

Speaker 1 ([00:15](#)):

[inaudible].

Josh Mangelson ([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.

Brittany Mangelson ([00:34](#)):

Hello everyone. This is Brittany Mangelson with the Project Zion Podcast. And today we're going to be having an episode in our What's Brewing series, which is all about mission. And I am delighted to have our guest on, this is Jody Barnhart and she and her husband, along with other leaders in the Pacific Northwest do a youth caravan. And we had the opportunity to have them come through Salt Lake a couple of years ago. And ever since then I've wanted to get them on to talk about caravan. So we finally did it. I'm excited. So Jody, welcome. And why don't you introduce yourself a little bit?

Jody Barnhart ([01:16](#)):

So I'm Jody Barnhart, I'm actually convert to the church. I joined the church through my husband. Um, we started caravan in 1991 as staff. My husband's job was just to keep the vans running and I was in charge of games and recreation. And since then we've been directing off and on for over 20 years.

Brittany Mangelson ([01:37](#)):

That is awesome. So Caravan was not a tradition that I was necessarily used to or familiar with I guess when I joined Community of Christ. So for those people who have no idea what we're talking about, why don't you give us an idea? What is caravan?

Jody Barnhart ([01:54](#)):

Caravan is? Um, it's for the high school youth. We invite them to come to five huddles and we ask them to come to each of the huddles because we work on a program. We work on community service. There's requirements that they have to do, they have to go on home visits, they have to learn about the area that we're going to. My husband does a lot of prayer and discernment about where we're going. And Ron Harman actually nudged us to go to Salt Lake a few years ago and we're really glad we did. And so we have these huddles. We have anywhere from 45 kids to 16 kids to nine kids. It just depends on the year and the baby booms and the baby boom myths and all that stuff. So, and then we um, go on the week trip and I'm doing the week trip, we put on a program, a church type program, but it's very user friendly so you can invite your friends.

Jody Barnhart ([02:51](#)):

We focus lately on the mission initiatives and then during the day we either do something fun or we do community service. We've worked with Catholic community services a couple of different times. We work at food banks. We help um, roof a house for Habitat for Humanity. We worked at the Boys and Girls Club. We've just done numerous, numerous community services projects. We try to do two to three to four during our week trip and this year we're going to Canada. And so I have, I'm scheduled to do community service in Crystal Springs and Chiliwack and Vancouver and Victoria. So the kids get a trip. But they also, um, developing disciples to serve as kind of Troy and I's main focus. We really want to develop these disciples to serve and provide mission, um, mission. And, um, our slogan is mission made

real and we feel like making mission made real in the lives of these youth, and we just really enjoy doing it.

Jody Barnhart (04:00):

And we feel a lot of reward when we do that. We have a lot of our youth who have become pastors. Carolyn Brock was the first caravaner from Southern Oregon, so that's kind of our namesake. It started in Seattle and then we, um, got the [inaudible] the bug in Southern Oregon and then we became a mission center—the Greater Pacific Northwest Mission Center. So we have kids all the way from almost the Canadian border as far as the the California border. And they meet once a month and they come from wherever they are. And, we practice, we have fun, we do community service, and then we just, we just bond. But we really strive to develop leaders and developing disciples to serve.

Brittany Mangelson (04:48):

So Jody, you mentioned the word huddle. I'm curious what that is. Are those the meetings before you go on caravan or are those your little spots that you're traveling to or what are those huddles are?

Jody Barnhart (05:02):

We have five huddles in our mission center. And the huddles, like the first one that we're going to, I don't know why they're called huddles. They, that just became, I call them retreats or get togethers or whatever, but they're they're where the kids, they show up Saturday morning at nine o'clock and they're there until Sunday, you know, one o'clock after potluck. So Saturday we come, we do registration, we do some fun games, we do some activities, we get the program. Travis Reese wrote the program and it's about the mission initiatives and it's called the Avengers, kind of a spin off of the Avengers, but as the evangelists and then we practice the program and then Sunday morning we do the Sunday morning program and then they provide potluck for us usually and stuff. But I'm glad you asked what caravan is about because when we planned the trip and we plan where we're going, some people have the congregations go, "Well what's Caravan and what are they doing? And we have to feed them Paula and what are they going to do?" And so they don't know quite really what caravan is. And really what it is is a bunch of high school disciples wanting to serve God.

Brittany Mangelson (06:18):

I absolutely love this. And I have to say that when you did travel through Salt Lake, not only did you supply my girls with two Mission Made Real sweatshirts. So they're all over Facebook in their Mission Made Real sweatshirts because they wear them pretty much every single day between the months of oh, September and March here in Utah. But also that first time you came to Salt Lake, that was the first date of a now married couple in the Salt Lake congregation. So a lot of fun things can happen at caravan apparently.

Jody Barnhart (06:54):

Well, yes. And you know, we, we borrowed your car to take a kid to the doctor. Do you remember that? The campfire and I hear the campfire was just amazing that the car, not only the congregation but the people that were in the hammocks in your park got involved in the, in the campfire. And that's really what we want to do when we go to, especially like when we go to these community services projects, we sometimes work alongside people that are, um, necessarily having to do community service, you know, so we get to visit with them. We get to tell them what we're about, what we're doing and stuff. And it really becomes a bonding time and stuff. So we really enjoy that. The community service part,

that's my favorite thing is, is planning the community outreach. One place in Idaho, Idaho Falls, we literally divided the group into three different groups.

Jody Barnhart ([07:46](#)):

The young ones, I call them the young ones, the ones under 16 went to one food bank where you actually got script and you got to shop. So really, you know, valued the dignity of the person, you know, so many points was this. So many points was that, and they got to shop and then one of the groups went to the Boys and Girls Club and then one of the older groups went to the Habitat for Humanity where they actually were putting on a roof of a house and with the homeowner. So that was really cool, you know, and the bus drops us off and then we all get together again.

Brittany Mangelson ([08:23](#)):

I absolutely love the way that you weave Community of Christ's identity into the local communities. So it's not an insular, um, let's just rah rah, rah the church. It's that you are getting out and doing mission in the community.

Jody Barnhart ([08:39](#)):

Yes. For instance, like last year we went to Laguna Beach and we didn't have a church in Laguna Beach and Costa Mesa's was the closest one and it had closed. So we stayed in a Unitarian church in Laguna Beach. We slept there so that the kids could have some opportunity in Laguna Beach and we fed the homeless in Laguna Beach. And so, um, this year when we go to Victoria, Victoria has been a little bit concerned, um, because they, um, they don't have a big congregation and so we're thinking of trying to get a nondenominational congregation to come with them or maybe go to that congregation and put the program on.

Jody Barnhart ([09:20](#)):

But we, we just thoroughly love it. It just gives us a lot of joy. Um, we feel like we're doing the mission of the church. Um, all of the five mission initiatives we hit. About four or five years ago, we focused on the enduring principles and that really stuck with the kids. You know, they still now, okay, maybe we should wash the dishes and not use paper plates and you know, Sacredness of Creation. And so they just really focus in on what the church is, is all about.

Brittany Mangelson ([09:51](#)):

Yeah, it makes, I mean your slogan Mission Made Real. It makes the church become real. It makes it relevant. I mean the church is relevant even if you're not doing Caravan, but it gives these students, these kids very tangible hands on experiences that we're not just preaching these things from the pulpit, but they actually have real life applicability. And I think that that's probably such an empowering thing for them to see.

Jody Barnhart ([10:19](#)):

Oh, it's very empowering. I can't tell you the lives we've had, we had one caravaner—this is kind of a funny story. We had one caravaner at the first huddle. My dad calls them Huggies. But the first huddle we had at Roseburg congregation, and she was like forced to come. She was crying. She did not want to come. Her mother was, had been a caravaner, you know, so we're dealing with three generations of caravaners. And so she made her come to the huddle. Well she ended up marrying another caravaner just this last summer, she went on the caravan for four years. They went to Graceland. Um, she's a priest

in the church. I mean this is a girl that had to be drugged by her hair to the first huddle and you know, just stories like that, uh, just the bonding that the kids get to do, but also, you know, them realizing that they could go back to their home congregation and some of them don't have a home congregation, which is kind of sad, but they can go back into their communities and they can serve God in their communities by doing community service.

Jody Barnhart ([11:25](#)):

You know, this particular trip, cause we're getting, you know, kids are saying, I'm going to bring my friend, I'm going to, I'm going to bring my foreign exchange student and stuff. So we're getting a lot of kids that are non church non-Community of Christ kids coming on the Caravan, which is wonderful. Um, another really great story that I have, and this was, this was probably one of my highlights of Caravan was um, I don't know, five, six years ago we went to Montana and one of our staff members wasn't a member of the church and his wife has Shanie Benedict said, "Ken may want to be baptized on the trip, but he doesn't want to be baptized in a font but in like a river or lake or something. And because we're going to Montana, that would be a great thing to do." So we're going through Montana, I'm looking at exit number 213.

Jody Barnhart ([12:14](#)):

That's a great river. We get down there. You know, I'm thinking of this, you know, like for about three days. And then we go to a water park in Kellogg, Idaho that has a bicycle, mountain biking trail to go down on. And all the kids went in the water park and Ken asked if he could go mountain biking. Well, we knew he's a great mountain biker, so we let him go. So we get on the bus, I'm the last one on the bus and he goes, Jody, do you know if there's a creek, a river or lake close by to the church? And I go say Sagle has a shower, cause I'm thinking he didn't get a shower. Right. He spent all this time, you know, mountain biking, he's stinky, dirty and everything. And he goes, I don't really want to get baptized in the shower.

Jody Barnhart ([12:58](#)):

And I just totally freaked out. I was so excited. We pulled into Segal, I got the pastor, pastor and Ken went and looked at this beautiful Lake and the next morning we had this beautiful baptism and it was just, I mean it still brings tears to my eyes. I mean it was just, it was over the top. I mean it was just one of those things that you'll never forget. We've had 'em baptisms at our final program when we usually end typically in Eugene, because it's kind of the center of our hub. And we've had kids be baptized and confirmed in the same, we've had our, our service and then we snuck in a baptism and a confirmation. So, you know, it's just bringing kids to Christ and making Mission Made Real in their lives.

Brittany Mangelson ([13:45](#)):

I absolutely love that. And what a cool example for the kids to see one of their leaders turn around and say, yeah, I do want to be part of this mission and make it official by baptism. That's really cool. Really cool.

Jody Barnhart ([13:58](#)):

It was, it was the, the Lake was beautiful. You could just, um, you could just see the reflection of all the kids on the dock, on the Lake and it was just gorgeous.

Brittany Mangelson ([14:09](#)):

Yeah. So Jody, I'm a little bit curious because I've heard when I've asked or when Caravans just come up in general conversations, I know that there's other mission centers and other areas that have done Caravan. Maybe they'll go on a church history trip or back East, you know, a US history trip or something or just different places where community service can happen. But I'm wondering about the specific caravan in your area. How long has it been going? 'Cause it seems to be that it's been going decades and decades and decades and decades. Is that correct?

Jody Barnhart ([14:40](#)):

Yes. Seattle. Seattle had a caravan. So this is when we were stakes and districts and all that kind of good stuff. Seattle had a caravan, the Irbys, and they came down to Southern Oregon and Tom and Jean Kaufman that has since passed and the Irbys have since passed, um, said, Hey, I want that for our kids. So that was about 1966 we started in Southern Oregon, the caravan. And so we had a caravan since 1966 out of the Southern Oregon. Now it's the GPNW the Greater Pacific Northwest Mission Center. So we've had it. So Troy and I, um, personally are seeing kids of kids that were on caravan. So, or you know, staff members', kids or, um, you know, we haven't got the three generation yet, but we've got the two generations. We've had kids. When, when Troy and I first started the Caravan in 91, when we first went on staff, we had, um, the Kings, the King boys, and now we have their children.

Jody Barnhart ([15:43](#)):

So, you know, it's been going quite and we wanted to continue to go. Um, I kind of tried to put a history book together of you know, where we've been and where we, what we did, you know, itineraries and stuff like that. And you know, we do evaluations at the end of the year so that the kids can evaluate what went well, what didn't go well. We also started about four years ago what we call a leadership group, so they have to apply to be on the leadership team and it's sophomores, freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. There'll be sophomores, juniors and seniors the next year. We have a retreat and they get to make some decisions like on some of the fun things that we're going to do on some of the community service projects that we're going to do. They get to of course pick out the color of the sweatshirts and the color of the t-shirt. And then if we have like an issue or something that comes up, we, okay now should we do this or this? And they get to make those decisions. And so some of them are on the team for three years and some of them are on the team for two years. And that's really been helpful.

Brittany Mangelson ([16:48](#)):

Yeah. Because then you're getting feedback from the youth and then they're getting a lot of leadership opportunity to form and shape what their experience is going to look like. And then I'm sure that they get more excited about it. So with the younger kids, you know, there's that mentor peer relationship that probably develops, I'm assuming. And ya.

Jody Barnhart ([17:08](#)):

Yes. That works really well. And when you ask about like the history, I also like to talk about the discernment of how we decide where we're going. We don't just, we don't just put a map out and throw a dart at the map. My husband does a lot of prayer and fasting about where to go and he feels real led to go someplace like Hagerman Idaho. We love to put Hagerman Idaho on the map and we have fun too. Uh, he said, I want to go, I want to go back to Hagerman and Buhl and New Plymouth and stuff like that. So we went and, um, and I said, well honey, why do you want to go there? I just want to go there. He

was like, you know, I really want to go there. Well, he was real concerned about the pastor and his health.

Jody Barnhart ([17:54](#)):

And so that's why he focused there. One year we went to Pocatello, Idaho. And last year when we went to Salt Lake, he said, we've got to stop at Pocatello again. They were just great. Um, you know, and this year we, um, he decided to go to Canada and we usually have an idea where we're going next year by this time. And we haven't, we haven't finalized that yet. We're still in the process. So people that are listening to this podcast, if you want to host the Caravan, I'm sure you could get ahold of Brittany and Brittany can get ahold of us. Because we're still in the process of discerning where we're going next year.

Brittany Mangelson ([18:31](#)):

It's true. And I will say, you know, when you did come through Salt Lake, we met up at a restaurant and I had all my kids and I think it was, I don't know, a Chuck-a-Rama or Golden Corral. Some type of buffet and you had your own room. So I'm like holding my kids' hands, trying to get them from just totally devouring the food. And you know, I'm like, Oh, we've got to find our people. We got to find our people. And then I walk into this big room filled with Community of Christ youth and leaders. And it just felt so cool to see that many youth in the middle of Salt Lake City. You know, that doesn't happen very often. So it was just a piece of home in your own home. It was. It was really fun to have you guys.

Jody Barnhart ([19:11](#)):

Well, and we really enjoyed that. It's all like, it was kind of funny. Ron, you know, said, go to Salt Lake. It's the booming place. It's the happening place. It's, it's where you need to be. So we went there and then he wanted us to tour the temple. The temple lot and we've never experienced that. And we had to, um, my husband and I coached track. And so we deal with a lot of Mormon track kids. We deal, you know, cause we have families, we have their oldest sister to the youngest sister and they go on mission and we keep track of that and stuff. So I had a little bit of background of the Mormon faith, but um, when we, um, when we toured the temple, I have to say our kids were so polite, so respectful and um, we gave the, and then, um, everybody had to go to the restroom when we first got.

Jody Barnhart ([19:58](#)):

So it was just my husband and I stood there with the head of PR and a couple of sisters and a couple of people from PR and they ask us what we were about, you know, and you've got 30 seconds to tell them what you're about. And I, and I talked about the enduring principles and the, the one that came out just flew out of my mouth was the worth of all people, the worth of all people. And I said, we just really focus on the worth of all people. And um, you know, they ask us questions and we had a really nice dialogue, but, but, you know, um, it was, it was very interesting and it was nice and I'm glad we did that and we're glad we went to Salt Lake. We really enjoyed that. And I always, um, when we're out and about, I try to have the kids wear their Mission Made Real shirts.

Jody Barnhart ([20:43](#)):

And we had just came from community service. We worked at the Catholic community service there. There's store storage area where they, um, like if refugees and immigrants come in to the United States, they set them up in housing. And so they set them up with a crockpot and a bed and a table and dining room chairs, everything they would need in an apartment. And they set them up. And so we worked there. You couldn't walk into this warehouse. It was just a mess. And by the time we were done, all the

school books were organized, school supplies were organized, the tables were all stacked and stuff. And the gentleman that was, you know, the head of it, he said, I can't believe you got that much done in two hours, but we worked really fast and really efficient.

Brittany Mangelson ([21:34](#)):

Yeah. Well, and I just remember, 'cause you know, the few days that you were here, we would, I would meet up with you in the evening and those kids were exhausted but simultaneously super energized because they're tired because they've been spending all day doing service and yet they're so energized because that stuff gives them life. And they wanted to talk and tell about their day. And they were joking. And I mean, it just, it was such a cool energy to just see the mission initiatives lived out through a group of kids. So for me it was really awesome just to witness.

Jody Barnhart ([22:09](#)):

Well, we're really excited this year because, you know, the invite people to Christ, you know, we have all these kids. We have probably 26 to 30 kids coming this year on Caravan. Where last year we had 16. You think we'd go to Laguna Beach? You know, we'd have a big group and stuff, but, um, we never know what the draw is, but it's a lot of kids inviting their friends and inviting their friends. And one of the requirements is to attend 75% of church. And it doesn't matter that you go to Community of Christ church, you could go to youth group, Young Life, you could go to another denominational church. It's just you have to have some type of church life to support you. But then some of the requirements too are, you know, um, interview someone in your congregation so they have to go to a congregation or, or at the huddle they have to enter, but interviews somebody over potluck about a mission initiative. What is their favorite mission initiative, you know, and why. So, you know, they really get down to the nuts and bolts of the church and what we believe in and, and, um, which I really appreciate because sometimes we don't teach that a lot with the kids.

Brittany Mangelson ([23:18](#)):

Yeah. So I, I guess, I'm curious, what other requirements do you have to go on caravan? Because I, I think that it is important to not just be a passive consumer of an experience, but to really get down and figure out this church that you're going on this trip with and to figure out the beliefs and how you can implement that into your life. So what are some of the other requirements for kids to be able to,

Jody Barnhart ([23:42](#)):

well, when, when caravan first started in Southern Oregon, they had to actually give sermons. They had to do home visiting, they had to do tracking, they had to, what was the other, some of the other things, um, that they had to do, but they had to do a lot. And we've kind of, we've tailored it to this group of kids. So attend the church regularly, interview a priest, go on a priesthood visit, go on a visit, you know, a home visits. They get to pick, it's like a menu. So they can pick two from this section, two from this section. And then they do all three from this section, you know, um, study where we're going, you know, get 10 facts about where we're going. So like this year we're going to Canada. So 10 facts about Canada. We've added research hymns or their favorite camp song. You know who, who wrote the camp song? Who wrote the hymn, why did they write it? What was so special about it? Why is it one of their favorite hymn that they like? You know, what do they get out of that hymn. They also have to participate in church life. So they have to do invocations and they have to do offerings. And some of them even do testimonies.

Jody Barnhart ([24:47](#)):

They have, they are required to do a testimony once during the caravan season. So the first huddle, you know, we may have three kids offer a testimony of what Christ has done in their life. And then by the time we ended up on the trip, it's like, okay, the seniors get first choice guys. And you know, we have four or five, six kids standing up and, and testifying their testimony about what's so important about the Community of Christ and their trip. And it's not, I really appreciate the kids haven't focused on, Oh, I just like being with my friends. I'm just having such a good time being with my friends. It's really focused on what God has done in their lives.

Brittany Mangelson ([25:29](#)):

Jody, it seems like so often with youth ministry, uh, and this is my perspective as someone who's only been in the church for five years, but I've been involved in youth ministry pretty much that whole time. And there seems to be, I don't know, this, this hesitancy or this fine line between being so church centric, meaning Community of Christ centric and then being just secular or anything goes or you know what I mean? There's, there's this fine line that I feel like ministers often have because they don't necessarily want to be fully rah rah rah for Community of Christ all the time and open things up more to um, different, you know, spiritual practices or different theology or whatever. But all this to say is it feels like you all have really found a balance where you can pull in Community of Christ identity in a nonthreatening way. You don't impose it. It doesn't, it doesn't feel forced. It just feels like you're taking so many elements of who Community of Christ is. And making it very, very practical in a way that I think a lot of youth ministry, and maybe I shouldn't say a lot, maybe this is just Brittany Mangelson youth ministries. Sometimes it's just a struggle to know how to find that balance when you're planning camps or even teaching Sunday school. You know, just finding that balance of being who we are unapologetically and yet not making it all about us. I guess what I'm trying to say is it feels like you have found pretty good balance in that.

Jody Barnhart ([27:05](#)):

Probably because I didn't come from, I, you know, I was a convert to the church so I really am open to other religions and other practices. You know, I, I'm the camp pastor at senior high camp and I bring in a lot of music and a lot of visuals and a lot of stuff like that. And, and I get the kids to share. So, you know, just non-necessary and I try to, you know, the kid that's sitting there in the corner and doesn't want to share about God, you know, maybe he will read a prayer and he'll get something out of the prayer and stuff. So, um, you know, it's just, it is a fine line. But I think that our values that the Community of Christ and the enduring principles and the mission initiatives really focuses in and especially to these high school kids, when you talk worth of all persons, all are called sacredness of creation.

Jody Barnhart ([27:58](#)):

Those are all things that the kids are focusing on. The kids are in tune to that and they can, they can grab hold of that and they can run with it. And so, um, you know, and invite people to Christ. Invite people, just invite people, you know, it doesn't mean you have to dunk them. Just invite them, invite them to come. Um, like I said, some of our kids don't have churches nearby. We had one kid last year, drove an hour and a half every Sunday to go to church because he didn't have a home congregation. And so we've also given them books to read, you know, books that we think have a good message for them to read and you know, tell us what. And then that's their church life, you know, and it, but then they also interview, you know, their congregation may be closed, but an evangelist may live in their congregation or in their hometown so they can go over and they can visit and they can interview that evangelist. So

that makes it, that makes it really nice. We just, you know, it is a balancing act, but I think that, um, and I'm not saying that we do it perfect. We don't, but we try really hard to meet the kids where they are and it's become a challenge. Um, just with the different things that have been happening with the world and the kids and stuff, you know, and, and, and politics and stuff. We try to really keep the peace in the conversation when we're talking caravan.

Brittany Mangelson ([29:24](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Jody Barnhart ([29:25](#)):

We just did. That's just my husband and I really focus on it is the worth of all people. All people are worthy. And so we don't need to get into, well you believe this and so you're not worthy or you believe that or, or you do this on Saturdays or whatever.

Brittany Mangelson ([29:42](#)):

Yeah, and I, I really appreciate that, that you allow that room for diversity because I think that if you don't, it would be a huge deterrent to the kids. And I also appreciated when you said, uh, our values, our enduring principles, our mission initiatives are things that really resonate with the caravaners. And I, I, you know, it, these are conversations that are, already happening that are already happening at school. They're already talking about the sacredness of creation and the worth of all people. And you know, even like all are called, there's all, there's a lot of conversation about just equality in general. And so these enduring principles that we have, they're already being talked about and discussed and lived out with church and non-church kids. So I just feel like anytime that you can implement those in a way that brings them to community and then brings them to the mission of Jesus is just two thumbs up for me.

Jody Barnhart ([30:42](#)):

Oh, thanks. Well, and it's, it's funny because we have a staff retreat in October and, um, our person that handles the program comes with a program outline and one of the characters in the program is non-binary, you know, it is, these are like superheroes. And so, um, we have recyclable man of, you know, um, we have repurposeful man. Instead of um, uh, what's that guy?

Jody Barnhart ([31:13](#)):

a super anyways, a super power superhero people and they're going out in the world and they're doing the mission initiatives and stuff. So, you know, we, we touched a little bit, um, to just make people a little bit aware, a little bit uncomfortable, and I think it's okay to be uncomfortable in church. Um, and stuff. So, you know, we touched on that a little bit. Um, I was trying to think last year there was, there was a scene last year and it was just, you know, let a little bit.

Jody Barnhart ([31:43](#)):

Mmm. You know, made people wonder it made people think and stuff. We in our area though and I want to give kudo, our areas are so very supportive to the Caravan. We have two auctions, we have one in the Southern area and we have one in the Northern area and people are very, very, very generous. They've went on caravan, their grandkids are going on caravan now and so they're just very, very generous with the program. And we've been very lucky to, to do that. And, and they, they like what Troy and I do and they like the kids being involved and their grandkids being involved and their nieces and

nephews. So it's just been a really good positive thing for our area and stuff. I wish that the church had more of it. Mmm. I think we're kind of one of the few that, that have it that have a caravan that goes out to different congregations in their areas.

Jody Barnhart ([32:38](#)):

You know, we've been to Montana, we've been to Hawaii twice. We've been to Idaho. Oh, a half a dozen times, um, California and probably half a dozen times. And we get to meet and what's fun is we get to meet saints and from like, um, Joni Rehose to give an example, she always wants to house us in Sacramento the very first night she has pizza for us. We have a pool party and then we go to various homes to sleep in. And that was one of the things that really struck me not growing up in this church. When I first went on my first um, trip, we showed up at the congregation and they said, Oh, you're going to the Smith's house. And the Smith's opened their doors. They had snacks for us, they had beds for us. They just treated us like family. And even you, Brittany, when, when we have the sick, the sick kid, you know, can I borrow your car? I need to take this kid to the doctor. And it was like, no big deal. Yeah, sure. Come back when you come back. And it's just the Community of Christ. We really have a niche on that, that we really love each other and we really take care of one another.

Brittany Mangelson ([33:49](#)):

Yeah, I totally agree. And I just always, I know, and I think, and I hope that if I were in the situation where I need some, I would need somebody to borrow a car so they could take me to the doctor. I would hope that somebody would offer up their car and I know that somebody would offer up their car. So, uh, it is, uh, such a, a great little community that we're part of, which is why I think it's so awesome that these youth are getting to see the larger community outside of their own local area. So one thing that you said though, and I totally agree with it, that you wish that there were more caravans like this throughout the church. And I know that whenever I hear people talk about caravan, for the most part, it's been things in the past or maybe it's only done every three years or maybe it's just a really small group. So I'm, I'm wondering if there are youth ministers out there, maybe they're not even youth ministers. Yeah, they just, maybe they just don't know they're youth ministers, but what, what are some of the tips that you would give? I mean, what are some of the lessons that you've learned along the way? What are some practical tips and tricks of the trade, I guess that you could share with other people?

Jody Barnhart ([35:02](#)):

I'm very fortunate that I work in a school district and so I have the summers off, but just like last night I spent probably three hours working on the auction at home after work, just working on the auction. It takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of dedication and you have to have a passion for it. So if it's, if you want to just go on a trip, if you want to take a bunch of kids on a fun trip, that's probably not what caravan is all about. And so you really have to have a passion for it. We, we started writing kind of a manual on how to do this. We take off the month of July and we worked from August till June on caravan and we have full time jobs. So we don't, we don't get paid by the church. We just totally do this as a volunteer.

Jody Barnhart ([35:52](#)):

But I mean we have in August we pick our staff, in September we pick our leaders and have the leadership retreat in October. We have our staff retreat and then we start the ball rolling. And then January, February, March, April, May, we have huddles, our retreats, and then we go on the trip in June. Then we don't even look at the evaluations until August. We put them in a, we put them in a sealed

envelope and then we open them up in August and we go from there. Cause we take the month of July off. So it really takes a lot of time and a lot of dedication. You know, it's a love. It's, it's a love for the church, a love for the kids and the love for the program.

Brittany Mangelson ([36:36](#)):

I really appreciate that you mapped out over months. You know how long it takes to put this on because it's not just surprise. We're going to go on a bus and go to these random locations? No, there's a lot of intentionality about it. There's months of planning, a full year of planning before you actually hit the road. And uh, just so many different elements and pieces. I mean it, it feels like a giant puzzle and you're just slowly collecting all the pieces for it to come together and making it all work.

Jody Barnhart ([37:08](#)):

Well, like we have our first huddle next weekend into quality. And so Monday evening I will start emailing all the pastors and tell him, okay, we have 26 kids, we have nine staff. Can you do breakfast for us on Sunday morning? Can you do potluck for us Sunday afternoon? Do you want us to sleep in homes? Do you want us to sleep at the church? It's all those little bits and pieces finding where to get showers at. Cause if we sleep at the church, you got a shower. I don't like stinky kids. So you know, finding showers and um, you know, finding where we could shower, calling the community service agencies. Okay. We have Monday from nine to 12 that block can you fit us in that time. So it's, it really is a puzzle that we put together. I really work on the itinerary and my husband really works on discerning on where to go. And we make it a team. We've been married 39 years and so we make a great team.

Brittany Mangelson ([38:09](#)):

Well, and I feel like if you've been married that long, but also have traveled on a bus every single summer with a whole bunch of high school kids every year and you still like each other, that speaks to the success of not only caravan, but to your, of your relationship.

Jody Barnhart ([38:28](#)):

Well, most of the time our anniversary falls when we're on caravan, it's June 20th and we leave June 20th for the trip this year. So we, we always laugh about that. We never know if we're going to be even at the same church or if we're going to be at the same home that night. We just always joke about that.

Brittany Mangelson ([38:48](#)):

Oh man. So much coordination, so much sacrifice. And to do all this as volunteer ministers. I mean that's, that's incredible. That's a gift. I mean, really. That's, wow.

Brittany Mangelson ([39:01](#)):

Well thank you. Thank you. Well, we, we, we enjoy it.

Brittany Mangelson ([39:06](#)):

You've shared a few stories as we've gone along, but I'm wondering if you have any more stories about where you have seen God show up in Caravan, whether it's the actual week, whether it's the planning and the retreats that happen before or whether it's with the staff or with the kids. Just any, any story of transformation that you'd like to share?

Jody Barnhart ([39:30](#)):

The first year that we went on caravan in 1991 that um, winter one of the youth was killed in a car accident. This is kind of a sad story, but it ends in a good story. So we didn't know the youth then. We were really new to the church. We were really new to the situation and we didn't know we were and we were in a church. Um, uh, let's see. I want to think Berkeley, it was someplace down in California. We were in a church and um, we kind of had a meltdown. The kids kind of haven't a meltdown. They had realized that their friend had been gone. You know, she was very involved in the Caravan and she was gone and they kinda, you know, it was mid week, and emotions are kind of running and stuff. And so, um, there was a little bit of a meltdown.

Jody Barnhart ([40:17](#)):

Well, my husband and I really didn't quite know what to do. You know, my, my job was games. We didn't, we didn't have a close relationship with this young lady, so we just didn't know what to do. One of the caravaners walked out to the van to get some gum and walked past a room and a bright light was in the room and two of the girls were being administered to. Hmm. And she believes that she saw Christ in that room and she came in and just was just like, what's going on in that, that classroom over there. And we just happened to know that two young ladies were being administered to, and she said Christ was there. So it's just stories like that. Um, you know, things that just get changed. That was one of them. Um, you know, people taking us into their homes and not even blinking an eye about that.

Jody Barnhart ([41:13](#)):

Um, the long term friendships that you make. Um, we went to Hagerman, Idaho and one of the young ladies was in middle school at the time. Well she ended up coming and living with us when she went to college in Eugene and is now a priesthood member and is active in the Eugene congregation, you know, and we met her when she was in middle school. Her parents, her mom followed us along the trip and did community service with us for a few days in the Idaho area, the Boise Hagerman view, Idaho area and stuff. So it's those longterm friendships and that mean a lot, um, to us. Uh, try to think about another thing. Um, I talked about the baptism. Um, administration is a big one when kids ask for administration and we explained it to them and what it is and, and, and, and whether that's kids or whether that's adults.

Jody Barnhart ([42:12](#)):

We were in, um, LA one year at the LA stake and I, you couldn't get out of the bunks back then. They had what they called the log house or lodge house and it was like a bunk house. It was perfect for us to sleep in. And his back was so bad that he couldn't get out of bed. And so we asked for administration. We explained to him he was not a member of the church. We explained to him what administration was and he, I want that, you know, he was administered to. We went about our day and we had a great day, you know, and stuff. So it seems like that is, it's also the sacraments of the church serving communion to kids, you know, at a huddle. Um, it's been a very highlight of mine, you know, just serving Christ to the kids. So, and I have funny stories too, but I mean, when you ask the God stories, you know, um, you know, the, those are, they're not few and far between. It's just, there's so many of them that it's hard to pick ones out, but there's been a lot of really dynamic stories that just touch your life and you never forget them. Well then there's that we painted the Baker City church three times.

Jody Barnhart ([43:32](#)):

Yeah. Caravan has painted the Baker City church three times in our lifetime. And I don't know how many more times it's been painted before that they no longer meet and they sold the church. But we always joked about that we would go on, cause we used to do a lot of community services at the churches too. And so, um, we call Baker City, you know, is there any project you'd like? Oh yeah, would you paint our church? And we build storm windows and we did the whole works and steps. So you know, we do a lot of them, we kind of joke about that or, or sleeping in the church that, that doesn't have pews or chairs. So you're sleeping in the kitchen underneath the dining room table, you know, you're sleeping wherever you can find a little place to put your head.

New Speaker ([44:23](#)):

That sounds, that sounds wild. When I was a teen, you know, I grew up, LDS is, everyone on this podcast is aware of, but we, we did what we call youth conference and the whole youth in my stake ended up sleeping in a high school gym and it was, you know, the girls on one side and boys on the other and half court was the no man's land. Like you cannot cross them. I don't think anybody got any sleep because there were a lot of kids shoved in there so. Well Jodi, is there anything else that you'd like to share with us about Caravan?

Jody Barnhart ([45:06](#)):

I'm, I'm just trying to think. Um, we just really enjoy doing it. Um, it brings us a lot of joy. It's a lot of work. Sometimes things that get neglected at home because of that, I always keep thinking that some little angels are going to come in and, and put the tile down in my living room that needs to get put down or somebody like that, you know, because we really work on it. Like tonight, I'll probably work on the auction about a couple of hours. And you know, my husband helps me with that and just different things. And we did get the trailer, which was really nice. We got a trailer to store all the sound system and all the props and all that other stuff that we have, all the sweatshirts that your kids enjoy because it used to be in our house, so we got a trailer and you know, like I said, the mission center has been just very generous and, and supported us very well.

Jody Barnhart ([46:03](#)):

Very, very well. And one time we stayed in our mission center, which got the kids in the Northern area excited about caravan, you know, so we stayed in the mission center. Um, one year our mission center president...Troy really decides where we're going, but we always ask our mission center president, is there someplace you want us to go or, or, you know, we asked Ron one year and he, you know, wanted us to come to Salt Lake, which we're really glad we did and stuff. So, you know, we give people the opportunity and stuff. Uh, Troy does a lot of discerning of where we're going and then, and it's become a challenge and it's kind of a sad challenge. Um, a few years ago we wanted to go to Montana. Troy said, let's go to Montana. We haven't been to Montana in a long time. And I go, Oh, well there's a congregation and X, Y, Z, you know, and they had closed. So, you know, there was quite a distance between this congregation and that congregation and different things, you know. And so, um, it's, it's becoming a challenge on where to go that um, the saints are close together, that they're close together that we can get from one place to the next and you know, in a day or so. So, but, but it's a good challenge. I like a challenge.

Brittany Mangelson ([47:18](#)):

Yeah. Well, and it sounds like caravan in your area has quite the reputation and the longevity. Gosh, I think of just all of the changes in the church since the 1960s that always is the, when you're talking

about the evolution of the church, you know, the mid sixties is usually where people like to start that conversation of where the church evolved. And to know that caravan has lasted through all of those changes and the theological changes and ordination of women and national conference. And I'm assuming, you know, just taking a step back, a bird's eye view of this ministry and just seeing how it's continued to be relevant has continued to be an identity marker of who we are. It represents who we are and that has changed and evolved alongside the church I think is just remarkable. So,

Brittany Mangelson ([48:12](#)):

Well, one of our pride enjoys, as I said, we develop disciples to serve. And right off the bat I can tell, I can think of two pastors that are former Carabvaners within a hundred hundred miles of each other. I mean, that's just, that's just, you know, how our, um, congregation are, you know, we've developed these disciples to serve. They become pastors, they become priesthood members, you know, um, they became real church appointees. You know, they're just, yeah. You know, we've developed them to, to serve. And that's what that's, and that's another nutshell in, in our churches we are to serve. We don't necessarily hire people to clean up potluck after us. We clean up the public, you know, we're to serve each other and just as Christ has served us.

Brittany Mangelson ([49:03](#)):

I love that. Again, just making our identity relevant and applicable and not just preaching from the pulpit, but actually doing church and doing mission. Again, it goes back to your slogan, Mission Made Real.

Jody Barnhart ([49:19](#)):

Yes. And we liked that. It was funny. Yeah. Somebody said we should change it. Change the font. We never changed the font of the sweatshirts. We've never changed the font of the tee shirts and it's just, we kind of came up with it and then, then I think a couple of years, you know, Christ Mission is Our Mission. The church came up with that and we're looking at t-shirts this year and on the back we're calling them travel shirts. Sometimes when we, because we're traveling over the border, I'm a little concerned about making sure our kids all stay together are identified as a group, you know, so we can get through customs easy and quickly and stuff. So we're thinking of travel shirts and on the back putting the lion and the lamb and then Christ Mission is Our Mission, but we would still have and then have something Canadian on it. So we're thinking about that stuff. But our work shirts, we call them our work shirt. The Mission Made Real shirts and you know, when you come in, um, like last year we went into the homeless shelter to feed them breakfast, you know, and when 25 people come in with those shirts that say Mission Made Real, you know, serving you breakfast as you're waking up, a little intimidating, but they were very thankful that we were there.

Brittany Mangelson ([50:25](#)):

Yeah. I just think what a great experience for the kids and for the staff and for the community and for the congregations that you're able to visit. Again, I know that here in Salt Lake we were really touched and uh, it was really good for some of our seekers to see what's offered in Community of Christ as far as how do we teach our youth about who we are and our identity. And, um, yeah, it was really exciting.

Jody Barnhart ([50:51](#)):

In a nutshell. If I was to, and I've been thinking about this, of trying to put something together for congregations that don't know what Caravan is, you know, that these kids are coming in, they're

sleeping in our church and we've got to provide potluck for. What do you know, what is this all about? Is, you know, we put on a program, the kids offer testimonies about Christ in their life and you don't need to put on the potluck. We would be happy to cook dinner for you. You know, if you're a small congregation, we'll cook dinner for you. We'll have the program at one o'clock in the afternoon on a Tuesday versus seven o'clock at night so that the elderly can come out and see. All you need to do is sit in a seat and see kids doing Christ's work. That's all you need to do. So, you know, we really want to encourage the congregations to have us and to not be a burden upon the congregations.

Brittany Mangelson ([51:43](#)):

I love that. I absolutely love the collaboration, the intentionality, the coordination, gosh, the coordination. That is not something that is has been gifted to me, that skill. Being able to coordinate all the meals and all the supplies and I mean, whew, that's just, that seems intense. But I really appreciate all the intentionality that has that has gone into this. So Jody, I guess if, if somebody has questions for you or they want to learn more, how could they get in contact with you?

Jody Barnhart ([52:15](#)):

They can email us at caravan@cofchrist-gpnw.org or TroyJody@Comcast.net is easiest. Either one. And then we have a link on our Facebook page. We also have a link on our GPNW website. So we have either one, they're more than welcome to call me. I would love to see this get started in, um, you know, California or, you know, uh, Idaho or Arizona or someplace. And I'd be more than happy to help them, you know, get started and stuff. It is a lot of work and so people have to just be prepared to, you know, to not think that, Oh, this is something I can do on Saturday morning, once a month.

Jody Barnhart ([53:09](#)):

You know, there's a lot of work and the requirements are really a key piece to it. We don't want the kids just to get on the bus, cause some congregations pay for their whole kid, their kid to go. So they, the kids get a full tuition is paid for and they need to earn it. They need to do their requirements, they need to show up at church, they need to interview people about their priesthood calls. Um, just different things like that. So, but it's great to talk to you.

Brittany Mangelson ([53:38](#)):

Yeah, it's great to talk to you. And again, I just love the intentionality of it and, um, I'm just really glad that we were able to have this conversation.

Jody Barnhart ([53:47](#)):

Thank you. And you have a great night.

Speaker 1 ([53:49](#)):

[music]

Josh Mangelson ([53:57](#)):

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Speaker 1 ([54:54](#)):

.[inaudible] [inaudible].