?

Brittany:

[00:43:09](#)

And that was something that was completely new and exciting to figure out. And so learning more of the stories of Jesus and figuring out that that the gospel could be a radical vehicle for peace and inclusion and, um, societal reformation. I mean, just this idea that it had nothing to do with parenting was just so revolutionary for me. And I was intrigued enough to want to learn more. So in the day and a half I had been introduced to all these ideas and just recognizing that my perception of the gospel was not everyone's perception of the gospel. And I think Jen Bryant was really instrumental into that as well because she and I talked about how she too was brought up to believe that she was only worth being a mother. And so for her to go through and actually figure out what else could the gospel be about. We had some really good conversations.

Brittany:

[00:44:07](#)

So reunion ended, I think just on that Saturday. And then I decided that I was going to take my kids up to the Salt Lake congregation and just see what it was about because I enjoyed my day and a half with the congregation so much and I just wanted more. And, and I think that just being heard was so important for me because again, all of my doubts and frustrations and points of pain had just been so dismissed. And so then to just be able to sit and word vomit on all of you guys and just have that affirmation that it was okay to ask questions and it was, it was okay to have doubts and that it didn't make me unworthy and that actually faith and doubt were intertwined very intimately and that I didn't have to just keep shelving my doubts and that I could face them and work through them and talk with them and sit with them and that it was okay.

Brittany:

[00:45:06](#)

So again, that intrigued me enough to want to find out more and just to see what a day in the congregation would be like. And I loved it. It was small, it was quirky. It was filled with people like me, whether they were lifelong Community of Christ

people or Latter-day Seekers and I recognize that being in Salt Lake, I'm, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by a lot of people like me. And so Josh came home from work that day and I just said, I think this is it. I don't think after experiencing that, I don't think I can go back to our LDS ward at least for a while because it was the first time in years that I'd actually had a positive church experience. So we ended up writing an email to our Bishopric, our church leadership, and we said, we're not leaving the church.

Brittany: [00:45:58](#) We're not, don't, we're not asking for our names to be removed or anything like that, but we are going to check out this new community, this new church. We understand that this is a big deal. We don't want to end friendships over this, we might return. We don't know, but we just need to follow where God is leading us. And, um, it was difficult. We relationships changed. Family was absolutely devastated when they found out there was a lot of, a lot of really, really difficult conversations. Uh, we were actually pretty quiet to family about it for a while, for months and months and months. They didn't even know that we enjoined once once that happened because it was just, we knew how devastating it would be to everyone. And so we really tried to frame things from a positive perspective. We really tried to not argue religion.

Brittany: [00:46:49](#) And I think people that were closest to me blamed Josh and people that were closest to Josh blamed me. And so we did get a little defensive, um, because there was just a lot of misunderstanding. So just really, really, really difficult conversations. But it was worth it. And I could finally see my place in a faith community that valued me aside from being a parent and aside from being a woman, um, that I wasn't pigeonholed into one box or one vein of ministry. And that I wasn't, that I, that I didn't have these expectations of what I should believe, how I should believe, how I should act. I didn't need to support my husband in the same way that I could actually be my own person outside of my relationships with others and that I could use my mind and that I could speak up and that I could have a voice.

Brittany: [00:47:45](#) And, um, if I, if there was something that I wanted to get started in the congregation, then there were ways to do that and I could get involved to the level that I was comfortable with. And so that was, that was really intriguing for me. And even though I think I said that when I started attending Community of Christ, I really still kind of thought that it would just be a step on the journey and that maybe we would kind of deconstruct there and then just wean ourselves off and then just become spiritual

but not religious. And the more though that I saw how the community worked and the more that I got connected with people outside of my congregation, and the more that I heard from people who grew up in the church and I saw that they were well balanced, functioning, faithful people that were still able to use their brain and they didn't have to turn off their brain when they sat in the pews.

Brittany: [00:48:42](#) And that things like science and faith and doubt and reality and history could all be wrestled with. Um, that just intrigued me enough. And it, it gave me a vision of a place where I could see my family and know that my kids, no matter who they ended up loving, no matter what they wanted to do in life, no matter the level of their activity, they could still know that they were unconditionally loved and that they would be accepted by a community. And so, because I think because I had grown up in Utah and church had been my entire existence, I felt really guilty pulling my kids from that. And I knew that I was going to make them into a minority living in Utah. And so I really, really wanted there to be something, some community, some framework of values and ways to talk about God.

Brittany: [00:49:35](#) And I just didn't feel like I could provide that for them by myself. And so I really wanted them to have that. And again, in Community of Christ, I could see that my theology could evolve, my faith could evolve, my beliefs, all those things could still evolve and change. And I would never be pegged as an apostate. And my kids would just be loved and accepted for who they are. So we felt pretty hard, pretty fast. And like Robin mentioned, we got baptized and confirmed the following January, so it was about six months I think from our initial contact to when we joined. Uh, and then we were both, my husband and I were presented with priesthood calls to the office of priest the following August. And that really rocked my world too because although I was championing women's ordination and although I was really that you could have a voice and you could get involved with ministry, it was still something that I hadn't necessarily given myself permission to do or to get excited about.

Brittany: [00:50:36](#) And there were all these voices in the back of my head and I felt like, and another Latter-day Seekers have said this on Project Zion before, but I felt like I would be proving everyone right if I got ordained because the assumption was, Oh, Brittany was just mad because they don't ordain women in the Mormon church. And so there she goes. She just went to a new church and got ordained within the first year. And I just, I didn't want to prove that assumption. Right. And so I had a lot of insecurities, um,

with that ordination and uh, but I was able to work through them mostly, but it took a while. I mean, and sometimes now I'm like, man, I probably said yes too fast to that call. Um, but it, it ended up working out. There were some bumps in the road and there still are.

Brittany: [00:51:21](#) I mean, it's, it's difficult to go from being very much a second class citizen in a, in a group, in a society to then being seen as a leader. And I mean, I feel like it happened overnight for me. And so that's been something that I've struggled with, but I'm growing into it, which is good news. But yeah, we just continue to get more and more involved and our kids, that's really all of our kids have ever known. I mean, my son again, was three months old when we found Community of Christ. My daughters were three years old, so they remember tiny things about the LDS church. We've gone back to our old building before for birthday parties or just one or two events in the last five years. And they're like, Oh yeah, we kind of do remember going to this church, but really they don't know anything about the LDS church.

Brittany: [00:52:11](#) They, uh, they don't have Community of Christ really all I've ever known. And so that was really important to me. And I think one of my driving forces to make the decisions that I did so quickly because I already saw the songs they were singing, the things they were learning and I just did not want it to impact them in any way, shape or form. And so I felt that we really needed to make a decision. And so yeah, it's just, it's been good. And, uh, my kids love Community of Christ. They've been to World Conference now twice and they talk about conference kids all the time. It's at least a weekly conversation at my house, if not daily. So they have friends in community of Christ all over the country and really all over the world that they met through World Conference. And so if I'm scrolling through Facebook, they'll see people that they recognize and they get really excited. So I feel like my whole goal of having a community where my kids could be loved and supported has really come to fruition and I, I just know that whoever they end up being, it'll be okay and that they'll always have a community that accepts them and loves them. And for me that was, that was one of my name goals with my faith transition.

Robin: [00:53:27](#) So a few other things happened. Um, during that time, uh, you enrolled in Community of Christ seminary and that, I think you started that in 2016 and you were called to the office of elder on, it hasn't been a year yet, has it?

Brittany: [00:53:46](#) I think are just at a year.

Robin: [00:53:49](#) Okay. Um, you served on the pastor leadership team of the congregation, I think starting in 20, the fall of 2015 maybe at least 2016. Do you remember when you started doing that?

Brittany: [00:54:06](#) I think Seth approached me that fall, but then I officially started that next January. And I think that all the things that you just mentioned again were kind of part of my, it's been hard for me to go from being a Mormon woman to suddenly leader in Community of Christ overnight. One of the main reasons why I wanted to go to Community of Christ seminary was again, to detach the gospel of Jesus Christ apart from the very Mormon distinctives that had impacted me so negatively. So I was, I really needed to figure out who Jesus was, what the Bible was, and be able to not only know for myself, but then to be able to articulate that for other people. Because again, the gospel was all about gender roles and it was all about marriage and it was all about family. And so I really, really, really wanted to be able to articulate what the gospel could mean outside of all of that.

Brittany: [00:55:05](#) And another reason is because I wanted to actually hear the story of Community of Christ and study the story of Community of Christ in a very intentional way. So even now, I still am dumbfounded how we all started together with the same restoration story and how the two churches are so vastly different. And I had done a really, I mean I had done a fair amount of study on my own, but I really wanted to take those history, scripture and theology classes that were grounded in Community of Christ to again, just be able to articulate the story and the journey of Community of Christ because I'm pretty convinced that the story that the church took is very similar to the plight the individual Mormons, ex-Mormons, or Latter-day Seekers take. And so making all those connecting dots was really, really important for me. And yes, in the midst of all that, I was called to the office of elder, so it has been a wild ride and I feel like as soon as I say yes to something, something else comes along. I did not expect to be employed by the church. I did not go to seminary seeking any sort of position with the church at all. And that was another thing that was difficult for me to apply and difficult for me to accept for a wide variety of reasons. But yeah, I dunno. I just keep saying yes and it keeps getting more and more exciting.

Robin: [00:56:34](#) It's been a wild ride for sure. I think one of the things I really appreciate about your story today is it helps us all understand that faith transitions are really difficult and there's almost always a period of theological deconstruction and reconstruction and those things just don't happen overnight. It takes time in, in some cases, it takes time to get to know who

we really are as a person. Um, and, uh, for women, I think that can be a different journey than it is for a male in today's world of discovering our authentic self as we come out of, of patriarchy, depending on how extreme that patriarchy has been in our formative years. And as we carefully deconstruct our, our sense of the nature of God, our theology, um, discovering how we're going to put the pieces back together again and what that looks like. It just takes time.

Robin:

[00:57:48](#)

I really appreciate your willingness to go on this wild adventure with seminary which is no easy task. It's a very rigorous academic curriculum, but also offered the opportunity to be in dialogue with other people doing a similar thing regardless of whether they came out of the LDS faith or a long time Community of Christ folks who are intentionally looking at their own theological constructs and sometimes, you know, a second hand faith, so to speak. And then encountering the, the history of the church, the history of the Christian tradition at large and Oh my, what a wild journey that is. But how rich and rewarding. Alright Brittany. So in this journey of discovering yourself and a new understanding of the gospel, you've been on this journey for a while now. Um, especially compared to when you first told your story of faith tradition, you have certainly been in the thick of helping other seekers, new seekers, seekers all over the world, um, seekers of different stripes even that come to Community of Christ from different religious backgrounds. Primarily you've walked with folks we call that Latter-day Seekers and at this on the journey of as you have opportunity to kind of pause and reflect on your story, your personal story. What are some of the things that you would want to share that could help others or key points on the journey that have made a huge difference for you as you work through all the different dimensions of what a faith transition means?

Brittany:

[00:59:49](#)

One of the things that I think has been most helpful is giving myself permission to trust myself. I think that when latter day seekers encounter Community of Christ, they, we have all been told that you have a spiritual authority, that you can only be found worthy of having God's spirit if you are living your life according to a very rigid set of rules. And that perception really creates a complicated relationship with yourself. I don't know if I've met a Latter-day Seeker that does not have a complicated relationship with themselves because they are never given permission to trust themselves and to become your own spiritual authority. And so that was probably the biggest thing for me in my transition that I did not, I didn't put my decision making in the hands of anyone else's and I didn't have to worry

about my spouses faith transition anymore because I trusted him to make his own decisions.

Brittany: [01:00:57](#) And I think for me, that was kind of the catalyst of being able to theologially deconstruct things and reconstruct them because if I knew that I was always worthy of making my own decisions with God's help and that no matter how much I doubted that God would never leave me in those doubts and that God was with me in that period of deconstructing and reconstructing, then I would be okay. So knowing that I was in charge of my own spiritual destiny was huge, and knowing that God was okay with that was huge. I also think one thing that really helped me was just knowing how much impact it would be to have a voice in my community of faith. I didn't, I don't think I really realized how much I was missing from not having a say in where the money went that my congregation was bringing in or worship planning.

Brittany: [01:01:56](#) I mean that's been huge for me and just things that I felt like a lot of Community of Christ folks probably take for granted. But there are things that are completely off limits to your average Mormon person. And so just really being able to form and shape your community in a way that makes church work for you was really, really important. And giving myself permission to be excited that I'm not thinking that I was selfish or lobbying for a certain call or position or whatever because I did get excited about worship planning and planning activities and just being involved in the congregation, uh, was, was really transformable. I think another thing when we talk about theology is just the reality that there are more than one way to look at all the things, a scripture sin, church history, even the identity and mission of Jesus.

Brittany: [01:02:52](#) And for a while and still every once in awhile I will encounter a word or a phrase or a scripture or a point of doctrine and my Mormon gears will come on because I was taught that everything only had one interpretation, one answer, one way to look at things. And so I'll get angry because I'll be triggered by something. But then I have to stop and think, okay, not everyone is looking at the scripture that way or sin is not talked about in the same way. Or just because we are mentioning Joseph Smith's name does not mean that we worship him or you know, just all these things that uh, I've just found can be triggering. There really is another way to look at it. And there are multiple ways to look at it. It's not just two sides of one coin and there's a whole spectrum of theology surrounding Jesus and scripture and salvation is another really big one.

- Brittany: [01:03:51](#) And that it's kind of fun to go through and just figure out where your beliefs lie in this, see a variety and diversity and then knowing that it's okay to change. My beliefs are very different than they were when I first came to Community of Christ. And yet I was perfectly fine before and I'm perfectly fine now. And I hope that my beliefs are different in five years and in 10 years. And I hope that I'm just continuing to challenge myself and my perceptions of reality and just becoming more expansive and selfless in my theology.
- Robin: [01:04:28](#) I love the words you're using a work in progress and in a sense, embracing your worthiness and letting go of guilt, giving yourself permission to just embrace life knowing that we're all imperfect. I love that and it's so hard to do for many of us. That's a very hard thing to do. But how liberating, it certainly sounds liberating in your story. You've mentioned meeting lifelong Community of Christ members. We have few of those in Utah where you have come to know the church and journeyed with the church. I know it's been an important thing for you as you've traveled about the church and also online as you meet lifelong Community of Christ members. What does this group of people need to hear as Community of Christ endeavors to welcome and walk with Latter-day Seekers?
- Brittany: [01:05:18](#) So those are the question that I thought a lot about. And the reality is that in my full time position with the church, I do work with a lot of lifelong Community of Christ, people helping them connect with seekers and resources and things like that. And so I have a couple things in mind. Uh, one of the most important things to remember is that Latter-day Seekers are coming with a lot of trauma, trauma and baggage. And it is a very sensitive ministry. People do not leave the LDS church because they feel welcomed and loved and supported. In the LDS church, there's a huge loss of community, of worldview, of groundedness, of, of security. And sometimes that security is financial, emotional. Um, there's a huge, huge, huge loss.
- Brittany: [01:06:24](#) And so sometimes I think it's when you have a Latter-day Seeker come into your congregation, it can be seen as a really exciting thing. And I know that I've encountered some folks who get really, really excited about mine and Josh's journey. And it's not that I want to be a Debbie Downer all the time, but sometimes the reality of the loss that it took to get the Latter-day Seeker to come through your doors is maybe downplayed or missed. And so just keep in mind that Latter-day Seekers have usually been through a lot and they're usually very distrusting of religion and of authority and of things that look like the LDS church. And it's kind of interesting because sometimes I have found that Latter-

day Seekers find Community of Christ, quote too Mormon, which I know would make Community of Christ people wince.

Brittany:

[01:07:19](#)

But when they see things like the Doctrine and Covenants or the Book of Mormon, it just can, can be triggering. But then sometimes Latter-day Seekers don't find Community of Christ Mormon enough. And so we're kind of in this weird space where we're not going to be a good fit for everyone. And Latter-day Seekers don't want to change Community of Christ and we shouldn't feel like we have to change for Latter-day Seekers. So sometimes I feel like people want to know what we can do to quote unquote attract Latter-day Seekers. And that's not what it's about because we will not be a good fit for everyone and we don't need to change who we are to attract Latter-day Seekers. If they come and if they stay then then it's good. But if they come and they know even for a Sunday morning that they are worthy and loved, and if they leave and find a home somewhere else, then just know that it's not anything that you did wrong necessarily. It just, it just wasn't a good fit. And so that's something that I want lifelong Community of Christ people to know is that that we are good enough as we are and that our message has relevance. But then understand that latter day seekers are coming in with a lot of trauma and we might be what they're looking for and we might not be what they're looking for. And it's okay. It's not anything that's wrong with us. It just might not be a good fit.

Robin:

[01:08:52](#)

It sounds like hospitality and more welcome. Being aware that folks are coming in as you say, with trauma and baggage and, and often extreme sense of loss. Being our true selves and community of Christ and loving people the way God has loved us is, is a really big deal. It sounds like to me. Brittany, how do you think your journey and the journey of other latter day seekers might connect with other spiritual refugees in your generation? You've talked about spiritual but not religious where, where some people call themselves the nuns or maybe society has labeled them the nones simply because on surveys or questionnaires that ask our religious affiliation, we have a growing number of people who check the box. None. How might the journey of Latter-day seekers connect with these folks?

Brittany:

[01:09:58](#)

So I think like I kind of mentioned that there is a deep sense of institutional mistrust. People are waking up everywhere to the reality that they can trust themselves and that they can forge their own spiritual path. And when I think of the plight of an average Latter-day Seeker, I think that that is something that they are discovering and understanding. I think a lot of what we

call the nuns or the spiritual but not religious. A lot of them from my perspective are post evangelicals or post some sort of more rigid literalistic faith community. And I have found the very, very strong parallels to the plight of an ex-evangelical to the plight of a Latter-day Seeker. I'm in a couple of posts, evangelical parenting groups on Facebook and their stories, their family interactions, their faith deconstructions are almost identical to mine. And so I think that we are all connected on that level of where we have been hurt by an institution and we're trying to build spirituality on our own terms.

Brittany: [01:11:13](#) I do think that people still need community. And we've talked about this before on Project Zion and a lot of different nuns are finding community in other ways, but I do think that spiritual communities will continue to have relevance. And again, the underlining mistrust of institutional religion, uh, is, is very similar. And I think that when we can come together and recognize that, that there are places where we can actually form and help shape the institutional church. That's kind of a happy medium. So I always talk up World Conference and my experiences in my two time's going and especially in 2016 with canonizing Section 165 and seeing people openly oppose it, seeing people debate it, seeing people ultimately accept it as scripture. Those are kind of the stories that I try to bridge that gap between spiritual but non, non religious and those who are still looking for a spiritual home.

Brittany: [01:12:21](#) Because I think when people can take ownership of their community, they're more likely to find fulfillment in it. And so I think the Community of Christ, we have all the dots. We have all the dominos. We have all the puzzle pieces there and we do a pretty good job at creating a community where voices are heard and people do have, have that, um, say in what their community looks like. So yeah, I think that there's a lot of ways that Latter-day Seekers are connected with the spiritual but not religious crowd. And again, maybe that's why not all latter day seekers stick with the congregation that they visit. But at the same time, I do think that we have a lot to offer that other faith communities or non faith communities have to offer. And so those are kind of the things that I try to lift up when I'm sharing with Latter-day seekers.

Robin: [01:13:13](#) Brittany, what are your hopes for Community of Christ as you reflect on your journey to now as you embrace Community of Christ as your people, um, your faith community and do you invest your life in that journey and participate fully in the community, shaping and forming our institutional organization? What are the hopes of your heart?

Brittany: [01:13:42](#) So I think one unique thing about both my volunteer and employed ministry is that I'm in situations where I see church growth. I get contacted by people regularly, literally every single week asking me about Community of Christ or sharing that they just visited a congregation or saying that they are going to go to a congregation or I'm connecting people with ministers in their areas. I see baptisms and confirmations happening over the place. I see new ordinations. I really have a ministry that provides me with a perspective that the church is growing. And I understand that that's not everyone's perspective. However, I wish, and I hope that Community of Christ would be able to hear these stories of growth and have transformed lives and that they would be proud of what we have. And I know Robin, I've shared this with you before, but there are so many times where I just want to, I mean, if, if Community of Christ was something that I could just take hold and like shake and say, do you know how good we are?

Brittany: [01:14:50](#) I mean, we are. And I truly think that Community of Christ is certainly the Restorations, best kept secret, but one of Christianity's best kept secret. And the way that we've been able to take some of our founding principles and points of theology and values and have brought that in and have continued to make it relevant in the 21st century. I see the impact that that has on people. I see what happens when people walk into congregations like a deer in the headlights like I was, and I see them start to put the story of our church together and it changes their lives and so many lifelong Community of Christ people, not that they take it for granted, but I mean in the words of a lot of lifelong Community of Christ people, they take it for granted. And so being able to actually see the hard, hard decades of deconstruction that the church took.

Brittany: [01:15:49](#) And I recognize the huge loss. I mean, one of my things in seminary, and I think I've shared this on PZP before, but I went and read through a lot of minutes from world conference, especially in 1984 and even before that. And I've just, I've read the debates and I've read the heartache and just knowing that that was not all done for nothing and that this journey that we've struggled through together, I just helped that Community of Christ really realizes how meaningful that is and how, I don't think another denomination has done that to the same degree and has transformed ourselves into this, this community that I truly believe that God has called us into. And so my main hope for Community of Christ, I guess is just that we would finally recognize consistently because I do think we have moments where we realize that we're good, but I want us to consistently

believe it and to take that and have that be our driving force of mission. Because I think that we might just need a little confidence boost. And so I hope that through sharing stories of transformation that that can start happening.

Robin: [01:17:10](#) You've given us quite a window into your story and how you experience Community of Christ in your hopes going forward. Brittany, is there anything else that you would like to share as we draw to a close that I haven't asked you about?

Brittany: [01:17:21](#) You know, I was also thinking about this too and I, I just kind of going off of what I was just talking about, I really find so much hope in, in our values and in our enduring principles and in our theology and maybe people spiritual but non-religious or Latter-day Seekers or whoever, people who have walked away from Community of Christ. Um, maybe they aren't speaking the exact same words that we're speaking, but whenever I talk to people, our values are the same people who might not necessarily be with us today. They still find great, great value and meaning in the words that we have canonized and in the words that we have put together in our enduring principles and our mission initiatives. And I don't think that we need to, I know there's a lot of talk about you know, how to make our message relevant in the 21st century and what can we do to grow our congregations and things like that. And there's a lot of different ideas being thrown out there, but I, I guess I would just hope that we would remember that what we have is good enough that we have all the pieces here and that our message is just as relevant today as it was in the 90s the 80 the reorganization and beyond. And um, that we don't need to change who we are, that just who we are showing up in just our true selves and in our ministry that is grounded in peace and reconciliation that, that that's enough.

Robin: [01:18:58](#) Thank you so much for being with us today, Brittany. Thank you for being willing to take a turn on the other side of the microphone. It's been a wonderful time sharing together and I know that your story will touch many, many lives and of course a very special thanks to all of our listeners. If you would like to learn more about Brittany's journey, check out the links in the description, in the show notes, and you can always email Brittany directly at Bmangelson@cofchrist.org. That's B M A N G E L S O N@cofchrist.org to hear more stories about faith transitions, look for fair trade in the categories drop down list on our website. This is your host Robin Linkhart and you are listening to Project Zion podcast. Go out and make the world a better place. Take good care. Bye bye.

Speaker 1: [01:20:04](#) [inaudible].

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Speaker 1: [01:21:02](#) [inaudible].