

Speaker 1:	00:15	[inaudible].
Speaker 2:	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.
Carla Long:	00:33	Hello and welcome to the project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long and I am super duper duper excited to introduce our guest today. His name is Steve Veazey and he is the president prophet of Community of Christ. Steve, thank you so much for finding time in your busy schedule to chat with us.
Steve Veazey :	00:54	Well, thank you for the invitation and I'm really happy to have the opportunity to share.
Carla Long:	01:00	So Steve, just in case a listener has no idea who you are, tell us a little bit about yourself.
Steve Veazey :	01:07	Well, in terms of my background, I'm originally from Tennessee, a little town called Paris, Tennessee where I grew up including being shaped in the Community of Christ church throughout my life. I graduated from the university of Tennessee with a degree in natural resources management and then I finished a master's degree, a master of arts in religion. My wife's name's Cathy and we have three children all grown, a daughter Bree and a son, Brady and a son, Bryce. Currently we live in Independence, Missouri.
Carla Long:	01:59	And you don't have any grandchildren you're super proud of or anything like that?
Steve Veazey :	02:04	Well, I wasn't sure we had time to get into the grandchildren. We have five grandchildren, a granddaughter who's 10 years old and then four boys who range from a eight to one year old.
Carla Long:	02:24	Oh, so it keeps you pretty busy. It sounds like they all keep you pretty busy.
Steve Veazey :	02:29	It's, it's wonderful activity. You get kind of get to live your childhood one more time with the grandkids. So that's a lot of fun. Just this morning, just this morning, I was over cheering my granddaughter on in a 5K race over in Kansas city. She's in a group called Girls on The Run and she did really well.
Carla Long:	02:54	Your 10 year old granddaughter ran a five K. I am really impressed. That's awesome. Oh, good for her. So Steve,

New Speaker:	03:05	Oh, go ahead. I was just going to say, I'm sorry to interrupt that, I thought about running with her, but I didn't want to slow her down.
Carla Long:	03:13	[laughter] Do you like to run?
New Speaker:	03:17	Uh, um, like? I exercise on a recumbent bike.
Carla Long:	03:26	I actually do too. So we have in common and I didn't mean to use the strong wordage of like, that's a tough, I know it's very strong. Um, there's a, there's a few questions before we jump into our podcast about the Enduring Principles Steve, I really want to, I've, I've heard a few things and I really want to see if they're true or false from you. Okay. So one thing that I've heard is that you would really prefer it if people called you Steve-O rather than just Steve. Is that true or false?
New Speaker:	03:56	People do call me that along with other things, but Steve is just okay.
Carla Long:	04:04	Steve is just fine. So, so that was fake news. That's what you're telling me. Fake news. Got it. The other thing that I've only heard maybe in my own brain, um, is that I, I have heard that you want the motto of your time as President Prophet of the Community, Christ to be, it ain't easy being Veazey. Is that true or false?
Steve Veazey :	04:28	I like it. And it's true as a statement I think, but I don't think that would be my motto.
Carla Long:	04:37	Oh, okay. Well, I'm pretty sure I just made it up anyway. I think it's a good one too. In fact, I am very proud of myself. I actually wrote a hymn for the new hymn book that came out, you know, six years ago and I, there's a many, many things that rhymes with Veazey that I had in my him and it did not make the cut.
Steve Veazey :	04:56	Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.
Carla Long:	04:58	Yeah. Sometime I'm going to have to send that to you. So, I mean Veazey cheesy, all lots of things rhyme,
Steve Veazey :	05:05	All of my life. It's been demonstrated to me how many words rhyme with Veazey.
Carla Long:	05:13	I'm so sorry. Long does not make life easy for me either. I understand.

Steve Veazey : [05:17](#)

Sure.

Carla Long: [05:19](#)

So listeners, if you're still with us today, we're going to be talking about our beloved Enduring Principles. And I say beloved because they really, really are. I know that in the Salt Lake city congregation, we talk about our enduring principles all the time. It's so important for people to know what values we stand on because it's, in many cases, it's very different than the values from the churches that they have come from. And when new people come into the Salt Lake city congregation and I'm chatting with them after the service or whatever, I always pull out the pamphlet with the Enduring Principles on because for them it's such a departure and it just, it just shows where we've come to as a church. And so what I think would be really interesting and what I'm actually one of our editors on the projects I am podcast, he said that it's a really interesting story about how the Enduring Principles came about in Community of Christ. Um, so I want to Steve to talk a little bit about that and hopefully that will come out in our, in our podcast. But, so yeah, maybe we should start there. So where did the Enduring Principles come from exactly?

Steve Veazey : [06:29](#)

Well, it's a, it's a very interesting story. The short answer is that after I was ordained as president of the church, we started seeking for ways to bring together a more culturally diverse group of leaders from around the world to discuss and try to come to some sense of direction about important issues facing the church in terms of different questions that we needed to be thinking about and responding to. Um, and as we began to do that we discovered that we didn't necessarily share the same language. And I'm not talking about the language we speak, I'm talking about the way we understand the nature of the church and its mission. We were having a tendency to use different phrases and words for what might be very similar concepts, but it was causing confusion as we were trying to dialogue around important issues.

Steve Veazey : [07:58](#)

And so we paused and the presidency began to lead a process with the same group. It was about 75 to 80 people from around the world that we convened several times a year. And we decided to step back and explore what is it that is most foundational and most enduring in terms of who we are as Community of Christ and how we understand our identity and, and calling in the world. And that was a process that lasted almost two years as we had those kinds of in depth discussions and finally came to a high degree of around the statements that are now called the Enduring Principles of the church.

- Carla Long: [09:04](#) Well, I know I was part of, of some of those conversations and I found them just, just really interesting, really enthralling just to hear what different people from around the world had to say about these because I mean, we all come from different places. Like you said, the language is completely different. Um, some words that we use in English don't even exist in other languages and vice versa. So it was not an easy process and I actually really appreciate the fact that we took two good years to do it.
- Steve Veazey : [09:36](#) Yeah, I think the willingness to pause and do that kind of in depth work to discover terms that we shared some mutual understanding regarding has been a tremendous help going forward is we've been faced with various issues that required careful thought and trying to find direction that could be embraced by the worldwide church. I think the work on the Enduring Principles has become so foundational to everything that's followed.
- Carla Long: [10:20](#) I completely agree. I do know, however, speaking of that language issue, I remember hearing someone, I think it was in Japan, that the word enduring is a difficult word and it means basically like something you have to like carry on your back and like endure the through the pain. And so that didn't really work out well for the Japanese, the Enduring Principles.
- Steve Veazey : [10:41](#) And, and we always said that there could be some flexibility and, and you know, and how we talked about what this set of statements was recognizing those language challenges. But yeah, I heard that story too. And it was, the word was more like what you have to put up with than something of a universal nature. So even that situation demonstrated to us how difficult it is to find a commonality and consensus throughout the worldwide church.
- Carla Long: [11:25](#) When was it that we kind of recognize the need for something like the enduring principles? Where were we at as a church?
- Steve Veazey : [11:32](#) Well it actually has quite a long history in terms of individuals attempting to articulate for the church what we would call Enduring Principles today previously say in the 1970s and 1980s, similar concepts were referred to as enduring concepts of the restoration or a distinctives of the church and in The Herald, if you go back and look in the, in the churches publication, the Saint Herald during that time and following decades, you'll see different expressions with some similarities between them as individuals attempted to clarify and articulate for the church. And of course that parallels the time when the church was expanding so dramatically internationally and we were trying to

discern in our own community what is it that binds us all together, even though it may be expressed in different ways and with different words and behaviors. What is it that's really at the heart of our DNA?

Steve Veazey : [13:02](#)

But you know, I recall a major article that was written back in April of 1980 by former apostle JC Stuart. He entitled it Enduring Concepts of The Restoration. And as you look at his list and descriptions, you, you find some very similar threads of the concepts and phrases we now called enduring principles. I was in a group called the Africa Leaders Conference, um, one year. And that group attempted to within about a week's period of time, didn't have much time, but they attempted to identify what they thought was foundational and, and that group called them core values of the church and others have referred to them as core values of the church. But as we looked at the results of our process, um, we thought the term enduring principles really communicated best these statements, which should be apparent and continuing across decades across era's they, they should be apparent and who we are and what we're doing, no matter what words we're using or, or how we're expressing it. So even though there were a few language difficulties, we agreed that the word Enduring Principles was most universally understood throughout the church in terms of what those statements are.

Carla Long: [14:57](#)

I, I completely agree, but, but I mean really, would you say that they are our values?

Steve Veazey : [15:03](#)

Yes. They are our values that endure. Personally I felt that the phrase enduring was very important even though it didn't work in some languages. It was very important because organizations, they write values statements, but there can be some change and drift over time. And I really felt like we had discerned what really was foundational to the identity, the very personality of Community of Christ in the, in the statements we developed, but yes, they, they would, could be called enduring values of the church, enduring characteristics of the church. We chose Enduring Principles.

Carla Long: [16:05](#)

So I really love the fact that we talk with that were more values-based rather than rules-based. Of course, we do have some rules that that need to be followed. But the fact that we're values-based gives people, I think, and you can agree or disagree that the chance to grow on their own and figure out how they can, how those values fit into our lives and how we can live in those values rather than being told this is how you will live. Do you see it like that?

- Steve Veazey : [16:34](#) Very much so. In fact, as I have studied organizations and theology and especially ethics, ethics are a collection of principled statements that people then use for their own moral reasoning in their lives. But situations and contexts can be so different. It's the principles that guide people, but the individuals still must make, and I'll use one of our Enduring Principles. They must make responsible choices, not just follow rules that have been developed. And to me that, that grows people spiritually. It grows disciples. It, it grows us as stewards in relationship with God as we seek to respond to God's call and live out divine purposes.
- Carla Long: [17:43](#) Well, I've also learned that if, when you're rule space, people always find a way around the rules. Always.
- Steve Veazey : [17:50](#) One of our challenges has been that in some cultures of the world the rules based approach is still very prevalent. And people want to know, you know, what are the rules, what are the boundaries? But as a church, we tend to emphasize prayerful discernment one's agency as individuals and disciples of being willing to live with questions and struggle with questions and try to discern a way forward. So that works in parts of the world where the culture really promotes individuality and you know, personal responsibility. But there are other cultures of the world where the individual is responsible for fitting into the community and, and that creates a bit more of a struggle in those places. So the work own ethics and how are we going to live together? Has to be expressed in a way that is more clear to people who are struggling to understand how the live in the world, if that, if that makes sense. It's, it's different cultures have different ways of approaching it. I guess this is best way to say it.
- Carla Long: [19:35](#) It's so true. I mean, I haven't traveled as extensively as you have, but I've lived in three continents and worked on four continents and even the people who live in a country similar to the country you and I live in, in the United States think completely differently. Like when I was working in Europe, I was, I was shocked by how different my view of the world was from a, say a Dutch person's view or Germans person's view. I mean, we grown up very similarly, but they're completely different ways of looking at the world.
- Steve Veazey : [20:10](#) Yeah, absolutely. And that's, that's one of the challenges. And again, I'll use one of the Enduring Principles. If we consider the the worth of all persons, then we have to understand their worth in their cultural context and respect the culture that is a part of their life experience and try to understand their

worldview and their perspectives. And that takes a lot of, a lot of time and a lot of effort. So in Community of Christ we don't always just yield to the easy answer. We continue to look for ways to value the worth of persons to respect differences of opinion and belief, but also find a way to be a community of faith that can move together in response to God's call and purposes.

Carla Long: [21:19](#)

You know what, what this reminds me of is, you know, I think about people say in developing countries who, who work all day simply to put food on the table to keep a roof over their family's head. And they simply don't have the luxury that we have here in the United States to think about things. And they're worried about things like their whole life is focused on staying alive and surviving. And, um, so that makes it incredibly difficult to talk about these things in a worldwide context. I mean, I think the listeners should recognize that. I, I'm just now remembering that myself, it's incredibly difficult to work in a worldwide context.

Steve Veazey : [21:59](#)

Increasingly so too, as there's more suspicion between nations and, uh, as the world becomes more tense, it's even more difficult, but our vision and, and our calling is to be that worldwide community of faith and hopefully show the world and alternative vision that's in contrast to a lot of the strife between cultures and nations and religions. That is a characteristic of the world today that that's really part of our purpose as Community of Christ is to say, here's an alternative way of, of being in the world together. And finding ways to discuss and struggle with issues and questions and then hopefully coming to some sense of understanding enough so that we can, uh, move together in response to God's call.

Carla Long: [23:13](#)

Well, I mean, I think you're absolutely right. People who believe in values like ours, not exactly like ours. Maybe they have different values to are so desperately needed in the world rather than being taken away by snipey little arguments that happen on Facebook or, or wherever else. I mean, if we could stick to these values, I think that you're right, it could be world changing.

Steve Veazey : [23:41](#)

Yes.

Carla Long: [23:42](#)

In fact, I've heard a couple people say when they are making a big decision, they actually go to our Enduring Principles and, and see what the Enduring Principles have to say about it. Will this decision impact the sacredness of creation? Is this, is this my truly the responsible choice on my part? Does this uphold the

worth of all persons? And it helps them to make decisions that they have in their lives, which is incredible.

Steve Veazey : [24:11](#)

I, I think that's wonderful. Uh, and it's really meaningful to me to hear that people are embodying the Enduring Principles in that way. And I can also say as, as church leaders when we are together and, and we look at issues and questions, uh, one of our main references, we do the same thing. There's the enduring principles. So does this direction or does this decision uphold as much as possible the, the worst of all persons and, and protecting the most vulnerable in our midst? Is it in the direction of the pursuit of peace? Does it celebrate and honor a unity even though we have diversity of thought and, and circumstance? So we do, we do the same thing on a, uh, organizational basis. Um, and I've noticed in our world conference that I'm hearing more of, of discussion among the delegates referencing different Enduring Principles says we're discussing issues. And so it's a process that's continuing to unfold, but I think it's transformative. And that to me really points out that underneath it all the spirit was working with us to help us not only address the issues that were most immediately pressing on us, but also to help us be who we're called to be as we go into the future.

Carla Long: [26:00](#)

Oh, I agree. So you've already started on this next question, but if you could elaborate a little bit more how, how else have you heard about the Enduring Principles changing the church? Like from where we were before we had named them to where we are now.

Steve Veazey : [26:17](#)

I am, I'm, I, I guess I would mostly reiterate, uh, what we've said but emphasize it. And that is as I travel throughout the church and I listened to people discussing situations and asking questions increasingly and more frequently the phrases from the enduring principles come up. There's also a discussion about what those principles mean. And I think that's right where we need to be because people can look at the Enduring Principle phrase and have a particular perspective on it, but it's only in dialogue with each other that we broaden our perspective and see things from different points of view. Although we're all looking at say the phrase, a sacredness of creation, you know, what does that mean? We have to continue to explore what it means. I see it showing up in our publications, our lessons. I hear it in sermons, and classes. Um, I've noticed in our church resources, it's like 11 that working its way through everything. And that's exactly what we had hoped for.

- Carla Long: [27:50](#) Maybe. I think all of them, or maybe not all of them, they each have their own section in the hymnal certainly helps as well.
- Steve Veazey : [27:56](#) Oh, that's another good example. Uh, when the hymnal was being organized, the Community of Christ Sings hymns know, uh, the enduring principles created a template through which we sought hymns so that we would make sure that our hymnody which shapes the vision and mission of the church, its identity and its message was also reflecting the enduring principles and strengthening our understanding of the Enduring Principles.
- Carla Long: [28:32](#) So I don't know if you can answer this as president, prophet of the church, but I'm going to give a little example before I do it. I want, I'm going to ask you if you have a favorite one and I'm going to ask you that because, uh, in Salt Lake when I'm speaking to people who are new to the church or who come into the church doors for the first time, the two that they all almost always focus on one. That means so, so much to them is the worth of all persons. Uh, because in some traditions you simply don't have worth unless you do something. Um, so the, the idea of somebody having worth no matter what, no matter what they do, no matter who they are, it is just so shocking to some. The other one that's really surprising in Salt Lake City is responsible choices. And I like to say, you know, God put a great big brain in your head for a reason. You know what's best for you and you know how to view the world around you. See what's best for the world around you as well. It's like if I were to always tell you what was best for you, I would definitely get it wrong. Sometimes those two are really important. I know out here in salt lake city and those two are pretty important to me. Do you have one that's important to you?
- Steve Veazey : [29:49](#) Well it's difficult for me to say that it's a favorite or most important, but I agree with you that the, uh, Enduring Principle worth of all persons is the one that I see being embraced and repeated the most as I traveled throughout the nations of the church. And as I talked to new members, say in African nations, uh, almost inevitably what they talk about is the churches message and emphasis lived out emphasis on the worth of persons. And I think that one is so core to who we are that it has to stand out at the same time all the Enduring Principles are there because they are enduring and they are important. I also like to remind people that, uh, when we develop the statement on Enduring Principles in the original statement, we emphasized that the foundation of the enduring principles was our affirmation of the nature of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. That that's, that's foundational. And then the enduring

principles are how we understand the characteristics of God as God has been revealed in Jesus Christ and continues to interact with us. And reveals God's self to us through the Holy spirit. So foundationally we have to always remember that these Enduring Principles reflect our experience with and our understanding of the very nature of God, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ and, and present in the Holy Spirit.

Carla Long: [32:17](#)

One thing I know that people here in Salt Lake and other places have really appreciated about how the Enduring Principles came about and how Community Christ does things in general is that we are very willing to be vulnerable to allowing the Spirit to move where it needs to move and where it does move. And for a lot of, I'm sure for a lot of people that can be really scary. Um, and is it scary for you just to kind of put it in the hands of people and in God and say, okay, where, where does this go from here?

Steve Veazey : [32:54](#)

Yeah, it's, it's been an interesting challenge for me because I believe very deeply in the principles of the church discerning God's will together. And yet particular responsibility is, is placed on the Prophet President of the church to guide that, to motivate that, to stimulate that in the life of the church. Uh, so I've come to understand, part of my role is, is to be creating the opportunities for the church to do that kind of discernment together and produce outcomes like the enduring principles so that we are truly being and growing as a, as a prophetic people. Uh, there are times when I might say it a little differently myself.

Carla Long: [34:06](#)

Oh, interesting.

Steve Veazey : [34:08](#)

Or I might arrange phrases in relationship to each other a little differently. But, uh, I recognize that that's me. Uh, and that the truth that is being pointed to is what's most important. Um, for example, and this is probably getting close to confessing things that went on during the development of the enduring principles. So I'm revealing this. Um, I was really in favor of having a phrase the worth of all persons in community because I wanted to balance, you know, the individual dimension of that with the relational, which we understand is the heart of the gospel. But I understood, uh, what others said about the importance of separating the two and into worth of all persons and blessings of community, uh, in order for individuals who maybe didn't feel like they were part of a healthy community to still understand that they were persons of worth. So the, a dialogue and discussion that occurred in the presidency and in the group, I think resulted in the best direction forward.

- Carla Long: [35:48](#) Oh, that's interesting. Because my next question was going to be, and maybe you can remember another one, um, what else do you remember that was happening when that, that group of 75 people got together and were talking to people from all over the world, right? We're talking not just from Western nations, we're talking all over the world and everybody who wanted to got to stand up and say something about this. So is there another thing you remember about that time when we were all together?
- Steve Veazey : [36:18](#) Well, what I remember is the challenge again of making sure that everyone felt free to speak because some were coming from cultures where they were very hesitant to speak in any way that maybe wasn't aligned with where they thought church leaders were. And it was quite a struggle for them to feel like they could make a contribution that was uniquely their own. But I think over time, as we demonstrated our willingness to, um, receive that and hear that and incorporate their comments that some of those hesitations faded away. I remember when we were talking about grace and generosity, uh, from a Western perspective, we were really emphasizing our need to give out of our resources and abundance. So we were thinking about it in those terms. But some of our participants from other nations remind, reminded us that the real heart of grace in generosity is to be willing to receive the gifts and offerings of others, even though they may not be equal in amount or scope to what we in the Western world might consider to be a generous offering.
- Steve Veazey : [38:11](#) So they pointed out the important first of all of receiving, uh, whatever gifts that others were trying to give in the spirit of grace and generosity. And I remember that being a real breakthrough moment in the group when we came to understand what, what they were really trying to, to say to us that we graciously need to be receivers and that's how we ultimately need to receive God's grace into our lives. Not to wonder whether we're worthy of it or if we've done enough to, to receive it or have we checked off all the boxes and now God can be good and graceful with us, but to simply live in the flow of generosity in the world, that that is the movement of God's grace. So I remember that being very profound and transformative in the group. In terms of the church context, we were talking about sexual ethics and sexual orientation.
- Steve Veazey : [39:34](#) And we were wrestling with issues regarding conditions of church membership, uh, baptism and confirmation. Um, and those were the very issues that we engaged and then discovered that we didn't have common understanding of our

foundations necessarily, or at least we weren't talking about them in the same way. And so it was these real complex issues and issues around which people were very passionate and, and emotional as they were looking for statements from the church that would reflect what different perspectives might be. That's what actually moved us in to the journey of developing the, the Enduring Principles. So that's, that's the context. I, I believe it was around 2008, 2009 in the life of the church that all of that occurred.

Carla Long: [40:44](#)

Yeah, that sounds about right in my memory as well. I, you know, when I, when I think about getting all of those people from different countries together to come to some sort of consensus, uh, that alone is, is quite the job to do that alone. So I think that's pretty impressive. And where they, I don't really remember where they like voted on after we got some wording stuff down where they, did we vote as a group or how did that happen?

Steve Veazey : [41:16](#)

They weren't really voted on. We just continued through our conversation to try to get to a, to a point where we felt that there was a consensus and to move forward. Although some people again would have used different terminology or might have added a few more to the list. So it was actually a process of discerning together when, when we felt we had arrived at a point that we did have sufficient broad understanding and language to reengage the issues that had initially prompted us to begin to look for Enduring Principles.

Carla Long: [42:12](#)

Oh, that's really interesting. I did remember that part, but it's very cool that we actually didn't vote to tell you the truth that people felt like we were at this place because a vote can be so final.

Steve Veazey : [42:26](#)

Right. And it could be off putting for those who weren't in the majority. Uh, so the, the better process I think is to say, uh, is this something that is many of us as possible, can live with and are willing to go forward with and checking with the group to see if that were appropriate, if that wasn't an inappropriate description of where we were. Uh, it's, it's more like in some communities, some religious communities, there are individuals who are always trying to, um, discern and articulate what they call the sense of the meeting. S E N S E a sense of the meaning, where are we now? And that's more of the art of, of discernment. Then it is requiring a vote.

Carla Long:	43:34	And Steve, if I may, I'm not usually into like giving compliments, but I think you do that very well and I appreciate that about you.
Steve Veazey :	43:43	Well, thank you. I work at it. I'm never satisfied with maybe the job I do, but it's, if we're working at it, we're on the right.
Carla Long:	43:55	Okay. That's exactly it. Um, so my next question is a little bit weird. Uh, and I don't, I mean, I, I've, I've never thought about the answer to this question either, but I guess it's a two parter. One, do you think that there's anything that's missing from the Enduring Principles and two, do you think at some point the church will ever come back maybe in 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, and re look at them and say, is this still where we are? Or do you think that these are good forever?
Steve Veazey :	44:33	You know, well let me say your first question was, is anything missing? Um, as I look back and as I've continued to look at the doctrine and covenants and continuing revelation in the life of the church although this concept is in the enduring principles, I would probably advocate that, uh, it be specifically identified. And that's the concept of, of wholeness. That is, uh, the aim of the gospel in our lives is to bring about wholeness and wholeness involves a physical, mental, spiritual, and relational, uh, wellness. And often Jesus talked about wholeness. And as we look at the continuing revelation related to the purposes of the Temple, it talks about a wholeness as a desirable end towards which to strive as we seek to live out the message of Jesus Christ. Uh, so I would probably, in retrospect, I have at least, uh, brought up the topic of wholeness as something that's very foundational to the way we view the gospel.
Steve Veazey :	46:05	And, and even the concept of salvation which is not just about the afterlife, but it includes the peace and wellness of the Shalom of people and groups in this world. And so I would have lifted that one up. I do believe it's present, uh, in the sacredness of creation, the worth of persons, the blessings of community responsible choices. It's, it's through out there, but I might have identified it so that we would have the opportunity to discuss it more. Your second question my experience in the church is that it's an ongoing journey. So I wouldn't be surprised that in the future, uh, some group of representatives, delegates, leaders want to, uh, and choose to go back and refined some of the phrases. There perhaps will be some new terminology that will better express what we're talking about as we as a church move forward in our experience with, with God in the midst of creation.

- Steve Veazey : [47:29](#) So just, just given our openness to continuing to seek for better understanding and expression of truth, that wouldn't surprise me. You know, one of the characteristics of our church that that really baffles I think some other churches that are more authoritative and dogmatic is that we as a church are, are self critical. We continue to evaluate ourselves almost to a fall to see if our language is expressing our best understanding of God at this point in our journey. Whether our practices are expressing our best understanding of God at this point in our journey. And whether our writings, whether, uh, our relationships in congregational life are, uh, focused in the right direction. So that's just who we are. I'd like that about the church, but it's very baffling to some people that, that we would be critical of ourselves in order to continue to grow and transform. And I think we see that live out in many ways in the churches life.
- Carla Long: [48:52](#) Oh, I'm sure you hear about it in many ways.
- Steve Veazey : [48:55](#) Oh yes. So we can also be critical of our leadership each other quite frequently. Yes, there's productive criticism and then there's some criticism that's just harsh, but we, we live with all of that.
- Carla Long: [49:13](#) we do and striving for that wholeness. I love that you brought up the wholeness. I think that that's really interesting. I do see it woven in and through our enduring principles for sure, but naming it is something different. I think. So I'm really intrigued by this idea of wholeness as well. I like it. The only one I thought of, and again, I'd never thought of it until this podcast, anyone that was missing when we were talking about, um, how community of Christ is okay to be vulnerable to. I was thinking about maybe like trust or vulnerability that I think that that is, that's becoming one of our, our hallmarks as well. Even when we were discussing who would be the next president prophet when we chose you, we, we went through a six month process for that and that is, that is deeply vulnerable. So anyway, I was just thinking about that too. So maybe, maybe there's a lot of them out there. I don't know.
- Steve Veazey : [50:21](#) Vulnerability and trust is the way we grow spiritually and understanding it's foundational to discernment. If we're going to be a prophetic people, we have to lay aside personal agendas and try to discern truth together. So yeah, I I can see it. You, you, you want to start the process.
- Carla Long: [50:46](#) I'm okay. Oh gosh. Steve, thank you so much for everything you said. I've really appreciated having you on the podcast. This has

been an awesome discussion about like, usually we just talk about the Enduring Principles like what they are and what they mean. We rarely talk about the how, like, how they came about and the depth of which that they have affected the church. So this has been a really cool podcast for me and I appreciate it a lot.

Steve Veazey : [51:13](#)

Well, I hope it's, it's helpful and, uh, I'm glad to have the opportunity just to talk about it and to visit.

Carla Long: [51:21](#)

Me too. Well, before we sign off, is there anything that you wanted to say that I didn't ask or something that you want to make sure you don't miss?

Steve Veazey : [51:31](#)

I, uh, I was going to tell a funny story. It's a short one. Is that okay?

Carla Long: [51:35](#)

I'm uh, you know how I feel about funny stories. Yes.

Steve Veazey : [51:38](#)

So shortly after the enduring principles came out, I was at a church family camp, a reunion. It was a fairly large one. And, uh, they were having an activity that involved a number of games. You may remember the TV show a minute to win it where you had to do certain tasks and see who could do it the fastest. And, uh, I won two rounds and then we got to the third round. Um, and I was standing before the group and I was asked in the presence of about 400 people to name the Enduring Principles from memory.

Carla Long: [52:23](#)

Oh no, I can only get like seven of them every single time.

Steve Veazey : [52:27](#)

No, you can realize the kind of spot I was, I was in. 400 people who were expecting me, uh, to have them memorize. And, and they emphasize in order, although, yeah, although I emphasize that it's really not a list that sequential, uh, it's one that can start and end with any one of them. Uh, it's more circular or spiral. That's a good image for us. So I began to sweat a little bit and I began to name them and I was calling upon every mental capacity, every brain cell I had, uh, because I felt of, you know, I really should know them. And I had lived with them long enough to know them in order. So I began to move through the list. And as I moved through the list and people saw me struggle, uh, there began to be more and more laughter in the room, which, which really, uh, this kind of disoriented me and I couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong because I was fairly confident in the list that I was created. And then when I got to

the last one and said it, uh, everybody clapped real loud and then they said, look behind you.

- Steve Veazey : [53:54](#) Throughout the whole reunion there was a big list, the enduring principles, a foam, the, the rostrum where the podium,
- Carla Long: [54:05](#) Oh, those blessings of community.
- Steve Veazey : [54:09](#) Yes, so the community got a good laugh at my experience, but they, uh, they really enjoyed watching me struggle to name all nine of them in order. But I am happy to report I did it.
- Carla Long: [54:23](#) Congratulations. I'm very impressed. I almost always forget at least one of them. And then I'm like, and there's another one and I'm sure it's really good. Well, Steve, gosh, thank you so much for being on the podcast. Thank you for your, um, knowledge and your wisdom and gosh, you're just so fun to talk to you.
- Steve Veazey : [54:42](#) Well, thank you again for the opportunity and I hope it's helpful to your listeners.
- Speaker 1: [54:53](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [54:54](#) 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 sponsored by Latter-day Seeker Ministries of Community of Christ. The views and opinions expressed in this episode are of those speaking and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of latter day secret ministries or Community of Christ. The music has been graciously provided by Dave Heinze.
- Speaker 1: [55:51](#) [inaudible].