

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.

Carla Long 00:34

Hello, and welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long. And today I have two wonderful, dear friends with me who are the managers of Dunfield House in the British Isles Mission Center. I have Paul and Sue Norton. Hi, Paul. Hi, Sue.

Sue Norton 00:49

Hi, Carla!

Paul Norton 00:49

Hi, Carla!

Carla Long 00:51

You have no idea how much these wonderful people mean to me. I have two very, very quick stories about them, but then, then I'm gonna let them introduce themselves. One. I think one of the first couple of times that Sue met me I'd had a, I'd had a head lice scare and he and when I was working in Europe, and I'm like, hey, Sue. So nice to see you again after years and years of not seeing you. Can you check my head for head lice? And she was immediately, Of course I will, Carla. No problem. That's what a good friend does for you. Checks you for head lice when you ask. The second story I have that's a really quick story about Paul. My parents came to summer camp, which is their family reunion, at Dunfield and my dad was supposed to go golfing with someone there at this golf course that was right above Dunfield House, and his golfing partner backed out. And Paul, who was super, super busy with summer camp and doing his job, took like three hours out of his day to go golfing with my dad. And it meant so much to my dad and my dad still talks about that golfing trip, Paul, and talks about how kind you were. So anyway, those are quick stories about how wonderful Sue and Paul are and you're going to hear it in this podcast. So now that I said my introduction, Paul, Sue, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Paul Norton 02:03

Okay, well, I'm Paul. I originally grew up in Leicester, fourth generation in the church. My father and grandfather before me were pastors of the Leicester Congregation. I have a sister, Sheila, and we grew up in Leicester, as I say, which is probably about 100 miles from Dunfield. I moved down here in 1978 when I married Sue. And since then we've had a couple of children. But in 2005 is when we actually took over as manager, managers at Dunfield House. Because that's it for me at the moment, so over to Sue.

Sue Norton 02:43

So I actually moved to Dunfield when it was purchased in 1965. We lived in Birmingham, my parents, Bill and Mary Coates, and my brother, Chris. And actually my dad came to look at Dunfield before it

was purchased. But my mum actually packed up our home in Birmingham and arrived at Dunfield and that was the first time she saw it, when she actually arrived having packed up and sold our home in Birmingham. So, so we get a lot of our faith from my parents who have done some amazing things in the past. And so I started working at Dunfield when I was 16 when I left school, and I trained as a chef and, and stayed there for 10 years until I left to start a family with Paul, beings we got married. And we had Jack and Sally arrived soon after. So yes, so my job, um, after that we had the children and I trained to be an occupational therapist and was in that job for nearly 10 years and learnt so much in that job. Loved the job to pieces. Never thought I'd stop being an occupational therapist until we saw job adverts.

Carla Long 04:10

Well, that is quite a story already. I, I, I know we're gonna jump into the rest of it. Sue, I had no idea that you were there from the very beginning of Dunfield. I had no idea. And that actually is where my first question is. And then we're going to jump into more about you being managers at Dunfield. So, how did we acquire this amazing and beautiful house?

Sue Norton 04:29

Um, in the late 50s and early 60s, a lot of Zion's League groups were thriving in the British Isles. And there was a core group of leaders who were working in their own little congregations, but actually wanted the young people to meet up together. So they started running camps. And the first camp they held in a center where they thought they might get just a few young people come and actually filled the center and filled one of the fields with camping as well. There was so many young people that wanted to be together. So they, they ran these camps in a few different centers because they could never book the same center twice. And then, um, the Spirit started moving through the, through the youth leaders. And they started to feel they needed a camp grounds of their own. They had no money, but they had a lot of faith, um, and wanted the best for the young people. So a large number of country houses were visited and viewed and explored before Harry Black and Cliff McArthur visited Dunfield and nearly bought it on the spot. And so my father was invited to go for a second viewing. And then the house was purchased for the church in 1965. So my parents were appointed as managers. And we arrived there in October 1965, just a few days before my birthday, my seventh birthday. And we lived in the main house to start off with, and then a cottage in the grounds was renovated. And we moved in there. So my parents managed Dunfield for 30 years.

Carla Long 06:37

Your parents are amazing, as are you two. Managing a campground is a lot of work. You know, like when someone just goes to a campground, you know, like we just expect it's going to be beautiful and perfect. And everything's going to be exactly as we have it in our brains. But it takes a lot of work to keep those campgrounds in that space. So blessings on your parents heads and blessings on your heads for sure. Wow. So I'm, I'm assuming there's gonna be a lot of people who are listening to this podcast who have never been to Dunfield House. Could you tell us a little bit about the house and about the grounds and, and maybe about some of the cool stories about Dunfield as well?

Paul Norton 07:15

Okay, well, at Dunfield, we have the main house, which is a country manor house built in around about 1850, we believe. The original owner was a gentleman called Henry Miles who was a furniture maker who had workshops in Bond Street in London, apparently, and used to take his prospective customers to visit the, the house to see the furniture actually in sitting rooms so that they could see what it would look like in the grand house. And so although he had the house built as it, as it currently is, it's quite a grand house, uh, we believe there's been a building on the site since probably the 12th, 13th century, which probably would have been a (. . .). And when Henry Wiles was, was living there, he, his guests used to arrive by train. We don't have a Royal Railway station near Dunfield anymore. But they used to arrive by train. And then were collected by horse drawn carriages and driven up the drive to Dunfield which goes through the existing meadow. And it was lined with monkey puzzle trees. I don't know whether you get those in the States or not. Okay. You have to look them up. And, and then they didn't see the view until they actually arrived at the house. And the view that you see from the front of the house, then is very much as you see it today. It's, it looks across to rolling hills, and in particular a hill called Harvest Ridge, which is a hill opposite. And to our left as you, as you sort of look at the front of the house is the hill called Bradner Hill and that's where the golf course is that we just talked about. And also there's a wooded area and can be reached from, from the house. To the right there's some more sort of fields laid out for football and other, other sports and down in the grounds we have two campfire sites as well along with a labyrinth and also new areas being cleared with, which has a barn and, and it's now going to be called the grove. The barn is still in process of being built. It was actually built during last year, and we're still in the process of laying paving slabs in there so it can be used for an outdoor worship area. But that's the house and some of the grounds. We also have stables which are also used for accommodation which is a smaller building can be rented to be self-catered or catered by, by us. The stables was renovated a few years ago, to bring it up to sort of similar standard to the house and has, uh, 20 to 25 beds in there, depending on how many people are coming to stay. We have approximately 75 beds in the main house. So along with the two buildings we can accommodate around about 100 people. Also on site, we have the Recreation Hall, which for our church groups is the place where most of the worships will take place, particularly at something like summer camp when there's a lot of people there. And also we have a small, indoor heated swimming pool, which is very, very nice considering that when we first had a swimming pool at Dunfield it was outdoors and cold. It wasn't able to use, be used apart from probably from May to September. But, of course, with a heated indoor one now we can use it all year round.

Carla Long 10:54

And I know directors of children's camps really enjoy that heated pool time, too. That, that's a really great activity that wears some kids out. That's what I always found.

Paul Norton 11:03

It certainly does.

Carla Long 11:05

One thing I also love about the stables, I love, I love all about the Dunfield House, but on the stables they're still like the doors look like there would be actually the stables so you're kind of like in your own little stable area, which I find, and the beds are very comfortable. Don't worry about that. But it's so, so cute. It's, I mean, it's just, it's just perfect.

Paul Norton 11:25

That's right. Well, the three ground floor rooms are all, are the old stables. So yeah, that's right. And there's one original door still there, which is the door into the toilet and shower room on the ground floor. (Oh, it's) We're gonna' talk a bit more about the stables later, sorry.

Carla Long 11:44

Oh, sorry. Go ahead. It was just such a beautiful place. That's all I was gonna' say. And, and I, I hope that we put a picture out there so people can take a look at it. Or, or if you want to go and Google Dunfield House, you can see how beautiful it is. Thank you for, Paul, for kind of leading us through that. I know there's a lot, oh, I don't know if you want to talk more about what it looks like, but I know there's a lot of really cool stories about Dunfield House, too.

Sue Norton 12:09

There are. There's, there's some, there's some, there's some stories, and there's stories that may be true. There's stories that may have developed over the years. But one of the stories that I think is, most people have heard about, is about the white lady. And, and there is actually a painting in Dunfield with a picture of the white lady on it. Which, and this is a copy of it.

Paul Norton 12:41

There's a copy of it behind us. You can't see it at the moment, but it is there.

Sue Norton 12:47

Right. So this, there is a story in the 1850s, which happens when the owner was riding home from the village to Dunfield on, on January 1. And he encountered a large group of poor and aged travelers, travelers it said in the newspaper, and he generously supplied them with a piece of beef, a loaf of bread and a quantity of brine soup. And it, it seemed to set off that benevolence and sense that Dunfield has of kindness. Um, so even through all of the history, you know, it, it seems to be good things that have happened at Dunfield, which adds to the Spirit of the place that when you come into the grounds, there's that sense of coming home. Um, it was requisitioned during the war by the American Army. Um, there was field hospitals built all over England in the second World War, which actually in the end, at the end weren't used because the, the firepower was so much stronger in the Second World War. So, that's the hospitals. The injuries, um, people weren't coming home with so many injuries. Um, but it's, um, understood that Winston Churchill came to Dunfield to do some high level meetings. General Patton was supposed to have been here and also General Eisenhower. But with the sort of secrets that there are around anything like this, then we, we haven't got evidence that that happened. We do have an anecdote that's a canteen of cutlery and silverware was put into the safe at Dunfield. And, and they were going to have dinner with, with Winston Churchill and they, they lost the key to the safe. So in true style, being an army, they actually broke through with some force from the back of the house on the outside wall to get into the safe so that they could get this canteen of cutlery out and, and share it. Um, when, when Dunfield was bought by the church in 1965 there was a local newspaper headline which about two inch high print on it saying haunted house bought by church. So I think the stories of the white lady who is supposed to reside at Dunfield came out of that. Um, various stories about the maid falling in love with the owner's son. But Paul and I have lived there all our time and we've never actually

sensed any spirit that would cause us harm or make us feel uncomfortable there. We do have people that have sensed spirits at Dunfield. Um, church members and people that visit Dunfield have seen figures, figures of women and figures of men, figures walking in the corridors. Um, nobody's ever been frightened of it. Nobody's ever felt uncomfortable with it. Nobody's ever felt fearful. Um, and, and as someone who believes in, in, in a loving God and the spirits, um, then I, I, I believe these experiences that people have that for all our time at Dunfield then we've always felt very safe there.

Carla Long 16:36

I remember that Andrew Bolton once said, If there is a white lady at Dunfield then she is very benevolent and kind.

Sue Norton 16:44

Yep. Definitely, definitely.

Carla Long 16:50

So that is, that is quite a history. I, I've always loved the story of Churchill and coming and then having to go into the back to get his, to make sure he eats on very nice cutlery. That's super important, of course. So the history is just so cool. I also really loved hearing and, correct me if I'm wrong, but this is what I remember, when you're walking up the steps in the main house the stairs at the top get a little bit wonky. And I always heard and someone told me and I could be wrong, but that's because, you know, up there as the servants' quarters and who cares what kind of stairs they walk on. Is that true?

Sue Norton 17:23

It is very true. Yes, the stairs, and if you actually look at the handrail on the stairs which was the stairs were about 400 years old. So we don't actually know whether the stairs were in an original house and the main house was built around it or whether the stairs were brought in when, when the main house, as it, as we see it today, was built. But actually if you go up the stairs to the first floor, the, the handrail is very smooth and polished and shiny. The further up the stairs you go into the attics, it becomes very rough, it's not been finished off. The gaps between the spindles are much wider. And so you can tell who, who slept where really from, from, just from the staircase. And on the stairs as well is, is a stained glass window which is made up of broken pieces of glass. And they've been dated to the 13th century. And again, we don't know whether they were in some kind of chapel that might have been on the site, or whether they came from churches that were damaged during the Reformation. They have been put together to create two figures which we've always called Bill and Mary because mom and dad were the first people. But then Dennis Oldchurch was managing director who actually commissioned a new stained glass window which is what was in the original chapel at Dunfield which, which we hold smaller worships in and that is actually a very contemporary design that captures the, the hills and the trees and the flowers and the rivers and the sunshine and the sunlight. So two very, very different stained glass windows, but very beautiful in their own right.

Carla Long 19:25

They're so beautiful and I always, I always stopped to admire the stained glass window of Bill and Mary on my way upstairs. I didn't see the other stained glass windows often because it's often the chapel and

I went, didn't go to chapel all that often, but I really loved seeing those. And also I'm just now realizing even though I've known it for a while, I always had to sleep way upstairs where the servants slept.

Paul Norton 19:56

For the younger people ended up on the top floor.

Carla Long 20:00

That's true. That's true. And all the short people I think, too, because you could easily hit your head up there.

Sue Norton 20:05

You can. Yes, definitely, definitely.

Carla Long 20:09

So Dunfield has been in the heart of so many people, in people live in the British Isles Mission Center, people from outside of the church, I know you've had a ton of outside groups visiting Dunfield, people like me, who I feel like I have been adopted by the British Isles Mission Center because I just, I just loved being there so much. So can you talk a little bit about the ministry that happened at Dunfield, either within Community of Christ or outside of Community of Christ?

Sue Norton 20:35

Yeah, yeah. Well, if I, if I bring you up to date, it's really that after my parents retired, Fred and Helen Crane became the managers of Dunfield. And they were at Dunfield for 10 years. And then Paul and I took over for the last 15 years. And I think we want to make special mention here to Barbara and Stuart Woodhouse because they provided holiday cover management for many years at Dunfield. And it was so important to be able to leave the house in safe hands. And so they supported both Fred and Helen and ourselves for many years. So we, we were very grateful for the support that they gave us. So just to put it in the picture that, that Dunfield's managed by the Dunfield Charity and that's on behalf of the mission center. And the Dunfield board is the trading arm of the business. And we've been very grateful for support from the mission center and world church, um, who've given us their treasure and time to ensure Dunfield remains a sacred space. I think a lot of people have experienced Community of Christ events that Dunfield that there's so many of them. And, and it's lovely to see how mission is changing and ministry is changing. And, and groups that are coming in. Um, my parents, the first group for them arrived two days after they arrived which was a work party. But on average Community of Christ groups use Dunfield for about 20% of the year. So the ministry of Dunfield reaches out to, to, to different groups of people. So we thought it might be nice to share some of those experiences. I mean, at the very beginning, Dunfield wasn't purchased just for Community of Christ. Even back in 1965, their desire was for Dunfield to be a ministry that other groups could share--people of faith and people of none--and was very much for young people. And that's been something that over the years has been, has helped with decision making on what we want to do or Dunfield because young people have been at the heart of everything that Dunfield stands for. And so over 80% of our bookings are year on year bookings. And I think one of the first groups that came, who is still visiting Dunfield, came over 40 years ago. And they first heard about Dunfield when they were on a music tour in the States. And they were staying at a campground owned by the church in the States. And they were explaining to a young lady that they

wish there was a campground similar to the ones in the States in the British Isles because they would love to take their school groups there. And so this young lady was Jill Holmes, who's now Jill Belton, and she told them all about Dunfield. And as soon as they came home the next day, they actually rang Dunfield and talked about bringing school groups. And they bring infant school groups and they bring junior school groups to make music and they bring orchestras as well. So, you know, even just that small chat with someone might make such a difference. So you want to explain some of the groups that come?

Paul Norton 24:16

Okay. We have many school groups that come from adjoining, from around the country. Many are primary school groups which are age of seven to 11 year olds. They come along with their teachers, so the teachers are responsible for the children while they're with us and we provide the catering and the accommodation. And they do all sorts of activities. They do work within the grounds, the nature study and that sort of thing. They often do a comparison between rural living and urban living while they're Dunfield because they're usually from an urban area. They also visit the Elan Valley, which is probably about 20, 25 miles from Dunfield and that's an area that provides water to the city of Birmingham and the surrounding area. There were several valleys that were flooded back in the early 1900s to provide reservoirs. And it's a beautiful area to go and visit if you're ever near Dunfield. And so lots of the children go to, go to there and visit where their water comes from. And they have a really good time. They meet with a, a ranger there. They do some nature study while they're there. And they have a journey through one of the dams to actually see what goes on inside. Well, that's interesting. We also have several older children groups that come usually second from secondary schools so that will be sort of teenagers. And generally, those groups are about making music. We have lots of music groups at Dunfield and the site does lend itself to the creative arts in many ways, singing music, drama, media studies, in particular. They do seem to go down well at Dunfield. But apart from the school groups, we have lots of faith groups visit. We've had some Muslim groups. We've had a Sufi group. We've had other churches, Baptist churches, and other youth groups, church youth groups, particularly evangelical youth group we have come from the center of London out to the rural area around Dunfield. And they have had a really, really good experiences there. They find that coming away to Dunfield they get close together and close to God in that sort of environment. And that's something that we've hopefully helped to foster while we've been there. In more recent years, we've had transgender, transgender groups come to stay at Dunfield and enjoy the spirit of community that's there. And they love Dunfield just as much as a lot of the other groups that visit, consider it their home just as much as we do.

Carla Long 27:08

One thing I, I don't want to interrupt, but one thing I think is really important to mention is, and just call attention to, is that you talked about different faith groups that come. I, I think it's because it's a sacred space. It has been built and the community has been built with intention around there. I think that the people that you've hired to be cooks and cleaners are people who are, uh, who bring that intention, the intention of Dunfield with them. And so it's a safe and sacred space. And I, it warms my heart to know that so many different people from different faith groups, from different whatever, schools or whatever, recognize that as a sacred and beautiful space. And I think that is a testament, Sue, to your parents, to Fred and Helen and to you two. Everybody who's built that community at Dunfield.

Sue Norton 28:01

It's nothing 'cause, um, for me, it's about running a faith-based center because we were the only church members working at the center. So all of our staff, we had a staff team of 11 of us, some full time some part time. And so all of our training was based on faith-based principles. And our staff are encouraged to see each person as a person of worth, um, and to remember that that person was, it might be their first visit to Dunfield. For children, it might be their first visit away from home. So to have a smiling face to have somebody who talks to them was, was really important. And we've actually got a group that's been visiting now for about 10 years. And she arrived to have a look around Dunfield. And we went into the entrance hall and one of our housekeepers was cleaning in the entrance hall, um, and I introduced (. . .) to our cleaner. And she said at that moment, she made her mind up this was the center that she wants to bring her charity to because if we valued, valued our housekeepers, then it, it had the (. . .) that she actually would like for her children to come. And she actually visited us just before the pandemic and there was another group on site. And what was really interesting, we were sat out the front, they were just finishing breakfast, and so we sat out front and had a cup of tea. And then the children came running out and, you know what the children are like when they run down the, down the banks and just so joyful and so excited. And, and she said I just realized, she said, they're sleeping in our beds. And she said, And they're playing in our grounds. She said, I've never thought of that before. And, and we felt that was such a sense of Dunfield being home for people, that when people arrive that it's home. And we've got some, some certain individual stories of groups that have come and people shortly after we arrived, and your dustman, refuse collector arrived to pick up the weekly collection, and he got out of his vehicle and walked to the front of the house. So imagine getting out of the car park and walking to the front of the house and having this wonderful view of, of the hills. And I went to check if he was okay. And he had tears streaming down his face. Um, and 40 years previously to that he'd visited Dunfield for one of our church sponsored children's holiday camp. The sort of backstory was he was one of nine children and his dad had left home the day before the camp. And the day his youngest sibling had been born. It turned out he actually lived just over the other side of the hill that he was looking at. He only lived about five miles away from Dunfield, that he'd been searching for that view ever since that time, um, because when he went back home, we knew that he was going to know that his dad had left home, and his mom had got this new baby. But they've been searching for the sunset ever since. And he thought in, in that very childlike way that he had traveled a million miles to get to where he, he had stayed. And, and it brought back the love that had been felt at that camp and the first time he had been listened to and the first time somebody had asked him how he was. And that had stayed with him through his complex life and kept him focused on how to be a good dad and, and how to, and how, how he could love his children just by having a relationship with them and, and talking to them. One of our staff members, a young mum was diagnosed with breast cancer. And she required very intensive invasive treatments and needed a, nearly a year off work. And our staff team didn't want to replace her because they didn't want anyone having her shifts and her space at Dunfield. So for, for nearly a year, the whole staff team pulled together to cover those shifts to make sure that she, she was able to return and that we, that we hadn't had someone else there in her place. And it just showed that, um, that love for Dunfield and for each other within the team. And the staff always love Community of Christ coming in. They always have a special place, really, in their hearts for Community of Christ, um, because they know how much support that is given on a volunteer basis on the board and trustees and, and financial support when it's needed. And they really respect that and they see ministry in action. And that's made them understand that a faith doesn't have to be dogmatic. It doesn't have to be in your face

or aggressive. But it's actually a small acts of kindness that they can actually make a difference in their lives. So, so that's just two stories that, we've got one fun story that involves cats with, we're usually involved with cats, but when we moved to Dunfield, Sally was in Korea and so we were babysitting her cat. He was called Gloria. And one day, and we've got a church group in, and Gloria jumped up and into the kitchen window, which is not that too high apart from the back of the house because it's not, not a high high leap. But Paul turned round and shouted Get out, Gloria, quite loudly. Just as Gloria Judd came into the kitchen to collect some food. So poor Gloria thought that Paul was telling her to get out of the kitchen. And, and you can you can imagine how shocked both Glorias were at this time with Paul shouting at them. And so that was one of the, one of the really fun stories that we have. But there were also times when we knew that God was walking with us. Sometimes we forgot. And sometimes it got tough and we forgot, but there was one one sort of standout experience really that Paul's going to share because it, it was sort of . . . Paul was fully involved in this. I was, I was on the good side of this.

Paul Norton 34:52

(. . .) probably about 40, 50 people over a weekend and they came to us and said, there's no water coming through the, the taps, toilets, etc. Okay, so we're gonna have a look. We have our own spring water at Dunfield House and it's, um, it goes from the spring to a pump house and they get pumped from the pump house up to the house and then it gets stored in tanks before it then feeds through to the, all the taps and the, the washbasins, etc. So I went. The tanks were almost empty. So I thought what's going on here. Go down to the pump house and had a look. Now the water is not coming through. And there appeared to be an airlock in the pipe that lead from the spring to the pump house. And that, that's normally travels by gravity to, to get there. And so I tried one thing or another, and I could not get the water to come through. It was getting late at this point. There was a tiny amount of water getting through, but nothing like we needed. So we talked to the, to the group leaders and explained situation. And they said they will try not to flush too many toilets and try to conserve the water; no showers, no baths or anything like that. That's right, buckets of water from the swimming pool so they could flush toilets if they needed to. And so we, we went to bed. And during the night, there's a lot of praying going on. But we did both managed to sleep. And in the morning, I woke early and I knew exactly what to do. We have a pump that clears water from the cellar seeing occasionally how it gets flooded. And I knew that if I took that pump down there, I could pump water back up the pipe to clear it. And I was able to do that. And I believe that God showed me what to do that night because I had no idea what we were going to do that night. I thought we're going to have to send the people home the next day because they just, we just didn't have the water. But I believe that God was with us that moment and He showed me what to do.

Carla Long 37:09

That's a wonderful story. And I've loved all these stories. I'm sitting here wiping my eyes because these stories just fill my heart with exactly what a church camp should be for people. So I've just really, really enjoyed that. And I really love the story about Gloria the cat and Gloria the person. And I really wish there had been a video camera to record that whole moment when Paul realized it. And when Gloria real, realized it, and Gloria, the cat realized it as well. Wonderful stories. Did you have any more?

Sue Norton 37:45

We've got? Well, one story we could share. Because this, this person shared it themselves. So, so it's good. We wouldn't have shared this story otherwise because we are very discreet at Dunfield as well. But one time somebody got stuck in the bath at one of our retreats. And fortunately, it was someone who usually stays up late and had decided to go and have a bath while everybody was sort of sorting themselves out. And we'd agreed to have a cup of tea, four or five of us, after everyone had gone to bed, and we do stay up late talking sometimes at retreat. So, we start to realize time had gone on um, and we wondered if she was okay. And, um, and then we thought well perhaps she'd gone to bed straight from having a bath. So anyway, I decided I would just go up and check so if she was sleeping, that was fine. So, anyway, I sort of knocked. I couldn't knock on the door because there was other people in there. Oh no, she's on her own in the bedroom. So, I, I sort of knocked on the door and just called and didn't hear anything. And then I heard this little voice saying, I'm stuck in the bath. So, so I, I had to go and get pulled because I, I try. Even as an occupational therapist, I couldn't get her out of the bath. I tried very hard. So, so Paul came and dignity was, was maintained all the way through. The problem was we were all laughing so much that we nearly all ended up in the bath. So, so it, it just wouldn't have been a surprise if, if we'd have all ended up in the bath with her at the time. So there, there's some, there's some really fun times that, that we have and, um, and, and she was obviously very safe and not harmed. So, yes.

Carla Long 39:40

That, that sounds awkward and hilarious all at the same time. There is one thing that I want to mention just in case you are not going to mention it and this is something that I'm well known for all over Europe since I was working over there, but I have to mention the food at Dunfield is so so wonderful. So I love the English bacon in the mornings so much so. So I was there to like a junior high camp and middle school camp. What do you call? What do you call it? Adventures, right? (Adventure Camp. Yeah.) And my love of bacon was so well known throughout the camp that the kids kept coming and offering me their extra bacon. Just so I could have it. I was grateful. And then I will never, ever, ever forget my first taste of chocolate cake with custard. Oh, my. This is not an American thing at all. I've never seen it in America ever. And I'm pretty sure I had six pieces. I'm pretty sure. And what are those one things the slap jacks? Is that right? (Flapjacks.) Flapjacks. Not slap jacks. Flapjacks. Those things are heaven. And I need to find some of them. Oh my gosh. The food at Dunfield, I will have to say, mmwa. I mean, I miss it all the time. It's, it's just incredible.

Sue Norton 40:55

The food is very much part of the ministry. And we've always with, within sort of cooks teams and always had really some fabulous cooks. Right through. We, we've been, Dunfield's, you know, been very blessed with that. Most of the food is prepared on site. So the flapjacks are made on site with chocolate pudding, chocolate, the custard sauce is made on site. And it's made with love. And, and I think that shows. And, and one of the, one of the things with our, with our team is very often they want to try new recipes. And we find that we'll, we'll offer groups a new recipe, and it'll be, No, we want chocolate sauce and chocolate pudding and we want banoffee pie and we want sticky toffee pudding. And so, and so we're very much trying to, try to bring the changes. But the other thing that I think is important with, with, with our team is that each group, because each group is treated as individual, and the worth of all of that group is that groups have very different needs. So we know, we, we do, we've

done vegan, vegetarian weekends, we've had Muslim groups in where we've cooked flour meals, we've had Jewish groups in where they have meals of different kinds of plates to suit their, their religion. And we cater for whatever the group requires for their needs. So, and that's a real joy because you get to learn different cultures, you get to learn different ways of eating. We had a lovely Indian family who stayed in the stables and in, in his culture, in his family culture, that if you were living on the same site as someone that you always cooked for them, so he cooked us meals for a whole weekend, which was just sheer bliss. And it was absolutely beautiful. So again, it's just the many different cultures and many different people that come to Dunfield and, and all of that mixed together makes Dunfield this, this very welcoming place which accepts the worth of all people. I think there's, there's also low times, and I think we'd be remiss of it being this wonderful, jolly place all the time, if, if not to share through, through all the managers, and I think any managers in any campgrounds because there can be a lot of quietness. The nature of the hospitality business is that it's very full on for one time period of time and then very quiet for others. But being in a faith community means that you somehow have that extra strength to know that it's not going to last forever. So you know that, I mean, one example was that we'd, we'd worked for 10 hours a day straight for two weeks. And we would do to go away for the weekend for a family celebration. And on the Friday that we would do to go away with our bags packed, the cook rang in sick. Now bearing in mind that the sickness levels at Dunfield are so low, it's, it's, it's really, really a testament to the staff team. So we know, knew that was very genuine. And so we sort of left our cases packed with our uniforms on and carried on. But we always knew we would have the strength to do it. And when we went in on that Friday evening, and I think the group were coming in for something like an eight o'clock meal, that we weren't as bright and breezy as we would have been had we just had two weeks off, but there's, you know, behind the scenes, it's a little bit like that swan or that duck is really swimming across the lake, but paddling furiously underneath. And there's times when you can have 100 people there and feel very lonely as well. So there are times when your faith can be tested, and it can feel very lonely. But the blessings are just phenomenal. So, yeah.

Carla Long 45:22

Thank you so much for sharing that, Sue. I think that's super important for people to hear. You know, hardly any of us have been campground managers, you know. And so it's, every single time I've sat down with a campground manager, I've heard about what a difficult task it is. But that difficult task is overlaid by so many blessings, as you so eloquently put it. So, it's, it's hard. It is hard work to make, like I said before, to make those beautiful grounds that I want to step on, and make sure they're exactly the way I remember them. I don't want anything to ever change. I want them to be exactly the way . . . It's a lot of work to keep it like that. And, so anyway, I'm, I'm so appreciative of everything you two have done. So, is there anything that you're particularly fond of, something that you super loved about being campground managers, about Dunfield? I just want to hear a, a few more good stories.

Sue Norton 46:16

We've got so many stories, I think we ought to be here for six hours, really. So, um, the things that we, that the, the activities that we enjoy is our spring and autumn retreats. Uh, these are for, um, are not necessarily for older people, but they tend to happen in school time so we don't tend to get children there. But it's a real testament to getting older doesn't mean to say that you have to slow down or you have to stop doing things. They're just a wonderful source of hope for the future, really, and the sheer joy and connection that we have with people who come to that who've really sustained this. And it's

interesting, they sort of come at the beginning of the season and towards the end of the season. And so it's, it sort of gives us something to hold on to as, as we go through. Reunions and summer camps are fantastic. We, our reunions turned into summer camps because we wanted our outreach to be to invite people to come. And sometimes the word reunion suggests that it's people getting back together again, who know each other so it became our summer camp. And we just love it with hearing the children playing in the grounds, people sitting on the benches. There's nothing that stirs our souls more than times of prayer and of singing. And that really thin space at the campfire site where I think the Spirit in the presence of people from all over the years just is, is in that one little space that just enfolds us. And then World Service Corps. This, this was just one of the best programs that the church had for us. It brought young people to us who had such strong testimonies of their faith, and their love of Community of Christ. And they shared that freely to our staff, to our guests, and Paul and I. They came during the summer months when it was at its busiest and I'm sure they all washed more pots and dishes than they had ever washed in their lives before. But it was a real joy. We've made some really strong friendships, and really gave us hope for the future, for the future of Community of Christ. And I think one of the best prayers I've ever experienced was shared by Matt Jones at our house church as he had rekindled his faith journey whilst volunteering here. It's great when we come out to conference because we meet up with everyone and, and just have real, real, real joyful time. So yeah, so that's some, those, those are some of the memories that we take away with us.

Carla Long 49:03

Well, I am, I have really enjoyed this walk down memory lane for me. I, I have enjoyed each and every one of my times at Dunfield and have always walked away as a changed and better person for it because of the work that you do and because of the work of everyone who comes on that grounds. And I think because, like I said before, because the intention, that you go there with the expectation of meeting God and you always find God there. Ah, well, thank you so much for being willing to talk to me today about this wonderful place and wonderful listeners, I hope that you get a chance to go to Dunfield someday. If you ever get the chance to go to summer camp or to a youth camp if you're young enough, go! Go! You definitely will not regret it. There's so many wonderful things that happen there. So, Paul and Sue, thank you so much for your time. Thank you so much for your testimony and for giving so much of yourselves.

Sue Norton 50:00

Thank you, Carla. It's been a joy, a joy to do, joy to be with you, but a joy to share Dunfield. Perhaps you could just share that the new managers have started at Dunfield who are Alison and Daniel, and we know that, that you'll get the warm welcome that Dunfield is renown for. So check in with them when you get there. You'll really enjoy being with them. We look forward to seeing people at Dunfield, too, when we can come as, as guests.

Carla Long 50:32

Alright, thanks again.

Sue Norton 50:34

Thanks, Carla.

Paul Norton 50:34

Thank you.

Josh Mangelson 50:43

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