

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.

Brittany Mangelson 00:33

Hello, everyone, welcome to the *Project Zion Podcast*. This is Brittany Mangelson and I'm going to be your host for today. And I just have to say, I feel like I say this every single time, but I am so excited for this interview today. We, my guest and I, have just been chit-chatting before we push record and I feel like I could have just continued to chat with her for the whole day. So, I am so excited to welcome my friend, Pam Robison, on the podcast for the first time and we are going to be doing a "What's Brewing" series, which is all about mission, all about what is happening in the church to live out Christ's mission. And, Pam, well, I'll just say we're going to be talking about something that I actually didn't know much about at all, and I'm kind of sad that I'm just now diving into it because I feel like at least people in my congregation could have been using this resource long before now. But with that build up, we are talking about the Piano Club in Community of Christ. So, Pam, why don't you give us a little introduction to yourself, just let us know who you are, where you're at, just whatever you'd like to share about yourself.

Pam Robison 01:44

Thanks, Brittany. I live in Independence, not too far from the Temple and Auditorium, and I've been a church musician, oh, golly, for, just a minute, I've got to stop and think how many years. I've been playing for church since I was eight years old, and started actually on an old pump organ when we lived in Nuneaton, England. Been playing on organ, piano, you name it, since then and I'm really excited about Piano Club because I think that provides an option for a lot of musicians that we didn't have before. It's something that I really enjoy doing, I really enjoy working with, and in a lot of ways, something I wish that there had been when I was younger, just starting out with some piano playing. But yeah, I'm on staff at Community of Christ, with the organs and have been there since 1968. So, been playing in various ways, a lot of years.

Brittany Mangelson 02:54

A seasoned organist, I am so excited about this conversation. So, let's just dive right on in. Tell us what the Piano Club is, maybe give us a little bit of history about it, some basic information. What is it?

Pam Robison 03:11

Okay, in 1997, Jack Ergo was Director of Music at Community of Christ. And I think Jack probably was aware that there weren't a whole lot of resources for beginning pianists who wanted to play for church services. And so, around 1997, Jack came up with the idea to start this Piano Club, as a club for children where the church would be able to provide very simplified hymn resources, so that if somebody was just starting out in piano, but wanted to play for church, they could do an arrangement, maybe even just a single line or a very simple accompaniment that they could use in the congregation. While he intended it initially for kids, soon beginning adult pianists wanted to join as well and so, it really kind

of grew from that. Initially, there wasn't a particular schedule on when the arrangements would come out, just, kind of, whenever Jack could get them put together. But somewhere around two or three years later, Bob and Jerry Gail Ramsey, took it over and led it for 13 or so years. Then things began to get a little bit more organized. As much as I love Jack, he is not necessarily the most organized person, and Bob and Jerry Gail worked it out so that there were six arrangements every year. They came out bimonthly. And those arrangements, we still do it every six, every two months, and every time there are five levels of piano arrangements and one organ arrangement. And the piano levels range from just a single melody line that may be divided between the two hands, all the way up to a more concert level, kind of, an arrangement, and then an organ arrangement that would work for accompaniment as well.

Brittany Mangelson 05:21

I absolutely love this.

Pam Robison 05:26

The arrangements go, you know, the level A is that the single line. B is the melody line with, kind of, basically very simple chord accompaniment. C level has some hand shifting, still not real difficult. D is probably what most of your average church musicians would use. E is designed more for prelude or ministry of music so, there's a wide variety. And the way we're doing it right now is that every member gets all of the levels so, they can choose whichever one works for them. So, on some hymn, maybe level C would work better for them. On another one, they might want to use level D or E, but they have their choice because they get them all.

Brittany Mangelson 06:23

This is so helpful because I have heard, you know, in my ministry, we have a lot of people who are pretty new to *Community of Christ Sings* and people love it, right? I mean, our hymnal, and we've talked about the hymnal on the podcast several times. And it is such a beautiful, beautiful book of scripture and...

Pam Robison 06:44

Right.

Brittany Mangelson 06:44

...you know, just beautiful. However, and to be clear, I don't play the piano, but I have heard that, you know, the, some of the hymns can be really tricky for people who want to provide ministry of music. And there's a lot of musical, Utah, where I'm at, there's a lot of musical talent around. But even for some folks that have been playing the piano for a while, some of the arrangements in the hymn book are difficult. And so...

Pam Robison 07:17

[inaudible] ...a hymn that I still have problems with and they might as well.

Brittany Mangelson 07:21

Yeah, and you've been a professional organist for decades. So, I mean, yeah, so.

Pam Robison 07:28

And, yeah, so, one of the, well, one of the purposes of Piano Club was to make it possible for musicians to have materials related to the hymnal, and making it possible for people to share gifts. So, I guess if you really want to relate it to the Enduring Principles there, it really ties in with the idea of Developing Disciples to Serve and the Worth of All Persons, because it acknowledges that people have gifts. And some may think, oh, I can't play that well enough, to play that. This says, "Yes, you can", because we can make it possible for you to be able to play. And part of the initial goal of Piano Club was to increase the level of participation by children, and youth, and inexperienced adults, and to eventually, hopefully, at least, have competent musicians in every congregation. Because we know that there are some congregations that are really small, and that may have just one person who does their best but maybe who is not particularly experienced or trained. And Piano Club's goal is to say, "Hey, here's materials that will help you provide the best ministry that you can."

Brittany Mangelson 08:53

And that is such a beautiful concept because in Community of Christ, we do believe in the worth of Aall persons, and that includes lay ministers. That includes children. And so, this idea that you need to be a professional in order to, you know, that you have to hit this mark in order to be able to provide ministry, that's just not how our church functions. And I think that anytime you're doing something that's a little more performative, like playing for a group, it can be really intimidating and so, it...

Pam Robison 09:27

It can be, and especially...

Brittany Mangelson 09:28

...just to be able to simplify it is helpful.

Pam Robison 09:31

Yeah, especially if there's a kid who's just really, kind of, starting piano, or an adult who's just starting, who really, really wants to be able to help their congregation or help provide even a music ministry at some point. Hopefully, there's something in Piano Club that makes it possible for them to do that.

Brittany Mangelson 09:53

Yeah, and to build confidence and to just...

Pam Robison 9:57

Yes.

Brittany Mangelson 09:57

...to be able to know that what they have to offer is enough and that they can be part of providing a worship service that is meaningful and people feel God's presence. And I just, I'm such a fan of this.

Pam Robison 10:11

Thank you. We're excited about it as well.

Brittany Mangelson 10:15

So, it also, I mean, sounds like a colossal project. Again, I have, you know admitted...

Pam Robison 10:21

It is a challenge.

Brittany Mangelson 10:22

Yeah. And I've admitted that I basically know nothing about this stuff so, how about you walk us through what it takes to make these resources. You said it's bimonthly.

Pam Robison 10:32

Yes.

Brittany Mangelson 10:33

There's a lot of hymns.

Pam Robison 10:35

Yes.

Brittany Mangelson 10:35

So, I'm just curious what does the process of producing these simplified hymns look like? What work goes into it?

Pam Robison 10:45

Okay, I start with creating a schedule of which hymns we're going to be looking at, try to do it for two to three years at a time so that I always, kind of, know what we're heading for. I send out the year's hymns, like this year's hymns I sent out to our arrangers at the end of last year, and said, "Here's what we're looking at." We've set a deadline that they come in. They're due on the 15th of the first of the month, because that gives me time to do the note setting, to get everything pulled together. There are several arrangers who help out. I have some who only want to do the A, B and C levels. Someone else who does the D levels. Jan Kraybill does E for us and I do the organ ones. And so, they create the, their arrangements and send them back to me. I put them in Finale, which is the music note setting program that we use, double check to make sure I've got all the notes right and add the fingering if we need to, then create PDFs out of those. When, I also send the information to someone who writes the stories for our newsletter, the story of the hymn and the composer. She sends it in to me. I put it into our Word template for the newsletter. It also, that story then goes to the person who creates the puzzles for the newsletter. And she sends those to me and I do them to make sure that there aren't any glitches anywhere along the line. When all of that is done, all of that is put together. And then I create PDFs of all of them, the arrangements and the newsletter, run that off, check it, make sure that everything is printing right, that, again, there aren't any hopefully major or minor glitches in it, then send it out. Most of the people get their newsletter and arrangements by email. I've got a few who still want the hard copies so, I send all of those out, and hopefully don't get any bounce back from any of the emails. And then sit back and go, "phew," until it's time to do the next one.

Brittany Mangelson 13:09

That sounds like a lot of work. And you said that there's a newsletter and I was actually taking a peek at that last night and saw the puzzle and the stories. You have a sample newsletter. Talk a little bit more about that. So, are they stories that go with the hymns, like, the history of the hymns? Or what, what's...

Pam Robison 13:30

Yeah, yup. The story that will survive is the story of the hymn words, the verse itself, as well as the story of the tune, the composer, the author, whatever information she can find that would help bring the hymn to life. Now, like, maybe where it was used? What caused the composer to write it? Why was the hymn tune named the way it was? So, as much information as she can find about the hymn itself. Then, there's a section in there called "Notes From Pam" that is whatever I think about adding. Sometimes it's a little bit of an extra, of some additional information that I have. Sometimes it's information maybe about an upcoming event. Sometimes it's how do you use this part of the hymnal? One time we had a section that dealt with how can you, if there's a hymn that you like but the people don't really know the tune or you can't play the tune, how do I find a tune that people are familiar with that will work with that hymn? So, we spent some time dealing with that. And then there's the puzzles. So, yeah, some fun information in there for people as well.

Brittany Mangelson 14:54

And I think that that's so important because I know that I have loved hearing some of the stories behind the hymns in our hymnal. One that we always tell, the hymn, "Is There One Who Feels Unworthy?"

Pam Robison 15:07

Ah, right. I love that.

Brittany Mangelson 15:07

And, yeah, and that story makes that hymn so much more meaningful. It's a meaningful hymn. But to know that that was written in part by teenagers, and that it happened at Spec, and it's all about welcome and everybody being worthy. And you know, particularly in our context here in Utah, in my context here in Utah, where there's, I mean, teen suicide in Utah, we're number one in the nation, and so...

Pam Robison 15:38

Okay, I didn't know that.

Brittany Mangelson 15:40

Yeah, or we have been in recent years. But to have that hymn, you know, juxtaposed to that and say, like, this is the type of youth that Community of Christ is producing. And this is what our message is teaching the youth. So, the hymn on its own is incredible, but then when you pair that background, it gives it such a more meaningful message, that it's not just, you know, these old, white, straight guys that are telling this message they don't actually believe in, but, like, this is the message that teens are getting, and are sharing with the world. So, yeah, what I'm trying to lift up is the background and the stories of the hymns, they can completely transform the music as well. And so, to be able to equip the

musicians with that background understanding, I mean, when these stories are shared, it just, it brings ministry in such a multi-dimensional way. So.

Pam Robison 16:42

Well, and as a musician, just knowing that the background, knowing the story about maybe what went into the writing of the poem, or where they, where the composer was when they wrote that particular piece, and why they named it, named that tune the way they did, it can have some impact on how you play it as well.

Brittany Mangelson 17:07

That's beautiful. And something I hadn't considered. But yes, you're absolutely right. Oh, very good. And I mean, there's puzzles in it. So, it's fun, right? It's this...

Pam Robison 17:19

Yes, hopefully.

Brittany Mangelson 17:20

...club. Yeah. So, I mean, I'm now curious, what kind of feedback have you gotten from not only the resources, but just the newsletter in general? Do you really feel like this is a community of musicians that you're helping foster?

Pam Robison 17:36

I do. Interestingly enough, I don't get a lot of individual feedback back, but I periodically hear from other individuals who say, "Oh, so and so in our congregation absolutely loves Piano Club." So, it's, kind of, a sideways feedback that we get. I don't get people necessarily saying, "Thank you so much for it." Although occasionally that happens. But it's more, kind of, many testimonials from people who say, "Oh, yeah, our musicians love it. We use it all the time." So, I figure as long as that's happening, and as long as people keep renewing or getting membership in Piano Club, we must be doing something right.

Brittany Mangelson 18:29

Absolutely. Absolutely. So, if you're producing content bimonthly, for those that don't know, when I guess, I'm guessing, Pam, and I'm putting you on the spot, but I'm guessing you could tell us exactly how many hymns there are in *Community of Christ Sings*. 630...

Pam Robison 18:46

Just a minute and I'll look it up.

Brittany Mangelson 18:49

Perfect.

Pam Robison 18:49

[inaudible] ...see the all right here.

Brittany Mangelson 18:51

There's a lot.

Pam Robison 18:52

There's a lot. It's 600, 664.

Brittany Mangelson 18:58

64, okay. So, dare I ask how far you've gotten through for the last several years?

Pam Robison 19:06

You know, I'm not really sure to be quite honest. We will not be able to do all of the hymns in the hymnal because there are copyright restrictions on some of them. And some just say, "No". Right now, what we're working through are hymns that are public domain, because those are easier to work with. And quite honestly, with some, well, with the pandemic, with the cutbacks that the church has had to make in some areas, not having to try and get permission to, from copyright holders to do that, has made it a whole lot easier and there are still a lot of public domain hymns for us to get through. One of the challenges, one of the issues is that while there are 664 hymns in the hymnal, there aren't 664 different tunes, because some tunes are used for two or three, or occasionally four or five different hymns. And so, while we may make an arrangement for a tune with a specific set of words, that, those, that same tune could be used if you're using one of the different, other set of words as well. Although there are a couple of times that we have, I have done multiple arrangements of a hymn tune. You know, we maybe did it, oh, seven or eight years ago. Yeah, let's revisit it. But I'm trying, at this point, I'm trying not to do that, because I'm trying to help us find arrangements for at least all of the public domain hymns that we can. When we begin getting close to the end of that, then I'll take a look at some of the copyrighted hymns again and see if we have the personnel that can help us get that copyright information or copyright permission, as well as the funds. And I don't think the funds were a problem with, I think Piano Club is in good shape for that. It's more of the question of, okay, who do we need to contact? What do we, what do you need from us in order to give us permission to make these arrangements? And then will you give us that permission? Most, I think most are pretty good about that, especially since it's for worship, but there are some that just say, "Nope, don't want, don't want anybody playing with the hymn." In that case, okay, we just have to leave it alone.

Brittany Mangelson 21:47

Yeah, well, I mean, at least we have a lot of options to choose from.

Pam Robison 21:52

Yes. Oh.

Brittany Mangelson 21:52

We have a big enough library?

Pam Robison 21:54

Oh, a whole lot of options. Yeah, I've got a list, actually, of the public domain hymns that we have not yet done. And there's still enough for a few more years.

Brittany Mangelson 22:06

Yeah. So, what about the hymns that are written by Community of Christ members? Because we have a fair amount of those too, but I guess the tunes might not necessarily be owned by our church.

Pam Robison 22:19

Correct. Yeah, in the hymnal, sometimes the words, the copyright to the words are owned by somebody, by one company and the music by somebody else. And, as a matter of fact, some of the hymns that we're doing right now, the public domain ones, the words are owned by somebody else. But we're not doing anything with the words, we're just doing the tune. And so, the story may, we may have some information in the story about the words that are commonly used with that, but we're not arranging the words. We're only arranging the tune, which is a public domain tune. Tunes that are owned by copy, or by the church are, we don't have any issue with. We can go ahead and arrange those.

Brittany Mangelson 23:06

That makes a lot of sense. And honestly, from my perspective, sound, like, this would be a nightmare for me. That's just because all of the red tape and figuring out, okay, what can we do with this one?

Pam Robison 23:20

Oh man.

Brittany Mangelson 23:21

What can we do with this one? So, my respect for this project, like, it was already high, but now, you've just taken it to a new level, because I guarantee if I were the one doing it, I would probably get something very wrong. And then, you know, I would cause a bunch of people to do all this work, and then it would turn out to be for nothing.

Pam Robison 23:44

Yeah, through the years, we've done some copyrighted hymns when there were still enough people in the legal department that they had some time to be able to help us with that. It's gotten a little tighter over the last few years. And so honestly, that's why I've been looking at the public domain hymns. There's a lot of public domain tunes out there that are in the hymnal and a lot that the church owns. And so, I figure as long as we can, kind of, keep working with those that gives us the option for several hymns, like I said, because some of those tunes are used for multiple hymns.

Brittany Mangelson 24:28

Yeah, oh, what a labor of love.

Pam Robison 24:32

It is. It's a bit challenging at times. Occasionally, depending on what else is going on, I find myself thinking, oh, I really want to get this out by the end of the first of the bimonth. Sometimes it's a little bit close, closer than I like, or maybe even into the second month. But it happens, life gets in the way sometimes.

Brittany Mangelson 24:59

Yeah, and grace abounds.

Pam Robison 25:02

Yes.

Brittany Mangelson 25:05

So, Pam, as I have been thinking about this, and just as I've been learning more about Piano Club on my own, you know, culturally in the US, I've mentioned I'm in Utah, and I feel like Utah is kind of an anomaly as far as the arts go...

Pam Robison 25:20

Right.

Brittany Mangelson 25:20

...but culturally here in the US, the arts seem to have taken a backseat, right? These are the programs we're getting [inaudible].

Pam Robison 25:27

Definitely, yeah.

Brittany Mangelson 25:27

Yeah, they're the programs that are getting cut from school.

Pam Robison 25:31

Right.

Brittany Mangelson 25:32

It seems like parents have really pushed kids into sports more than arts.

Pam Robison 25:37

Yeah.

Brittany Mangelson 25:37

And so, I'm just wondering as you have worked with the Piano Club over the decades and have just seen ministers, growing, musicians in Community of Christ growing, have you seen that culture impact, musical ministry in the church?

Pam Robison 25:54

Yes. Unfortunately, I have. Membership in Piano Club has fluctuated. Sometimes it's been really, really, really great. Sometimes it's been to the point that makes me think, oh, okay, are we really doing something that we need to continue? But it hasn't dropped to a level where I think, no, it's time to end it. I have heard occasionally from some who say, "As much as I love Piano Club, our congregation is, just

isn't using it." And that's sad. But I also hear sometimes from piano teachers who use some of the arrangements with their kids. So, it's a balance. And I guess I figure that as long as we can keep providing something that helps kids and adults to feel that what they're doing is worthwhile in the congregation, that's our way of saying, yes, the arts are important. And some of the arrangements sometimes have additional instruments with them, like an accomp-, or a melody, or descant that can be used by any of the C instruments or B flat instruments sometimes. So, it provides another option as well, so that if there's a couple of kids in the family, one's playing piano, ones playing violin, okay, there's a way that they can do a ministry of music and our way of saying, "Yeah, it's important and here's a way you can do it." So, yeah, I wish that there was more attention paid to the arts. I wish it was seen of more value. I do worry sometimes about the future of music in church. I know there's a lot of congregations that have praise bands and I'm not averse to that. I've helped with some in the past. That may be something we look at somewhere down the road about, okay, how can Piano Club help with that? I don't know. I'm not sure what we'll do if it comes to that. But, yeah, yeah, I have seen an impact on it. We just keep plugging away and doing our best to try and help provide materials to help kids see that it's important.

Brittany Mangelson 28:44

Well, I absolutely think that it's important and I am a self-proclaimed traditionalist, sometimes, when it comes to church.

Pam Robison 28:54

Me too, a lot of times.

Brittany Mangelson 28:55

Yeah, I love traditional hymns and, you know, multiple-part harmonies and just the act of singing together. And so...

Pam Robison 29:09

Right.

Brittany Mangelson 29:10

...the idea that we could be, just, yeah, culturally, not putting emphasis on that, just in general, outside of church, in church, etc. It does make me sad and causes me some concern. But I also think that there's enough of us traditionalists that we'll keep it going.

Pam Robison 29:29

I hope so. I hope so. We're trying to.

Brittany Mangelson 29:33

Yeah, well, and again, I keep up, I keep bringing up my context in Utah, but I know that there's a lot of piano players here and sometimes when people have stepped away from their religion, in our congregation, that's one thing that we have several people that are like, oh, we'd love to learn the hymn. So, we've ordered you know, the musician copy of the hymnal...

Pam Robison 29:56

Right.

Brittany Mangelson 29:56

...for several people in our congregation because that's something that they miss. It's a ministry that they miss being able to provide for people. And so, yeah, and that's why I said earlier, you know, I think my congregation could really benefit from this. And so, I don't think that anyone in Salt Lake is a member of Piano Club, and I am hoping to change that.

Pam Robison 30:16

Alright. You know, we've had some congregations in the past where they buy a membership for the congregation, as well as individuals who just buy it for themselves. So, if someone doesn't feel like they could afford it, or if the congregation wants to buy it, okay, go ahead and get a membership. We'll send it to whoever the key person is, and you can share it with whoever.

Brittany Mangelson 30:44

That's good to know. Which kind of brings me to my next question is, how do we get involved with Piano Club? And I'm also, so, when I say this, you know, my initial thought is how can somebody partake in the resources that Piano Club is providing, but also, is there a way to volunteer to help Piano Club out? I'm...

Pam Robison 31:06

Oh, you bet.

Brittany Mangelson 31:07

...curious about that, as well. So, how can we get involved, whatever part of the ministry would fit?

Pam Robison 31:11

Okay? If you want to be, now, let me back up. Membership is open to anyone who is interested, whether they are a member of Community of Christ or not. Because again, a lot of the hymns that we use, while some are unique to Community of Christ, a lot of the tunes are found in hymnals of many other denominations. And so, if someone outside Community of Christ wants to join Piano Club and get those resources, fine, we'd love to have them. They can, you can get membership by going to the church's website, cofchrist.org/pianoclub and that will take them to the information page where they can join. Membership, if they, if they're willing to get the resources by email, it's \$10 a year. If they want snail mail, that's \$25, just to help cover our costs there. My email is on that page as well. So, if someone wants to say, "Hey, I, I'd be willing to, I'd love to do some arrangements," or "I'd love to write a story," or "I'd love to help, you know, with whatever." If there's a, an, or just sharing ideas, send me an email. I'd love to hear it. So, in fact, some of the current arrangers are people who said, "Oh, I'd love to be able to arrange." I've had some who's, who say, "Yeah, I'd like to try doing this. Maybe I just want to do one B arrangement of one hymn." That's fine. Sometimes we send out two ABC arrangements, because I've got a couple of people right now, who both like to do those levels of arrangements and they do it in different ways. And so, in those cases, someone may have two options of either the very

simplest one, and I don't have any problems sending out a couple of arrangements by my different arrangers.

Brittany Mangelson 33:29

Thank you, Pam. I again, I just feel like such a dork listening to this, because, like, I'm getting so excited. And again, this isn't even anything that I know anything about, but I'm so glad that it exists. And just to underscore how inexpensive this is. You said \$10 a year to get...

Pam Robison 33:48

A year.

Brittany Mangelson 33:49

...for [inaudible]...versus by email, and then \$25 by snail mail.

Pam Robison 33:53

Correct.

Brittany Mangelson 33:53

So, that is cheaper than any piano book you will ever find.

Pam Robison 33:58

Absolutely. Absolutely. And, you know, one of the things that we have, I have a list. Well, let me back up a minute. We have copyright permission for some of the arrangements that we've done in the past. Those, unfortunately, I cannot, like, I can't share because we were limited to a specific number that we could do. There are a lot of public domain arrangements that we've done. I have a list of those, and I probably should put it up on the, make it available on the website to say these are available that we could send to someone if they were interested. And when I've done that, I've, we've asked for just minimal, you know, minimal payment to help with those. But, yeah, there's a lot of resources out there. Interestingly enough, sometimes when I've said something about Piano Club, people have said, "I didn't know that was still around." Yeah, it's very definitely still around, still going strong?

Brittany Mangelson 35:05

Well, you know, this is a little podcast, but I am hoping that you see a little bit of a bump in membership with this.

Pam Robison 35:14

I will let you know.

Brittany Mangelson 35:17

Yes, I'm curious.

Pam Robison 35:18

I would love, I'd love to see several emails come in. You know, if, the best way to do it is to go to that website, the church website, which will take you then to the Herald House link where you can order, make your order. And that's the best way to do it.

Brittany Mangelson 35:37

Excellent. And we'll be sure to link that directly in the show notes of the podcast. So, it's really accessible.

Pam Robison 35:43

Okay, great.

Brittany Mangelson 35:45

So, listeners, make sure you go do it.

Pam Robison 35:49

I'd love to get a lot of emails from Herald House, saying here's some additional Piano Club memberships. The other thing that I probably should let you know too is that membership runs on a calendar year. So, it doesn't matter when you join during the year, you will get all of the resources for that year. So, for example, if somebody doesn't hear, doesn't join until, say June or July, I will send them the first and second and then third resources for that year. We've done it that way just because that's an easy way of saying, of knowing when it's time to renew. And quite honestly, so that I'm not having to think, okay, wait a minute, this person needs to renew this month, this person needs to renew that month. With everything that's going on in our lives right now, to be quite honest, I don't have the time to do that.

Brittany Mangelson 36:50

Yeah.

Pam Robison 36:51

And so, by saying membership is on a calendar year, then I know that whenever I get a new member, all I need to do is go back and send the previous ones and add them to the list for going forward.

Brittany Mangelson 37:04

That makes a lot of sense and it sounds like there's a lot of, a lot to juggle with this project and so streamlining...

Pam Robison 37:11

Yes, there is.

Brittany Mangelson 37:12

...that one aspect of it.

Pam Robison 37:14

That's also why we send everybody all of the arrangements. When Bob and Jerry Gail were doing it, they had it, they had a, oh, I'm not sure, kind of, they had it streamlined in a way so that you could say I only want the E arrangements or I only want ABC arrangements. And they were able to do the labels and had a, an assembly line setup to get all of that done. Again, as the years have gone by, I don't have the time to go through and say, okay, these five people only want this level. Those 10 people want that. Okay, especially if, especially if we're sending it email because then they can simply run off the ones that they want.

Brittany Mangelson 38:04

Yeah, again, that totally streamlines it.

Pam Robison 38:08

Yeah, well, when life gets a little hectic, you, kind of, do what you have to do to make it easy, as easy as possible.

Brittany Mangelson 38:14

Absolutely. You want one, you get 'em all.

Pam Robison 38:18

Yeah, oh, we've got some wonderful people through the years who have been involved in helping with the arrangements. It has not been the same people all the way through. You know, sometimes people's lives get busy and they say, "I just can't do this anymore", or whatever, or someone else will come in. But we've got a really good group right now. But I'm always open to individuals who are interested.

Brittany Mangelson 38:44

Yeah. So, can I ask real quick about how many people, I mean, we've talked a lot about the process, but how many people are involved?

Pam Robison 38:53

Oh, let's see. I've got one who does the puzzles, one he writes the stories. I've got two who do the ABC levels. Someone else who does the D level, and Jan does the E level, and me. So, at the moment about seven?

Brittany Mangelson 39:13

Yeah. Wow. It's amazing what seven people can accomplish and...

Pam Robison 39:20

It is.

Brittany Mangelson 39:20

[inaudible]...as being, you know, circulated throughout the church and throughout the world. That's pretty exciting.

Pam Robison 39:25

Yeah, it is fun. It's fun sometimes, too, see where the different memberships are, where people are. We've had people in Germany at times. Don't have anyone there right now. It's mostly the U.S. But, again, if anybody's listening outside the U.S., with email, we can send you the arrangements and you can get them very quickly and very easily.

Brittany Mangelson 40:00

Excellent. I just picture Community of Christ talent shows all over the place, with little kids. Here, you can help the hymns.

Pam Robison 40:11

Yeah, sometimes, but, again, several years ago, we used to do a Piano Club recital at conference.

Brittany Mangelson 40:19

Oh, okay.

Pam Robison 40:21

I had an opportunity to do that. As things have shifted, again, that, unfortunately, fell by the wayside. But that was fun to be able to see people sharing in that way. So, yeah, if there's local congregational talent shows that are doing that, it would be so much fun to be able to see, either a video or even just a picture of someone doing that. I ask some times in the newsletter, if folks would send a picture. Unfortunately, they don't. But I'd love to have pictures to be able to share.

Brittany Mangelson 40:58

Well, I wonder if even, you know, I mean, if it's, it, I get that it can be difficult to get things from people. But now I'm having this vision of an online recital, right, of everyone just playing one hymn that they've done. And you could...

Pam Robison 41:13

Oh, that's an idea.

Brittany Mangelson 41:14

...stitch them together. There's just so many possibilities.

Pam Robison 41:19

That's an idea. I'll have to, we'll have to talk about that in maybe the next "Notes".

Brittany Mangelson 41:24

Well, and again, listeners, I don't boss our listeners around very much, but I'm really excited about this. So, I hope that more people take advantage of this incredibly inexpensive resource. And I'm, yeah, I'm excited.

Pam Robison 41:45

I appreciate your support. I hope we can get the word out to more folks as well. Those of us who are involved in it, really enjoy doing it, and hope that people who are getting them enjoy it, and would love to be able to share it. I know when I send out the renewals, I send out a brochure as well, which is also on the website and just say, hey, feel free to share this with anybody you know. So, I'll say it here. You know, if you're interested, if you know anybody would be interested, this is not restricted to Community of Christ. Anybody who would like to have some of the arrangements can join.

Brittany Mangelson 42:25

Excellent. Pam, thanks so much for this conversation. I always like to end these interviews with just, is there anything else that you would like to leave us with? I just, again, want to thank you. I think that this is such an important ministry that absolutely develops disciples to serve and really upholds the worth of all people and allows people to bring ministry wherever they're at, at the different levels in such a meaningful way. So, thank you. And is there anything else you'd like to leave us with?

Pam Robison 42:58

I don't think so, except to say, thank you for supporting us and helping us get the word out.

Brittany Mangelson 43:03

Yeah, well, again, I hope some of our listeners take advantage of it. I think that's, like, maybe the fourth time I've said.

Pam Robison 43:11

I will be sure and let you know.

Brittany Mangelson 43:15

Okay, thanks so much, Pam.

Pam Robison 43:17

Thanks, Brittany.

Josh Mangelson 43:26

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