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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.

Mike Hoffman 0:33

Hello everyone, this is Mike Hoffman with Project Zion Podcast. And today I am thrilled to be interviewing one of my students who has been engaged in inspire the missional ministry and leadership practicum here at Graceland University and a student who has just graduated in the class of 2020. Despite COVID-19 and really no formal celebration, she's here with me to sort of help put an end to a year and to share some things with me about it. So Laurie, Laurie, Due welcome to Project Zion Podcast today.

Laurie Due 1:10

Hi, Mike.

Mike Hoffman 1:11

Hi. Very good. Glad to glad to have you here with us. So, Laurie, you know, I've known you for four years, I really appreciated the opportunity to get to know you and to work with you. Laurie is a major in psychology. And she minored in religion, and we were, we were talking about this. She made me the last truly religion minor. We're not sure that while she enrolled in the program, it sort of changed on her and became religion and philosophy, but I think she, Laurie did she take all religion classes basically to make a dent pleat the minor so I know you do you do? Have you thought about where your interest in religion comes from? I mean, you know, so it's, it's obviously come from somewhere because you're intensely and we'll cover this more, but where did it come from?

Laurie Due 2:06

So heard of it, okay, it this, it stems from the same place that my interest in psychology and physics comes from. Because there is an underlying pattern to the way the world works. That way the people work, the way that the physics of existence works, all of that there's this pattern. And I found something so similar in religion, that even if what you're studying whether or not you believe it's like a one true kind of deal, the way that people approach religion and seeking out the best way to exist as individuals and as a community there is there's this natural human way to approach it and it's so fascinating to me.

Mike Hoffman 2:48

Right? That's, that makes sense. I mean, I do I you know, it's taken me a while to figure out the patterns in life, but I do understand that from from that, I think it's I think it's great that as a young adult, you've caught on and see those things. So I'm still discovering things like that. So you're from Ohio originally. What? What's your like? What's your favorite place in Ohio? What was your? Did you have a place? I mean, when I think of Ohio, all I think about is Cedar Point.

Laurie Due 3:17  
So that's, that's fair.

Mike Hoffman 3:19  
Maybe I should, maybe I should say, the Kirtland temple. But you know, that's the

Laurie Due 3:23  
that's okay. I'm with you on the Cedar Point thing. I, I lived in Ohio and a lot of places and I was never a fan of it. It wasn't it was never a home to me. I was born in Oklahoma, and we moved to Ohio when I was young. And it just never felt right. And so the one place that I really liked was the library. There was one specific library.

Mike Hoffman 3:47  
Oh, I see. Yeah. Now it's, yeah, it that's interesting, because one of the things that I have grown to appreciate about you is your push for things despite the fact that You're legally blind. And I didn't When did you become legally blind? At what age?

Laurie Due 4:07  
Um, I was declared legally blind at the age of four, but they're not actually sure when it said in it's believed that I've been legally blind since birth.

Mike Hoffman 4:17  
Oh, okay. Okay. And I think, you know, to be honest with you the first year or so that I knew you here at Graceland I wasn't I didn't even notice that about you because you seemed so incredibly able to do things. I mean, you know, and just that experience at Graceland in terms of knowing you, I we were talking about how, you know, we first met I remember you sort of a fond memory of you hanging out in the campus ministries office, which is the student office, which is directly across the hall from my office, and I remember the thing about you is how passionate you are. And that may be putting it into positive terms. But you would get so passionate and sometimes so irritated at something I remember right? I used to come across the hall and I'd say, Oh, please, please watch your language, watch your language, you know, that kind of thing. And I was always paranoid. I mean, you know, you started here four years ago, and that would have been my second year as campus minister. So, so, you know, I wasn't, I wasn't quite used to that kind of language coming out of that office. But, you know, where did Where do you get your drive? Where do you get your passion? I mean, do you know?

Laurie Due 5:38  
So, when I was it comes from a few different places. When I was growing up, I was raised to treat people the way I wanted to be treated. And when you're blind, you realize that a lot of people who are suffering in different ways are not being treated the way that you, as someone who is suffering, would like to be treated. There are people that are there. People that are just physically assaulted verbally abused by family members and community members for absolutely no reason. And I get that. And so when it comes into other topics that it doesn't even

have to be related to the community aspect, when I feel like there is something that is wrong, that needs to be discussed, even if it doesn't seem like a main point, I will, I am fine drawing attention to that I am fine looking a little crass. And like I'm a little out there because it makes you look at it. Oh, well within that person you're a little uncomfortable with because it means you're looking at that thing that isn't getting attention.

Mike Hoffman 6:36

And you know what, that that is something I know about you because how I would probably oversimplify it, but you have this strong sense of social justice. I mean, you know, if maybe that's not the word you would use, but you know, you really express that I think in many ways and you know, that whole element of I don't know when I think about organized religion I think about that and, and those kinds of things so before we get into too much religion and theology, which I really want to have a discussion with you about that to some degree too. So, you finished your four years here at Graceland. So how is the grace of experience been for you overall?

Laurie Due 7:20

It's been a trip man. It has, it was absolutely nothing like I expected and I had, which is I didn't I don't know if I had any expectations to begin with, which is kind of hilarious. I never I didn't go to the orientations. I didn't go to SPEC. My first time stepping on campus was the day I moved in. Wow. Despite growing up in Community of Christ, I had no experience. So when I went in, pun intended, I went in totally blind.

Mike Hoffman 7:51

Yeah, because I didn't realize you hadn't gone to Spectacular so yeah, so that would make a make somewhat of an impact. This would be your that would have been your first time on campus then first time in Lamoni so.

Laurie Due 8:03

Yeah, so when I got there the first thing that floored me and this has stuck with me through all of my time at Graceland was that sure the community can be a little crappy sometimes. And that's what happens when you have house life because everybody gets all excited about this one thing and it can get a little clicky that happens everywhere. But the thing that really defines Graceland is the fact that there exists so many people who are totally okay with whatever it is you're going through. And just want to make your time a little easier. When I first stepped foot on campus. I met my house president. I have no idea how to say her last name, but she was Jess, she was Australian. Is Australia. Awesome. Yeah, she

Mike Hoffman 8:50

I think it's Jess half the tedious I think it's the latest side.

Laurie Due 8:55

She, um, she introduced herself and I said I it's really nice to meet you. I'm so sorry, but I'm legally blind, I'm going to have no idea who you are in five minutes. And she goes, Okay, cool.

Meet me down at the end of the hall in 10 minutes, I'm going to take you to disability services. Oh, wow. I didn't even know Disability Services was a thing. I have no idea. When I went into Graceland. I went in fully prepared to take care of myself. I was not prepared for the level, the level at which the community was ready to dedicate itself to providing assistance.

Mike Hoffman 9:29

Yeah, what so what else were you on?

Laurie Due 9:32

I was on Shalom, shalom.

Mike Hoffman 9:34

Shalom. Yeah. So you're a Shalomy then just a shout out to the anybody listening to us that might be from shalom. We probably ought to honor that. So very good.

Laurie Due 9:43

We, we my freshman year, all of the freshmen got free t shirts that saying shalom is home and it's one of my favorite t shirts.

Mike Hoffman 9:50

Yeah, I know that there's certainly in residence life as well as Graceland all together. There's really a push to try to make students feel at home while they're at Graceland. And of course, that can be a good experience for some students who have had a good home experience. But that phrase can be challenging for students who've had less than a great experience at home. So, but it sounds like it sounds like Jess sort of made you feel at home right from the beginning then so

Laurie Due 10:15

She really did when I when I was telling my friends about it, I told them that Graceland was my Hogwarts. That was a, you know, houses and all but I told them, I said, I went high. When I got to Graceland, I felt like I was supposed to be there. And like, it was the place that wanted me to be whatever it is, I'm supposed to be.

Mike Hoffman 10:36

That's great. That is really great. I mean, you know, it's one thing for me being assigned here a few years ago and working here. That's, that's for me. That's what it ought to be like. And I'm so appreciate talking to you about this story. Because it's like, I don't know. It's just a it's an incredible place, I think. And I didn't go here as an undergrad. So it's, it's been a learning experience for me. So So Laurie, I Can you speak more about the Graceland community was there over the course of the four years did the group How would you describe the Graceland community in greater detail?

Laurie Due 11:10

Very weird.

Mike Hoffman 11:13

I wasn't expecting that. So

Laurie Due 11:14

It's Graceland is a strange place because it's it follows a lot of general things. Like I said, it can be a little clicky like all like everywhere is you've got your athletic people, your volleyball guys. Right, you've got some people think that campus ministries can even be clicky sometimes. Yeah. But the thing about the community is that it is so ready to shift at any given time.

Mike Hoffman 11:42

And how did how did how do you? How do you see that? How do you mean that?

Laurie Due 11:46

So I think one of the best examples I can think of was Campbell Hill, Tam.

Tam was the I think she was one of the best examples of the capacity of the Graceland community because So when she was the GSG president she implemented all of these changes. And even if she didn't get to see them through to the end, she was so ready to start it and so ready to put herself through whatever was necessary to make the changes that Graceland deserved. And the students even if, even if they're not going to be part of some big change, they will, you can see shifts in behaviors towards like, when all the DACA stuff happened. Most of the students got really pissed off about what this meant for potential international students, even if it didn't affect them. And it was it This was clearly something they had never thought about before. But it was almost instant.

Mike Hoffman 12:46

You're talking about this. You're talking about Tam Hill, who was price and Student Government president. That was last year so it would have been your junior year? Yes. Right. Okay. Okay. Yeah. And, and I get that right there. Again, that's social justice. issue. I mean, that was that what people might not realize is the Graceland student government that year were focused very much on the social change model and how to make it work at Graceland. And so that's good to know that that was your perspective on it. Yeah. And you mentioned DACA students. That was certainly was a sort of was a tough time at that particular moment when students sort of felt pressured, I guess that they might not be able to stay and not stay at Graceland. So

Laurie Due 13:33

Yeah, it was. I mean, like, I'll even say I still don't know a whole lot about it. But I do know that there were people that were scared, and people didn't know what they were going to do. And even if we didn't have a concrete way of saying, what this meant to us as those who would not be affected, we still were very much we will stand by those people that are that are going to suffer for this. We're going to be there. We're going to do what they need us to do. And that the thing about the Graceland community. It's, it's very ready to shift to do that.

Mike Hoffman 14:06

So would you say that that's the the biggest thing you took away from Graceland community sort of experience?

Laurie Due 14:15

I think so. It was it was definitely it was most notable.

Mike Hoffman 14:23

What else about Graceland community? I mean, is there anything else you'd like to share about? I mean, that's pretty profound. Don't get me wrong. It's like, again, sort of not only do you see social justice in your life, but you're identifying sort of that motif here at Graceland, too. So

Laurie Due 14:42

I think the other thing I would say is that it's very socially versatile. And there are there are lots of places for students to be like to exist wholly as themselves. And so going before I started Graceland, I got huge indigence Dungeons and Dragons. I even have a Dungeons and Dragons tattoo on my arm.

Mike Hoffman 15:04

And I live in a year. I remember you being involved with Dungeons and Dragons here on campus.

Laurie Due 15:11

And before I left for Graceland, and my grandma said, I love her to death. But she's she gets a little out there. Sometimes my grandma says, you're going to have to stop playing because they're going to kick you out for devil worship. And I was like, you know, if that's the kind of school I'm going to end up and go ahead, they can kick me out. I'm gonna play because I like doing this and it doesn't hurt anybody. I was so ready to fight Graceland on this. And I got here and there were students that were playing D&D there wasn't there wasn't like a club, but everyone was like, Okay, what you're doing isn't terrible. I mean, you're not hurting anybody. There aren't any Nazis involved. You're good. So. So it was. There are just these, you find these little pockets of space for students with weird interests, to explore those interests in a healthy way. And That's really nice.

Mike Hoffman 16:02

Yeah, that's true. I mean, it's that's, I can see that. So so if you had to identify one thing about Graceland whether it's part of the Graceland experience you've talked about, is there. One favorite thing about Graceland that you have? Or a least favorite, or something? Yeah, least favorite or most favorite?

Laurie Due 16:23

I will say so. My favorite was definitely the community. It was it. Oh, I was always surprised. I was continually surprised by the way the community was ready to evolve and to meet the needs of students and even non students who were suffering Gracealnd, Graceland was very responsive to the situations even if all they all it could do was say this is what we believe. I think my least favorite was Graceland a little hard sometimes, especially during Welcome Week.

Mike Hoffman 16:53

And really, what do you mean could go hard? So

Laurie Due 16:57

I think given that I didn't go to SPEC. This is just speculation.

Mike Hoffman 17:02

This good play on words then.

Laurie Due 17:05

Thank you. Um, but I think Welcome Week was supposed to help emulate the type of vibe that students got back. And so those of us that didn't go to SPEC are not ready for that. And especially if you're a student with anxiety, depression, if you're a particularly introverted person, if you are someone who is not socially savvy, events where you are required to go be in these large groups and be hyped up and excited, and yeah, yeah, yeah, we're not ready for that. We can't do that. Three days after moving in. That's just not an, we want to go to bed man. We're so tired from all of that unpacking and meeting new people and their meetings. It's just it can be too much sometimes. And I think that is my that was the one thing I did not like about being at Graceland, was every year I had to watch freshmen go through that

Mike Hoffman 17:59

and you So, would you consider yourself and an extrovert or an introvert?

Laurie Due 18:05

I kind of fall in between

Mike Hoffman 18:07

Okay, that's fair.

Laurie Due 18:08

There are, I mean you know, I can talk a lot when I get going and well,

Mike Hoffman 18:11

but but but a lot of times it's in smaller groups and not least my experience with you it's been that way. The reason I ask is I, what you've just described reminds me of the basic question is where do you get energy from? And it sounds like you pull energy from some of those big things, but also being alone and working and doing things by yourself. Is that true? I mean, would you describe yourself?

Laurie Due 18:39

I am kind of person that I, some of my energy, it does come from me I've had to be very self sustaining for most of my life. I didn't have social relationships growing up. So it was a long it. There was a long time where I didn't form any of those relationships that could sort of feed my emotional energy but now More as an adult, I take some of my energy from the people in my life, the support they give me, the relationships that we have those also feed my emotional energy. And so it's like, if you're someone like that you can't get anything out of those big events because you don't have those relationships to help you through it,

Mike Hoffman 19:20

then that makes sense. And I and I understand what you're saying about Welcome Week and in fact, there's a couple of times during the year that there are lots of activities like that a grace and welcome week homecoming. Final fling at the end of the year that can or spring playing for you and it's Yeah,

Laurie Due 19:40

I think final thing is final thing is definitely the one I would say is an exception to that because final thing is the students that need it go and the students that don't need it Don't feel bad about not go. It's the end of the year, you're taking care of finals, but also a lot of searches blowing off so much steam. Yeah, and so on. I think that would be the one exception that homecoming week you're heavily pressured to be involved with your house. If you're a hoka member and you have a lot of things to work on, you can actually you can get in trouble for not being more a participant, more of a participant, especially in the air band, and noonish games if you would be available.

Mike Hoffman 20:20

So you mentioned hoka were you on the house Council in show? Yes, I was an asked my sophomore year. Okay, so ask grep for for those who might not know is the academic Student Council. So that's pretty impressive to me and ask you

Laurie Due 20:36

Definitely underrated people do not give it enough credit.

Mike Hoffman 20:39

Yeah. Thank you. I suppose because of my own involvement with grace and student government, I I've grown to appreciate it so that's pretty cool, though because I think for at least a few a couple years ago, you had to have a certain grade point average to to stay as an ascrab so very good. So was there is there anything that you would have identify as that's how you've changed while at Graceland? I mean, you know, I mean, how would you describe yourself in terms of growing and changing here while at Graceland?

Laurie Due 21:15



I have become a lot more aware of the words willing to throw my plan out?

Mike Hoffman 21:23

Oh, yeah?

Laurie Due 21:24

So when I started Graceland my senior year high school I got big into psychology. I took AP psych. I loved it super cool. And then I took a year off from my vision and my mental health. And then I got at Graceland and I was like, Alright, get in, geet psychology, get out. I even had a conversation with my friends where they were like, oh, you're going to your churches University. Are you going to like be super religious? And I swear to you, I said, I will never set foot in a religion class. And I'm only going to church because my mom asked me to. And my friends were like, okay, cool, because they were worried I was gonna get it. Some cult or something?

Mike Hoffman 22:01

Yes, sure. Wow. And my how you've changed Yeah.

Laurie Due 22:08

And so as when I as I went through Graceland, I realized, you know, it's I, I'm not trying to sound like I'm bragging, but it's gonna sound like that. So there's the preface. Psychology was just too easy it was it came naturally. And I was bored almost instantly. Ah, I periodically i get i get into something that would be interesting. There was no challenge. It was like, I imagine it's, it feels like what a math major feels like doing basic algebra. Like it's, there's nothing there.

Mike Hoffman 22:40

Yeah, so,

Laurie Due 22:43

I, one of my friends, Bryce Anderson, he suggested I take a Tony and Charmaine class. So that's Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith. Yeah. And he's like, yeah, they're really weird. They're cool. The class isn't like normally structure you're gonna love it. And I was like, I don't know. I don't know how I'm gonna handle a religion class. And he goes, Well, all the stuff you say about everything else where you're super aggressive do that in there, too. They're gonna love it. And so I was like, Alright, whatever, I'll take this class and I fully expected to be bored out of my mind. And I just went with it. And that was when I started really going with the flow accepting these changes. And I think that was the biggest thing Graceland did for me was making open to those changes.

Mike Hoffman 23:26

Yeah, that's that's really good. Because I that's, you know, Graceland is a liberal arts university. And I know, sometimes people really don't know what that was. In fact, I did not know what liberal arts universities or colleges were all about until I got here because I went to a State

University. But my gosh, it really is about developing the whole person. And it sounds like that's sort of what happened to you with psychology and then religion on top of that, so

Laurie Due 23:54

Yeah, thinking about the liberal arts thing. I think This is going to be this is going to be like total school nerd Teacher's pet moment for me, but I got to give a shout out to the critical thinking class because people do not give that class enough credit. I that's the kind of class that should be taught in high schools to demonstrate like an appreciation for what a liberal arts college can bring, and the type of ways that you should approach different types, of course material because it was, was definitely helpful for me. And so that was just something I was thinking.

Mike Hoffman 24:26

Well, that's, that's great to know. So, it, so that was your first part of your first year experience was the critical thinking class. So who did you Who was your professor for critical thinking?

Laurie Due 24:39

Isaac Pressnell.

Mike Hoffman 24:41

Okay. That's cool. Very cool. Yeah. So I'm one of the instructors for it too. And I love the class I, I recently shared in a bio that it's like, as a campus minister, I would never encounter some of those students except for critical things. In the arts and sciences, because you know, it's not a not a religion class, not part of the campus ministries, but being able to do that really connects me with students that I have just grown to love. I mean, I, and the topic is so incredible. Because it, you know, it's critical thinking is so important. And, you know, and obviously, you've applied this critical thinking to a whole lot of things in your life. You know, like, what's going on with like, your future? Do you have plans for the future?

Laurie Due 25:34

Um, so I like my immediate future is I'm going to go it's like a school for the blind. I'm going to go stay with the Iowa Department for The Blind and spend like, somewhere between five and nine months question mark, learning how to do things blind like cooking, building things, using power tools, why they're letting us do that, I do not know, but I'm ready for it. I'm going to spend some time doing that and then continue with seminary. And I think eventually what I would like to do is I'd like to end up teaching religion. Because there was a comment, there's a comment a few of my friends have made where they have said, the only time they're willing to listen to anything religious, is if I explain it, because I use a plethora of swear words, and they understand what I'm saying.

Mike Hoffman 26:24

That's, that's an interesting twist, Laurie Due yeah. So so you skipped over something really quick that you said and go to seminary? I mean, and that's for me, okay. Like, like, you know, that's one of the things people don't know about me. I was in seminary, I just started taking classes because I wanted to be a better pastor. And so technically, I was enrolled in the

seminary for about nine years, I don't know seven years something you know, and that's a whole nother story. But So tell me about your seminary experience, because I understand you've already started taking classes in seminary while you were an undergraduate is that true?

Laurie Due 27:00

Yes, I took my first class it was the the Christian theology class, my first semester as a senior. And I took it as a CEU student, which is continuing education unit. And so the way that it works is I paid a third of my tuition. And we're still a little fuzzy on it because the Graceland seminary CEU program, they're still kind of working out the kinks on it, but I'm fairly certain some just some time before I graduate, I pay off the rest, and the credit will count towards my degree. So I have already met the prerequisite that is the intro course. And now I get to jump in on May 4, this Monday. And I get to just jump right back into my classes. And I'm so excited because this is my jam.

Mike Hoffman 27:45

I know that about you, and I so appreciate that. So so you're going to go right back into seminary just like in a few days at what would have been after your graduation and those kinds of things, but after you finish the semester, so that's really cool. So you'll be doing that. Now. Most of those classes are online. I know but there's also what is it twice a year you actually go to face to face class, I think something like that.

Laurie Due 28:11

I don't know if it's specifically twice a year I can't get to class related. I'm still learning all of this but like this course we would have had a week long focus session, but because of the virus that got cancelled and now we have sessions at noon.

Mike Hoffman 28:26

Yes, of course. Well, and you know, that's that's a whole nother thing we could talk about is like right now, with the pandemic going on, life has changed on top of everything else changing in your life. So yeah, it has it how, you know, I really I want to talk about theology in seminary a little bit because I just know that you have a brilliant mind. I've had professors other professors tell me about you, and just say how thrilled they are to have you in their class Tony and Charmaine for two people but But you know, just to say, what a, what a brilliant mind you have in terms of being able to not only understand theology, but like you've already expressed, turning around and sharing it with other students and sharing it with people that makes, you know, makes it understandable and relatable. So that's really good. So, um, anything else about seminary? I mean, what do you so you want to teach religion eventually?

Laurie Due 29:25

Yeah, I kind of ended up there. Like, that wasn't the plan. When I started seminary, I am actually mostly doing seminary for fun because I really love the topic matter. And so I just, I was like, Yeah, let's do some there. This is gonna be super cool. And I really just did it because I thought it was cool. We're gonna keep doing it. And I'm gonna take all of the classes that I think

sound interesting and you're there like three different tracks and you're supposed to pick one but I think I'm not gonna just stick to one because that's just

Mike Hoffman 29:55

Gonna take all three huh? That's,

Laurie Due 29:57

Well, maybe maybe Yeah,

Mike Hoffman 29:59

Well, that's That's, that's great to explore that and figure that out. So, so, you know, with classes being over, you know, it's spring break basically, Graceland sort of started shutting down how did how how has the whole pandemic thing affected you? I mean is it has it created more of a challenge for you or

Laurie Due 30:21

So it was there were a few things that happened with the pandemic and the first thing that happened is a little funny and just a little sad I have I have these things I call them bucket lists. I have two bucket lists is that before I go blind and the after I go blind but before I die, and on the before I go blind was to go see one of my favorite comedians live and so I was going to go see Gabriel Iglesias and it got canceled two days before the event. It's that's like that's a lighter thing, but it was kind of sad because I've never crossed anything off of either bucket list.

Mike Hoffman 30:55

Yes.

Laurie Due 30:57

But on a more phone final note there is the switch to digital classes has been particularly difficult, because looking at a screen for that long when you're light sensitive is very difficult. And so, like one of my classes, we were reading, we were supposed to read this entire textbook and I had to I had to talk to the professor in triage the chapters and select the most important out of them. Because I just couldn't do them the whole book wasn't a possibility. Because it was something I couldn't do that.

Mike Hoffman 31:32

Was the book digital format too?

Laurie Due 31:34

Yes, it was digital format, I would have, I would have been fine if we were still in physical classes, because that would mean that the rest of my workload wasn't digital.

Mike Hoffman 31:42

Right.

Laurie Due 31:43

When my entire undergrad workload became you have to look at your computer screen this whole time. That's when the problem kicked in. Because I I could maybe do that for one or two classes, but not five.

Mike Hoffman 31:55

Yes. Yes. I mean, you know, being a fairly well Well sighted person, it's struggled to be on the screen a lot during the day, you know, just with with well answering emails, but also having meetings and other other situations. So yeah, that can I can understand that. I also remember you. I mean, I know that you're light sensitive. I mean, I think we sort of sort of redid the campus ministry suite when you join the team. So we, you know, we wouldn't use the fluorescent lights in the

Laurie Due 32:27

I still think you should keep that set up, because a lot of students like that

Mike Hoffman 32:31

Well, so, you know, the Memorial Students Center has become the Newcome Student Union. And even though it's not completely open yet, there is I don't know if I've told you this feature, but one of the new features is the lights in every office, at least the offices I've seen, have dimmer switches. And so I thought of you and I it's like, so they're, they're not there. They look like they're bright white lights like fluorescence, but you can actually hit it demit as far down as you want, and so I thought, wow, this is gonna make it. You know, I know you'll come back and visit campus ministries, but if another student comes into our team or something who is light sensitive, I thought, this is brilliant. This is really going to be good. I thought of you when we first I mean, I didn't know that was going to come into the, into the offices and so I thought of you when I started playing with the dimmer switch a little bit because I thought Laurie so happy so. Yeah, no, they're there. You know, I do appreciate what you've said. Because I mean, you impacted the campus ministries team in some incredible ways. You know, when you join the team, you be well, I guess your first job was on safe ride, right, wasn't it? Has it been safe ride the whole time?

Laurie Due 33:47

Okay, it was I was I started at the end of my sophomore year. Yeah. Temporarily a safe ride coordinator in my sophomore year.

Mike Hoffman 33:56

Yeah. So yeah, so safe. Ride is up. program here at Graceland where, where we provide students on Friday and Saturday nights. Our teams Laurie has been the coordinator, one of the two coordinators for this last year. She coordinated a team of students, student employees,

who provided transportation for students. And the service basically was Friday from 10 o'clock at night, Friday and Saturday rather, from 10 o'clock at night till three in the morning. So, yeah, so she got all her student employment hours in on those, well, not all of them, but a good portion of them. Yeah. So do you have any perspectives on safe ride? What? How is that as a student employment? I mean, I know. I know. I always felt like safe ride was this interesting campus ministries, you know, because it was it's part of campus ministries to allow the anonymity for students who use the service but did you gain any perspectives from working safe right?

Laurie Due 35:00

So when I was when I was just a safe ride assistant, and all I could do, I couldn't drive today and obviously, Graceland does not have that kind of liability insurance. But so, you know, I was just doing companion and dispatch my first year and a fifth of being assistant. And it was when I was doing that it was interesting to see interesting and sad to see the gradual decline in use. And so that was that was what made me want to be a coordinator because I realized what safe rate is a genuinely valuable service it when you look in the mall and I you have to be honest with yourself, there's nothing to do past six at night. So students drink like what else? There's not a lot to do people like yes, let's drink and play beer pong because ping pong balls can't hurt you like that's that's what you do. You're not going to get hurt with a ping pong ball. People are going to crowd around you table and do that for like, a number of hours I don't know. And I don't play beer pong, I have no idea. And that's, that's how they have fun. And so you need to cater to that because your options are, you can choose not to cater to that you can choose to shame students, and make them feel like they're doing something wrong or trying to find something to do. Or you can foster a safe environment. You can say, look, I may not agree with your method of entertainment. But I'm not going to create a space that makes you feel like you have to hide what you're doing, or you can't call us or get like those earrings. That's you can do that, or you can choose to make them safe.

Mike Hoffman 36:43

Now I do want to clarify just a little bit though those kinds of activities don't happen on campus. Yeah, on off campus, and that's good, but, but you make a good point because the students are going to some students are going to do those activities and the whole idea behind safe ride is that instead of driving under the influence of anything, or even driving, or even if they feel unsafe in some other way, you know, we provide transportation within a 10 mile radius back to campus and that kind of thing. So, yeah, but I think that's, I think that's, you know, you did a really good service for Graceland for the last couple of years being involved in that. So it's like, so if I were to ask you, I don't know if this is our final question, but we'll see. If I were to ask you what gives you hope for the future. How would you, how would you answer that?

Laurie Due 37:41

I think, I think what gives me hope is that people are really pissed off.

Mike Hoffman 37:48

Okay, explain that one to me. That's I didn't see that coming.

Laurie Due 37:51

So that is, when I'm angry that's what drives me to do more. When I am angry. I don't shut up. You have heard me when I'm angry. You never hear the end of it.

Mike Hoffman 38:02

Yes, okay. I'll agree with that.

Laurie Due 38:03

Other people are angry, they're driven to do something. And what gives me hope is that people are starting are starting to realize that they can use their anger to be constructive to go towards movements for like climate change or pay equality for women or all of this immigration crap. Just nice general blanket term for everything that's happening there. It's people are starting to use the rage constructively because they're starting to realize that the more the more aggressive, they are without direction and without restraint, the more the thing they're trying to change is further demonized and further ignored. And so what gives me hope is this constructive rage because we are angry about so many things that are happening in the world there's, I couldn't give you a comprehensive list. I really couldn't. But it's it's not aimless anymore.

Mike Hoffman 39:02

That's pretty good, Laurie. Yeah. Yeah, that's, that gives me great hope to. Yeah. So, Laurie, I want to thank you for our time together today you are, you are truly a blessing to have been a blessing to campus ministry is a blessing to Community of Christ. And I just wish for you the best is you have graduated and now head out of here, head out of Graceland and go on your adventure that includes seminary and so many wonderful things. So I count you as a friend and appreciated very much that you were part of the campus ministries team here at Graceland, so thank you.

Laurie Due 39:41

It was, campus ministries was one of my favorite parts of being at Graceland. It was a good community. So I also want to thank you for that because you really did help build a good community there.

Mike Hoffman 39:53

Thank you. Thanks. Until next time, thank you. Bye bye

Laurie Due 39:59

Bye.

Josh Mangelson 40:08

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