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Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson

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

Hello, everyone and welcome to another episode of Project Zion Podcast. This is Brittany Mangelson and I will be your host for today. And we have on Kelly Padilla as part of our Fair Trade series where we talk about faith transition. So Kelly and I have been Facebook friends for a couple years now, but we've never really talked, especially on this level. I've just seen her post, you've seen my posts. And I have had Kelly on my list of people that I wanted to have on for one of these interviews, and we finally got it worked out. So, Kelly, I'm really, really excited that you are here today.

Kelly Padilla

Thank you. It's a pleasure. Thanks for inviting me.

Brittany Mangelson

So why don't you just tell us a little bit about yourself? Tell us where you are, who you are, what you do, that kind of stuff.

Kelly Padilla

Okay, well, I am here in North Carolina, born and raised, um, currently a member of a Community of Christ for the past couple of years, Some in the past being raised in this area. I was I grew up Baptist, like everyone else in my, um, African American family. About 10 years, I was a member of the Mormon church. And, um, I'm a single mom. They have two lovely daughters on both an elementary school, third and fifth grade. Um, and I'm actually a pharmacist by trade. I used to work in the pharmacy long ago, but now I'm a clinical research pharmacists where I work for a firm. My company doing clinical research in respiratory.

Brittany Mangelson

Nice. Thank you. I didn't realize that my girls were right in between your girls my twins are in fourth grade so that I have a feeling they would all get along quite well and probably get into a lot of mischief.

Kelly Padilla

Exactly!

Brittany Mangelson

Okay, So, Kelly, if you're okay with that, we're just going to start at the beginning wherever the beginning looks like for you. And I'm just curious to know you said you were born Baptist. So I'm

curious to know what that looks like for you growing up? Um, how involved were you in church life? What did God or church look like to you when you were growing up?

Kelly Padilla

Well, initially church for me meant going to my grandmother's church, though some of my earliest memories would be spending the night with Grandma, who also lived in the same town where we grew up and she and it went to the old church. You know, that was, you know, the family church. They went all the way back to, you know, slavery's as far as people could remember. And then I had cousins who went to the same family church, you know, kind of, um it was kind of a family thing. You out in the country and since we lived in the city was just something we didn't really attend. And from what I understand I started asking my parents about, you know, what's our church? Why don't we go to church? And, um, you know, both of my periods grew up, you know, out in the country, on the farm. And so church was not just, you know, a faith. It was a way of life. It was part of the culture. And that's just what you did. And, um, I don't speak for my parents, but I think for my dad, it seemed like he was just burned out and just not, you know, not going. But they weren't going to stop me, so my mom started taking me to church, each in town, and that's kind of where I started, you know, in the little Children's choir and just develop my faith that way. You know, in the Baptist tradition, it's kind of expected that we turned 12 that you get baptized and kind of only joined the church. That was when I first started. I guess rebuilding I was not into that. I just you know, I didn't feel like, um if I did, it would be authentic. And it wasn't until just some random Sunday, Um, when I was in high school. Well, I just I just did it. And I shocked my mom and a whole family because I didn't talk to anyone about it. Just like, now it's time. But I just went and did it. So the first time I was baptized was in high school, different with college, then that, um, and that kind of family setting.

Brittany Mangelson

Can I ask what baptism looked like in that church?

Kelly Padilla

Well, it was you have full immersion. It was, you know, a separate ceremony with myself and some other kids who around that time who are much younger than me of the time since I was a high schooler. They were, you know, middle school, aged. And, you know, we had a ah program with some some songs on him. Some prayers from the minister, you know, did a brief sermon, and then we each got baptized, um, one by one. Um, afterwards, um, the Baptist Church. There's a lot of different creeds and things, and then we had kind of, ah, covenant that's always on the wall. And I had to read that. And I remember reading as I was reading, it was like the first time ever looked at it. So it's kind of slightly whoa. It says that, um and then, like the whole like, congregation people who came to it, everyone kind of stood around us and there was one big prayer for all of us. Yeah, that's what I remember.

Brittany Mangelson

Yeah. Cool. Well, keep going!

Kelly Padilla

So so then I hit the road and left town. Um, went to college here in Charlotte, North Carolina, UNC Carolina Tar Heels. Um had a great experience there. Um, and it's kind of I guess expected? I guess I don't have the right word, but, you know, growing up, you know, African American in the South, it's it's very common to just kind of find your church where we moved to. And so I went to the one Baptist church, you know, growing up. So now I'm in college, You know, I needed to look fine. Whatever church I'm gonna go to, um, in college. And I remember, um, um, the friends I hung out with, We all kind of went church shopping. Are, you know, are on our own like, Okay, you know, after we've we got settled in, we did all the party and you wanted to do, like, you know what? We should probably find a church, church, family. And so we visited a couple of different churches in town. I don't think I ever joined any of another time, but it was everyone, so I'll just kind of a nice to have a place to go sometimes. But then I was during this time I was also, you know, studying hard pre pharmacy, But I was also enriching band, but you Carolina Tar Heels And in the band, there was kind of a sub, I guess club, um called music makers. And so I didn't realize at the time of the music makers was like a faith based club that went with a band. And so I went with them one time to, um I think of worship. I think it was on campus, like and then union. It was It was fun. And then, um, one time I went with them to a revival, and it was actually at the church of one of the members of the group, kind of near where I grew up. So we all went out deep in the country again. And I think that revival and that, you know, we're gonna back does have been to several, you know, revivals. We spend the whole week, Um, you know, we're shipping and they have a big, you know, big kind of finale worship that Friday night. This one. I don't know. It was kind of the first time. I really I felt like I had a true spiritual experience. And even though I had already been officially baptized and officially, you know, joined the church. You know, the broader church. It was the first time I felt converted. And, um and actually, in part of the program they had at the end, at the end of the whole thing, Um, the minister had everyone kind of closed, her eyes looked down and he was just asking her questions. If you feel like this, stand up and everyone stand up and it's like, if something like this, I can't remember what he said. But, um, if this happens, keep standing, keep standing. And so eventually people start sitting down at the end. It was myself and one other person, you know, still standing on the hand by eight us, you know, and the after the program to talk This morning was really the first time. I really felt like I was truly, I guess, a member of the fold. And you know, I loved it, but, you know, But then, you know, it wasn't I wasn't formally a member of any church, but that was the first time, actually felt like I was in the body of Christ.

Brittany Mangelson

Well, it sounds like having that support, that community was probably really important to you as a young adult, even if it was something you formally joined, just knowing that there was a church family out there I can imagine would be at least a little bit comforting.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, and I think, you know, growing up, I think maybe part of it was because at the very beginning, I didn't have a formal church. My, I guess identity with being, you know, communing with God was not tied to a particular church, um, down, nomination or congregation. Even it

was just something directly between me, um, and God. So I guess now, like us, the term people uses, you know, have faith, but not really religious. Um, I think I was a little more religious than that, but not formally a member of, ah, a church. So back then, you know, I would hear the phrase joined church. It was kind of interpreted as being a member of a congregation, not necessarily joining of God. You know, I feel like I've already done that. Um um I guess probably the phrase that was used more was being saved. I was that saved. You know which ones I've been baptized and accepted, You know, Jesus Christ, but I wasn't heading. Joined a church, a church family. So anyway, during that time, I was still in college, just living, living my best life graduated and was working. And, ah, I will fast forward maybe a couple of years. It was actually September 10th 2001 and by this time I'm working, you know, as a pharmacist at Duke Hospital. And I just had an overwhelmed This is kind of, I guess, my unnatural experience that you just can't explain other than through faith. And anyway, it was such a pretence on Monday. And I just remember having just a feeling of loathing that day. For some reason, you know, I'm single. This is before marriage, before kids just just myself. And and I remember I kept leaving to go to the bathroom to even cry. I don't know why I was just so upset about something. And, um, a time, um, hospital had this little training that went under the ground to go to the, uh, another part of the hospital. And I remember being underground waiting for this train, and some random lady just came up to me and just started chatting it up with me and I Maybe I had a look on my face, but she was just like, you know, sometimes we go through bad times. I just won't let you know that God loves you and everything's gonna be OK. And and, ah, you know, just want you share that with you. And so we chatted it up and it turns out she was a nurse. But it was in some new program at Duke where they were kind of researching relationship between faith and prayer and healing. So she was in that program. And so then I thought, Well, you know, those nice chatting, you know I'll never see you again. Then I get to the other side, the hospital, and go eat my lunch. And second, I guess my second little angel that came up still the same day some older gentlemen who wanted to come sit with me and I remember instinctively thinking this old guy trying to flirt with me, you know, like please, you know, I already have a dad. You know why you're coming to sit with me. But anyway, he for niggles himself to sit with me and started talking to me, and it was and this was the part that really kind of stopped. Well, he said, you know, sometimes sad things will happen in your life, and no matter what happens, I just felt like I really need to tell you that God loves you. Um, this is the second time within 30 minutes and things you know where you may think the world is coming to an end just like, just well, you know that God loves you. And then you have felt much better within about my day and then the next morning, September 11th Oh, and yeah, and just all sorts of, and we all remember that all sorts of just fear in anxiety that early morning not knowing what was happening you're free realized that it was a terrorist attack. And the only thing that was going on in my mind was, no matter what, God loves you and you will be OK. And it was just such a special, you know, time Just just thinking, um, you know, just thinking about that song. You know, his eyes on the sparrow, some of the most you know, most tragic things happen that day the biggest things, you know, in our in our country's history. And I felt like and all of that God took the time to send that one. But two people to me to comfort me in my you know, um, in just my day of just feeling feeling down and, you know, never forget that. Never forget that feeling of just the individual personal love that each of us can feel from God. And I think after after that experience, well, I think that was the first time I really, seriously started thinking,

Wow, I really need to, you know, pay attention to this and really do some changes in my life to, um, reflect what I believe, you know. So, um so I think that's where they started changed, really start changing for me, you know, um, faith wise. So anyway, all of the things that came with September 11th you know, were happening. Remember the anthrax scare? And just before we knew who was tied to the attacks. Just all of that, you know, it was you know, everyone's when I shouldn't use every day. He had it all day you know when you could and at any rate, one of those days had the TV on. And, of course, we want, you know, I was at home, hanging out, doing tours. The TV was like, some listening to news, and the commercial comes on talks about Jesus Christ, you know, came to the Americas on and, you know, you want to find out more, you know, call this number. And it was for me, time stopped. Um, because, um, several years prior, when I was in high school of kind of going back in time. Sorry about that. But, um, this would have been the 11th grade. Maybe 12th grade. I, um in 11th-12th grade. I attended a high school that was a residential, um, school of science and math. Um, so that was the focus of the school. But for English and social studies, subjects were merged, and the the course was about ancient, ancient religious or ancient Mesopotamian culture, I think, but started from ancient times and, um, so social studies in English. And I remember, um, in that class, we all had a yearlong assignment where we had to just come up with something that kind of write a thesis. It was our like are We are one big project Learn how to do that the research and and do a yearlong thesis. So the topic that I chose was a question. The title was, um where the Native American one of the lost tribes of Israel?

Brittany Mangelson

You were setting yourself right up!

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, and mind you I'm a Baptist girl. You never heard about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Barely, you know, at this time, you know, in the sort of in the early nineties, late eighties, early nineties, um, barely even knew, like one or two Muslim friends knew one Jewish girl. That was that my whole life was, you know, baptist, you know, in summer camps and maybe meet the occasional Methodist or something. But that's it. And so, um, anyways, I spent a whole year working on that, and then years later, I see this commercial that same you know, Jesus spent time in America. So just because of that, you know, just just kind of stopped me and made me curious. And so, um, that was when I first reached out to talk to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints. And you know, they were calling me. Oh, you're the golden ah investigator because, you know, again from I got respect ground it is very common to just church shop. And so I called and I talked to, I guess, a sister missionary and I got a copy book of Mormon. And then a few weeks later, I call it was like OK, so word, right. Where can I go to join your church? And, um I think Well, I know. And after the fact, Like months later, they thought that I was calling to prank them so they don't take me seriously. But I was serious. I was like, OK, so where you guys, you know, I do You have someone you know, You have a place local, and, um, they're like, Well, we've gotta send, you know, some missionaries out to talk to you and teach you some lessons. Make sure this is what you do. Okay, here's my address. You know, when you know when he come tomorrow when you're coming. And so the first appointment we made, no one came. So then I called back no one came. What's going on?

Over? Sorry we started. Couldn't find you. Second time No one came. And so then the third time and called, like five minutes before. Okay, I'm here. I'm ready! Where you? They didn't come. So then life gets busy, and, um, I just didn't think about it for a few weeks. So again, this is This is like subsection related happened in October. November. I'm trying to meet with these missionaries. Um, so then, in December, still working at Duke Hospital, I get an automated kind of Christmas like a, um, e card e Christmas card from from the church. And it's kind of animated. And it shows, um, like Bethlehem with the star and it's like, mission made Christmas. And so, um, I thought it was nice, and this was when social meeting email was new. So this is so beautiful. Sight forward it to, um, pharmacy department at Duke Hospital, which at that time, the pharmacy department consisted of 100 pharmacists, 200 pharmacy technicians. It was just kind of like everyone's what People afford stuff, you know, just wishing everyone happy holidays, basically. And so, um, about a week later, I bumped into one of the pharmacy technicians in the hall and he was actually older. Gentlemen, kind of quasi retired, I think. Just working there to get the benefits and he stops me a hallway, you tears in his eyes and it's just so overwhelmed. And he's just like, Oh, my goodness, Kelly, thank you so much for sending me the Christmas card. It was just so thoughtful. I didn't know that you knew that I was a member of the church and have just seen something so personal, Just, you know, thank you. And and this is so out of my mind, I'm thinking, What do you return? What you mean You mean the eyes are You said that everybody and it was just a funny thing. So he was a member of the LDS church. And so I was like, You know, that's the thing about you guys. You guys don't follow up with appointments cause I made these three appointments and no one came and that's it. That's it up. And, um so then he started crying again. He said, Just feel so bad. I've been receiving promptings to talk with you about, you know, the church, but I still are occurred because it's right working. We hardly get a hard labour new here. You are, you know, trying to trying to meet with missionaries. Well, I'm best friends with the mission president. You could come to my house and we'll get it set up. So through him was when I first started having the, uh um missionary discussions with the 1st 1 and still with my Baptist lined I'm thinking is just one. And then you can join the church. So at the end of that, you know, they asked him any questions. I said, so we can get that we're gonna get baptized, You know, um so just kind of funny thing. So, needless to say, back in those days, this would have been never crossing over to early 2000 and two. You know, I was all going ho with, you know, joining the LDS church. You know, I was completely surrounded by just friendly people. I saw great examples of, um, you know, loving, you know, um you know, relationships. All of this is where you know, this is where I'd like to be, So that's kind of where get started. So it would have been February, actually. 2000 and two when I, um, got baptized a second time to the LDS church.

Kelly Padilla

Nice. What a story. I can't believe that you have three no shows. Like no contacts from nothing. Yeah, And so that was when I found out after the fact was because they just thought someone was pranking them because it seemed too easy. And I guess the the townhouse that I was living in at the time, it was brand new. So it wasn't showing up on any, you know, maps. And back then we're talking map quest, you know, it's so they just thought this is just a prank. But I kept calling

Brittany Mangelson

Back when you would print off your directions, Right?

Kelly Padilla

Right. Exactly.

Brittany Mangelson

Oh, man. Wow. What a story! Uh, then you were LDS.

Kelly Padilla

Yep.

Brittany Mangelson

How did that work out for you?

Kelly Padilla

So I was, you know, LDS and just everything. I was just such a honeymoon phase, you know, just loved everything about it. I loved all the programs. I love the home teaching of visiting, teaching, and break the fast, you know. So back then I was you know, even though I had you know, I had been out the house, you know, graduated and working on my living by myself for a while. You know, they move to the singles ward, which is a whole new concept, you know, for me. And I thought, Wow, there's so many young people just like me. You are, you know, trying to be faithful just loved everything about it. Definitely. You know, I was one of the tokens when the oddballs, because, you know, most of the people were, you know, Caucasian. And I wasn't. Ah, But besides that, I mean, it wasn't a bad thing. It was just very clear, culturally for me, growing up in the Black Church, um, things like, for example, with considered reverent Wright are much different. And But I had never associated that with the church. The earliest church. I still share that with just different culture, you know which. But you get used to growing up here. Yeah, and during that time also was dating. So is dating that the person at the time was going to be my future husband. Um, he grew up catholic and definitely was not interested. And, you know, being in church or any church you know one of those people who you know, knows God, but not different. Absolutely not interested in being a member of the church, And And that was fine with me. So, um, you know, things got serious and we got married a couple of years later. During those two years, I was, I guess, progressing and faith, I guess within the LDS church doing various callings, I remember I Let's see, we got married and then Oh, yes. So I was preparing to go to the temple, and this is the first time I encountered something that just kind of rubbed me the wrong way. I put it on the shelf, so and whether all the temple classes and your everything's fine and I'm ready to go. And then the bishop calls me to his office and wanted me to, you know, talk to me about my preparations and what had my husband feel about it. And I'm thinking, why asking what my husband feels I mean, we were married. We've talked about it, you know, doesn't you know, whatever. But then I finally got it that he was actually telling me that I needed to get written permission from my husband to go to the tippie because he was not a member of the church.

Brittany Mangelson

I have heard some people about that, but I have never actually talked to somebody that that's happened to.

Kelly Padilla

Right. It had to be written and it took me a while to get that. That's what he was telling me because it was really kind and gentle. And I think in hindsight he felt awkward even saying it, saying, this has to happen if you're serious about going to this temple and I'm thinking that is ridiculous, you know, whatever. Some calling him, just talking on the phone, you know? You know, I tell him, Tell him, you know, that I could go to temple, you know, but it was just the whole this whole big deal. So So then I had to wait and go and get the right paperwork and haven't feel it out and sign at it. It was just kind of this awkward. It was really awkward. And so that was only my first not so blissful feeling. You know about the church. It was kind of just so antiquated. And I thought, Wow, you know what's next, you means you're gonna have to bring sheep or something for me. You know, I have to go this temple. What? You know,

Brittany Mangelson

Here's my offering!!

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, yeah. So that's That's still that was still limping. And, you know, what was that 2004? That was a lot of people do that. Yeah. Yeah. Grown women. Yeah. And so and then I thought, Well, that's ridiculous. So then I had to ask the question, What if I had done this before We get married? Would you have needed my dad's for Meshiai? No, because you're an adult. But once you get married as a female, I guess I wasn't anymore. So yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

So did you end up going through the temple?

Kelly Padilla

I did, And a few probably weeks before, maybe a month or so before I went. It just so happened that the church in the Ensign magazine, had some articles or had a theme about the temple. And even though I had taken all the classes and I remember my bishop of the time saying, you know, there's nothing secret about the temple, everything sacred, and there's nothing that the, um will be taught in the temple that would conflict. What you already know, you know about God is like some not some new revelation that's only, you know, shared in the temple. And, um, when I read this Sunni waiver, this magazine from the ensign, it had one article about the all of the symbols, all of the kind of the ceremony, the ceremony itself, and talking about how you know, people have, um, outside the church, have talked about it being like from the Masonic, you know, writes, But, um, it said something about well, you know, you may see similarities. That is mean is from that, you know, is just that it's so ancient that different groups may have pulled some of these things and some have used it out of the context, you know, blah, blah, blah. But it was kind of in a quick break, apologetically like you Don't worry, you know, everything's fine, you know, You know, you'll you'll have a great experience in the temple, and I

think I did. I was just remember being so excited. You know, my escort was just a sweet, sweet lady who, um, took me through and excuse me. It was packed that night because, um, you know, pretty much everyone in my ward who could come you could get it, could get in there. Of course, we're talking a much smaller temple than I'm Salt Lake. So, um, um, um, yeah, so, I mean, I had a great experience, then some parts were definitely okay. This is what they're, you know, this is what they're talking about. Okay? All right. You know, Yeah. I'll go there, the hoops, you know, whatever. But I'm not here. I'm not here for the physical, you know, ceremony, um, here for the spiritual. You know, endowments. Um um And actually, by the time I left that night, um was about 45 minute drive from the temple to our house. And I remember immediately calling my husband just being so excited and telling him this makes you want to be a better wife. And everything is gonna be so great. And, you know, I'm so happy in blessed and you know, all of those things. So at the man think it was Ah, it was more awkward going in before the temple, you know, preparing again the permission slip, Then it was actually in the during the endowment on. I remember not sleeping last night that night because I just kept thinking about the whole thing. And and it was just so much information. I remember I couldn't sleep. Yeah, from time to time during at the beginning. You know, I would, um, go. And some point, I I had a calling to join the young women's, um, presidency. And I remember going mawr part of it, because I was dealing with the you would go and dio baptisms. But I just remember during that period just doing a lot of family history. I was just so excited about learning. You know more about my own family, and, um, kind of filling in a lot of gaps and, you know, bringing in, um, my own names and, um, yeah, I just, you know, just loved. And I thought, This is great. This is a great church of me. What? You know, You know, whenever we moved, you know, the brothers would come and help move it, you know, just just one big, huge family wherever we went. Um, it was just great.

Brittany Mangelson

It sounds like it worked. So when did it stop working?

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, um, That's what I'm trying to think, when did when the things stopped working? So I think there were some, I guess, just a little one off things in the back of my mind, you know, for maybe, um, a couple of years that it wasn't a big deal, but just kind of, like, noted, you know, just little things. Like, um, like, for example, the whole Kate Kelly think, actually, before I go there, I'll just give a general one before then. So being in North Carolina where we are, there's a lot of universities. So we actually have a lot. A lot of young people who come here from Utah go to med school or law school or excuse me. A lot of men who come here from med school in law school and their young wives who come with their little cute little babies. And so they're just a lot of young professionals in this area who were members of the church. A lot of them probably leading more liberal than their parents. Right? Um, in Utah, not all of them, But you know, some of them. But then, you know, inevitably the parents will come to visit their their new grandchild and visit church, and so that you just get little glimpses of what it must be like to be in Utah and little things that just irks me, like, you know, that come and visit. Oh, it's just so lovely to be out in the wilderness. And, you know, you guys have so much faith here, and I'm thinking, what were you expecting? Like, why are you calling us the wilderness where we

literally sitting here in the temple? Like what? You know. And so I'm just learning a lot of little little tidbits of that culture that from day to day, I just never saw until little things like that would happen. And so are just the whole thing, people will come and, um, you know, introduce themselves because people are friendly when I meet each other, but they would define themselves by how far their family goes back into the pioneer heritage as part of, like, part of their value. And I'm thinking, I don't really care, you know. But if we talk Pioneer guess what you're you're might be 1/6 generation pioneer. I'm a first generation pioneer! You know, it's just just weird little things like that. Where, um it just it was very clear that they were just certain types of people that I guess that are considered, um, better Oh, are more valuable than others. Based on that sort of, you know, stuff that I felt from a faith perspective, it just didn't even register with me as a convert. So anyway, so that background So the whole thing with Kate Kelly happens, and I'm just, you know, an outsider looking afar like man, that's cool. Go. You know, go on, Sister! Go ahead, Sister. And for some reason, someone mentioned it during Sunday school and someone's mom was there. And the first time I ever heard someone just say the most mean, mean girl, vile things about another woman. Interns, ever in my whole life I can't even repeat with this person, this mom said about Kate Kelly, and you would have thought Kate Kelly you killed all of her Children. Just horrible, horrible things about her. And the reason why she felt was okay to do it. Because, you know she was leading, you know, ordain women. And I just thought that's not right. That's not right. By just being so shocked. It was almost, like, stunned. I'd even know. Like, I feel like I need to say something right? Even know what to say? Because it was just is one of these. You don't realize how far apart you are from someone until they come out and say it. You know, um and so then I just after that. And then I think, is when I really, honestly started paying attention to all these little things that why are all these little things I noticed. But maybe I'm immune to because I'm in North Carolina. It might, for my perspective, that was a one off, you know? Wow. You know. But then, um, in October, maybe before you, Then let's say 2015. I just started noticing little things. Like I saw this article about this young woman or this gun family. I guess the mom taught nursery. Um, and she got, I guess, reprimanded. Maybe for teaching something that was in the church essays. And I can't remember The topic was But I remember thinking what are the church essays. What are they talking about? You know, And so then I go and find those who read them. And I remember being irritated that they're they're like, a footnote, and it was never mentioned. Never knew they were there. Um, but then when I read deep about deeper about this one particular woman, I thought, Well, why is she getting reprimanded for teaching something that's, you know, on the church website? Well, because it wasn't in the manual, right, So? So that bothered me. And as you probably knows, I speak out lot sometimes and Facebook. And so I'm you know, I'm just, you know, speaking from my Protestant background. This isn't right. And why do this? Why do you think about that? And I'm not knowing that I'm scaring off all my Mormon friends, you know? Right. So, um, but I'm just like, asking the question right, cause I come from a background where if you see something that's not right, call it out. You know? So, um and so I'm kind of asking all these questions, but me. Well, I'm still feel happy in the church. At this point. I'm actually, um I think teaching in the primary my now you for years of past in my children are in the primary, and I'm teaching on the classes and I was able to get tickets to go see General Conference. And I thought, this is I saw him, you know,

face like I'm going to General Conference. Who can, you know, host me. I can't wait. I'm coming, I'm coming.

Kelly Padilla

And so, um, I go out there first time in Utah, First time Salt Lake City and, um, the super excited. And, um uh, and I think my experience was kind of like Martin Luther View did the story of Martin Luther. You know, he group in the country, right? And Germany somewhere Austria wherever. And he goes to Rome for the first time. That's how I felt. That is exactly how I felt. And I went from the highest high. I mean, even while I was there, I mean, I wouldn't toward, you know, everything all all the places to be, and I'm just so excited. But then I you know, just you start seeing things like all of the ads for, like, cosmetic surgery and just all of the things like this. This isn't right. This is it. This this is not matching. What, you know, it's just a lot of little thing, a lot of little things, but all of it, I'm seeing it all at the same time. That same weekend. Yeah. That was October 2015, right? So then I fly home and thinking, Well, that's That's a lot to process. I'm gonna get some time to process this.

Brittany Mangelson

Utah is wild!

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, but I'm thinking it's fine. I'm back in my, you know, my home congregation. Everything's fine. I've got plenty of time to process this, then November 2015 like Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, so then that Yes. So then So then it's like, OK, I'm gonna have to deal with this now. You know, there's no more putting things on the shelf, and so I think that's when,

Brittany Mangelson

Just for people who might not know. I'm assuming most of our listeners, because we've talked about before on the podcast. But when you say November policy, November 2015. What are you specifically talking about?

Kelly Padilla

Yeah. So, um of course the first I first hear about it on Facebook. People are posting the articles about it. But basically, the church comes out with, um the new, I guess policy making it very clear, I think, as a response to marriage equality, right. But making it very clear that if you're in the LGBTQ community and a member of the church and that shall be excommunicated or this is so horrible that you should probably be excommunicated for that reason alone and that furthermore, any children of that relationship are no longer allowed to be participants in any blessings or, you know, special programs. It can't be baptized even if they want to. Even if their own parents have the permission, they're not allowed to do that until they are over 18 and then only after. You know, once they reach 18 only after they kind of denounced that, you know what they call life. And it was just it was just too much. I remember this, remember? And during this time, I'm kind of skipping around. You don't want details were during this time, you know, I was having issues in my marriage as well. And so after that wonderful, quasi wonderful trip to Utah, Um, You know, I thought, I'll have time to process this right now. I need to focus

on my mattress, you know, other things to focus on. But all of this was happening at the same time, and it was just too much. I just remember just being so, um angry, angry at God with because I'm thinking I need to have to be this church, you know? I wasn't raised the search. You know, I felt like God let me to go to that church. You know, with all my little experiences you have had such a great, you know, life the whole time I was in admitting that met such great people. You know, I'm not, you know, lesbian or anything, but I feel like I've always been an ally, and this is just too much. And it was It was just, you know, I was like, not only I think if I hadn't had children, I'm probably would still be a member today because I feel like I need to fight, you know, I need to fight, and I'm just going to stay and fight until they kick me out. But I think being in, um, the primary teaching primary. And, um um, you know, seeing the, um, the little manuals, you know, they were They kind of give the topics and your suggestions of what you make sure you give it to share testimony about it, just like this is it. This is not right, you know, And I do not want, I cannot let my children grow up in this environment where they would be told the church is one thing, But then the church is actually doing another, you know? No, it's not happening.

Brittany Mangelson

I said the exact same thing. I was in the primary to when we left. And I thought if this was just me, I could kind of create my own church in my head and just deal with it and try to be an advocate and an ally and all that. But I could not put my kids through that. I just thought that I'm, I knew that I would be a hypocrite. And I'm not saying that people that stay and have kids are hypocrites. But for me, that's how I felt when you know a few months that I was trying to stay and make it work, I like my personality was being split in two. And it was It was too much. Yeah, it's so for that. So that's when these just, um, just started. Just angry. Did I just can't I can't express how angry I was, you know, because I've been to the point a lot. This church is true and and the church's money forward and you know, yes, it has a history, but so does about disturbs. Have a history. I mean, all of these, you know, churches, you know, you have a history, you know, But we're moving forward, and this is moving. This is moving backwards. And, um yeah, so I did a lot of yelling and screaming and and having temper tantrums, you know, argue about this, You know, this or that or the other. But my plan was stay in there and and we're going to sort this out, right? Because this is the true church. And, you know, God will not let you know the true church, you know, do something like this. And I remember one time and one of my prayers just just kind of yelling at God, not yelling verbally, but just spiritually just yelling at handles. How could you do this? How dare you? What about the children? What about Jesus said about, you know, bring the children on to me? Just what about this? What about that? Um, and I just remember just getting kind of an answer, just like maybe this is not me. And that thought scared me because I thought, Oh, no. Maybe I'm being influenced. You know, Why would I why would I have? How could I think that thought? And so so then I became perfect. Mormon started going to the temple often like and And for here, you know, it's again almost 45 minutes just to get there, you know, having to get child care, because I'm you know, you know, coming single and all that stuff and going several times a week, Like I thought, you know, maybe there's something I'm missing, right? You know, that's my friends is only on Facebook. Have faith, and they'll understand. You know, I have this, you know? So I'm doing everything I can to try to understand, Um, still talking a lot of jobs, you know, in the meantime, but just like,

help me understand God because you have got. We have got to work this out, okay? And, um, so a few months later, and I'm still in the, you know, in the primary and older bed in our had a fireside in South America there, probably Brazil I can't remember. And, um, you know, there's certain apostles that I just would people interest because I because he was 11 of the ones that had that, um, has come to North Carolina since I've been a member, you know? And so um oh, I wonder what Elder Bednar was talking about. And, um, there was nothing really scandalous about the fireside. But afterwards he had a Q and A. You should not have had the Q and A. And so the first question, the different someone said, Well, how can we as members reach out and show love to the gay lesbian? You have members of the church. You know, this policy that a lot of people hurting, what can we do to, um, support them and his and other translating it ride from English to I guess, um, Portuguese in the back. But he knew what the question was. And so his response was well, there aren't any gay and lesbian members of the church. And that was it. No, that was it. When I read it, I read that I thought surely didn't do that so that I looked it up and found the video. Okay, He did that. And so that night, I think it was like a random Tuesday. But that's it. I can't go by. I cannot physically go back there. And so at that point ahead are decided I'm done. But as a courtesy, I'm going to I'm going to do a formal resignation. So I emailed my bishop and my stake president, who at that time used to be my bishops are These people have been for several years. Both my bishop and my stake president had Children in my primary class, um, center, the whole family. And, ah, you know, we all kind of knew each other, and I said, I'm just let you know. I'm telling you this as a courtesy, because you're gonna need a substitute for me for Sunday class because I will not be there. I am not coming back. My resignation is attached. And And that was it. Yeah, That was it. Yeah. and, yeah, it was a so, um so I guess I felt so exposed. I don't know what the right word where it is to do that. Because I'd invested so much time and energy and love into this, and I was like, That's it. I can't do it anymore. Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

Wow. Wow. Yeah. I probably should have asked this question a while ago, but how did your family react to you becoming Mormon? I mean, because you probably have some tough conversations with, um, Yeah, you know, you intentionally chose this. You intentionally went against your family's long, long, long tradition. Who could make this stuff and then to be devastated by the church? I mean, that adds huge layer of just complexity onto a faith transition story.

Kelly Padilla

Right. Absolutely. And I would say it was more of I don't think I had any kind of negative pushback. I think part of it, because a lot of people in my family really hadn't paid attention to the church because it was just so outside of, you know, kind of our universe. Um, the question here on the news about Warren Jeffs of people like, Oh, that's the polygamous church and that it had to defend it. No, it's not because, you know, you know, that was stopped in 18 fifties and little blonde, this is get out. And, um well, then I'll get well, you know, like people you know were allowed to have the pieces. Yes, but that was second care on in 1978. And, you know, everything's right now. And you remember the Baptist Church. They didn't want to stay here either. So you know everyone. We're all moving forward. We're all learning together, you

know? So I definitely had those conversations and it probably, you know, for my parents specifically, it's just kind of like, you know, do do whatever you know. It feels right for you. They all came to my baptism, and I think they just want to make sure I felt that I was safe in wasn't being, you know, chorister anything. And then I'm happy. And they were. They were supportive of it. You know, I never stopped getting tease for you for not drinking. Ah, alcohol or sweet tea? Probably more. The sweet tea. That's that's a thing right in the South. That's a big That's a big thing thing. And I remember actually when Ah, when the missionaries like you got to stop drinking tea, it was like, What? Why? What's wrong with tea? Like and I had tea and all forms. I had the sweet iced tea out have the hot English tea, Earl Grey with it, almost every day. And I actually went there, Ah, withdrawal when I stopped because it was getting so much caffeine from all that. Um and, you know, at the conversations, what is it about it? Is that the caffeine or is a tea or what about herbal tea? What about it Up? You know all those conversations and, you know, why is it surprising? What does God care? You know, you all of that stuff. You know, it worked through and work Tito my close friends and family through and the and then all the sudden is like, You know what I'm doing this church, you know? Uh huh. And I think that was part of my anger, too, because, like, I feel like I had done so much to intentionally I just felt betrayed, you know? And I just especially in a time when you know when people were, you know, just so devastated and committing suicide. And just just so many horrible things. How could how could you know someone let that happen, you know? And then just kind of, um, took it off as well. We must have faith. Must have more faith to understand it better think eternally. I was like you know what I'm gonna think eternally over here. I need to be separate.

Brittany Mangelson

You have fun over there.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, exactly.

Brittany Mangelson

So then from there, how did you find Community of Christ?

Kelly Padilla

Yes. Oh, so then, you know, I'm, you know, single separated, you know, have went from being completely immersed into this church family, do not having anything. And I still want to be a member of some kind of community. And And I thought, well, I could go back to the Baptist Church and his family church little you know, somebody back. But it's like, No, it's not. Yeah, I knew that some things about me had changed some of my beliefs. I thought about, you know, in the past, and I attended the Unitarian Church and, you know, with all the different Protestant face and everything so some of it just already knew that wouldn't be interested. Probably the groups, the two groups that I was considering would be Lutheran. Interesting Lutheran, Right. And, um, we have some work. Is that you United Church of Christ, UCC, I guess around here that seemed to be very just, you know, kind of affirming, welcoming. All keep Well, yeah. So anyway, I got online again. It just kind of looked around and see what was around in this area. And, um I thought, you know, what I really need is just some kind of a Mormon light, Mormon

light, you know, group. And so I think I maybe Google that or something and and pop that I think it was like some discussion group popped up on this. Someone was talking about CofC. And so it took me a while to figure out what is the CofC, you know. And so then when I finally figured it out, that was the RLDS church. It kind of gave me pause because I remembered back now way back when I was taking the discussions, I remembered seeing RLDS church website when I was looking at the LDS website because you're some reason at the time, both websites look very similar. And so I wish I had not gone by what someone told me about the church, and it is just going to see what people say about it themselves. But there's two things that I was told. Oh, we'll see. See, they're always trying their two things. One, they're always trying to copy us. See? Even their website is trying to copy us. So the then two the other one is oh, they believe that you have to have a, um, a blood relative in your son to to be prophet. And we believe in revelation and see you to see how true we are, that sort of thing. And that was it. That's all I ever heard, and and, um, I just never looked into it again. And, um, in hindsight, looking back, I think that, um, the church that I thought I was joining, like as far as my beliefs was actually more of Community of Christ, you know, um, but I just didn't go deep enough, you know, back when I was, you know, church hopping. So I don't know if that answers that question. Um, but at any rate and I saw, I just started looking a lot online on the website. You know, there's a lot of videos on there. I saw it was just I was just remember doing a lot of crying. And I thought I might crying because of the marriage or my crying just because of change. Or, you know, is is this me something to me? And I just could not stop looking at all these different things on the, um, Community of Christ website. And then, um, one day I thought, well, you know, it will go visit yet I will just go peak your head and And I went and there was only, um, like one car in the parking lot. And I thought, Maybe it's the wrong day, you know, it's just the right time, or the website said this started 11 but maybe that's not right. So we didn't go that time. So then when another tire said, OK, there's two cars. Maybe, you know, I'm just gonna go in and see what's going on, because it might be, you know, it's definitely a lot smaller than I was used to. I'd learned that actually, most people parked around the back. So there were more people there than I thought. But, um um, just from the first time I stepped into the doors, there was a sweet lady city there by the door passing out programs, and it was just like I was home immediately. She just welcomed me. And it was almost like, um she's when she hears this. She is Ah, a Paula Deen fairy godmother. You know, just super sweet and just so look, I mean, everyone getting up to introduce themselves again. It's maybe 20 people in the whole, the whole building. And so And when we walked in when I wanted with my two daughters, Now we've increased the number of youth by, you know, 200% you know, right? And so, you know, you know, there's a bunch of, you know, grand parents right in this congregation. Okay, so just the joy of seeing youth in there, and, um, it was great. And I can't, um I think when I walked in, they were they were finishing up Sunday schools. I saw a little bit of that and then moved over to the church service. And just it was just everything about it. I just felt, you know, just welcomed. And, um, when I explained this to some people, you know, um, one of the terms that discussed a lot of Community Christ is being a sanctuary of Christ peace. And, um, actually, I first heard that term. Just I didn't really get it, didn't it? Didn't identify with me because I always thought of sanctuary as the building, the room, But this until this particular day where I actually felt like I was like a spirituals refugee, like coming Just, you know, I just remember to sitting there in just, you know, they would have the program and and I'll just sit

there and cry, you know, for an hour. I think what? We go home, you know, And And I just realized that for the first several weeks, you know, didn't regularly, like, you know, here in here and there it was just I would just sit there and just cry, just, you know, and they and they welcome that. They would just let me, you know, And then a few months later, they're like, Whoa, would you like to come? They would start inviting me to things and then a few months later, they started asking me to do stuff in the program and the, uh, the worship service. And so just very gentle. Um, I think they really let me do kind of my healing there before they, you know, you asked me to do things. I just love that about it too. Especially coming from, you know, faith where you gotta do work, work, work. Part of your value is what you can do. Um, but here it just felt like I'm already loved because of who I am, if that makes sense, so yeah,

Brittany Mangelson

Yeah, that does make sense. And it's so interesting to hear you to kind of backtrack just a little bit when you of, uh, when you joined the LDS church, it seems like looking back on it. Now, you kind of assume that you were joining a church light community price. A lot of people who have found Community Christ from the LDS Church in their head. They've kind of created their own version of the LDS Church. That looks like Community of Christ.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah. Yeah.

Kelly Padilla

So when you say, you know, what would their ideal church look like or whatever? Well, what would that experience be like they often are describing Community Christ. And when people do walk in to a Community of Christ congregation or when they attend online worship, service or whatever, Uh, there is kind of that sense of coming home because I think that a lot of us have just kind of created that experience in our brains and in our hearts. And then it just clicks.

Kelly Padilla

It just clicks, Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

So I do you think there's a lot of people that that that would relate to that.

Kelly Padilla

So, yeah, and then for my children, during this time, my oldest was actually turning eight, which is a big deal to because it's like right, which just time for to be baptized. I leave the LDS church, you know, And so she had been raised thinking into doing all this preparation she's expecting, you know, for someone to ask her to be baptized when she turns eight. And so she asked me, Mom, I'm gonna be eight soon. What are we doing?

Kelly Padilla

You know, and and so I kind of, you know, encouraged her to wait because I really wanted to her to understand that this was a different church. And what about it is different and, you know, make it be a real decision versus a rite of passage. Right? Um, and, um and one of the things that she had commented, um, one night because again, very small. First of all, I can't stress how small it is most the time we go my children are the only two there during the during this time and then in the summers, like some of the other members, their grandchildren become that sort of thing. And so when they would have I had this one teacher that that takes them that takes the youth out and teaches them a lesson during the part of the church service. And so one day I just asked, How is it going? Oh, it's great, it's fine. And she kind of said, You know, we don't do as much stuff, but, um but I really like it. And I said, Well, what do you like about it? And my little eight year old said, Well, I feel like everyone is really kind to me, but it's different. And I was like what do you mean? She said, well I feel like they're kind to me because they want to not because they have to.

Brittany Mangelson

Oh, she picked up on that!

Kelly Padilla

And I thought, wow, She gets it. Yeah, she she could feel the difference. And I said, You know what, that's exactly how I feel. That's why we're here. Because I want us to be in a place where we feel, you know, you feel you know what people say about us or to us. We feel authenticity and that we can. I want us to feel like we can be our true selves whatever that is, without any, you know, judgment. So, um, but during that time, they didn't really know the real reason why we left. Now, now that they're older, I've explained it to them. And they're like, Oh, man, that sucks. Yeah, Yeah, I'm glad you took us out, you know, Good riddance. That sort of at the time, it just I don't think Yeah, it would have been appropriate. So Yeah. So, um, yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

So, this was how many years ago that you found Community of Christ?

Kelly Padilla

So that would have been actually, um, 2016 when we started kind of going. And then it was 2017 when I actually got confirmed a member. And then actually, just last fall, both of my girls got baptized. Yeah. So what, last year they would have been 8 and 10 Um, but yeah, we love it.

Brittany Mangelson

So what does church life look like for, you know, um, kind of things that I mean, have you been able to get involved in things or your kids involved in the congregation at all? Like what does it just a day in the life of your family with your congregation? What does it look like?

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, I would say for us that we show up for the kind of the 11 o'clock Sunday service. I know they have Sunday school, you know, every Sunday at 9:30 we just don't make it that early. And

I'm not trying to if you so that's that's what, that's what it is,. Um, we have, you know, again during the service on one of the other women takes the kids out to teach a lesson. Pretty much well, the sermon this happening in the church service. I love monthly potluck. That's where really have gotten to know everyone where everyone brings food, and we have just a big long table set up. And this is a smaller congregation, so our potluck is in the same room where we have our sanctuary. Like we move, move the chairs and put set up tables and have, um, potluck there. In the summers, we have, um, vacation Bible school, which is a remnant from my experience growing up Baptists. That was a big thing for my childhood. Um, having vacation bible school. So I have, um, been involved with that and have been one of the vacation Bible school, um, teachers of the first year. Now, I'm kind of helping planet each year and that we kind of open up to the community. Um, here I play the flute. So a lot of times, I will play the flute during worship service. And, for example, women's retreats or the union? This year is the first year I am on the committee to help plan our women's retreat for our mission center. And so, um, the past few years have been going out to this beautiful. Actually. I think it's a Methodist own kind of retreat. Conference center up in the mountains outside of Asheville. And we say this historic hotel, you kind of imagine dirty dancing, you know, the old kind of mountain retreats. And so we go there and have that and some on the committee this year. So I'm learning kind of learning how that goes. Um, one thing that we desperately need to do, and I've kind of fallen to raise my hand to do it is work on the website for our congregation, especially as someone, you know, myself who initially that's all I did was look online about Community of Christ, I'm sure I know there's others out there. Um, we do have kind of a local Facebook group of Latter-day Seekers for the Carolinas, which is pretty pretty quiet, but I guess I'm admin for that. But, um, recently, actually, last fall, I went to a kind of a training for the Latter-day Seeker ministry. Um, just trained people on how to better be prepared for the Latter-day Seekers and accept them. And so, um, I went to that, and actually, that's where I met Barbara Carter. So this is a , side tangent conversation. So I met her for the first time. she's just totally awesome. Right?

Brittany Mangelson

Yes! Her episode for PZP actually went live today, so

Kelly Padilla

Okay, Okay. I want to listen to that. So, um anyway, I was telling her about how I've been really wanting To have an excuse or have a time. Something to take my kids to the temple Independence and Kirtland. I've never been. And maybe we could go like summer vacation and go up and do it. And I was telling her how that was what we're gonna do this past summer. But then schools changed and we had to, you know, we switched to year round school schedule now, so we couldn't do it anyway, So she said, Well, you've got to go to Kirtland. They're having this Advent retreat. Um, in December, and this was like gonna be the next week. You got to go and and so I was able to go to that, and it was a wonderful , wonderful experience to go to Kirtland a little sidebar conversation. But anyway, so I came back for that rejuvenated and done this kind of Latter-day Seeker training. So I'm feeling that, you know, um, this is where I think I could really lead, have building that ministry and in the website. Um, because I know every once in a while people will come in and visit one time. And I know some people have reached

out to me just, um through a DM asking about it. Who, um clearly don't feel comfortable asking and public because, you know, that stigma of of asking questions and LDS church. Um, but, you know, here, even though we have enough people here to support an LDS temple, um, it's just very because the Community of Christ congregation is so small. There's definitely a fear of coming there and then bumping to someone else Unit might know, You know, I kind of being outed as as ah, investigator. And so people, you know it. And it's very obvious when a new person comes. We're that small. So yeah, so, um, so I'm hoping that maybe with the website, we could just have a lot more information and point people to the online community, things like that, where people can just learn more in a safe in a safe place. Yeah, yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

Wow. That's all so awesome and I love that your little girls are seeing you do all of this stuff.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah,

Brittany Mangelson

You're able to be involved in ways that you wouldn't have been able to be involved in the LDS church.

Kelly Padilla

Absolutely not!

Brittany Mangelson

And I love again that they recognize that the congregation loves them, not because they have to love them or they're obligated to, its was just what, what people do!

Kelly Padilla

Right? Yeah. Person, The woman who was a woman who have baptized, both of my girls and she actually was kind of a lead for the vacation Bible school. And it was very special for her because, you know, she grew up in Community of Christ and remembers back when women do not have the priesthood. And she had commented how she remembered when her daughter wanted to be baptized she couldn't do it because she was a woman. And so she was recently ordained last year, and so she was able to do it. It was just very special for the whole, you know, community, not just for my girls, but for her as well. You know, it's feel to participate in that.

Brittany Mangelson

What a full circle moment. So I guess, what are your hopes for Community of Christ? I mean, coming from, you know, having a such a rich religious background and having gone to a lot of different churches, you've seen the way that churches down in a lot of different places. So what are your hopes for Community of Christ?

Kelly Padilla

I wish there was a way for more people to just know about it. And I've said this often, you know, because, like, for example, now we've got these business meetings and I'm just like, I can't believe we're having a business meeting. This is so awesome. It's like it's like I wanted, like, shake, shake the members to say you don't know what you have like this is this is so awesome. Do you realize how awesome this is? This is, you know, and it's like I don't want to say they take it for granted, but it's just so normal to them. They don't just realize, like all the little things of how of the programs, not just the programs, but just how the church was organized is so special and that I think the long term members don't realize that I wish my dream is for there to be a way where that realization would happen so that others could see it, you know? Yeah. And I don't know what that looks like, but I just feel like I'm sitting on a treasure is that it's almost, like, not fair that have access to this and others, others don't you know? Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

Yeah, I know that. Well, we had a We had a business meeting soon after. I started attending a couple months and people were almost apologetic about it. Like, Oh, sorry. You've got a business meeting and I was like a WHAT? We can look at the budget and we can talk about it and we could debate it, and we continue. And and I mean, it was I end up. I was really excited.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And even like with my daughter's this past summer was the first time we were all able to go to re in, um, in our, um, mission center. And, um, it was, um, over Labor Day weekend. It was the first time I grows. Really got to me a lot of other kids from other congregations and you know, the kids have their own little camp stuff and adults had their can't stuff so outgoing they did not see them. And then a dinner time My youngest like branta me hug, which said, Mom this church is awesome. I like it way better than the church we normally attend that I was like that same church. Yeah, really? Yeah, yeah. So now she can't wait to go next year and we know reconnect with her friends. So I'm just, um it is for my family. Just I'm just looking forward for us as a family growing together, learning more about, you know, kind of the Community of Christ way. But just wish there was a way that we could be a shared more with people outside who I know we're looking, but, um, you know, you don't want toe. I think there's at least for me that sometimes you feel like Oh, no. Is this again make you know, it was just too good to be true? Are you just trying to do a bait and switch on me? You know where it's not? Um overly zealous Anyway, that's my quandary.

Brittany Mangelson

I know! I totally get it. I kept waiting when I was early in my seeking months, I just kept waiting for the big skeleton in the closet to appear. I was like hey when am I going to be devastated because I've been devastated before! And that's not to say that the church is perfect, but man.

Kelly Padilla

But it's real. But it's real I think that's the difference. It's real. Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

Exactly. And people are just sincere and usually willing to say when they get it wrong. And collectively, there's somebody that will catch you if you fall and yeah., I've yet to run across that big skeleton in the closet, so knock on wood! Don't let us down, church!

Kelly Padilla

Yeah, you know, transparency is its key, and you can't help because I'm still friends with, you know, you know, Mormon. I still have my Mormon friends and things, and you see here about stuff every once in a while of what's going on, you know, in the LDS Church. And and it's almost like, um, you know, I don't think people are even doing it consciously. This kind of like, See, we're getting better. Maybe you can come back now and it's like that ship has sailed, honey! We're way past that now.

Brittany Mangelson

Yeah, we've had people commented, you know, what would it take to get you to come back? And we're like literally nothing. You could come up with a big old checklist and they could cross it all off, but we have simply moved on.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah. Yeah, well, I've said it was probably sacrilegious, but even if Jesus came back and said, Kelly, it's it's okay now you come back to the LDS church. I'd be like, seriously, seriously, Jesus? It's like I'm good over here!

Brittany Mangelson

Well, if that's sacrilegious, I laughed. So there's that. Ah, well, I want to thank you for sharing your story. And, you know, it's it's so interesting to hear the faith transition stories from other people. Because so there's so many connecting points to my own story to other Latter-day Seekers that we've had on, um, that just this path that's brought us all to the same place, it's just really exciting. And they're just so much shared understanding. Um, but is there anything else that you that I didn't ask that you wanted to say? And any final thoughts?

Kelly Padilla

I guess just the comment. Actually, I think it's from a previous podcast with Zac. I can't say his last name. Harmon McLaughlin.

Brittany Mangelson
McLaughlin

Kelly Padilla

Yeah. So, um, you know. I was listening to it in my car and he said something about, um, talking about churches like attendance getting really small and maybe even a congregation, you know, having to close. Gosh, I wish I had written it down. I'm have you have been listening to it now, but basically, he was talking to the effect of us really believing that it's God, you know, that can leave this church that we don't have, do anything you like, create new programs or do new new

shiny things to try to bring people into the church. And we even have to be willing to even make it seem in the short term to falter, just like, you know, I think you know, just like Jesus, You know, he even, you know, had died for three whole days. But then he resurrected. And sometimes that if we just let go and kind of let the spirit, you know, breathe, you know, even let it go to the point where we might think is a failure that opens up a void for new creation. And so I really believe that. And I just love that, um, imagery. And I think we're going to see that Community of Christ. So, yeah.

Brittany Mangelson

And it's a it's an emotional journey. But it makes me excited because I think the caliber of people that we have there hanging on is, it's good news for the church, so.

Kelly Padilla

Yeah. So, anyway, glad to be here, but I think that the journey that I've been on if I had, you know, learned about Community Christ, you know, 15-20 years ago, I probably went out of joined. Like, I think I needed to go through the journey I went through to really appreciate where I'm at now. And so I think I have, you know, that real joy. So, yeah. So, um, you know, it's kind of cliché to say, you know, enjoy the journey, but this one I needed, you know, I needed this journey to get to where I am now.

Brittany Mangelson

Yeah, there's a lot of wisdom in that. Yeah. Be able to look back and recognize that that was a needed part of your journey, I think. Likewise So yeah. Oh, well, thank you. So so glad that we were able to find time to chat. And now I mean, this is the first time that we've talked face to face, even though, it's through Zoom, but it's exciting.

Kelly Padilla

Thank you. Thanks so much.

Josh Mangelson

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