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Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson 0:17

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 0:34

Hello, everyone, welcome to another episode of Project Zion Podcast. This is Brittany Mangelson. And I will be your host for today. And today we have on Emily Rose, and we are going to talk about the camping tradition in Community of Christ. So, Emily, you have shared your story on PZP before and I'm pretty sure that we've had you on a Holy Grounds episode where we've talked about spiritual practices. Yes, but let's just why don't you just give us a quick overview of who you are and where you are and what you do?

Emily Rose 1:07

I can do that. So, Hi, everybody. My name is Emily Rose, and I grew up in Community of Christ in Alabama. And then I went to our church affiliated school, Gaceland University in Iowa. And now I live with my husband, Daniel, in California, and orange, California, where I work for Community of Christ as an invitation support minister, or our area, our mission center. Yeah!

Brittany Mangelson 1:41

Awesome. So one of the reasons why we wanted to talk about the camping tradition or just camping and Community of Christ is that we are in the midst of social distancing and isolation and quarantining etc, etc. due to COVID-19 and so a lot of camps in the church are being cancelled, which is really, really devastating. So we wanted to maybe up lift, just a little bit of information about the camping tradition to just kind of give some context of why this is such a bummer for so many people. And so since I did not grow up in Community of Christ, Emily, I'm hoping that you will just be able to share just a little bit about the camping tradition in Community of Christ, maybe the types of different camps that go on in the church, what kind of planning is involved, just that kind of thing.

Emily Rose 2:39

I could talk all day about the camp. I'm really excited. Um, so in Community of Christ, typically over the summer season, there will be multiple camps that happen at our various campgrounds throughout the US and the world. It's hard for me to even wrap words around how I feel about the camping tradition. It is a hugely formational experience. I believe and I could be wrong, you can check me on the history on this but I believe that our reunion experience which is like a family camp where people come as families and stay together for a week of worship and formation and campfire and all kinds of things. I believe that that sprung from this desire to meet more than once a year at like a, like a district conference back in the day. And so, reunion kind of sprung up as a way for us to gather again, again, I feel like that's maybe folklore. But

Brittany Mangelson 3:54
Folklore that I'm familiar with,

Emily Rose 3:56
Okay, good.

Brittany Mangelson 3:57
Give it we'll give it a gold star.

Emily Rose 3:59
Yeah. Yeah, we're getting grounded in context

Brittany Mangelson 4:03
We do have an episode about the history of reunions specifically. So we'll be sure to link that with this episode.

Emily Rose 4:10
Absolutely. So that's kind of a little bit of context about where reunion comes from. But outside of reunion, there's also youth camps that happen during the summer. And in the area where I grew up on the Gulf Coast, we had our campgrounds with Bluff Springsprings campgrounds, and it's still one of my favorite places to visit and to think about, there's just a really, again, formational place for me, but we had Junior camp, which is for like rising fourth graders through rising sixth graders, kind of that age group. And then we had Junior High camp for middle school aged folks and then Senior High camp for high school and I went to camp for all all of those things. So I really feel like I was kind of raised up in that system. And what happens at Camp is, you know, youth gather, and there's counselors, and there's all kinds of silly traditions ranging from songs we sing around the campfire, at the end of the day, to chance you might do at the dining hall. There's just a lot of fun, you know, tradition and community building that happens. And so that's like one camping context that I've been in. But I actually when I was a student at Graceland, I was a Graceland Summer Rep. So I went to campgrounds all over the country and Canada and got to experience kind of some of the traditions that happen in those areas and me, you know, just all kinds of wonderful, incredible people and get to be a part of camping experiences there. So I think I feel the loss. I feel that acutely because I'm thinking of all of these places that I hold in my heart that may or may not be facing these difficult choices. So they're their places of love, where some pretty awesome things happen.

Brittany Mangelson 6:20
Yeah, and then in addition to that there SPEC, and different retreats, whether it's, you know, congregational retreat or women's retreat or men's retreat, or whatever it may be harmony. The organization formerly known as gala has a retreat as well. So I would say that retreats and camps, I mean, they they're kind of one in the same and Community of Christ and it is a big loss. I know that they just barely announced the cancellation of SPEC, which is pretty devastating. And I know that Emily that you are involved with spec a lot as well. So I'm sorry.

Emily Rose 6:58

I am too. I am I'm, I'm missing the ritual. And I feel like the the camping season sort of punctuates my year. And I'm sure that it does that for a lot of people. And so the rituals associated with that I, you know, I am holding that loss with so many. And I know that, you know, I particularly thinking of the campers, for things like Senior High camp and spec, and just sort of what that community can mean for them. And yeah, it's just, it's just a loss that we're all kind of holding together.

Brittany Mangelson 7:37

Yeah, and there's really no way. I mean, I think at the beginning of when you were talking, you were saying, you said something like, how can I articulate you know what camp actually means, and that is something that I've found to be true. Anytime that I've participated in a camp with Community of Christ, which and actually I've said this before, but camp was the very first experience I had with Community of Christ. And there is something very, very special about putting everything aside and coming together as a community, that in your everyday life, you are doing very different things. Maybe you have different beliefs, you have different backgrounds, especially in a big camp like SPEC or something or IYF where you're coming from all over the place in the central location. And there's something that magically happens when everybody is together and singing, and doing skits and playing sports and doing activities and worshiping together. It's a it's a, it's a community building activity that really can't be replicated. And so I'm you know, as I'm seeing more and more camps being canceled this summer, it is a big loss. And I know that even the camps that have impacted my congregation and my little family, it's been a big loss for us and just to recognize that that happening on a much larger scale beyond just ourselves. It's kind of overwhelming. It's kind of sad. Yeah, yeah. It's a collective grief, for sure. And I think what has brought me comfort is knowing that I'm not alone in holding that. And I just want to extend that to our listeners, I guess, who may be feeling, you know, the sadness of that loss. And hopefully we can, you know, share stories and memories that, that bring a little lightness to the edges of that. Yes, exactly. So that's where we're going.

Emily Rose 9:38

Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson 9:41

But we did want to acknowledge the grief.

Emily Rose 9:43

Yeah, we have to name the grief. Right. You can't skip it.

Brittany Mangelson 9:45

Yeah, exactly. So one thing that I've noticed at all the camps that I have been to is a lot of times we talk about taking the spirit of the camping tradition back into the congregation. So I've noticed that particularly at spec, among the leadership among the counselors, there was a lot of conversation of how to keep people connected in between activities in between events, how to keep the energy and the sense of spirituality and the sense of self and self love how to keep

those, that spirit within the kids within the campers throughout the rest of the year. So I guess I'm wondering if you can maybe name some of what makes the camping experience so meaningful. And to you what do we mean when we say like bringing the spirit of camping into the congregation or into our communities?

Emily Rose 10:47

Yeah. So I think the the magic that happens, and I use that word, I really think it it's the holy thing that happens. It's it's more than just kind of like magical and fun, like It's the sacred thing where we create a space where people get to be fully themselves. And I remember when I was growing up, you know, I had this really just wonderful, incredible group of friends that like this community that I had built at camp. And there was sometimes this feeling of like, you know, when you're at camp, you get to be fully yourself and around this community that accepts you for exactly who you are. You get to kind of integrate all of these parts of yourself, these really silly parts or these spiritual parts and and build community around being absolutely who you are. And sometimes, especially as a young person, you don't get that kind of safety or full acceptance and welcome in like school, for instance. And so, especially with youth camps, that language of, you know, take what you've experienced here and bring it somewhere else is really prevalent. And I think that that's what we're talking about when we say, say those words is that we want people who have experienced this deep belonging, a camp belonging to themselves as well as belonging to this larger group of people to take that sense of belonging and offer it as a gift outside of camp, and, and that's kind of what makes camp so special is that it's a place where you really do get to be fully who you are.

Brittany Mangelson 12:44

I love the idea of being fully yourself being able to be fully present and being able to fully belong to a group in in a really safe place. I know that some of the retreats I've been to some of the women's retreats, particularly some of the ones here in the Salt Lake area, they've been filled with women who have had their whole spiritual framework crumble. And they they're in a process of rebuilding and in a process of learning who is God to me? What is the Spirit? How does God speak to me? What spiritual practices do I want to implement in my life? What do I want to leave behind? There's a lot of self discovery. But to be able to be vulnerable in a place where you are unsure of who you are, or you're like still uncovering those parts of you, I think is also kind of parallel to youth camps where they're just coming into themselves. They're figuring out what they want to take forward in their spiritual life. Some of them are figuring out their sexuality. Some of them are figuring out their relationship with God. And so camp can be a really a really good place to foster that self discovery and then ultimately that sense of belonging. So I guess, is that something that you have experienced or that you have witnessed in any of the camps that you've been involved with?

Emily Rose 14:11

Oh, gosh, yes. And yes. Or immediately came to my mind just now is my favorite day at SPEC is Friday. And part of that is because our worship class that we teach has finished all of the worships that they have to plan and we usually just have like doughnuts and juice for them and during our class time to celebrate all the important work that they've done. But I also love

Friday because it ends with this giant talent show out on the lawn like the quad at Graceland. And you witness these young people who may or may not have ever seen in themselves, you know, some who would participate in a talent show and they get up and they not only give, you know, all of themselves, again, you talk about vulnerability, it's like this vulnerable thing to get up and share, you know, whatever talent they want to bring and the way they are received by the community with just pure love and joy like that. It's at the end of the week, and you see this like community that has come together to support people in and sharing vulnerably. And it's just, it's, it's so wonderful to watch. It's so wonderful to watch. And I've seen things like that, you know, all over, all over the country, watching people, young people, particularly at youth camps, who open up something within themselves, like a new well of confidence. Or a new well of spirituality. I mean, there's something that happens in this concentrated week of camp that opens them up to new parts of themselves. And getting to watch that unfold in real time. It's just there's nothing like it.

Brittany Mangelson 16:24

That reminds me of a reunion that we had a couple years ago where the children's class did a worship, they plan to worship. And in my congregation, having children help plan worships is not really something that we've done a whole lot of. They have participated in worship, but we don't necessarily turn the service over to the eight year olds, you know. And we did that at reunion and they loved it and the, the, you know, the leadership development that happened there where they could take charge, and they could say what they wanted. Obviously, there were adults involved who helped with the parameters and making sure that it was a meaningful service. But the kids had a lot of saying what happened, and they really loved it. And then the next year at kids camp I directed and I asked them what they wanted to do. And they wanted to plan a worship service. And I was like, all right, this is not something that I would have expected, but they loved that experience so much. And so we just kind of did a little worship service for ourselves. And it was led by the kids and, um, yeah, discovering, discovering who they are, through actually getting involved in developing their interests and talents. And that kind of thing was just really cool to watch. And it was very unexpected. Like I was not expecting them to really grasp onto worship planning. That's not something that I would have ever guessed that the kids wanted to do. And yet, the opportunity was there at camp and they took it and ran with it.

Emily Rose 18:01

I love that. That's, that makes me think of all of the just incredible community and worships that come out of our worship class spec, the just witnessing and young people, the creativity that happens in a circle where it's like bouncing off of one another. And usually it happens right around Wednesday. So like midway through the week, there's something that shifts where, where the group suddenly like coagulates like, there's something that that shifts and they have bonded in this just beautiful way to each other and to the task of inviting their community into the presence of God. And I just, every year it gets me every year witnessing the creativity and the spiritual depth of our young people. It's just It's powerful.

Brittany Mangelson 19:02

Yeah. And at camp, there's not the same restrictions as there would be in a congregational setting. So they're not competing, if you will, with other adults who want to play and services or, you know, there's less opportunities to be told no, when you're at camp, there's a lot more leeway to experiment and to really dive in, you're not tied down to a lectionary text or you're not tied down to I mean, maybe it's some camps he would be but um, yeah, there's just a lot more creativity I think that can help them then just in a traditional if you're the only youth in your congregation and you want to get involved with something I just like there's a lot more roadblocks that can happen.

Emily Rose 19:44

There's a whole lot more Yes, that happens at camp. Yeah, is were you at the spec. I want to say it was an IYF/SPEC. Oh, they all blend together. There's gonna be people that are like no, it happened that this one and not that one. Anyway. There was this one worship that I don't think I'll ever be able to forget where we were doing the story of Jesus calming the waters. Were like the disciples are in the boat. And we actually like so we were all in the the gym at Graceland, that's where we were doing our morning celebration. And we had like a canoe that we may or may not have borrowed, slash I don't think we like borrowed without permission, but we got a canoe. We had these like big, like metal sheets that I think Jack Ergo had tracked down for us. I don't know, but they like made Thunder sounds. And then we like borrowed blue fabric from the theater department to like, make waves with fabric. Who was incredible. So we like immersive The whole community in this experience of like being in the storm and like there's these campers that are like banging on the canoe that's turned upside down. And then like this camper that we had kind of like signify that Jesus character starts to drum a pattern on the canoe. So that like, all of the chaos of the sound starts to become a beat. And then they start leading the whole group in singing. So then there's like, 1000 people in the gym, like singing out of this rhythm of people like drumming on the canoe. It was amazing.

Brittany Mangelson 21:40

I was not there for that, but

Emily Rose 21:44

it's that kind of stuff that happens when we say yes to our young people. And yeah, it's just a I can't wrap words around it. I keep trying to wrap my head around this experience and can't And which is all the more reason why we need to continue to invite people to these experiences!

Brittany Mangelson 22:09

So what I'm hearing you say is that in order to bring some of the camp spirit back to our congregations and back to our community, is to maybe say yes to new ideas more often, maybe be a little more flexible in how we do worship services or what we allow others to be involved with. And I know for me, sometimes I like I look at my own congregation, and I feel like sometimes I have typecasted, myself or others or they themselves and we all just kind of stay in our own lane, and it's really easy to just kind of go through the motions, but I do wonder what would happen if we said yes to new ideas more often. And if we said yes to really allowing people to bring their ideas and their giftedness to the table to then do something about it I

think sometimes we just get really comfortable and I guess maybe at camp, you're not overly comfortable. You're, you're not, you know, eating your normal food. So maybe it's just a little easier to kind of let your guard down and just explore a little bit because you're all there together in that discomfort.

Emily Rose 23:21

I also think camp lends itself to like silliness

Brittany Mangelson 23:28

I was hoping that we would go here so great.

Emily Rose 23:29

Yeah. Like camp lends itself to, like connecting with that part of yourself that just doesn't really care what other people think and to embrace being silly. And you think that there's this like sacred playfulness that happens, especially with campfire songs. We could do like a whole podcast on just camp songs.

Brittany Mangelson 23:57

And I think that one thing that I've noticed When I've been to camp and you know, guests, ministers who are usually world church employees, you know, sometimes they're presidents of 70 or apostles or whoever it may be just ministers that are more public facing in the broader community. And when they get up there and do something like grey squirrel, yes. You know, when it's just like, all right, we, this is great. Yeah, we don't take ourselves too seriously.

Emily Rose 24:29

That's a lot of fun. That's a lot of fun. There was one time um, so Daniel, my husband and I, we lead the campfire experience in the evening a lot. That's one of our favorite things to do. And we were leading campfire and it was shortly after we had moved to California. And it's interesting because Daniels, sister and brother in law Zac and Katie Harmon-McLaughlin lives In California before we did, and moved, like three days after we moved here, that was fun. But before we got here, Zach was really well known for his version of little red wagon. And if this version, like if this song is unfamiliar to our listeners, the idea is that each time you sing the song, you sing it a little bit louder and a whole lot worse. That's part of the verses. And what happens is people like Yo, the song, they like scream it and if someone who is leading the song wants to really like, get into the song, a will, screaming people's faces. Sometimes there's like running and chasing people. And Zach with like, you know, lead this song to the point where he couldn't really speak the next day. And you'd have to like really Really scream it. And so Zach was not there at this reunion and it was shortly after he had left and like Daniel and I had like taken on this mantle of trying to leave campfire at buck corn. But his dad Ron, who is an apostle and in Communtiy of Christ was there. And we thought it might be funny if like Ron led Little Red Wagon. I think there might be video of this somewhere. He's gonna, yeah, I'm gonna tell this story and just let the chips fall where they fall. So he yelled, and screamed as you do with little red wagon. And at one point like this, this row of like little kids at the front of our campfire ring and he goes and like tries to pick one of them up to like, scream the song into a space and

he falls backwards with the kid in his arms. Ron was safe, a little sore the next day, but it was it was a nice way to honor Zac his son in law and have a fun story about leaving calfire. So yeah, it's a place for silliness.

Brittany Mangelson 27:17

And again, it doesn't matter your position in the church, you're allowed to be silly. Something that I truly appreciate that's, that's pretty great. Yeah.

Emily Rose 27:34

It was great. And what's so bad is that like, the campfire it buckwheat is very dusty. So like, he just fell right on the ground and there's like a cloud of dust and like, hey, Daniel, and I weren't really sure when it happened. It was a whole thing.

Brittany Mangelson 27:52

What other what are some other camp stories that you have that you love camp experiences, whether they be from you as a camp Or you as a counselor?

Emily Rose 28:03

Oh, gosh. It's hard to kind of like, gather. There's just a lot of them. I'll try and tell some funny ones from childhood maybe. And then I'll share maybe some sweet ones. How's that? Yeah, go for it. So, growing up, I don't know how much this tradition still kind of gets played out these days. But at the camp that I went to when I was a kid, Bluff Springs, campfire was a really big deal. And having like a date to campfire was a really big deal. So when I was like, maybe in junior high, it must have been Junior High camp. I had a campfire date. I don't really remember with who I was, you know, do your hiking but my dad was the director. And so he kind of found out about set campfire date and what I can't predict is is like you sit with that person and campfire and that's it. And what he did was he sent two female counselors to sit on either side of us at camp fire. And they proceeded to like whisper back and forth really loudly like, Emily's a campfire with a boy does fun. So sometimes in your account like your, your dad or you know, your mom or whoever is like a leader at the camp, which makes which makes her experience another time, you know, like sneaking out is another element of camp where like you'll sneak out of your dorm and generally the counselors in on it like when it's done well, the counselor like knows and either helps or Yeah, like doesn't try to stop you so it's done well.

Brittany Mangelson 30:26

Camp stories uncensored!

Emily Rose 30:28

What's that?

Brittany Mangelson 30:29

This is like camp stories uncensored.

Emily Rose 30:32

Well so it's when it's done well your counselors in on it and make it kind of fun so like when I was growing up, you know, you'd have a camp counselor who would be like, Guys we're gonna sneak into the, into the kitchen tonight or whatever and like, they would like make it this really, you know, high stakes thing and like try and you know, be like sneaky at night and sneak out and get into the kitchen but like they would have You know, convinced whoever the cook was to like make extra cookies, and they were like cookies in the kitchen or whatever waiting for you. So they stopped like that. But really fun. So that those are kind of like, what I remember, as a young person. I also remember like this feeling of wanting to include as many people as possible. So like when I was a, like a senior high camper, we try to get as many people to fit at one table as we possibly could. And that like became this tradition of like, because we had these roundtables And naturally, the whole camp couldn't fit at one table, but we like, tried to like squeeze and like shift our trays and like just be as like, utterly welcoming as possible. And that that's a fun memory for me. I also remember playing a game called the cup game. Have you heard of this? So Think I can I think I can do it?

Brittany Mangelson 32:02

Is it the one where you like, tap like you tap it?

Emily Rose 32:05

And yeah, yeah. So it's like, (claps) yeah, just like that. So we would get like circles of that and, and we'd stand around the table like, you know, free time in the afternoon or something. And we'd like have all of these cups from the dining hall, and you would like, pass it in a circle. So you'd do that, you know, tapping together, but then at the end, you pass your cup to the next person, and that person has passed their cup to you. So then it's in a circle. And like, sometimes if you wanted to make it competitive, like if your cup filled and you were out, and then it got to a smaller circle, that kind of thing. So it's just fun, fun stuff like that. That kind of, again, it It builds this capacity for silliness and this capacity for creating the logging, and I don't like it gets better than that.

Brittany Mangelson 33:00

Yeah, well, yeah.

Emily Rose 33:03

No, go ahead.

Brittany Mangelson 33:05

I think you know, for youth who are in elementary school, middle school, high school, the idea that I kind of brought up with reunion where a lot of families are coming together who might not agree on everything, they're pretty diverse, whatever it may be, they come together and have this experience. I feel like that's even more predominant in youth camps. Because if these kids were all in their own school, they'd be in different groups of friends, they'd be doing different activities. They'd come from different socioeconomic classes. There's a lot that in you know, quote, unquote, real life separate these kids, but if you can get them all in a group all

playing the cup game, or all singing campfire songs or all participating in a spiritual practice together, you're accomplishing something that goes beyond just that moment, like you're creating community that in school cannot be replicated. Or even in a congregation couldn't be replicated because not all of them go to the same congregation. So I just think that it's so important to recognize that that you are and you general you, Counselor you, camp is breaking down those barriers that often separate kids from each other and all the different ways that teenagers or preteens can divide themselves up in different cliques and groups and whatever it may be. But camp really tries to wash that all away and just get everybody together doing the same thing. And I think that's really, really beautiful.

Emily Rose 34:38

It's a it's a teeny tiny glimpse at what the kingdom of God looks like, right? Ah, you know, or maybe I should use language like the Kingdom of God. Because it's more, it's less hierarchical, because that's what's happening is we're tearing down all of these, these walls and structures that create who's and who's out. And I'm trying to really disrupt those and be abundantly welcoming. I mean, I, I think of another just Dearly beloved camp leader from my my youth, delegates and, and she was I was the camp pastor and she and her husband Jake would like, teach our classes like the theme class or whatever. And she had this tradition where she would stand at the front of the line as you would go into go get food, like at every meal, until she knew everybody's name. And so they would come through and she would give like these giant hugs to everybody, as they were coming in through the line until she could name every single camper, every single staff person and build a connection with them. And it was just this like intentional welcoming, because what would happen at the end of Camp is we would stand in a circle. And we would this was like our closing thing that we always did where we would say sing a song that names every single person. So like the way it would go is like you'd say, "The Lord be with you and bless you, Brittany, The Lord be with you and bless you every day." And you would go around the entire camp and I mean, my camps sometimes had 70 kids. And the goal was to make sure that you knew everybody's name. And that you had like built relationship with them. So yeah, it it's this tiny little holy glimpse of the kingdom of God. Yeah, that doesn't happen and other settings at all.

Brittany Mangelson 36:40

So all these stories, I've experienced them to where I've seen kids, like I've been involved in kids camp, so you know, elementary school age where the older kids will really make it so the younger kids feel safe. They learn their names. They include them in the activities explaining the things that are going on. And there's there's a sense of responsibility and accountability for the campers that I've seen. That is just, I mean, it's it's leadership development, but it goes beyond that. It's just it's community building in the most organic way. And so I think that it is sad. And I don't mean to, like downplay this, but it is sad for the campers this summer that aren't going to get to experience that. But beyond the individual campers that are losing out, it's our entire community that's losing. We're losing out on a lot of mentorship. We're losing out on a lot of hilarious stories of campfire of children and falling over it like we're missing or missing this collective experience that we all have in our in our little pockets of the world. And

so well, I guess I should ask, do you have anything else to say about like camping stories or I'm gonna like, move us along just a little bit. Is that okay with you?

Emily Rose 38:03

That's totally okay. I could sit and tell stories all day.

Brittany Mangelson 38:10

Yeah, so. So I think that that's why it's just so extra sad with COVID-19 and how we have to isolate ourselves from each other because we are a very social community. And again, we're missing out on a lot with the cancellation of camps. So I'm curious because you have planned so many camps, you've been involved with so many events that happened over the summer. Have you been involved in any conversation? And I know that in our outline, I put replacement in and I did that on purpose because we can't fully replace camp. But I know that congregations and mission centers are looking at Okay, we can't meet at our campground What are we going to do instead? So I'm just curious if you've been part of any of those conversations, and not I'm not asking you like make an announcement for anything, but I'm just wondering, you know, what are some things that we can be doing to stay connected to each other during the summer to just try to keep that camping spirit going.

Emily Rose 39:18

And so our mission center is just starting to have this conversation. In fact, I think, just on Monday is when we're going to have our first sort of brainstorming session, because we've only just recently made the announcement about our summer camping, you know, cancellations. So we're in the early stages of that. And I think for us, we're thinking that it's going to be the most helpful to have some kind of survey to try and capture what not only what like the essence is, the essence of Camp is but also what people are up for, because we're in this time where where everybody's so zoomed out that, you know, we're trying to think about length of time format. What what people would be interested in? I have a couple of like, silly fun ideas. So like, Capricorn is in many campgrounds claim to have like the best cinnamon rolls, you know, that's kind of like a thing that happens. I don't know that I can name my favorite from various campgrounds. But anyway, popcorn ends the week with truly excellent cinnamon cinnamon rolls, and I thought it might be fun to do like a whole like an at home cinnamon roll Bake Off, and like have people take pictures of cinnamon rolls that they make. Anyway, I thought that that could be a fun, fun activity. That's not necessarily a zoom meeting, right? That gets you doing things with your family and you get to eat generals like that's always good. Or also definitely going to try and figure out how to do some sort of campfire something online. You know, the hardest part of singing virtually or online is that you don't really get to hear everybody singing at once. Because there's feedback loops and all that kind of stuff. So what could be fun is having like various family members or like different families record themselves doing a Silly Song so there's like multiple voices in that recording that then if if people are watching that and seeing they hear multiple voices in their ears, and not just them and one of them. Plus, you know, a lot of campfire songs have silly motions. So if you can get a whole family to do the really silly motions of you know, gray squirrel or paper ido or any of those, it's a lot of fun. Um, so we're gonna try and we're gonna try and hack that we're gonna try and figure

out how to do some kind of campfire experience where we capture the fun of that. And like I said, these are just early conversations we're gonna see, we're gonna see.

Brittany Mangelson 42:14

Yeah, it's, it's difficult to know what this is going to look like. Because again, not only is this just youth camp, or just reunion or just women's retreat, or just men's retreat, it's all of them combined together at the same time. And there's so much energy in the spring that spent planning for camps. I know that we were neck deep in planning for kids camp and reunion, and then suddenly, it was like, Oh, this, this is we're on a different track now. And so, to keep something going, but like you said, I do feel like there is a real thing of zoom fatigue. Yeah, like man, how, how can we provide something Yet not make the expectation be that you are going to sit on your computer all day. Sort of what camp is normally like, like a lot of our campgrounds don't have any connection.

Emily Rose 43:11

Yeah, you know, like, and this is kind of old school I think most most youth camps will do like a video log now but like when I was a camper, we had like paper logs where it was like, you know, like, top 10 lists of like silly things that had happened at camp or, um, you know, stories or songs or pictures, there'd be like little blurbs on each cabin or whatever. And then everybody would sign the log at the end. So I've even thought like, how can we utilize mailing a log that like you pass along to the next person like you sign it and then you pass it along to the next person? I don't know. There's just things like that that are like how can we how can we utilize These, you know, services that are theoretically available to us that can connect us that don't involve a screen necessarily. So anyway,

Brittany Mangelson 44:14

Yeah. Oh, I take so much creativity. I mean,

Emily Rose 44:19

it's so hard to have creative energy right now.

Brittany Mangelson 44:23

Go outside and be together and we can't, Yeah. It's difficult. I know that I've thought about you know, what would it look like? The talent show is really big in my area.

Emily Rose 44:38

Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson 44:39

What would it look like to have people submit videos. I know that my kids school is doing a virtual talent show right now. Well, I love it. Kids are all submitting their videos. So I don't know it's it's tricky, though, to know how much do you want to just push the business of that or you know How How much do we want to just say let's just rest and here's some spiritual practices you can do on your own and yeah, I don't know it's it's something that I'm struggling with even

just thinking about because I was going to be directing kids camp so it's you know, even trying to figure out what we can still provide the kids who were really excited about camp and yeah, just a lot up in the air. But,

Emily Rose 45:28

you know, most camps do have a rest period. You know, like, what, what, what camp offers us to is this time to just be you know, especially reunion I find that happens more at reunion than at Camp necessarily where you feel like you need to have something happening all the time, but at reunion, there's just this like, flow in the afternoon where you can like, sit and read a book, or you can, you know, set up a hammock somewhere and spend time next to a lake or, or some other, you know, naturally beautiful thing. So I think that's important to include as we try to think creatively to like, encourage rest time for people.

Brittany Mangelson 46:25

Yeah. It's, it's hard to find a balance. Because since we're all stuck at home, I feel like I'm doing a lot of resting, but then justify the business that I feel and I don't know, it's just it's a weird time for everybody. And we could talk about this all day.

Emily Rose 46:41

Oh, yeah. For sure.

Brittany Mangelson 46:43

So trying to figure out what community building and ministry looks like in the midst of a global pandemic, where everyone is staying indoors has been, has been an interesting challenge.

Emily Rose 46:57

Yeah, yeah. I've been trying to remind myself that what we're going through is a giant global collective trauma. It's all happening to us and the best thing that we can extend is grace to ourselves and to other people to be exactly where we are. And and that we're enough exactly where we are.

Brittany Mangelson 47:28

Yeah, because that's all we can do. I mean, there's there's not a lot that is in our control right now. And so picking up the pieces and doing what we can to create community and to further Christ mission of radical love and hospitality. finding new ways to do that, I think is really the best that anybody can do right now. So I say that an end of the week cinnamon roll cook off is the perfect when

Emily Rose 47:58

I agree!

Brittany Mangelson 48:01

That sounds remarkable. And I don't know, I know some really phenomenal cooks and bakers. So I don't think I would stand a chance in something like that. But it would be good to still be able to eat my, you know, contribution.

Emily Rose 48:16

Gosh, what if? And what if I don't know how we could pull this off, but I think it'd be really cool, if like campgrounds. I mean, every campground has like their own thing that they do really well in terms of like food. Like what if we were able to collect recipes from campgrounds all over? That is a great idea. And then people could click that like I'm thinking of like the peanut butter bars from bluff springs. And those were like a major thing of my childhood and I don't even know if they still make them but but something like that right where there's like this thing that always happens like it. Camping Noronto. They always have like, like a, like a corn on the cob night, where they literally like dip the corn in like a vat of melted butter.

Brittany Mangelson 49:11

Wow!

Emily Rose 49:11

It's amazing. It's like a beach party and like you go down to the beach and like there's corn on the cob. It's like a fire anyway, like there's like food that happens in in particular ways at campgrounds all over the place. And it'd be really cool if we could like collect those somehow and share them so that like all summer long, people who are missing camp could try out recipes from all over.

Brittany Mangelson 49:36

You heard it here first ladies and gentlemen! Oh my gosh, I actually super love that idea.

Emily Rose 49:47

Yes.

Oh, yeah. Awesome.

Brittany Mangelson 49:50

Whenever ideas like this come about, I always think that wouldn't be too hard. And then there's always complications. I feel like it wouldn't be too hard to do that. Right?

Emily Rose 50:00

So I feel like we need like a hashtag. And then people like posted on a hashtag. Isn't that how it works. But yeah, um you click the hashtag and everything pops up.

Yeah, so like #cofccampfood.

Brittany Mangelson 50:22

Oh my gosh. I love where this conversation is going. This is good. This is good. Well, uh, yeah, like I said, folks, you heard it here first, this section and this conversation I love it. Absolutely

Emily Rose 50:38

Use the hashtag we'll see what happens. And if nothing happens, then we're gonna like call the campgrounds we'll figure it out.

Brittany Mangelson 50:45

We'll get that cinnamon roll recipe.

Emily Rose 50:48

That's right.

Brittany Mangelson 50:51

Oh, Emily, it's so good to just laugh with someone. So this has been great! Before we sign off I usually like to ask our guests if there's anything else about the topic that you wanted to say that you weren't able to, is there anything else that you would like to say about the camping experience in Community of Christ?

Emily Rose 51:12

Hmm. I don't think we missed anything. But I will just say that, you know, in this time of collective grief, and it's really my hope that our past camp experiences can sustain us. And that will sing our way through it. However, that looks, but I'm truly convinced that the community that we build at Camp can sustain us outside of it, too.

Brittany Mangelson 51:44

Yeah, I think so, too. And I mean, I hope so too. And I think it will. I know that the church has been through well and the world has been through rough times before. And in the midst of troubling times, it can seem like, you're not going to see the end of the tunnel and that you're not going to see. resurrection, if you will, we're still in this Easter season, which feels very feels like such a big paradox. But, um, I think that it, it is good to remember that there is collective grief and that there's collective hope in that. And even if you're not feeling it in the moment, and I will admit, there's many, many last few weeks that I have not felt very hopeful. But that's what communities for to lean on each other and to have that collective hope of looking into the future. So all that to say is that I hope what you just said does come to pass and that we remember the experiences that we've had and continue to look forward to the experiences that are come and we will open up again, and we will be at reunion again and we will be at spec again. We'll be at Iowa. If again, and somehow all will be well, so yeah, thanks, Emily. Of course. Thanks for inviting me. It has been fun. It has been fun.

Josh Mangelson 53:19

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