

Josh Mangelson 00:17

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

Linda Booth 00:33

Welcome to the 13th episode of Coffee Buzz, a podcast conversation with a member of Community of Christ First Presidency. My name is Linda Booth. And today I'm talking with one of Prophet President Steve Veazey's counselors, Scott Murphy. Welcome friend. In September, you and the Community of Christ First Presidency met with the World Church Leadership Council. And I'm going to give some background for our listeners. This Council advises the First Presidency on such issues as like world church policies, theological statements, World Conference preparations, etc. and Council members include the Council of 12 apostles, the Presiding Bishopric, President of the High Priest's Quorum, Presiding Evangelist, and Director of Human Resources. And I have many warm memories of serving with these dedicated church leaders on the World Church Leadership Council during my 22 years on the Council of 12. So Scott, if you could please share some of the highlights, or warm memories, from your recent virtual meetings with the World Church Leadership Council?

Scott Murphy 01:47

Well, hi, it's great to be with you, Linda, and all the listeners. So thank you for the opportunity to share this time with you. Yeah, we are still, as a World Church Leadership Council, still learning and growing into this kind of virtual online experience that we've been engaged in last for the last two months now, or to two gatherings. So again, we for the first time, we did our online meetings in May, and then again, here in September. And so it's, it's had the challenges normally, as you remember we meet all day. And in now we have to, our meeting. timespan is three hours. Because accounting for where Apostle Mareva Arnaud lives in French Polynesia, and our Sister Catherine, Apostle Catherine Mambwe who lives in Zambia. So the time difference between those two extremes allows us only a window of about three hours to meet. And so it has, it has really changed the way we come together and has really kind of focused us. And as you have indicated, we have been engaging our full attention in the discernment work that the Leadership Council's been sharing in. And so it it has been different. And yet,, when you're only meeting three hours a day, it certainly frees up other time for for other things to take place. But it has been a good time. And especially in this last session, as part of the work that Katie Harmon McLaughlin as the Spiritual Formation Specialist is doing with us. And then retired Presiding Evangelist, Dave Brock, two of them facilitating this journey for the Leadership Council. This last session, we spent a lot of time in our journey, of better understanding our own experiences and understanding our own cultural dynamics for for each of us. How that has influenced our journeys as a means to help us better think about the church where we're at, at this point in we're trying to discern where God is leading us. So the very nature of this—what is called in spiritual practices and discernment is called social analysis— that opportunity really gave us a wonderful time of sharing together. And we actually spent a lot of time in small group sessions. And again, that's one of the wonderful aspects of zoom, in that tool, to be able to do what we call breakout groups and to meet in small groups. And again, at times, there

were three of us together. At times are four, but very meaningful sharing together and wonderful journeys. And so yeah, I think we came out of the meetings, feeling good about one) the journey that we're on; the things that we're learning. But also learning to live into what it means to be able to be together in a more virtual way than in person.

Linda Booth 05:28

Yes. Well, I'm thankful that you all are going through that discernment process. I know it will bless the church as we move into the future together. Yeah, and you wear several hats, Scott, as a member of the First Presidency, and one of which is Director of Field Ministries. And in that role, you in quotes "direct" the Council of 12 apostles. And I know that they met in September as well, any news that you can share from those meetings?

Scott Murphy 05:54

Yeah, there certainly wasn't anything specific, like a key decision made in those meetings. But again, as you remember, Linda, it, when when Council of 12 meetings follow the World Church Leadership Council meetings, a lot of time is kind of processing some of the things that were, you know, encountered, heard, discussed in the Leadership Council Meetings. And so that more intimate time with the Council of 12, talking about those elements, as it relates to how's that begin to look or feel out in the field becomes important. And so, you know, Apostle Harmon, you know, make sure that there's time for the Council of 12, to talk even more about the discernment, and especially when you come together around that Council of 12 table as a representative group of the the global church. And so having apostles from different cultures and all of that, that's, that's a special time to really talk together about what's happening, what we're learning in discernment. But how does that begin to inform us in terms of the mission and message of the church out into the fields? I also know that, you know, effort has been going on—there's been a lot of conversation over the last several Council of 12 meetings as Ron's leading that—of really kind of talking about the the nature of transformed congregations and new expressions. Really trying to get at the heart of so what does that mean? When we talk about transformed congregations or new expressions? What's it mean in the context for Apostle Carlos Mejia in in Central South America, or you know, Bunda Chibwe in in the African fields and those kind of things. So there, there was conversation about that, and understanding of this, this need to really continue to talk about those—what it means to be transformed in the different cultural contexts. Looking at how do we reclaim the gospel of Jesus, and more fully live out what that mission means for us. Really looking at how do we develop ongoing future leaders of the church so that that's been a really important part. And really that essential question of where's all of this leading us? And as you remember, the difficult questions of what is it that we have to let go of, to be able to move forward. So those are some of the things that were taking place. The presidency actually spent a full meeting session three hours—so the Council of 12 was limited in their time, just like the World Church Leadership Council—but we spent a time, really a lot of time, on conversation of the the online sacrament document that we're going to be talking about here in a little bit. Really just trying to better understand that. And that was an opportunity for the presidency to really help the Council of 12 members understand the grounding principles and what presidency is trying to bring and share. So the Council of 12 can begin to work with the field officers and leaders in preparation for the release of this document into the life of the church. So that was really a kind of a exploration, sharing with the Council 12, offering education and development for them and help—you know—giving time and space for for

them to understand and probe in different ways based on questions that they know that they'll get into the field.

Linda Booth 09:50

Yes, and so Coffee Buzz Listeners. That's what Scott and I are going to be talking about this morning, is this document entitled "Sharing the Sacraments of Community of Christ When In-person Contact is Not Possible." And it's slated to be released on October 7 on the church's website. And at the end of this podcast, I'll talk about where you can discover that on the church's website. And as we all know, sacraments have always been important in the life of the church and in people's lives. Inspired counsel in the Doctrine and Covenants, has told us a lot about the importance of sacraments. In fact, section 158, given in 1992 says, "Look, especially to the sacraments to enrich the spiritual life of the body". And then we've also been told to generously share the sacraments with people so that they can encounter the living Christ as well. So our church has eight sacraments that are vital to the church's mission of forming spiritual communities and nurturing disciples' lives. And then we're called to share them generously. Unfortunately, the pandemic has caused that sharing to be difficult. Scott, before we talk about the principles and the guidance outlined, in "Sharing the Sacraments of Community of Christ, When In-Person Contact Is Not Possible." Would you please provide us some information about the process? And what the First Presidency went through as you developed this document for the blessing of the church? And who was involved in that process?

Scott Murphy 11:34

Yeah, that's a good question, Linda. You know, I, I would want the listeners to, to recognize and understand that, as the presidency holds responsibility for the sacraments of the church, the sacraments are a topic for the presidency periodically. And sometimes that conversation is stimulated by requests that come to the presidency, normally through the apostles, but requests that come for possible considerations of exceptions, based on just the different nuances of human life. You know, somebody who just physically is not able to be immersed, is there a consideration for an alternative form of baptism, again, when there is a physical reason that immersion would create harm to them physically. Those kind of things. And so just by the nature of the kind of questions that get raised at times from the field, invites the presidency into those kind of moments of, of reflection and pondering. And, again, as you have articulated some of the Scriptures, our responsibility to to uphold the guidance to the church through Continuing Revelation, or any World Conference Resolution. So this is a, sacraments are always an important conversation in piece for the presidency that we hold very intently and take seriously. So what brings us to where we're at today, in this document and why we felt it was important, we really need to step back and recognize that this journey began before the 2019 World Conference. And it was a time when, as as the presidency was recognizing the emerging nature of online gatherings that was taking place because of technology. And because of the number of questions that were coming to the presidency for clarification about guidance on serving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the conversation about the sacraments, and online sacraments really started for us, understanding that we were starting to see a future where things could be going and happening. And so how do we start thinking about that? And in being considerate? Well, as you remember, and as we've actually shared with with listeners before, in a previous podcast, we talked about the Sacramental of the Lord's Supper document, and the provisions that we made in that for allowing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be experienced online when people you know, again, when people

are not able to physically be together. Even in the midst of that conversation, we were already starting to wonder what that means for the other sacraments like the Evangelist Blessing, other sacraments of laying on of hands, or marriage? So the conversations were beginning to emerge in our discussions. And then bam, the pandemic hits. You know, so when the pandemic hit, and we offered the advice to the church, that meeting in person was probably not in the best interest of the welfare of all. I'm not sure that we anticipated it would be going on as long as it did. In that moment, we did give provisions for an exception in the way that the Sacrament of Laying on of Hands for the Sick could be done when we're not together in person, because we understood that the nature of that sacrament would really be important in this kind of pandemic time. But over the last several months, as we've recognized the progression of this pandemic—the progression that the opportunity to be back together in more in person connections was not going to be happening as quickly as we may be anticipated, or hoped for. So that really began a conversation for us. And we asked ourselves, what do we need to be doing, understanding that the sacraments are such an important part of the church's mission of forming spiritual communities. And as questions were being raised from the field, we felt the need to really step back and say, "Okay, we have to be serious about this. And how do we allow the array of the sacraments that the church has to be experienced?" You know, what's interesting is, sometimes we don't recognize this until we have hindsight, but if the listeners will consider the Words of Counsel that came to the church in President Veazey's closing message to the World Conference (2019), these words were brought forth. "Technology presents opportunities for involvement in sacraments by priesthood members and participants in separate locations. The First Presidency will act in its calling as chief interpreters of Scripture, Revelation, and church policies to provide procedures for offering sacraments, in new situations, while upholding essential meanings and symbols of the sacraments. As the church explores new opportunities for sharing sacraments, direction will come as needed, through inspiration and wisdom." That is exactly what we found ourselves in the midst of during this pandemic. And that really opened our eyes and our awareness of something was happening. And some things were, we're not going to change. And so we became very serious to look at this and spend a lot of time in conversation among ourselves, and consulting with Jane, Presiding Evangelist Jane Gardener who has done a lot of work on sacraments and who the Presidency kind of charged to help develop and do some additional work. And Jane has actually been doing some more writing on the sacraments, and again, conversations with the Leadership Council. So all of that has engaged. I think, what's interesting, the document that will be released to the church is version 12...we've gone through. And I share that just to help the listeners understand there has been multiple iterations that we have gone through, to make sure that we're trying to express the right things. And try to be as clear as we can to help the church, the priesthood, the leaders out in the field, and the members to understand how the nature of online—experiencing sacraments in an online setting—can be a blessing to the church.

Linda Booth 19:23

Thanks, Scott. As you were speaking, I was reminded of the words given to the church in March 2014, which I believe prepared us for today and will continue to lead us into the future. And that comes from section 162 of the Doctrine and Covenants. And I quote, "It's not the form of the sacrament that dispenses grace, but it is the divine presence that gives life. Be respectful of tradition and sensitive to one another, but do not be unduly bound by interpretations and procedures that no longer fit the needs of a worldwide church." That was given 16 years ago, that was before we even imagined the

importance of technology would be in our community building. Or that the, as you said, the pandemic would force us to be physically distant, and close our congregations, buildings, and our campgrounds. And so, God has—not that God has caused any of this—but God has certainly given us inspired counsel that helps our minds begin to envision what the future might be, and prepare us for time such as this.

Scott Murphy 20:34

Yeah, absolutely. No. No question.

Linda Booth 20:38

Yeah. And so when we look back through our history, we go, "Oh, my goodness, God, thank you, thank you for those words, that helped to open up something like that our hearts mind souls that would allow us to consider where we might be in the future and what we might be able to do to bring blessings to God's people." So let's so let's talk about the principles, if you would, that create the foundation of these guidelines in the document "Sharing the Sacraments of Community of Christ When In-Person Contact is Not Possible."

Scott Murphy 21:14

So as I, as I indicated, just a moment ago, Linda, the sacraments are vital to the church's mission—when we think about the mission of the church, of forming spiritual communities, and for the nature of developing and nurturing lives of discipleship. And so, when we, when we think about that, and understand the sacraments, as expressions of God's love and grace, there there are, it becomes important to think about how do we continue to uphold both opportunity, and still uphold still the significance of symbols and procedures in words, that draw us deeper into the covenant nature of the sacraments for us. So when we wrestled with all of this, some of the the principles that were very important for us is that the symbols of the sacrament still needed to have an opportunity to be present. And yet acknowledging that being together online, is going to be different. So when you can't have the actual physical, physical, sense of touch on your head, for the sacraments that involve laying on of hands, then how is it that the visual nature of that symbol, or creating using words that help open up the the imagination or the the ability of the mind to envision what that feels like coming out of our memory, those become really important for us as we think about creating that, that space of sacredness of, of touch. If it can't happen in person, then it can happen in our mind through sight, or through words that create or draw us in. So holding up the significance of symbol was an important principle. Another important principle that we needed to uphold was the sense that the sacraments provide the opportunity to be experienced in the, in the context of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and in the context of worship together. Sacraments are never private. They are always done in community. Even if it's a sacrament of laying on of hands for sick, even if it's just the the recipient of the sacrament and the priesthood member (physically together). It's always done in community. So upholding that principle, that when we do this online, reminding ourselves that we are still together in the spirit of that sacredness of community. Another principle that becomes important is understanding that the the opportunity to experience the sacraments in an online setting should be and needs to be done in real time. Which means that it's happening as we're seeing each other and being together on screen. In comparison to watching a video or a recording of something that happened at a previous time, and now I'm watching it. So we think it's important to the nature of togetherness in "real time" understanding that

in the virtual world, there's always a delay between when I speak and when you hear as it goes through the the elements of of technology. But still real time means that we're together. And even in that short delay, we're experiencing something in real time. So that becomes an important principle because again, the spirit of being together in community, sharing that togetherness, both as the congregation who is observing and supporting the recipient, that the recipient and the priesthood member sharing together. Some of the other principles real quick here are, there will be times when there will be different combinations of the way that people come together. So we literally could, again, in the sacrament of laying on of hands, you could have a situation where you have one priesthood member who's able to be present in person with the recipient, and another priesthood member who was joining or coming together in that setting from a different location in doing that online. So those differences, being mindful of that. And especially during this pandemic, we want people to still be responsible in using wise and safe procedures for the protection of both the recipient and the priesthood member. And so we wanted to hold up in the principles that if something's happening in person, then safety guidelines provided under the guidance of public health mandates need to still be followed. So we don't want we don't want people to be careless. And we want, you know, good choices to be made there. I think another important principle is, and this is really important, when you when you think about the the nature of virtual world, we are not suggesting that it's appropriate to use a proxy. And again, that question has come up if, if I can't be present, or if I can't be there in person, can I have another person represent me in person? Or can I have just a person lay their hands on me, even if it's not a priesthood member? We have not, that is not for us an appropriate expression, I would want the listeners to hear and again, as this document goes out, one of the things that the Presidency wants to the church to hear clearly, it is not our belief that in person sacraments is a better quality of sacrament experience than an online. It's just different. But we believe that the divine grace of God that we encounter in the sacraments permeates the online world and experience for us. The Holy Spirit can come to us in multiple different ways, through different channels. And so that is another important critical principle is that in person isn't better and online is is like a second tier value or experience. We believe that both have the ability to offer the divine grace and blessing to the church, in whatever case that might be.

Linda Booth 29:06

Yes. And I would testify to in the times in which I've had Communion in communities online, that that Spirit does united as a very powerful way. And it is a very sacred moment when I take the bread and the juice that's sitting here on my desk and share it at the same time as others. And the same is with the Laying on of Hands. I've done that multiple times. And the very first time or the second time I did it, I made the comment, "Well, this virtual experience (and the man that I had participated in, given the blessing for said) this didn't feel virtual to me." He said, "I felt your hands and I felt God's Spirit". So I attest that Scott, that this is, this is not less than, because the Holy Spirit makes it more than we can ever imagine it to be.

Scott Murphy 30:04

Absolutely. And again, we just have to hold onto that. And in time, people will begin to recognize that as they experienced this online opportunity,

Linda Booth 30:16

Scott, I really appreciate those principles and the testimony does unite us in very powerful ways. Take us through the guidelines of those eight sacraments and the impact that they might have on the blessings to the church.

Scott Murphy 30:33

Yeah, so what what the church, what the members will encounter when when the document is released, is, first of all, the first two pages of the document really is an opportunity, as the Presidency tries to address the theological, spiritual, and scriptural foundation for the nature of providing alternative ways for engaging in the sacraments. And again, as I've indicated earlier, Linda, that, in this in this kind of upfront, or introductory kind of information that the Presidency provides, speaking to the importance in place of symbol and our understanding of sacraments, and how we uphold the significance of symbol, when physical in person connection is not possible. So when we get into the guidelines, we have acknowledged that, again, there's some specific statements that we wanted to provide, primarily for the sacraments that involve laying on of hands. So as I said, earlier, words have the ability for us to help create image or to draw us into remembering experiences. So we have in the Laying on of Hands, we have provided in these guidelines, some very basic expressions that the priesthood members could use, that that will offer a level of consistency as we share in the sacraments. As you well know, Linda, and as the listeners are probably mindful of, Community of Christ doesn't have a lot of kind of ritual or liturgy practices within the, in the church, unlike some other denominations that that have more rituals and patterns that they go through. The sacraments are really those key areas where the kind of ritual or liturgies that we have, that help offer consistency for people when they encounter the sacraments. So we wanted to make sure that we were still trying to uphold that principle and understanding for the, for the familiar aspect of the sacrament when people encounter it online. So with the guidance of Presiding Evangelist Jane Gardner, she has worked with us and with the Presidency to provide some some very basic statements. So what people will find, and priesthood would find in these guidelines, let me give you an example of that. You know, before the worship experience, ask the candidate to prepare a worship environment in their location. So that's one guidance given to make sure that again, we want the recipient of that sacrament to truly have that moment of being in that place of sacredness. Then the guidelines go on to say when ready for the confirmation prayer, a priesthood member, might state "Entering into this sacrament, we remember the life of Jesus and those who were touched and blessed by his ministry." A very simple statement that invites both the recipient and the observers in the congregation, to pause for a moment moment to be drawn back into remembering Jesus. That's what the sacrament does for us. And so through words, we are inviting people into a place of remembering and a place of holding on to that sacredness. And then, after that statement, the priesthood member would address to the candidate, "As we share the sacrament with you, may you accept God's invitation into the sacredness of this moment, as you allow yourself to imagine and sense the touch of our hands on your head." Again, it's not it's not long sentences or you know, lots of words. But it is a simple statement that invites the recipient to open up their imagination±—their mind—and to allow them to begin to sense what that feels like. Remembering from past experiences, what it feels like to have hands placed upon your head. Again, this is those moments where we think that when, when it's not visually possible to see or feel the hands on your head, then words can help create those opportunities in the mind. And so we also want to help the priesthood members understand that, again, not only in words, but visually, symbols can open us up in different ways. So some of the suggestions provided is that when when doing a aying on a hands if it's for Confirmation, Ordination again, the Laying on of

Hands for the Sick, that a priesthood, or the priesthood members online, they may find themselves standing behind a chair, an empty chair, where where they would envision the recipient sitting and placing their hands on that chair as a symbol of laying their hands on the recipient of the sacrament. Again, as that's visually possible to be seen by both the recipient and the participants in the online gathering, that symbol continues to uphold and remind us of Jesus's touch of laying on of hands as we encounter him in the stories and scriptures of Jesus. So those are again, those are some of the basic guidelines that we offer in the sacraments as it relates to laying on of hands. We don't want to make it complicated. We want to make it as simple as possible and yet trying to uphold still, the symbolism and procedures that people are familiar with and comfortable with, that doesn't take them completely out of their awareness. But something that that they can still hold on to. The Sacrament of Naptism is another important one. This is, the presidency had multiple conversations about this one and with the Leadership Council. In the end, the presidency still feels strongly that upholding the importance of in person opportunities for the Sacrament of Baptism is still important. Now, we understand that there may be cases where a priesthood member and candidate cannot be together in person. And so, if there, if that is the situation, we have allowed—and have shared this with the Council 12 members— an exception to providing an online sacrament of baptism can be requested by the Apostle in who will consult with the First Presidency. And so we're, I would want the listeners to understand why this isn't just an open door for, for online baptisms to occur. And yet at the same time, we don't want to close ourselves off to situations that we may not be aware of. And in that case, the Presidency working with the the apostle for the field, would have to think through the very specific requirements that would be needed, um, to make sure that the sacredness and integrity of the sacrament is being upheld. But again, there's something still significant about the importance of being together and being in the water together with the with the candidate that we felt like was still important to uphold, in retain at this given time. So let me let me say one final thing about one one more sacrament, and that's the Sacrament of Marriage. So, the, the nature of legal marriage, as you know, is is different in different nations. So there are nations in the world where priesthood members don't have the authority to act upon on the behalf of the of the courts or the or the civil government. And so marriages need to occur in the civil provisions in the courts, and then the church is able to offer the Sacrament of Marriage in a in a church setting. So the guidelines given here is that priesthood members are required to comply with all government requirements for providing an online marriage ceremony if the government allows for online marriages to occur. So that's the first thing. It doesn't, it isn't a requirement or provision available in all places. So it's really important that priesthood members are aware of what the local government allows for. It's also important that the priesthood member knows what the the civil laws require, or allow for a priesthood member to provide or act upon for the civil courts. And in that regard, even in the context of the USA, not every state allows for every priesthood member, to be able to officiate at a legal marriage. So for those who are residing in the United States, it's state by state that they have to look at. But if you're in a different nation, you would need to really explore what that would be required, in terms of the legal requirements and with the documentation, signatures, all of that. And again, priesthood members have a really important requirement to uphold those expectations. And again, just wanting to acknowledge that there is the covenant statement that we would continue to uphold as a requirement in those that covenant statement that comes out of Doctrine and Covenants, a 111, section or paragraph 2b. There is an alternative statement for nations that have approved same sex policies. And again, those nations know what that alternative statement is and how that available to them. So that is just the different sacrament of that we offer that in the guidelines that I would just want to uphold for the

listeners to make sure to pay attention to, and primarily for any priesthood members who would be thinking about or have been asked to do a marriage that would occur in an online setting. So those are the guidelines. And again, as the document becomes available, people will have more chance to read those and raise questions. And again, mission center officers or the apostles in the field are certainly able and willing to be able to address those kind of questions.

Linda Booth 42:43

Thank you, Scott, for providing those guidelines. And I'm really excited for the church and the blessings that will occur as we're able to provide the sacraments of the church to the blessing of God's people. There's a paragraph that ends the first portion of the First Presidency's document on sharing the sacraments when you can't get together in person. And I'm going to quote that, it says, "It is our hope that providing for the sacraments to be shared through online experiences, will continue the pastoral care ministries the church is called to extend into human life. Even during this time of physical distancing. It also will prepare the church learnings for how to share the sacraments in a world that is becoming more borderless, through online connections. May blessings abound as you offer these gifts." So these words remind us again that God continues to lead us forward into a future that's waiting for us to discover. And Scott, you already mentioned about the Council of 12 meetings, how you're talking about recognizing the major cultural changes and shifts in perception about religions, religion, which is being impacted in the Christianity in the Western world. And there's some missional writers believing that God is calling congregations to be open to the possibility that they're being formed into something new, perhaps even a new missional expression, whatever that may look like. So there's that one line that I want to highlight when the First Presidency writes, "It also will provide the church learnings for how to share the sacraments in a world that is becoming more borderless through online connection." So Scott, what do those mean words mean to you about the future church and where God's leading us?

Scott Murphy 44:38

Well, I want to be very clear with the listeners that these guidelines have been developed to address a specific time for the church in this pandemic. And yet at the same time, the presidency as we ponder the Words of Counsel, and we ponder an understanding of that online communities are not going to go away. Just when, you know, we know that when the pandemic is over and people are moving back into in person gatherings, online communities will continue to be going forward with us. So we have a responsibility to anticipate the needs of those kind of experiences. And how does the sacraments—as we understand them in the life of the church, as we understand them in their pastoral care ministries, and as they are a part of the forming of sacred community—how they can be lived out and offered with integrity, in new experiences and settings. So the presidency wanted to give an indication that we're at a time during this pandemic, and we will learn more about the nature of the sacraments in online settings during this time, that will be informative for us in what it might look like for sacraments to be shared, going forward into the future, beyond the pandemic. So it's for now, and it's also anticipating where we will be going. And so that that's both a, an exciting and thrilling opportunity. And yet, at the same time, we don't want to be careless about the sacraments because of how important they are in the formation and in the sacredness of community development. And again, as the the pastoral nature, as we've talked about. So we're going to be watching, we're going to be listening, and we're going to be exploring and the Leadership Council will continue to be pausing

periodically to say, what are we learning through this are there are there changes that we would need to make and to be open to that. So, you know, again, as you reference Section 163, of the Doctrine and Covenants earlier, the call to generously share the sacraments through which people will can encounter the living Christ, that call is not going away. And that call will continue to be as relevant in an online setting as it is in person settings. And we just want to be responsible to for the providing for what the church needs as we move forward into the future.

Linda Booth 47:58

Absolutely dear friend. I want to thank you so much for your time and your insights with our Coffee Buzz listeners, and in particular, please thank members, your colleagues in the Council of 12 and World Church Leadership Council and for the Presidency, for the thoughtful and inspired way in which you've gone through this process to bless the church. Even though we're in the midst of a pandemic, it's reassuring to know that God continues to guide our our leaders, and I believe the First Presidency's guidance will provide opportunities for us to effectively minister to the needs of our faith community, through the sacraments and to also generously share the sacraments with our neighbors and our communities. And thank you Coffee Buzz listeners for joining our conversation. Remember after October 7 to check out "Sharing the Sacraments of Community of Christ When In Person Contact is Not Possible." You can find that document on cofchrist.org and search under sacraments. And listeners please watch for next month's episode of Coffee Buzz. I'll be having a conversation with President Veazey's other counselor, Stassi Cramm.

Josh Mangelson 49:26

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