

286 | Coffee Buzz | Creating Community: Move Toward Jesus  
Project Zion Podcast

Josh Mangelson 0:18

Welcome to the Project Zion podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

Linda Booth 0:34

Welcome to the 10th episode of Coffee Buzz, a podcast conversation with a member of Community of Christ, First Presidency. My name is LindaBooth, your Coffee Buzz host. A lot of you don't know me, but before my retirement in April 2019, I served as a member of the Council of 12 apostles and Director of Communications for nearly 22 years and one of my favorite colleagues was and still is Scott Murphy. We were on the human resource ministry team when he was HR director, and in the Council of 12, when he was an apostle, and Scott served briefly as the Council of 12 president as I supported him as the Secretary of the Council. And then Scott was called in and ordained to serve as one of two counselors to prophet president Steve Veazey. Welcome, my friend. How many years have you served in the First Presidency?

Scott Murphy 1:36

Well, I was called in to serve in the presidency in 2013. So it's, it's been, it's been seven years.

Linda Booth 1:44

And those have been quite remarkable years. A lot has happened in the life of the church in those seven years.

Scott Murphy 1:50

Yeah, if he asked me how long it feels that I've been in the presidency, probably double that number.

Linda Booth 1:58

I'm sure that's probably Do and and before that How many years did you serve as an apostle?

Scott Murphy 2:04

I was privileged to be able to serve in the Council of 12 for three years.

Linda Booth 2:09

I know that was way too short.

Scott Murphy 2:12

It was my again, I truly missed those times with the council and, and being able to serve out in the field.

Linda Booth 2:21

Yes, but you still serve in the field in the presidency a lot.

Scott Murphy 2:25

And that's one of the that's one of the great privileges of my my assignment to him in position with the presidency is director of field ministries to continue to, to travel and be with the people around the globe and experience the church so that that's a great blessing. I'm, again, it's a real privilege to be able to serve in that way.

Linda Booth 2:45

Yes. And we're thankful that you are serving in that way. And of course, most of your life, you've been a minister, serving in a variety of roles like mission center, President and pastor. And in all those years, I know you've never experienced what we're doing. experiencing now with a Coronavirus. Everything's been turned upside down. And our faith movement whose very name proclaims how important it is to build community centered in Jesus Christ has been forced to build community in new ways, not face to face with hugs and handshakes and sitting across potluck tables, but with face to face encounters on zoom and FaceTime, and other platforms, and the pandemic has forced the church to shut down our camp grounds, which means we're missing our beloved reunions or family camps, youth camps and retreats, and even in person vacation, church schools for children and spectacular for teenagers. They've all been canceled. But you know, the corona virus cannot stop our community building. That's right or our desire to be together. And because of the ingenuity and dedication of a lot of people some reunions or family camps, youth gatherings and vacations to schools, and even Spectacular are continuing. So Scott, I know that the church has provided a menu of great ideas for reunions or family camp says here on the church's website. And last week I participate in the heart of Texas and coastal bend zoom reunion, which was a wonderful experience. Are you hearing about or participating in any reunions or family camps this year? And, and how are they going?

Scott Murphy 4:33

Yeah, you know, I have been pleased with with the number of mission centers working to offer an online kind of reunion experience the summer as a way to continue to form those opportunities of sacred community, especially in the absence of the physical opportunities to meet together. You know, as interesting as it turns out, About the reunion I was scheduled to share in this summer and then with spec, that reunion chose not to do an online experience. So I yeah, I have not had the personal experience of doing that online opportunity. I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in one of the last in person reunions before the COVID took hold in the US and I was grateful to spend that opportunity with a wonderful group of people in the Florida winter reunion at the end of January, so that so I got I got a little bit of my fix this year, in that way. I know that Stassi Cramm has participated in an online reunion experience and I think she's participated down in in Texas at see a needle. And again, as she was sharing with Steve and I had wonderful conversations with with the group as she was teaching the class. and engaging in other activities and that so she she has spoken highly of that and she'll be participating in a another reunion coming up that she was sharing with Steve and me yesterday during our presidency meeting so that everything that I've heard has has been extremely positive. I also enjoy getting on on Facebook in a time seen screenshots of the the gathered

groups for reunion that people will post in and again, there's just, it's not the same, but it's still something that serves as a blessing for people. I've also been intrigued with. What I've seen on Facebook is more and more pictures of pass for union and camps being shared by by people and mission centers. It has reminded me of that deep blue long enough that people have to share in those experiences and, you know, the opportunity to put those pictures up there really is a for me becomes a spiritual practice of helping people remember what it means what it looks like and feels like to come together in those kind of special in spiritual ways. And again, I I just truly hope that people can still encounter the spirit of what it means to come together even though it's on screen and you know, I can't do the hugs and, and all the fun stuff that they're doing, but yet the spirit of still being together, I hope it becomes a meaningful opportunity for people during this during this unique time.

Linda Booth 7:46

I think it I think it has for the few that I know who have participated or have told me about their participation. And as I reviewed that long menu that has been put together and it's online I was really struck by their desire to provide opportunities to build community. So they even gave ideas of how to do talent shows, where you take things in advance. And even the service that evening service I participated in, they had done which was one of the ideas in those reunion. That reunion menu was to take photos of the campground so that service began with a like a drone flying over the campground, and then photos of different places. And then they had three men playing guitars along the river, which is a spot that anyone who's been to that campground would recognize. And it was just lovely to kind of have your brain go to that sacred space. That we all love those sacred spaces that camp grounds but to recognize that they now have the opportunity to have sacred moment. Rather than being at the sacred space, absolutely.

Scott Murphy 9:05

And that's, that's the power of, of the human capacity. Well, we can't be there physically and smell it, what we can the imagery that we can experience in our own mind in the sensations that we can have. Yeah, we can begin to capture some of that.

Linda Booth 9:26

And some of the ideas had all all the elements, they were trying to keep the elements that you have at family camp or reunion. So there was early morning meditations where you can sign up go to the early morning meditation. There were spiritual practices that you could do. In the service that I participated in. The presider had a young man playing the saxophone for one of the hymns so we had him on screen playing the saxophone. He was really good too. And then for another ham, she had the hands of a woman We all knew from the mission center playing the piano. So people are getting very creative when it comes to those services as well. Yeah.

Scott Murphy 10:10

For me, that is one of the the most wonderful outcomes that have has happened in a way that I have not experienced at the same level. When we were just a congregation is we're just the

same reunions. People. I've just been absolutely amazed at the amount of creativity that has emerged in what people have put together. It Yeah,

Linda Booth 10:41

it is remarkable. So if anyone wants to check out those resources, which you could use for your congregation as well, I know I think one of the missions centers did a 31 day during 31 days in July, where they did something every evening or during the day where people could connect. I mean, there's lots of those kinds of ideas and these resources. So if you're listening and you have a pen and a piece of paper handy, or you can just go online and search for it, because it'll be easy to find, but it's [www.cofchrist.org/reunion-resource-2020](http://www.cofchrist.org/reunion-resource-2020). And you can find the reunion materials for youth and children and adults plus a lot more and like I'm saying that's not just for family camp, you could use it actually to build community in your congregation before you can sit in the pews together.

Scott Murphy 11:50

Yeah, absolutely.

Linda Booth 11:52

And Scott, I believe that the reunions are most of them, if not all are focusing on that guiding question before The church, which is are we moving towards Jesus the peaceful one. And I read on the church's website that there's even a way for folks to gather online to be part of that ongoing conversation on that guiding question, which was first asked at the 2019 World Conference by President Bz. And I read where that first online discussion in June went very well. And a participant from Australia reported and I quote his his or her response. I attended the first session last Monday and greatly enjoyed it. Both Matt for sales contribution, and the opportunity to share in a small group of three with a white male and a female of color, and I'm looking forward to the next one in August. So Scott, tell us about these discussion opportunities that are offered through I believe, 2020 and 2021. In preparation for the World Conference.

Scott Murphy 13:03

Following the the 2019 World Conference, the presidency went into retreat is part of our, our planning and strategic time to begin to implement and think about the resolutions coming out of World Conference in in our next steps or the next few years out of that conversation in at the same time in a parallel conversation that was occurring with with Jen Kilpatrick who will start taking over as Director of Communications after, after you. You retired Linda, and then Janne' apostle Janne' Grover, who also has a functional assignment in formation ministries. There was these conversations occurring about how do we use this next three years Instead of just you know, coming up with the reunion theme or a theme each year, how do we look at what we want to try to invite the church to experience over the next three years that moves us from the wonderful opportunities we had in 2019? In some of the resolutions that came out online violence, the domestic and sexual violence and some of the others, how do we look at that and begin to experience a journey over the next few years, that takes us to the 2022 World Conference. And so in that planning, and looking at that, and thinking about what we would want to address in the best way that that would occur. I was taking part on a team that that

Janae and her role was leading and it was a team with Matt, Brazil and Ron Harmon and myself as we started talking about Is there a way to begin to get people engaged in the conversations and to deal with the concepts and the content that we want to share with the church, but let it find a way for it to be more than just print information that we deliver through the Herald in other things. And so we found ourselves talking about in considering the idea of what it would look like if there was a herald article that would come out on a specific theme that we had articulated for for the year. And then after that Herald article was out, that we created an opportunity for an online experience for people who wanted to to be able to come on through zoom and the the author of that article would have an opportunity to share A little bit more and to respond to questions. In addition, it created it would create an opportunity not only for the author to share thoughts and reflections, but to create through through the the availability of zoom as a platform to be able to put people into groups to let people begin to share their insights and understandings and in a more open and collective way. And so as we talked about that there was something that just really energized us about that idea.

Unknown Speaker 16:37

And so Janne' and Jenn Killpack, took that in, took a lean in and started to organize that and again, as you reference the the first one Matt Frizzell, did the first article and did that first, online sharing together in the game, the outcome of that was really positive. I Hi, I forget how many people participated in that, but a very meaningful experience and, and for the listeners that is now posted on the church's website and so in the YouTube channel so it can people can go out there if they were not able to take part they can go out there and at least observe or listen to the conversation that Janne' and Matt were having and and some of the additional information. The next one up will be Ron Harmon. And so Ron, Ron has wrote the article that just came out. If you haven't received your Herald, it's now coming out. And again, a time will be set up here soon with Ron that will be announced through the different avenues on the church's website and that and again, there will be an opportunity Janne' will will host that online experience with Ron and so we are planning to do that. Over the next year with the different authors that will be be writing and inviting the church into those reflections.

Linda Booth 18:08

That's excellent. And you made reference to those Herald articles that are also linked with videos. And so you can find those online, too. Can you outline a little bit about the Herald series and tell us a little bit about those videos? Yeah.

Scott Murphy 18:28

So coming out of the 2019 World Conference, one of the main resolutions that the church is being invited to journey with over these next three, three years is is World Conference resolution 1319. Non violence and so the outcomes of that resolution was a in asked for the church to engage in conversation And then to be able to come to the 2022 World Conference, to talk more about how Community of Christ will respond to the issue of non violence, and what it means for us to be a peace church. So when we started thinking about that, again, in the context of, of the strategic work that the presidency was doing afterwards, in, in the conversations that Janne' and some others in the council of 12 were having around this article

that had come out of Sojourners, a year ago called Reclaiming Jesus. There was something that we found ourselves thinking about, if we truly are going to engage in the conversation about non violence, we need to first ground ourselves in understanding the whole message of Jesus and so out of that conversation came this series that we are inviting the church to journey in. As we, as Steve probe that question in the World Conference closing message, you know, are we are we moving forward following Jesus the peaceful one.

And so from that collective conversation came the focus of, of living Jesus Herald series. And so over the next year, there is a, we have laid out a series of articles that invite the church to think about this, following Jesus, the peaceful one, in what it means when we actually look at and explore living Jesus in the context of what Jesus did when he lived and served on Earth. So the the first article that was that Matt wrote was really an introduction to that journey. Following that, Ron is Ron's article that is coming out in this Herald is, is inviting us to think about in understand Jesus in the context of the first century. And what what it meant for him to serve into to talk and deal with the issues of social justice that he faced. When we talk about Living Jesus, his ministry took Jesus into into the heart of the poor. And so I'm Andrea Reed, who is a member of the church but serves as the with outreach International. In her role with the field. She will be writing an article dealing with the poor and then then we have some others home. Joey Williams in in Michael Wright in Elray and some other individuals a collective before individuals will be writing about the displaced in the world. And that's the looking at ethnicity, those from different sexual orientations and again, a variety of different ways that people get displaced in and put aside. We'll also be having an article that Dave Anderson and his daughter, Robin Luffman will be writing on the mistreated and, and looking at non violence and racism and domestic violence in the work of all persons will also be an article to to deal with the issue of the disease and the wholeness of body, mind and spirit in that regard. So those are some of the articles The final one will be on the environment. So it's not only that the human side but looking at the creation side in the environment that we live in that that series of articles then over the next year, invite us to explore again really the emphasis of what it means to live Jesus in the context of our own life and in the context where we live in the world. Following that, we will be preparing then the resource for reunion 2021 which will be the preparation resource for the 2022 World Conference. And Stacy has been working on that as she has in her role. She is shepherding the World Conference resolution 1319 as she works as the advocate with the peace and justice team, so they are in a process now of of mapping out a focus Just like I just outlined for what we're covering this year, they are now mapping out a focus of what we want to invite the church on into in that discussion in preparation for the 2022 World Conference, but it will begin to be more specific, as we explore the issue of non violence. You know, the call of living Jesus today, what it means to live peace, what it means to live towards a peaceful one. Those are some of the concepts that are starting to to emerge as we look at this and again, as a way to invite the church into that further conversation that leads us into our World Conference 2022.

Linda Booth 24:48

Although those articles and videos and what's coming for next year, all sounds very inspiring, and creating a inspiring and challenging journey for the church. In preparation of 2022 World

Conference, and if we, if we all go more deeply into that guiding question, are we moving toward Jesus the peaceful one, the one and if we really began to focus on what it means to live Jesus in our daily lives, I'm so thankful the presidency with other leaders has created this journey for us as a church. And you've touched on it a little bit, Scott. But as we go deeper into that question, what to you and the First Presidency hope will happen to individuals to congregations to mission centers?

Scott Murphy 25:40

Well, I think the first thing is Linda. We don't want this just to be treated as an academic experience. Again, learning information that way is important. But if we are truly not going to explore and be authentic. And the question, are we moving towards Jesus the peaceful one? It's a question that has to take us deeper into the soul of who Community of Christ is in, in what it means for us as disciples. So I think that as, as we've laid out this progressive journey over the next few years that leads us to the next World Conference. You know, we hope that the church will take this as an opportunity to, to engage in meaningful conversation that sparks a spirit of a being able to truly listen to one another in the differences in life experiences that form how we approach this kind of question to listen to and to be heard in ways that ultimately allows the church to talk together. I think another way of putting that is we hope that there's a presence in spirit of sacred trust that begins to emerge among the body. I know you're aware of this, but too often we hear the comments from members. I can't share in my congregation because I don't trust there's something painful in that. When when we hear that kind of statement. And if I'm to be honest, you know with the listeners if the church the church has a community of people, faith community, if we cannot be a place of sacred trust and respect where people can feel safe to come together, share together and work together through the difficult struggles and questions of life. And we are failing in our call to be the church. And we're failing in our call to create that presence of spiritual community. And so, there is a hope that the willingness to engage in this hard question so again, by no means do I want to imply that this conversation about following Jesus the peaceful one in what it means when we get to the heart of the question about non violence and what that means for Community of Christ. That is a gut wrenching question, but if we can't go there, we will never go deeper in terms of who we are called to be. And so there is a sincere hope that, that inviting the church into this conversation and journey, that there will be a place of creating that kind of sacred trust and a willingness to listen and be open to each other.

I think it's also an opportunity to broaden our understanding of the context of life. Maybe it's me, and so I'll just I'll just claim this. But sometimes, I think I can lose perspective of the context of life when I just get focused on my little world of where I live in what I participate in, and I know you are aware of this, that every time I have the opportunity to travel out into the church, and even even broader when I go out into the church into its global nature out into the villages of, of the where the church is present, it broadens my understanding of, of the context of life, in what, what people face in their lives in the challenges. And thus it helps to, in that broadening of understanding, to deepen the awareness of why this invitation to the journey in wrestling with a question about who Community of Christ is in what it means to follow Jesus, the peaceful ones becomes so important. Because if we can't, if we can't get to

that place, then I don't know how we help make the kind of changes in the world that we are called to, for the welfare of, of all human lives. So I again, being on this journey, not only invites us into the conversation, I'm hoping that it broadens our understanding of what life, of what people live with.

Unknown Speaker 31:36

And it becomes so relevant for me that yesterday, the presidency had a chance to engage in a conversation and it's something that that the presidency is doing throughout the summer is that we've made a choice as part of our discernment work in in being on our journey. We need to listen to the voices of the people out into the church. And so we've been meeting with small groups of young adults, leaders, employees, others throughout the field. And yesterday we have the privilege of meeting with a few of the members of the Chattanooga congregation

Linda Booth 32:17

Good.

Scott Murphy 32:21

It was for me it was a moment of disruption and further awakening of what these members who again, would define themselves as members of the Black community, Black lives, sharing with us the stories of what life is like for them. And yet what Community of Christ means for them in the context of, of where they live. That that moment just broadened my awareness of the country. context of life. And again, it is our hope that that will occur for other members of the church as they engage in these conversations together.

Linda Booth 33:10

Yes. Did, I don't know if you had the opportunity to? Was Mike, a part of that conversation from Chattanooga? on I'll tell you, I have a story right here. It's really short. He said nine years ago, on September 14, I got sentenced to federal prison for a hate crime. Four years ago, my brother Kevin took me to Chattanooga Community of Christ in the Black neighborhood on Glass Street. And tonight you see me wearing Black Lives Matter shirt. God is unchangeable because Jesus is still changing people like me to love those whom I want hated. I love my church who shows us to enjoy being color blessed for three years been enjoying loving my Black, sisters and brothers. My goodness, that's that's a living testimony of what you're talking about. To help for the whole church, that kind of inner transformation where we allow our spiritual ears to be open and our hearts to be blessed by differences we all have, whether it's thoughts or lifestyles or whatever and how we can come together as a community in a sacred way, where we do trust and listen and are changed, truly changed. It's remarkable that journey where it would take us absolutely. And the presidency is already talking about in exploring that. We don't have to wait until World Conference, to create the opportunities for people to be together and to talk about these issues. We're looking at ways again, through through online gatherings of how we bring groups of people together to engage in these conversations. People coming together from different places and context of life to deepen in enriching those, that understanding before we actually get into the World Conference. And so there are some, I, I'm just really excited about the journey that we're on the steps that are being taken the the visionary process that we're



looking at over the next three years. That that, again, continues to try to take us deeper. Yeah. So I think it, I hope it will be a blessing for the church as those who are able to be able to participate in those ways.

Oh, I know, I know it will. It will be a blessing to the communities in which they live and the congregations and where they worship. And hopefully we will and on a deeper level, live Jesus in our daily lives, that would that would be amazing. So I'm going to switch our conversation just a little bit because we've been talking about the power of these opportunities that are provided to members and to friends of the church that are online. We also know for some of us who've been to Spectacular Graceland University where 900 to 1200 teenagers show up. And they they really focus on very tough, challenging questions having to do with social relevant kind of issues. And so that had to be canceled this year, because Because obviously, of the close proximity of staying in dorms together and setting on bleachers together, and so they're going to have an online gathering on July 18. And they're going to be exploring some really important topics too, such as racial justice and systemic racism and how Scripture supports racial justice, etc. So tell us about some of the main elements of the of that one day gathering. And if you've talked to or heard from SPEC leaders, how they hope to build that community in this new gathering format, because that's been one of the joys of Spectacular is getting all those kids from different cultures and backgrounds and races together to really become friends and build community.

Scott Murphy 37:31

Yeah. Well, I was, I was really pleased when I got word from apostle Barb Carter, who was who was the spec apostle when she she sent me a message indicating that the directors had decided to host a one day gathering for the youth. And again, I really appreciate their willingness to do the extra work to try to pull that together. I'm reminded that creating these online communities for those in the older generations is a little more challenging just because it's different. But I'm reminded frequently that for the younger generations, it's a part of the norm of their life. And so they, they don't have to work as hard as, as some of us others who, who need to do that on these experiences. So what the what the directors are attempting to do is to create, provide elements of what what the youth would normally go through in a specific day. of of the beginning with the coming together in what's called the today class that's really the leadership class. development around the theme of spec. And so they will be, again, using the wonderful tool of of zoom, they will be putting youth into, into groups. And there will be a facilitator with that group and getting the kids talking together and working together in that part of that theme class. Following that, there will be the opportunity as they go from that theme class, usually into the adventure opportunities. And those are the elective kind of classes that they get to do if it's, if it's music, if it's some other form of art, you know, some other kind of creative opportunities. So they, I think there's maybe three, four or five different elective kind of opportunities they have, I don't know what those classes are going to be, but they will have that and so, again, the youth will have that option. opportunity to choose where they would like to go based on their interest in, they'll be able to do that. And then the culminating experience for them will be sharing together in a worship experience. And I know that President Veazey has been invited to, to be able to share some words as part of that experience

with with the youth and so he'll he'll be taking part in that in that regard. So there won't be the sports opportunities, which, you know, majority will will miss but the Yeah, that experience of being able to come together there's something powerful, even though we can't touch one another. There's something powerful about being able to look at your computer and look into the eyes and the face of, of multiple people that are gathered. That I think it will not be a problem at all for them to experience that. Especially for those who have been in spec, it will immediately draw them back. The other thing that helps is the spec directors are so good at preparing the youth to be able to come in to take part. So what they'll start putting out on social media, you know, the themes and people start sharing together through social media, all of that actually begins to form the spirit of community before they actually even step placed on on the Graceland grounds when, when it's in person or when, when the zoom conference call opens up. That spirit of community and excitement will already be there with the youth. So they, again, I'm grateful for the for the leaders and all of those who will be teaching the classes and offering this so I am I hope even that one day will be enough to To hold the youth together and keep that spark alive until 21, when we hope we can be back together.

Linda Booth 42:07

Absolutely. And I know that several congregations have held vacation church schools using zoom and other platforms. And we've mentioned Chattanooga, but they were pleasantly surprised when 44 children attended their online vacation church school. And I know the Community of Christ historic sites Foundation's website has searchable online offerings such as Emma Smith, hymn festival to celebrate her 200 and 16th birthday on July 10. And there's lecture serieses. And we are all storyteller video projects. And they even have a zoom tour of the Kirtland Temple. So that's all pretty remarkable, and I'm sure there's a lot more that I don't know of that you know, of, have you heard of any other online community gatherings? And if so, please tell us how those are and what they're doing.

Scott Murphy 43:01

Well, there's, yeah, there's just other things taking place that actually one of the things I enjoyed doing towards the end of the day before I kind of wrap up by, I get on Facebook and just kind of scroll through and and see what kind of experiences people have been encountering. Last week, President Veazey, had the opportunity to share a time with with the evangelist and over 200 evangelist across the church and from Australia and in other parts of the world took part in that. I know that Zac Harmon McLaughlin, the Director of Community, Christ seminary, has been doing some online experiences and, and again, that's that's been very positive. I always chuckle when on Tuesdays I there was a There's one family up in just north part of the Kansas City area here that sponsors the campfire each Tuesday night and so they're, they're there with their their kids singing campfire songs and doing that. And I've seen I've seen another family and congregation here in the Greater Kansas City area on a Sunday evening providing campfire opportunity experiences. I've seen in another part of the church where an afternoon coffee chats have occurred and just getting on and it's facilitated by the mission center president and it's just coming together with your coffee and just being able to share together. There's a, I actually noticed the other day that there is a there's another mission center that is hosting chats. On the theme of the sacredness of creative So taking one of the

enduring principles and and just coming together and and having conversation about that, the, in Europe, they have created a unique opportunity and this has been posted on Facebook and, and this is again open for anybody who would like to participate. They usually do an annual peace colloquy that they've hosted. But because of the COVID impact, they have created this Peace Colloquy that's going to be spread out over several months. And it's the European Peace Colloquy and if people are interested in wanting to participate in that they can, they can get online and search for that too. And again, be able to take part in those experiences. So those are some of the the unique opportunities that have been emerging that I've seen pop up. You know, again, Toronto Center always does a wonderful job. Job. Every once in a while I'll see John Hamer, the the pastor there at Toronto, indicate how many people have joined in their Sunday services and from how many different nations and so that's always a great opportunity that that has taken place. And again, the number of reunions that are occurring, as you referenced earlier, Linda, some of those reunions are just gatherings in the evening I've there's a reunion going on now with the greater Pacific Northwest and Yeah, they start in the morning, it's just they have activities all throughout the day. So they have a breakfast club if you want to get on and join and have breakfast together but the sharing service the class and into so they, yeah, they've really have tried to create a full day reunion experience that goes into the evening and so that I just have been absolutely amazed at the creativity in And the steps that people have taken.

Linda Booth 47:02

And that's the word that comes to me as you've been sharing all these different opportunities that have been emerging is amazing. And while we hope the Coronavirus times will soon be behind us, we also recognize that even though we've had to be physically distant from one another, that the Spirit has connected us in tangible ways and even life giving ways. Scott, would you share with us and experience that as a firm that God is in our midst and moving the church forward, despite this difficult time?

Scott Murphy 47:37

Yeah. Well, you know, I just just mentioned a moment ago about the presidency taking time. This summer is part of our discernment journey. And part of the discernment worked at the world church leadership council is engaged in last week We had an opportunity to meet with a group of young leaders in the field and they, again, they were spread out in different places. So this wasn't just in one mission center. And part of the one of the questions that we've been asking is as the as the world church leadership council is engaging in the journey as you know, the question of God, where's your spirit leading now, as we continue to live more faithfully and deeper into the soul of Community of Christ. And so as we gathered with that group of young leaders and invited them to share their reflections in helping us understand what it is about the church that is speaking to them, one young woman shared this quote, church does not feel like it is can find anymore within four walls that that statement really captured me. And it wasn't just the the words that she spoke but it was the image in the expression in her face that I saw as we we saw each other on on zoom. Churches not feel like it is confined to four walls anymore. That is such a powerful statement.

Unknown Speaker 49:35

And for me is one of those moments of spiritual disruption that reminds me that even in the midst of the challenges in the deep yearnings that people are feeling and missing with being together. There is something profound that is happening. That is awakening for young for generations, that there is the ability and the power to truly be the church. beyond just the walls of our physical buildings that we have held on to. I found myself going back is I've reflected on that in the words that came to the church inspired council out of Section 165 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Additional innovative approaches to coordinating congregational life, in supporting groups of disciples and seekers are needed to address mission opportunities in a changing world. Those words are coming alive in a new way, in the context of what we're facing in the world. And again, while well, I don't have a theology that, that believes that, that God has created the virus and put this in our midst. as a, as a wake up call, I do believe as I reflected in my, my article that I just wrote in the Herald that were called in during this challenging time to be open to what God invites us to learn through this experience, and these words for me, help us understand that in the changing world that we did not envision when these world words came into our midst. But they come alive in a real way now, and, and again in the words that this young woman shared at the church is not confined in four walls is a powerful witness to what is taking place in the light would be Last. So while we yearn for those hugs and being together in person, I hope we will not lose the the awareness of the profound blessings that have occurred over the last few months, as we've experienced being a church in a new way, because this will not go away, we hope the virus goes away. But how we're experiencing the church, through online communities is not going away. And I'm having more and more conversations with with members of the Council of 12 about the need to create online congregations, and what that means in terms of our bylaws and our administrative processes. And so the presidency is wrestling with that. Because we know that these are, these are emerging life changing opportunity. Unity's have mission that we cannot just simply say at the end of the pandemic, we're done with this. And let's go back to just the way it was. This is a way forward and a new ways of engaging, that is changing us. And hopefully, as it changes us, it will begin to change the world.

Linda Booth 53:22

Isn't that exciting? Thank you, Scott for sharing about and reminding us that we really are one in the spirit, whether we're in the same room or connected on the internet. And it reminds me of that missional him that we sung so many times. We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord. And we're discovering that we will walk with each other we will walk hand in hand even when our hands aren't touching. And we will work with each other and we will work side by side even if we're not physically side by side. And as we connect with friends and neighbors and strangers on the wall, walking paths or sitting in lawn chairs on our driveways that fail. No, we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they'll know that we are Christians by our love. And so living Jesus being engaged in Christ mission as our mission continues, despite a virus that is changing our lives as well. So thanks, God And thanks to all of you who have listened to this episode of Coffee buzz. I hope that our conversation has given you some ideas about how you and your congregation can strengthen community as we walk together toward the peaceful

one. Please watch for the next month episode of Coffee Buzz. I'll be having a conversation with Stacy Cram a counselor to profit president Steve Veasy.

Josh Mangelson 55:00

Thanks for listening to Project Zion Podcast, subscribe to our podcast on Apple podcast Stitcher, or whatever podcast streaming service you use. And while you're there give us a five star rating. Project Zion Podcast is sponsored by Latter-day Seeker Ministries of Community of Christ. The views and opinions expressed in this episode are of those speaking and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Latter-day Seeker Ministries or Community of Christ. Music has been graciously provided by Dave Heinze.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>