

500 | Celebrating Five Hundred Episodes of Project Zion Podcast!
Project Zion Podcast

Robin Linkhart 00:00

Hello, and to Project Zion Podcast. This is your host, Robin Linkhart, here with the one and only Brittany Mangelson, to celebrate the 500th episode of Project Zion Podcast. That's right, today's podcast is the 500th full length episode posted on Project Zion, and we want to take time to mark this as a special day in the life of our journey together as a team, and with all of you, our listeners. Today, we will take a trip down memory lane, hear from different members of our team, and even take a quick peek into the future. Brittany, it's great to have you here today. What else do you have for us in the way of an intro for today's podcast?

Brittany Mangelson 00:50

Not much just kind of an overwhelming feeling of gratitude that I can't believe that we have produced 500 episodes, full length episodes, and just a lot of gratitude for our listeners. And for everyone who's been on the podcast so far, and our entire team, just feeling really, really grateful that we've made it to this point. I'm excited.

Robin Linkhart 01:14

I'm excited too. So listeners, we're gonna start with a brief history of Project Zion Podcast from the very beginning, like how did this even come to be? So back in 2014, I was on assignment in Utah, in the early days of our current Latter-day Seeker Ministries. I was good friends with Lindsey Hanson Park, who is a well known podcaster. She did the Year of Polygamy podcast, and she was the host of our first house church down in Stansbury Park. She loved what Community of Christ was doing in Utah and who we are as a people. And she reached out to me one day and she said, "Robin, I want to talk to you about something you might consider because I think it would really connect with a lot of people who are spiritual seekers." So she probably didn't use the word spiritual seekers, but people who need a safe place to land and kind of discover who they are and where their journey might take them. So at her request, I met her at the Whitefields Education Center, where she was lending a hand to John Larson and his team. He was a major voice in the post Mormon community at the time. And, and she just said, "Hey, I think podcasting might be a good way for you to share about who you are, and to connect with people who want more information." And she had one of their sound engineers sit down and kind of go through: here's the basic equipment you might need; this is how you put it together; and this is how you get started. And Lindsey gave me a few pointers.

Robin Linkhart 02:57

And then Katie Langston, a common friend of Lindsay's and an active seeker with Community of Christ at the time, also met with us and we just kind of began to brainstorm. So in April of 2014, Katie and I, in earnest started really kind of talking about what this might look like, and what we might call it. We even had a private Facebook group, which eventually became our team Facebook group, brainstorming, communicating with each other, talking about the vision. We came up with the name Project Zion Podcast, just messaging back and forth. We reached out to Gerrilyn Hassel Pool, who's a graphic artist, to help us create our first logo. And that summer at Sunstone Symposium, we actually signed up to do a presentation. We hadn't even launched yet. But we talked about our vision and what it could be, and

we had little handouts, which is kind of funny because we didn't actually get launched for another year, but we were out there.

Robin Linkhart 04:01

I also purchased some used equipment in downtown, downtown Salt Lake City at some kind of a sound band store. And the mixer board is ginormous. Couple of microphones, a bunch of cords. And Katie who was gonna you know, help launch this—she and her family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota for her to attend grad school and she—bless her heart—she packed all that equipment and took it with her. We ended up launching in 2015. And Katie was really a major player on the back end of the podcast. She allowed us to use a website or an app that she was using, that kind of hosted us as an organization as a web page, website. She was a creative consultant and partner with me. She was an early host and editor for the podcast. And you know, I don't even know if Project Zion Podcast would be a thing without Katie Langston's help.

Robin Linkhart 05:09

That summer of 2015, back at a Sunstone Symposium, we had a meeting and Brittany, I don't know if you remember this, but Katie came back in town for the symposium, the summer of 15. And we grabbed a table out back of the U (university) where we were for the symposium and Seth, Brian, your husband, Josh, Katie and myself, just ate pizza at a picnic table and just kind of drafted out, you know, "Okay, we're ready to launch. What's going to be our first recording? What are we going to do? What does this look like?" And we set a date to record our first episode, which was...that was all so funny. I mean, this whole thing has been an adventure in the making. We did post that original Episode 1, decided that was pretty awful and, and reassessed, took it down and put in something else in its place. But it was, it was a seminal moment in the life of Project Zion. Another early podcast, which is one of my absolute favorites, is one that Josh did on Fireflies, Let the Spirit Breathe. It was our first Extra Shot, and it was some of his reflections on Spirit, and faith, and the journey of faith.

Robin Linkhart 06:30

We started posting one episode a week when we launched. Josh was doing a lot of the editing, Katie and Seth did some editing, Katie, Seth, Josh, and you Brittany all served as hosts, at the beginning. I think I may have done one or two early host interviews. We also partnered with other podcasts and did some cross posting, for example, Seth and Bill Reel did a podcast together that was posted on Bill's website, or podcast and then allowed us to cross post.

Robin Linkhart 07:10

Our very first series was Percolating on Faith and that had a real intentional focus on faith seeking understanding, theology, the process of thinking about God and the faith journey. And I recruited Carla Long to be the host of that, she was coming on board as a Latter-day Seeker Minister and was going to be an independence for a bit before she moved out to Utah. So she took that on. And that's that's been a really important series in our podcast.

Robin Linkhart 07:42

In the fall of 2016. And we were like about a year into production, there was a Go Fund Mission, opportunity and campaign in Community of Christ, and we signed up to be one of the missional

opportunities that people could help fund and we met our goal for raising funding to support this podcast happening. Becca Loving, who's still on the Communications Team, some of her time was allocated to support the ministries of Latter-day Seekers. And what we were doing with this podcast was part of that. So she helped us with our website and also with project management in those early days. And we also—and this was in the journey of Go Fund Mission, we made an edit on our logo. Our original logo had the Community of Christ Temple Spire, our temple and independence. And beside that was the Salt Lake Temple top with Moroni and his bugle. And we realized by this time in our journey, that our original vision of this being kind of a dialogue with different people in the restoration tradition—including our friends in the Mormon church—had not really materialized in the way that we had envisioned and actually, it wasn't really in the wheelhouse of the Mormon experience to have theological explorations and diversity of thought. So we revised and fine tuned our vision and had clarity of focus and now only the Community of Christ Temple spire appears on our logo.

Robin Linkhart 09:32

We also add in more editors and hosts in 2016. Jason, Jason Eyre, who was a seeker at the time and had lots of expertise came on as an editor. Recruited Karin Peter to be a host, explored the liturgical calendar and Christian calendar in Common Grounds and also Cuppa Joe is another series that she eventually took on. Karin's has been really helpful to us in giving us a lens through which to see the the missionary, invitation, and witness opportunity resident in sharing our many stories on Project Zion Podcast. Helping us be outward facing and welcoming in different opportunities with Project Zion at booths at Sunstone Symposium, Sunstone satellite conferences like Nauvoo as well as World Conference.

Robin Linkhart 10:32

Which brings us to World Conference 2016. Britt and Josh were there it was their first World Conference with their family. And they wasted no time in exploring what kind of interviews could we do face to face while we are there. And a really important one that they did was with Wallace B. Smith, past president-prophet of Community of Christ. And it was about that time bread that I think you were at least looking into seminary. Did you start Seminary in 2016?

Brittany Mangelson 11:07

Yes, I think it was right before right after World Conference World Conference was in April. So I started that next fall of 2016.

Robin Linkhart 11:19

That was actually a summer World Conference in 16. So it was in June, and yeah, and then you started that Fall. Because that was important to this whole journey of Project Zion, because you were suddenly in, not only a great opportunity to learn and explore and grow, but you also were meeting tons of people and networking. And it became like this epicenter of generating ideas and content and people we can interview and we had a little explosion of new series about about that time.

Robin Linkhart 11:55

So we percolated along there for a while. And then 2018, July 2018, Brittany actually came on board full time as a Social Media Seeker Ministry Specialist, which pioneered a new role of ministry in the

context of online internet digital world. And that has been a big plus in lots and lots of ways. But it brought Brittany on as a project manager taking over for Becca who left working with Latter-day Seeker Ministries to devote all of her time to Communications Team for Community of Christ at large. And it was at Fall in 2018, and I think that's right, Brittany, that we expanded our posting schedule to two posts a week is that when we did that?

Brittany Mangelson 12:50

yes, I looked it up and October 2018, was the first month that we posted two a week.

Robin Linkhart 12:57

And that was kind of a big step, a leap of faith. I know some of our hosts were like, "We're not sure about this." But it worked out great. And we've done it without fail two posts a week. It was about that time too that we began exploring partnerships with different folks. We'll talk about that a little later on. We developed a rhythm of posting we began becoming much more intentional with our strategic planning and when Brittany and I would be on working retreats, and in conversation with all of our Latter-day Seeker Ministries across the US. We added another editor Matt Davidson, a seventy up in Headwaters Mission Center who was a faithful listener and was more than happy to volunteer some time to help us out.

Robin Linkhart 13:46

And then World Conference 2019. Oh my gosh, Brittany, it was like ministries online had really taken on a new intentionality and was getting some traction. There weren't tons of online ministries, but Project Zion we consider an online ministry in a different kind of way. But we had a Lunch and Learn for Project Zion Podcast, we had a booth for Project Zion Podcast. And we had a full court press interface and promo with the members of the Church promoting Project Zion Podcast. And we also sponsored a Lunch and Learn for online ministries, which was I think pivotal and and like I said, there's an there's an interface between online ministries and a traditional sense of offering you know, what we do in gathered community as a church as well as delivering an interface of story, ideas and content through Project Zion Podcast.

Robin Linkhart 14:50

Then in 2019, Linda Booth at that World Conference, retired from her full time employment with Community of Christ as Director of Communications and as a member of the Council of 12 Apostles and the President of the Council of 12. And I thought that was a strategic time to recruit someone who had lots and lots of experience in ministry in the church, but also as a professional communicator. So she came on board as a volunteer host, and Coffee Buzz one of the series that she sponsors, in conversations with members of the First Presidency has been a huge addition to our content lineup. And it was about that same time we recruited Mike Hoffman, the campus minister at Graceland University, Community of Christ College. And that has added a different dimension of demographic and voice in young adults attending Graceland there in Lamoni, Iowa.

Robin Linkhart 15:53

And then we roll into 2020. And as everybody knows, by the end of February, early March, we were full in a pandemic, and a shutdown all the way around and Project Zion in a lot of ways I think Brittany

became a lifeline to a lot of people. And if we look at our stats over time, we see this huge bump of listenership starting mid February to mid March is just going up, up up and it continues on through that whole locked down for several months. That's when we reached out to Katie Harmon, McLaughlin, a spiritual director, full time with Community of Christ, and spiritual Spiritual Formation Ministries, and invited her to do a series called Awaken to God's Presence, which provided 10 different guided meditations. We were sensing a real spiritual hunger, a need and desire to connect not only to one another, but to our source of being, to the Divine Presence. And that was, I think that was a really important response on the part of Project Zion to the needs that we were feeling across the board. What do you think, Britt?

Brittany Mangelson 17:18

Yeah, I think that that's one of the best parts of producing a podcast is you can respond to what's going on around you really, really quickly. And so with the pandemic and with Katie's series, I remember we were hearing from church members that were in nursing homes, who really weren't even able to leave their little tiny room without fear of feeling sick. And yet they were able to have a spiritual practice that was a familiar voice, was a familiar culture, a familiar way of talking to God, with God, about God. And so I would say those early days of the pandemic really shifted my focus that Project Zion is an actual ministry. It was always a ministry, but providing pastoral care through the podcast. 2020 brought a new dimension into that, and I think it continued with President Veazey's response to the killing of George Floyd, and just at various times, for me, 2020 shifted the focus that we were actually bringing pastoral ministry to the church.

Robin Linkhart 18:33

Yeah, yeah. Really great insights there. We also saw a shift in the Communications Team, and how they were interacting or taking note of the content coming out of Project Zion Podcast. I think, with the addition of the First Presidency's voice that certainly got their attention, and they had put a few links to us for different things prior to that date. But this is when we see the Comms Team really picking up and posting links to content, using some of the content for Herald articles and other ways. So there's that... when we see that big bump in listenership through the pandemic, I think part of that was they were a partner in helping the church as a whole understand, here's another resource that we have that you can plug into, and it's a take and go anywhere you are, whatever you're doing, it can be there for you.

Robin Linkhart 19:33

Now, it was also a 19 that we had access to a great program provided through Buzzsprout and that's a computer generated transcription service with Otter and previous to that we'd had lots and lots and lots of requests to please have transcripts, but it was very laborious and time consuming. We had a few volunteers that did some the old fashioned way, here and there for some of our most popular podcast episodes. But there was just no really time effective or economical way that we could get access for a sustained transcription service to our listeners until this computer generated app came out, which has been great. It still requires transcribers to listen and fine tune, but it does a lion's share of the work. So Brittany was doing most of those transcription reviews and getting those posted online. But in 2021, we intentionally recruited some full time transcribers. In other words, they would commit to doing that. So John Wight, Senior President of Seventy, and Sarah Tubbesing, who was the Mission Center President and a halftime Latter-day Seekers minister in Arizona, began doing that for us. And they both

retired into 2020. And continued to do that as a volunteer into 2021. That has been a wonderful asset to our team lineup. And we have really great transcriptions online for all of our episodes, beginning about July of 2019.

Robin Linkhart 21:28

Then in late 2020, we began expanding some of our—I'll call it heavy lifting content—and Karin Peter took on a series called He'Brew, She' Brew, New'Brew. And it's a three part...it's actually a two part series, all of last year was He'Brew/She'Brew, which is walking through the Old Testament with Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith similar to the reflections that they offer on Percolating on Faith. But these are very scripture focused. And Karin Peter is the host. And they've completed the He'Brew, She'Brew, with the She'Brew having some episodes, focused on the feminine female voice in the Old Testament. And this year, they're doing New'Brew. And that's been a great addition to the lineup. So that brings us up to now 2022. Britt, do you have anything to add, or any reflections on the history of Project Zion Podcast,

Brittany Mangelson 22:35

It's really interesting hearing you give that overview. I mean, I lived all of that history, but just hearing it in a short, concise time frame, not over years, just really makes me see how much we have grown as a team, you know, literally, with adding people, but also just our understanding of how to podcast, the purpose of podcasts, the missional potential of podcasts. I think that we started out with a hope, but none of us really knew where it was going to go. And I think that just hearing you talk about all the different steps that we have made as a team over the years, just I don't know, kind of makes me proud of our little team and how much we've been able to accomplish. So thank you. Thank you for that overview.

Robin Linkhart 23:25

So I want to move now into just interviewing you, Brittany a little bit, because you have held a couple roles. And I want to start with your function and role as host. How did you come to be a host on Project Zion Podcast?

Brittany Mangelson 23:43

Well, if I remember correctly, I was at a women's retreat in 2015, that very first women's retreat that I went to, and I think that you had some papers printed out of...that you passed out to everyone that just kind of had suggestions of what topics we would want to hear about, if there were any guests that we wanted to have. And so you and I had a conversation about that. And I gave you my input, and then you sneakily snuck in the "would you like to do the interview?" It was very smooth and natural, and I was nervous about it. But I took your invitation seriously, and decided to do it. Josh had already been in conversation with you about kind of the production of the podcast. And so this definitely was a conversation that I was involved with, and I was very excited about, but I wasn't necessarily thinking that I was going to be a host. But when you asked I said yes. And I mean, it took several months. Again, like you said to you know, actually start doing interviews but I was I just started getting involved in scheduling and figuring out the types of conversations we're gonna have at that point.

Robin Linkhart 25:02

Yeah. And I think it was a real great addition. I mean, you brought a fresh voice and new perspective, very invested in your discipleship and Community of Christ. And, you know, wouldn't be long a year later that you'd be going to seminary, which really, that part of your journey brought all of that into Project Zion Podcast. And it was such it's always been such a great influence and an additional lens through which we not only see but hear. And, you know, in those early days, so, Josh and Seth, were doing some interviews, Katie Langston was doing quite a few of our interviews, and then adding your voice to that lineup was great, and also brought some new connections and new guests to the podcast. So as one of the first hosts on Project Zion, what was it like then? And what is it like now?

Brittany Mangelson 26:03

So I would say at the beginning, I was just really, really, really nervous in a lot of ways. I mean, I still get this way. But in a lot of ways, I was interviewing people who I just wanted to have personal conversations with so one of the first interviews that I did possibly even the first was with Barb Walden and Andrew Bolton, about this question, Jesus, or Joseph, this pivotal moment in church history, and I was just a nervous wreck. I mean, here, I was interviewing a retired apostle, you know, little old me, and the Director of the Historic Sites Foundation, and two big important voices in the church, and I just had a billion questions for them. And so I was pretty insecure. And I remember, it was just so worrisome that I was gonna mess up the recording. So I had my computer and everything, and then I set my phone next to the speaker, just in case, something happened with my computer, then I would have some, you know, bad quality sound on my phone, but there was just a lot of anxiety. And so I am less nervous about that now. But I still try to be really intentional about the people that we interview, and I, you know, double and triple check that I pushed record at the right time and everything like that. But I do feel like now it feels like I'm interviewing friends, when, at the very beginning, it felt like I was interviewing people that just kind of intimidated me, or, you know, I just I felt like I didn't have a right to be doing some of these interviews. And luckily, I don't necessarily feel that anymore. So I've chilled out a bit since I first started.

Robin Linkhart 27:56

You've also had a hand in coming up with not only ideas for podcasts, but kind of series headers. We have found it helpful to organize our podcasts in different avenues of thought or focus topics. And some of those are... continue to be kind of primarily in your wheelhouse. So tell us a little bit about the series, either that you helped create, or those that kind of continue to be one of your wheelhouse series.

Brittany Mangelson 28:29

So I would say that there's two that I'm primarily involved with, and was primarily involved with the conception of them. So those two would be Fairtrade and Chai Can't Even. So Fairtrade is our series where we interview folks about faith transitions, and it's primarily folks that come from the Latter Day Saint tradition, but it's not all that and we do have several episodes of folks who come from a variety of faiths, backgrounds, but it's all about their conversion to Community of Christ. And then the other series that I'm primarily involved with is called Chai Can't Even where we interview millennials and Community of Christ. And the, the reasons why I like those two series and why I think they're a good fit for me is because as much as I like to talk about church history, or theology, or things that I don't know, need to be a bit more polished, I would say, I really just like hearing people's stories. And I think that there's something so poignant about humanizing faith, and humanizing belief and theology in a very practical,

real way. And those are what those two series do for me. And so it's giving people a platform to share about their doubts, to share about the harm that religion has done, to share about the reasons they are compelled to still be engaged in a church community. To share about the distinctives that make Community of Christ stand out, to share about the enduring principles, the mission initiatives, how they're engaged in church life. Maybe how they're empowered as a queer person, or as a woman, within our faith tradition. And so for me, we can talk about high level theology or the past, or, you know, church finances, or name any of the other topics that we talk about on Projects Zion, they're all equally important in my mind. But at the end of the day, for me, being a mom with young kids, for me being a millennial, for me, being a person who has gone through a faith transition, I really want to pull out why we stay engaged in a faith community. Those two theories are all about intentional faith and intentional reframing. And for me, allowing people to share their stories, provides, I think, not only healing for the person sharing their story, whether they grew up in Community of Christ, or whether they're a convert, but it also helps bring healing and reconciliation to those who can relate to their stories. And I just think the humanizing of faith is where my main interest is. And so it's just been a joy to get to know a lot of different people in the church, and basically hear why they like Community of Christ. I mean, we go to difficult spaces in both of those series. But we always come out on top, we always come out from a place of hope and a place of missional potential and shouting the enduring principles off the rooftops. And so those episodes just give me a lot of hope and faith, and really a lot of joy.

Robin Linkhart 32:00

So what are some of the challenges you've had along the way as a host? And what are some of the joys?

Brittany Mangelson 32:06

So I would say one of the challenges that I have as a host is everyone has a different way of wanting to do these interviews. Some people want a tight, tight outline, where I give them you know, bullet points and very specific questions, and then either and sometimes even type in my potential responses to what they're going to say. And then other people are like, we're good, you give me a topic, we can wing it. And then there's everything in between those two perspectives. And again, I don't think one is right, and one is wrong. It's just very, very different. And so sometimes when I give my invitation to be on the podcast, I usually ask, you know, I have a couple questions that kind of vet where they are on that level of this needs to be tight and structured, or it's totally free flow. And sometimes I maybe get it wrong. And sometimes I totally freak out the people I'm interviewing, because I either over prep them or under prep them. So finding that sweet spot has been a little bit difficult. For me, I'm most comfortable if I have basic questions, basic, basic, basic outline, but then also the shared understanding that I'm not necessarily going to doctor my responses before we have the conversation, because I want it to be a normal flow of conversation. And I also want us to have the ability to just go where a natural conversation would lead. And so if we go on a side tangent, that ends up being really important. And we veer off the the outline, you know, I don't think that's a bad thing. But it makes some people really, really nervous. And then there's other people where you just have no idea where they're gonna go, because they just want to chat and they want to share everything. And so there have been a few times where I'm like, "Oh, how do we rein this in?" And so, I mean, I'm not a professional interviewer. And that probably comes out in my interviews, but it's, it's just, it's a juggle, and can be challenging. And as I said before, I think one of my biggest joys, especially for the series that I'm involved with, is just giving

people a platform to tell their story. And I think that I've gotten feedback from several people who I've been able to interview and it's been a really good tool for them to share with family members, to have them understand their faith story, maybe a little easier. And so it's not so confrontational because the family can just, you know, listen to it on their own, and then have a conversation about it later. And I've also heard from people who have listened to those stories that it...they bring them a lot of hope. And I think that seeing your church through the eyes of someone new can be a very healing and encouraging experience for some lifelong members of Community of Christ. And so it just, it feels very sacred to be able to have a platform where people can share their stories. So that's that is, for me, my biggest joy is just allowing people to share their stories in a way that feels fully fully authentic to who they are.

Robin Linkhart 35:22

What do you know now that you wish you had known at the very beginning?

Brittany Mangelson 35:28

So I wish that I knew that it didn't have to be perfect. So there are some folks who want a more professional style podcast. My way of interviewing people I really just say is as if we're chatting around a campfire, and we're just friends and you know, a couple 100 People just happened to be listening in on it. But I like to keep things really casual. And I thought that that was wrong at first. I don't know, there are some hosts that we have that are more, more professional, more scripted. And there have been times where I've thought that that needed to be me. And there are times where I've tried to keep to a tighter script. And it just doesn't, it just doesn't work for me. And I've recognized that all of our hosts are different. Everyone that we interview is different. And I do best when I just show up as myself. And I don't need to try to mimic someone else's interview style, or I don't need to try to be someone who I'm not. Because at least I can tell when I'm faking it, and it's not good. I wish I would have known early on that I don't need to be worried as much as I was, and that I can just show up as myself. And if people don't like my interviews, they don't have to listen, but it's fine. I can just be me. And that's enough.

Robin Linkhart 36:57

You've already touched a little bit on the positive impact Project Zion's had on listeners and on the team. Can you share a story another story with us about positive impact Project Zion's had in the world of faith or mission or ministry?

Brittany Mangelson 37:13

Yeah, so I can think of two seeker now members, specifically who considered Project Zion their congregation—at first—their church. Neither of them had congregations nearby. They were both visiting congregations when they could, talking to ministers online, but how they actually learned about the church and learned who we are and learned how we present history etc, was through the podcast. And so that has been really cool. Because again, it's it's way more, there's way more missional potential than I even recognized at first. And knowing that I played a role in that even if it wasn't podcasts that I hosted or whatever, like, just by nature of being the project manager, I hear a lot of those stories. And knowing that it, it takes a big team to create this, but that it does have an impact. And I should also note that the two seekers that I'm thinking of, we're both male, and that doesn't seem like it should matter. But if you've heard me on the podcast before, you will probably know that my experience working with male seekers has been a little bit challenging because of my background with the LDS church.

Sometimes I can be really nervous to even provide ministry to men, with men, even because of the strict strict patriarchal society that I grew up in. And so to have two male seekers specifically tell me and the rest of the team that their conversion to Community of Christ was in large part, if not, the majority of the reason why they were able to convert and join this faith community was just really meaningful. And as someone who has a long history of quieting and silencing my voice around men, just knowing that this ministry is meaningful for all genders, and that my voice is part of that has been really healing for me as well.

Robin Linkhart 39:27

Tell us about one of your favorite podcast episodes and why it's a fave for you.

Brittany Mangelson 39:35

Okay, so this might be cliché or maybe not, but when we interviewed Wallace B Smith, I think that was hands down my favorite experience and there was a lot going into it. As Robin mentioned, we were at World Conference 2016. We drove from Utah, so it was, you know, a, I don't know 22, 23 hour drive and we split it over two days and we had Uh, basically three toddlers. I mean, our kids were so little. And it was kind of an adventure getting to Missouri. And then we rolled into the temple almost immediately and jumped out and did the interview. And so I was exhausted, my kids were exhausted. Luckily, we had help with the kids. So they weren't necessarily running around, or we didn't have to worry about them. But we met in the recording studio of the temple. And Wally came in, and he was so warm and generous. And it was, again, one of those pinch me moments, because here is one of the most influential humans in the church today, and throughout history, and he just sat down and chatted with my husband and I like we were old friends. And we had, you know, a little pre interview chat. And he wanted to hear about our family, and he wanted to see pictures of our kids. And it was just one of those moments where, if you would have told me that that was happening just couple years before, I mean, I would have just laughed in your face. It was like, it was. It was so wild they're realizing like, oh, my gosh, these folks are trusting us with this interview, that really felt like recording history. And, you know, I heard people say, after they listened to that episode that they heard Wally talk about things that he had never, you know, they had never heard him talk about before. And they've known him their whole lives. And I don't know, there was just something so special about sitting down with the man who brought us the revelation about the temple and women's ordination, and just letting him share his stories and his reflections. And, you know, he shared about the, the discord that that caused and the break in the church. And he talked about whether he regretted it or not, and he didn't. And, you know, it just, it was amazing how open he was and how just warm and kind and generous he was. And I ended up seeing him again, at the next World Conference, we were on stage together, talking about the temple, and he totally remembered me and wanted to know if I was still interviewing old guys like him. And, you know, he was so, he was so sweet and humorous and showed me his walker. And I mean, it just it was such, it was such a great experience. And now to consider Wallace B Smith, a friend of mine, you know, and that's, that's something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Robin Linkhart 42:43

Thanks so much for sharing with us about your role as a host and all the adventures and wonderful opportunities you've had and to network with so many different people. Now let's hear from our other hosts, Carla Long, Karin Peter, Linda Booth and Mike Hoffman.

Robin Linkhart 43:05

Hey, Carla, we're so glad that you can be with us on this 500th episode of Project Zion Podcast. And just visit with us a little bit about what it's been like for you as a host on this podcast. How did you come to be a host on Project Zion?

Carla Long 43:24

Well, I've worked with the church for, like 17 years now. And so after I was finished working in Europe, and I was on my way to work in Utah, my new apostle Robin Linkhart came up to me and said, hey, just FYI, you will also be a host on Project Zion. And I'm like, I have no idea what words you're saying. And I don't know what that is. And so unlike my husband, who obviously already knew what Project Zion was, I did not. And so Robin said to me, you said to me, that I would be a host and that I'd be doing lots of interviews, and that we needed to start right away. And so I said, Okay, let's try it. And I was pretty nervous about it. I didn't really know what it, what was involved with it. But mostly I was nervous about the technology. Because I didn't totally understand the technology. I knew that I could talk my way through almost anything. But the technology part was really the scariest part. And the technology has gotten way easier since the very beginning for sure.

Robin Linkhart 44:28

Yeah, it sure has. I think we had like random microphones and Tony and Charmaine had one and you had one and trying to get the connection. Kuzma was a dream at layering all those different soundtracks for sure. So you were actually one of the very first hosts on Project Zion. What was it like then and what is it like now comparatively?

Carla Long 44:53

Well, I think similar to that last question, so it was just much harder back then because we, at the very the beginning when I was still in Independence before I moved to Utah, and I was working directly with people like with Tony and Charmaine Chavala-Smith, I went to their house, I tried to do this setup, and I had no idea what I was doing. It was stressful. I feel like I want to go back and listen to that very first podcast I did with them. But I also really, really, really don't want to go back and listen to it, because I bet it sounds really stilted. And not free and easy, like what I like podcasts to be. So I, it's been very different. And then after I moved to Utah, I had to use, we used Skype and Audacity and all these, all this different technology that I was worried that wouldn't work all the time. In fact, one time, it did not work. And I had to ask some people to redo a podcast, and I felt so bad about it. Like, I just felt so bad after they put in all of that work. And I asked them, I couldn't, I didn't, I wasn't able to record it. So anyway, it's much easier now, that rarely ever, ever happens now. And so I've come a long way in regards to technology. And I think I've come a long way in regards to the interviewing process, too.

Robin Linkhart 46:10

So Carla, what series of Project Zion Podcast are primarily in your wheelhouse, and tell us a little bit about those?

Carla Long 46:19

Well, the big one that I definitely do is called Percolating on Faith, and it is one of my favorites. Not only is it my favorite, because we get to talk about theology, and I get to talk about theology with two of my favorite people on the planet, Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith. But I also get to relearn some things that I forgotten that I would have learned in seminary and I would have learned in my undergrad degree. I get to really talk about those things again. And sometimes when I'm asking questions as the interviewer, like, I'm really asking questions as Carla Long because I don't totally remember everything that I learned from seminary, and they are such good teachers, that they can re-teach it to me, and to everyone else in a way that we can all understand, even though they're not directly in front of us. So Percolating on Faith is really, really good. And I think Percolating on Faith is a great place to send seekers to when they want to understand what the Trinity is, for instance, or understand how we view salvation. The Trinity actually is a big one, I mentioned that on purpose, because I have sent people to that Trinity podcast at least 70 times. And because people are like, very curious about what we mean by the Trinity, so when you can point them to a specific podcast it—well, it kind of shows that we have our stuff together as a church, which is really cool. But also they get to hear it rather than read it, which I think is more as easier for a lot of people. I also helped come up with a series called What's Brewing, I think I helped come up with What's Brewing, which is a series that talks about different mission that's happening all over the church. I helped to come up with Holy Grounds, which is a series about spiritual practices. And even though I don't necessarily host all of those, I host some of those, I don't host all of them. But we as a team came up with a lot of those. And those were two of my ideas.

Robin Linkhart 48:12

Yeah, I think that's really important Carla, that we all are on this team together. And ideas come from all directions, as well as some ideas come from our listeners. So it's great to think together and have that creative, innovative energy flowing freely, which you have. I also just want to say it really is a comfort and a plus to have you engage the way you do with Tony and Charmaine because you take that role of a walking on the journey of faith seeking understanding. And I think it really helps the listener feel like the information is very accessible and understandable to them.

Carla Long 48:49

Oh, I appreciate that. Sometimes I re-listened to those. And I'm like, "Oh, I don't sound like I'm super smart here." But I really am trying to make sure that I'm understanding in the end that listeners can understand as well.

Robin Linkhart 49:04

Yeah, and you know, all of us have things that we've learned through our life, and we don't have instant recall on everything. And that's okay too. So I know, the life of a host is an adventure. Can you share some of your challenges as well as maybe some of your joys?

Carla Long 49:22

Honestly, and this is going to be the lamest answer ever. But the biggest challenge. And I don't know if you've heard this from other hosts or not, but the biggest challenge is scheduling. It is so hard. You the people that you want to be on the podcast are people who everyone wants a part of, everyone wants to talk to, and everyone wants to have meetings with and so they're very, very busy people. And so scheduling is so difficult, especially scheduling in the summertime, because they're like 'well, I'll be

gone for reunion this time at this time at this time and then I'll be at SPEC and after that. It's September." So the time goes very quickly. So scheduling is by far the biggest challenge, the biggest joy is that I get to communicate and interact with people that I love. There's so many people that I interview with, that I don't get to see on a regular basis. And when we get to sit down and have intentional time together for a podcast, then I get to reconnect with those people. And that is a huge joy for me, because, you know, especially during the pandemic, and we were in the house for a long time, all by ourselves. Sometimes the podcast was one of the only times during the day that I talked to people outside of my family, and it was a big joy for me.

Robin Linkhart 50:43

What do you know, now that you wish you had known when you first started doing this?

Carla Long 50:49

It's a really good question, because I wish I would have understood the technology better. I mean, that was obvious from my other answers. I also wish I would have known how big of an impact this would make on my life. I'll tell you a quick story. I was at Sunstone symposium in 2017. So this is very early on in the in our podcast, in my podcast journey. I was only about a year into it at that point. And I was working the Community of Christ table at Sunstone Symposium, and someone came up to the table and I did not know this person at all. And we were talking about Community of Christ. And he kept looking at me saying, "Have we met you sounds so familiar. Are you sure we haven't met I think that we've met." Then he looked down at my nametag. And he's like, "Wait a second. Are you, are you Carla as in Carlo Long?" And I said, "I am Carla Long." And he's like, "I listen to your podcast. You're so funny." I'm like, "Well, thanks. But funny is not really what I'm going for all the time." But, um, so that, that impacted me that I'm like, Whoa, people are actually listening to this people are journeying with us. And that, that side of it, I really hadn't thought about, you know, like I thought about doing the podcast, and I didn't really think about the lives and the people that it was impacting, and that that might come back on me as well. So that was a really big, that was a big eye opener for me that what I say on those podcasts matters. And the questions that I asked really do matter.

Robin Linkhart 52:27

So kind of along that line, Carla, how have you seen a positive impact in the world of faith and mission ministry, and you know, joy, hope, love and peace, the communities that we hope to build.

Carla Long 52:43

So in the Salt Lake City congregation, we have new people coming in every single Sunday. Every single Sunday, we have somebody new walking through our doors. And usually we have 2, 3, 4, 5 new people every single Sunday. And as the pastor there and as a minister in for Community of Christ, I do my best to catch those people in the foyer before they leave and chat with them. And at least 80% of them say, after I asked, "Do you listen to podcasts?" They say, "Yes, I listen to podcasts." And then they're like, "Do you have a podcast?" And so I am so thrilled to say that, yes, we have a podcast, and I give them the Project Zion card. And I point them to a few episodes of things that they might be interested in of questions that they have asked. And it is something wonderful every single Sunday that I get to do and sometimes I'm like, and you'll hear my voice. Sometimes I'm a host, they're like, "You're a host?" I'm like, "Yeah, i'm a host too." So the impact for those people is pretty huge, too. Many, many

times those people come back and they talk about different episodes that they have listened to. And they ask questions where sometimes I know the answers and sometimes I do not know the answers, but they have definitely engaged with the podcast and in a way that they would not have engaged before. So that is such a huge and positive impact and something that I can, like a physical thing, a card that I can hand them that they can go and listen to that podcast, it's a big deal.

Robin Linkhart 54:22

Yeah, I think so too. So Carla, what's one of your favorite podcast episodes and why?

Carla Long 54:30

I think this is my favorite one. I quote it all the time. So I'm probably gonna say it's my favorite one. It's the one Tony and Charmaine and I did from Percolating on Faith on the one true church. In Utah. I hear the term one true church all the time, even though it's not in Community of Christ and in our circles. I hear the one true church all the time and in that episode, Tony and Charmaine really lined out what it meant to be the one true church and really lined out and said, there isn't a church on the planet that's the one true church. And that was really powerful for me to hear and actually be able to speak some words that say that that's line out why no church is the one true church. And so a lot of seekers have talked to me about the one true church and I have been able to because of that podcast, been able to speak really intelligently about what that means and why no one is.

Robin Linkhart 55:36

I love that I'm gonna have to listen to that one again now. Well, yeah, it sounds like it. I just want to thank you for being part of the Project Zion Podcast team, and for the countless hours that you have given to this project. And thanks for being with us on our 500th episode. Yay.

Carla Long 55:57

I cannot believe it's been 500 episodes. That's shocking.

Robin Linkhart 56:02

Hello, Karin, we're so glad you can join us today on the 500th episode of Project Zion Podcast, a well known host for us, I just want to ask you a few questions to share it with our listeners as we celebrate this monumental time in the life of Project Zion Podcast. So how did you come to be a host on Project Zion?

Karin Peter 56:26

Well, first off, I think the whole team needs to congratulate itself on 500 episodes, I think that's an amazing thing to accomplish. I ended up being part of this after it was already up and running for some time. And it was you Robin Linkhart, who talked me into it by waving a carrot in front of me of doing a series on the liturgical calendar, which, you know, is one of my favorite topics. And so you put that on a stick and waved it around so that I would bite and say, "Yes." That's how I became involved..

Robin Linkhart 57:04

There are a lot of these stories coming out as I ask people questions.

Karin Peter 57:07

I bet there are (laughing).

Robin Linkhart 57:11

Okay, so you bought you took a bite of that carrot waving in front of you? How did you prepare to take on this role, as a host on Project Zion?

Karin Peter 57:20

Well, you know me well enough that I can't bluff my way through this. So first, I just pretended it was not happening. I just ignored it for a long time. And hoped it would go away. And I was already a podcast listener to other podcasts, I was a faithful Stuff You Should Know podcast listener and Stuff You Missed in History Class is another one. But I started listening to a broader group of podcasters to get an idea of what it was like and the different ways that host hosts interacted with guests and, and everything from kind of lecture podcasts, which I listened to one called the NT Pod about the New Testament out of Duke University. And then I listened to Lindsey Hanson Park, do the Year of Polygamy, which is a completely different style. She's a real authentic relationship builder kind of interviewer. So I just listened to a lot of podcast.

Robin Linkhart 58:16

So beyond Common Grounds, which was the caffeinated title that developed for your liturgical year Christian calendar content, there are some other series that are primarily in your wheelhouse. Tell us a little bit about those.

Karin Peter 58:35

Well, the main, the main one that I've done longest is the Cuppa Joe, which, again, is a is our caffeine laden reference to church history. So it was a great play on Joseph Smith. And it's kind of all things restoration history. And lately, we've been partnering with the Historic Sites Foundation, they do a lecture series every spring and every fall, and we've been interviewing their guest lectures for those and getting a little more inside scoop, and maybe some anecdotes that don't come out in the lecture, that kind of thing. And that's been a lot of fun. And it's in my area of interest with church history. And then we started our Scripture series. And those are both audio and video. They live in two places on Project Zion, and then on YouTube, but we started with He'Brew, which is for the Hebrew Scriptures are the Old Testament. And we did a few She'Brew episodes that focused on women specifically in the Old Testament, and now we're under a New'Brew with the New Testament. And we'll do a couple of She'Brews in there as we go along with New'Brew, and that's with Tony and Charmaine Chvala-Smith, who are such wonderful podcast guests in multiple series on projects and it's amazing that they still have time for Graceland University on the seminary with everything they do on Project Zion. But that's been a lot of fun delving into the scriptures again through their lenses of exploration and, and engagement. And then there's a new series we've been working on with Tony Chvala-Smith, as a theologian and Lock Mackay, an historian, where we're kind of delving into the story of the church through a lens of what was our understanding theologically, while things were happening historically? And what did that look like in context? And what? What came out of it? So it doesn't have a cute and clever name yet, we haven't come up with one. But we have been recording some episodes for that. And that will live in a couple of places as well. So that's, those are my main areas of focus.

Robin Linkhart 1:00:46

Right? And just to update any listeners that are wondering, why are we talking so much about coffee? It's the Project Zion Podcast: tagline is The RRestoration C feinated, which we think kind of helps people who come from the restoration tradition identify this Community of Christ expression of the restoration, embracing, especially in today's world, embracing coffee, and is used whole heartedly.

Karin Peter 1:01:13

Well, and I live in the Greater Metropolitan Seattle Tacoma area. And you know, coffee is a way of life out here. So it works. And one of the most enjoyable things is when we develop a new series is trying to figure out a new coffee laden term for it. So if we can come up with our one for our history, theology series up, I'll be really impressed.

Robin Linkhart 1:01:33

So as a host for Project Zion Podcast, tell us a little bit about maybe some of the challenges that you've had to tackle and navigate, as well as a joy or two.

Karin Peter 1:01:45

So the main challenge for me is reaching out to schedule interviews. And you and I've talked about this before, I will procrastinate procrastinate because I just don't want to do it. And it's, it's because I'm, I'm an introvert. And so that first reaching out to saying to somebody, would you do a podcast interview, it's really, really hard for me. And when I shared that with you, you did really well, making that go away in a lot of ways. Whether it's partnering with historic sites, where Barb Walden sends out a lovely notice to all the lectures that I'll be noted, notifying them, or simply having some ongoing series, where I don't have to do as much of that. But I've gotten better at it. But that has been, you know, that's just a nightmare. For me, that's been the hardest thing. And some of the joys, which I didn't think I'd have any in podcast land. But some of the joys are seeing guests who have never done a podcast before, and are terrified of it as I was when I started, just kind of come alive when they figure out that it's informal, and it's fun, and I'll make it as easy and pleasant as possible and, and seeing them enjoy the experience and have a good experience with it. For me It's just been terrific. But it's also been learning, meeting new people and learning new things. Just it's just been exciting. And I think our listeners have that same experience when they listen, they're learning new things and meeting new guests, and delving into new ideas that maybe they hadn't thought about before. It's a lot of fun. And then finally, I get comments people email me, or text me, or message me with comments good and bad. I've had unpleasant comments as well, I welcome them all. I'm happy to hear responses from people where something touched them or made them think in a new way. And I'm happy to hear where something where they disagreed with something and and they want more information on it. So

Robin Linkhart 1:03:45

you mentioned learning, learning new things as you function as a host for Project Zion and just learning through the experience and certainly, Project Zion as a team. We have learned a lot since day one. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you first started?

Karin Peter 1:04:05

I wish I had known, I sometimes I think I should go back and redo Common Grounds because I know now that podcast, the best podcasts are when I allow myself to be myself and not my artificial church lady self, which is what I was when I started. And, and I was and part of that was driven because I wanted it to be perfect. I wanted everything to be just so and everything to go, and I wanted to control it because I felt out of control doing something new. But really it's better if you just allow yourself to be who you are. So I wish I had realized that going in.

Robin Linkhart 1:04:42

I know you've had lots of unique experiences on this journey with Project Zion and certainly you have privy to information and feedback that is kind of like the the lived out experience of interfacing with Project Zion with those who listen as well as those on the side that deliver it. Share a story with us about a positive impact Project Zion has had in the world of faith or beyond.

Karin Peter 1:05:12

So, the latest one is when I'm going to share it happened just this summer. I had a podcast listener who lives not too far from where I live. Her name is Brenda Sargent. And she has done children's ministry at reunion for years in something called Storytellers where they've had guests come dressed as biblical figures and kind of share the story from the Scriptures. And then they would have crafts and food and things that kind of went with that particular story for the kids each day at their reunion. This is the reunion from GPNW, that happens at Lewis River. And she is an is an avid PZP listener. And she contacted me because she had been listening to Cuppa Joe and enjoying some of the stories from our partnership with Historic Sites Foundation, particularly stories of people that are more diverse than we would normally hear. And also stories of women that really touched her. So she had the idea that maybe she could take some of those stories that she'd learned about from Project Zion. And instead of doing biblical interaction with guests, she would have guests come as those figures from our own stories, history. And so she had contacted me to see to get a little bit more information and to see what guests might be good for her to do. And we talked about it a bit. And so this year, the guests that came were guests as Joseph Smith III, because if you listen to Project Zion you learn all about the tenderness of him and his family. And even when he was sick and not feeling well and older, he would come out here to reunions because it was so important for him to be with people. So one was Joseph Smith III, and one was Marietta Walker came and talked to the kids with a great lady figure who stood up for what she believed in even in the face of First Presidency displeasure. Emma Smith, of course, there was one who came as Emma Smith and learn the kids learned about her and William blue, from the podcast that we did, with about William Blue with Historic Sites Foundation. And that's a wonderful example of how project Zion brought the church history to life in such a way that she was excited to share it with a next generation of children. So I'm really excited about how Project Zion changed that ministry in a way that I think we're really blessed. Those kids, and I think it probably blessed the adults who did it hasn't been

Robin Linkhart 1:07:56

Great story. Thanks for that. Last but not least, tell us about one of your favorite podcast episodes and your favorite.

Karin Peter 1:08:05

So I have a couple of favorites. One of my very favorites is well all of He'Brew is a favorite of mine, because it's Old Testament, which nobody likes studying the Old Testament, including me, but we had a lot of fun doing it. And but this particular episode is the one we did on Daniel, the book of Daniel, and really Dan and stories about Daniel not just good stories about Daniel, and you know, Daniel, we tell Bible stories about him and he all these great things. And I'm sorry, not Daniel, I'm sorry, David Daniels, fine. David is the dog. So David is the one that we tell all these stories about David and Goliath and David did this. And David inside is all of it. But if you really dig into David, he was he made me very unhappy. And I was I was not reserved in sharing my unhappiness about David in that podcast for Tony and Charmaine, they would something, and I'd be like, "That's horrible!" I mean, it was just... and go back and listen to the one about David because in that podcast, I talk about what I think is the saddest line in Scripture. The very saddest line I have ever read in Scripture, it comes out of the story of David. So we listen that podcast and I'll tell you what it is.

Robin Linkhart 1:09:30

Now I've got to re listen to that to find out what that line is.

Karin Peter 1:09:33

And just FYI so next in line would be I did an episode with Lach Mackay on Polygamy In the RLDS Church, which was really interesting. So if you're one of the people that grew up RLDS like I did, and that title shocks you listen to that episode. And also Wendy Eaton, who is a administrative assistant at the Joseph Smith historic site in Nauvoo. Also with Historic Sites Foundation, has done a bunch of episodes on women's stories. And she is devoted to making sure that we hear first person voices from women in our history, not men's voices talking about women. And so her podcasts are just really well researched and detailed and she makes people come to life.

Robin Linkhart 1:10:25

Well, thank you, Karin, for being with us today. And thanks for all you do out front in public and behind the scenes to make Project Zion Podcast what it is today. Take good care. Bye.

Karin Peter 1:10:38

Bye, Robin.

Robin Linkhart 1:10:42

Hey, Mike, and Linda, we're so glad you could be with us today on our 500th Project Zion Podcast episode, I just have some questions for you. I'd love each of you to answer. So how did you come to be a host on Project Zion Podcast?

Mike Hoffman 1:11:00

I became a host on Project Zion Podcast, when I was visiting with the leadership of the team. And they... we talked about the possibilities of visiting with Community of Christ students who are attending Graceland University. I thought it was a great opportunity to hear the next generation or the younger generations talk about, about things going on not only at Graceland, but things about going things going on in their church life as well. And so I think that became a really exciting thing to explore, and I look forward to continuing the program that we offer.

Linda Booth 1:11:39

Well, I became a host through an invitation and a free lunch. At the time, I was a little wary of free lunches. It was right before the 2019 World Conference and my retirement from serving nearly 23 years as Community of Christ apostle and Director of Communications. And people were already inviting me to accept ministry and leadership roles. Now that they thought I had more free time. I had already made several commitments to Prophet President Steve Veazey, to continue serving as a volunteer member of the First Presidency team. And that meant that I was going to spend two weeks that Summer in a ministry trip to Zambia and Malawi, Africa, to mentor and support my colleague and soon to be ordained friend, Catherine Mambwe. So when apostle Robin Linkhart asked me to lunch, I wondered if the purpose was to ask me to do something. And before the plates were cleared from the table, Robin did ask, "Would you be interested in taping stories from your newly released book God All Around for Project sign? How often I ask, well, just once a month? Well, I thought I can do that. Sure. I told her. And then she suggested I think about hosting a podcast. Okay, I said, I'll think about it. And then I started thinking about possibilities and came up with Coffee Buzz, a monthly conversation with a member of the first pregnancy. And as today I've taped 32 episodes.

Robin Linkhart 1:13:16

What is some of the challenges you've encountered as a host?

Linda Booth 1:13:21

Keeping the Coffee Buzz conversations with a member of the First Presidency under 40 minutes is always a challenge. We've had a few that have had to be two parters, and scheduling with Steve's, Scott's, and Stassi's full calendars. It's sometimes hard to find an hour to talk. Another challenge is choosing the topic to discuss. There's always a lot of timely issues to dive deep into and share with the church. No matter what the topic is members of the First Presidency are always candid. They speak from the heart and they are authentic and open. And sometimes they answer so honestly, when they're speaking, I'm surprised as perhaps Coffee Buzz listeners are as well.

Mike Hoffman 1:14:08

Some of the challenges that I've encountered as a host is coming up with really sort of new and innovative questions. That's been a challenge. While I typically know the students that I have started the conversation with sometimes I don't. And so sometimes the questions emerge in the middle of our conversations, and those are, are typically more informative than what we would have done if we had just gone with the set straight questions that I asked. So I think that's one of the challenges. And then also one of the challenges is actually helping students be comfortable just reminding them that it's just a conversation sitting here with me talking with me as the campus minister and so just try to get them to relax and be comfortable with sharing some of their thoughts.

Robin Linkhart 1:14:56

Those are some interesting challenges. What's the joy you've experienced as a Project Zion Podcast host,

Mike Hoffman 1:15:03

I think every single time I've done an interview or I or a podcast with a student, it brings me great joy. Every time I've done it I there's... and were that goes is that it's an intentional conversation. And it allows me to get to know students even at a deeper level than I otherwise would, at least in some of the cases. While I know the students pretty well, sometimes I don't, we don't take the time to sit and delve into deeper matters. And so I think Project Zion Podcast and Coffee in the Swarm, allows us to go deeper, and to sort of get to what matters most.

Linda Booth 1:15:49

It's always a joy to get a chance to talk with my good friends, Steve Scott and Stassi. I served in World Church leadership with Steve all of our 22 plus years, and nearly that long with Scott and Stassi. I've traveled with them shared in ministry with them, spent hours in meetings with them, so I know them well. And I love and respect them. It's also a joy to hear from people's positive comments about Coffee Buzz from folks when I'm on ministry assignments, or some even take time to email me to share their appreciation for a particular Coffee Buzz episode.

Robin Linkhart 1:16:27

It's always great to hear about the joys. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you first started?

Linda Booth 1:16:35

Well, I wouldn't have had any trepidation about what Robin was going to ask me at lunch if I'd known how much fun being a host of Coffee Buzz would be. And it's not what what I didn't know before. But what I learn every time I have an intimate conversation with Steve or Scott or Stassi, my admiration increases each time I finish a coffee buzz episode with them.

Mike Hoffman 1:17:00

When I first started with Project Zion Podcast, I have to be I have to tell you, I was really nervous about the technology, I didn't really know what a... I mean, I've listened to a podcast, but I didn't really know, the backstory, if you will, and the things that, you know, I need to do need to know about the technology. And the truth is that the technology maybe has evolved even since I started but it's been, it's really much easier than I thought it would be. So it's been a joy to learn that and been an advantage to learn it in some ways. I've actually taken what I've learned about Project Zion Podcast technology, the technology behind it anyway. And I'm using it in some teaching modules and classroom situations, especially when we have to record video or record a message. And then it gets played back as a sort of a learning module in a class. So I think there's some advantages that way.

Robin Linkhart 1:18:01

We would love to hear you tell a few stories about some of the positive impacts you have seen this podcast have.

Mike Hoffman 1:18:11

One of the very positive things about Coffee in the Swarm and Project Zion Podcast is the impact that it makes when I share with students about the fact that we even do this. Some students are not aware that we've got this going on, and they're not aware about all the podcasts that are available. And so

when I get to share either the invitation to come in and join me for a conversation, or when I mentioned that I've just done this with a certain student and let them know about it. I think it makes an impact in that the Community of Christ has a sort of a very positive message and outreach to people that they may not even be aware of. So I think it's a really exciting positive impact that we are making. And it reinforces sort of the enduring principles and mission of the church when we do that.

Linda Booth 1:19:05

Coffee Buzz always focuses on mission. From the First President members perspective, whether it's Scott as Director of Field Ministries sharing missional stories from around the international church, to Stassi as presiding bishop, going deeper into financial reports and current contributions impact on mission now and into the future. I remember a specific Coffee Buzz conversation that I had with President Steve Veazey in 2021. It was a really difficult conversation. I had packed it with difficult questions like What is the relationship between the church and politics? And another question was, "Some view the church's response to COVID as too cautious, over reactive or even a lack of faith in God? Why has the church responded as it has, as well as questions on the climate crisis, church finances during the pandemic, and what issues weigh most heavily on Steve's heart?" And Steve answered honestly and boldly. And as we talked, I knew that some church members and friends of the church would be pleased with some of his answers, and may be highly disturbed by others. And likely some people would be upset by all of the questions and all of his answers. And when we finished taping, Steve said, "Well, this Coffee Buzz was certain. will certainly cause a buzzzzzz." And he was right, it did. But I also know that his courageous answers to difficult questions advanced our understanding of faith, of mission and of ministry. For his answers reflected Jesus Christ's life and ministry. Faith, mission and ministry need challenges to move us forward toward Jesus, the peaceful One.

Mike Hoffman 1:21:08

Again, I just add that congratulations to Project Zion Podcast on publishing our fifth 100th episode. It's been an exciting journey for me to be a part of it, and I look forward to continuing to host the Coffee in the Swarm here at Graceland University.

Robin Linkhart 1:21:27

Thanks so our hosts for sharing with us today. Now let's turn to our editors. And we'll hear from Josh Mangelson, Kuzma Brudsky, and Jason Eyre. How did you come to be an editor for Project Zion Podcast?

Josh Mangelson 1:21:44

Josh Mangelson, here. I became an editor when I heard Robin talk about wanting to get the podcast off the ground, the podcast hadn't even existed yet. She was in the works with Katie Langston to start Project Zion. And it was me that was really into podcasts at that time. And I took it upon myself to learn how to start recording things. And those early episodes was me getting it off the ground as far as getting bumpers. And for the beginning and the end, and also recording those first few episodes.

Kuzma Brudsky 1:22:27

From my wife is one of the hosts of Project Zion Podcast. So I was honored to be asked to be if I could be an editor I've never had it edited the podcast before. So it was kind of an interesting challenge. And I really enjoyed it.

Jason Eyre 1:22:50

Early on, in the days of the podcasts, there was an episode that was recorded, that had some audio problems. And I offered to help fix the audio problems where I had access to some of the advanced features and software that are used on a Mac that I had purchased a few years ago. So I offered to be an editor, and I'm still helping occasionally.

Robin Linkhart 1:23:14

So Josh, and Kuzma, you were actually our first two editors on Project Zion Podcast, tell us what it was like in the early days and how it's different now?

Kuzma Brudsky 1:23:25

Well, it was challenging to figure out all the moving parts and some technical challenges were there as well. But by the right now, we pretty much know I pretty much know what I'm doing. And and we are working hard to provide the best quality of podcasts.

Josh Mangelson 1:23:52

And the early days, it's very different. There was no streamlined process, we had to self teach everything. We used Audacity. And I went to Bill Reel who is somebody from a different podcast to learn how he did editing for his podcast, and we didn't have the best mics back then. And we just kind of learned as we went. Now Brittany on the other end of it has a whole chain of events that happens for each episode. That's very different than what it was back then. There's a lot more people involved to know.

Robin Linkhart 1:24:31

What are some of the challenges you encounter in editing?

Kuzma Brudsky 1:24:35

Oh, just learning about the editing app. Understanding how to fix sound background noise in just just getting around the that art of, of of editing

Jason Eyre 1:25:00

Probably the biggest challenge that I encounter in editing is when somebody has recorded in a public space like a restaurant or somewhere else. And there's a lot of background noise. And it's really difficult to eliminate background noise because it can be somewhat destructive to the to the voice component. And that's the whole point of the podcast.

Josh Mangelson 1:25:23

Some of the challenges have been some of the audio has been so bad that we've had to go back to whoever recorded it and ask politely that they rerecord. And I had to go through the learning process of

if their mic wasn't good enough with say they did it through zoom, that they would have to rerecord it because there's only so much you can do after the episodes are recorded to fix audio.

Robin Linkhart 1:25:53

What do you enjoy most about editing for Project Zion Podcast?

Jason Eyre 1:25:58

What I enjoy most about editing Project Zion Podcast is knowing that the podcast itself had a very important impact on my life and on my decision to, to look at Community of Christ and to eventually join. It's, it brings me great joy to think that I can do something to help other people who may have been going through the same challenges, I did find the same helps that I did.

Josh Mangelson 1:26:26

What I enjoyed most about editing for Project Zion was being able to take control of how I sounded. So if it was specifically the episodes that I was in, I could make myself sound more intelligible than I would be face to face.

Kuzma Brudsky 1:26:45

Well, I like to be the one who listens firsthand, the new episodes. And I love it. I love to be aware of what's going on. And what's the what's the latest out there.

Robin Linkhart 1:26:58

share one of your favorite bloopers with our listeners.

Jason Eyre 1:27:02

There was a podcast that I was editing and it I believe it was on environmental topics. And sometimes I do destructive editing where I've removed the ums and some of the other low lying things that people do or moan about as they're talking, especially when they're nervous. And I removed something that changed the entire way...it made it sound like instead of saying yes to something they were saying no. And I had to go back and try to really work hard to make sure that I was completely changing the message there.

Josh Mangelson 1:27:39

Some of my favorite bloopers come from Tony and Charmaine episodes, Tony would add little bits in with Carla that we'd have to take out and in fact, I added some of them as an Easter egg at the end of the bumper. If you want to go back to some of the early Tony and Charmaine episodes you're going to hear some bloopers at the end of the exiting audio.

Robin Linkhart 1:28:04

What's your favorite Project Zion Podcast episode?

Kuzma Brudsky 1:28:09

Actually, I started to listen Project Zion Podcast. I believe I was one of the first listeners, maybe even because when I was a missionary coordinator for Eastern Europe, for Eastern Eurasia, I was working

with LDS seekers and I found this great resource called Project Zion Podcast that that was talking about faith transitions from the LDS church to Community of Christ, and it was extremely helpful for me back there many years ago in Ukraine. So I was already familiar with what Project Zion Podcast is before I met the team and become an editor.

Josh Mangelson 1:28:54

And that my favorite PCP episode goes back to the 2016 World Conference where Britt, Brittany and I had recorded an episode with Wallace B. Smith, who was one of the presidents of Community of Christ, just being able to hear firsthand from him. His experiences during those transitional years that led to where Community of Christ is now was very fascinating.

Jason Eyre 1:29:34

Everything in the Hebrew series, I found that I was looking forward to, to those episodes with Tony and Charmaine and Carla and I was looking forward to having the stories of the Old Testament that I had taken so literally early on in my life, explained to me in such amazing context, and explained to me with such care, I felt like it was almost like grownups storytime.

Robin Linkhart 1:30:02

Thanks so much, Josh, Kuzma, and Jason. Special thanks to Matt Davidson, who could not be with us to celebrate today. Also, deep gratitude to our transcribers, John Wight, and Sarah Tubbessing, be sure to check out episode 431 to hear all about transcribing. And they also include some funny bloopers for all of you. So don't miss a chance to hear more from John and Sarah there. Let's go back to Brittany, now. In July of 2018. Britt, you came on board a new role for you as a project manager for Project Zion Podcast. Tell us about that experience for you both personally, and how it impacted our footprint as a podcast.

Brittany Mangelson 1:30:54

So that was a wild ride. Not only had I never fully produced a podcast, I also had never really been a project manager of a team to this size. And that would produce this amount of content. And so there was a lot of learning on the job. So tons and tons and tons of Googling, I watched hours and hours of YouTube videos and various online tutorials and different tips and tricks and of not only managing a team, but of just the very beginning and end process for producing a podcast. At one point, Robin, you had asked me to make a document of everything, every single step that needs to happen from beginning to end of a podcast. And I mean, there's like over 45 steps that have to be taken. And so it really is a lot of work. And again, I had been part of those steps for several years, but I hadn't really seen the big picture. And I hadn't like, pushed an episode through the production line, let alone two episodes a week for the rest of my existence. I mean, that's kind of a joke. But that's what it feels like. We produce a lot of content, right. So again, there was a lot of a lot of learning. And what's kind of tricky is, you know, Project Zion, there are other podcasts related to Community of Christ. And I really, really hope that we get more in the future. But I didn't have and I still don't really have a lot of contemporaries in the church that have a ton of experience with podcasting. So a lot of us, myself included, are just self taught, and we are learning as we're producing. And so it was kind of a steep learning curve, because again, we have not missed any weeks of posting. So we have continued to post while we're learning how to do it, there's never been a gap. And so it's it's been an adventure, it's absolutely been an

adventure. But the good thing about having somebody who is getting that bird's eye view of the podcast, and that's, you know, one of their primary focuses is that we really have been able to expand the footprint of our podcasts. So again, we've doubled our production, we've been able to get transcripts for all of them, we have an Instagram account, that's pretty active. You know, we have a lot of followers there, and we get a lot of post shares and things and tags on Instagram, I've I was able to figure out how to link things on Instagram, because if you're not familiar with that platform, it does not work the same as Facebook at all. And so we've been able to modify some of our social media posts to be more friendly for a variety of platforms. It's it's just been really good. And we've been able to honestly build a community around the podcast. I mean, we get people commenting, we get people sharing, and I try to interact with those posts as much as I can. Because these, again, are real people telling their stories, even if they're talking about church history or theology, right, like these are real people behind this podcast. And so keeping that human face on it has been really helpful. So I've hopped on Facebook Live a couple of times over the years to give random updates and posting in various Community of Christ spaces. Things like that. It's really again, put more of a human face, not just behind the podcast, but in front of the podcast, which I think has been really helpful.

Robin Linkhart 1:34:50

So as a project manager, tell us one of your worst days ever and one of your best days ever

Brittany Mangelson 1:34:57

Oooohhhh. So not only do we have, you know, you can subscribe to our podcast through almost any podcasts subscription service, but we also have a website. And we did a great migration of the PZP website in 2021. And, again, no one really knew what they were doing. And there was really no one in the church that could help me. So it was a lot of googling. Again, I have worked with websites before, but I have not worked. I have not worked with websites that have, you know, over 500 audio files, and over 500, pictures and pages, and embedded links. And so when we decided to upgrade our website, I was really, really hopeful that everything could just naturally migrate. And the worst day was when I found out that was not reality. The worst day was when I realized that I was going to have to manually transfer over every single episode, which at the time, we had over 400, full length episodes. And then we have about 100+ Extra Shots. So again, at the time, it was 500 audio files. And then each of those files had pictures, they had texts, a lot of them had hyperlinks, and none of it transferred over automatically. And so once I realized that once I got it confirmed, and I got it confirmed with, you know, the website company that we go through, I closed my computer, I went and took a shower, and I had one of those like good shower cries. Just like okay, Britt, this is gonna be a lot of work. And it was fine. And in the back of my head, I knew that that was probably going to be the case that it wasn't going to be just be like a magic, click of a few buttons and everything was going to work. But it was a lot of work. And there were so many bugs that had to be worked out. And there were so many times where I thought we were finished and then realizing that we weren't and it was it was a ride. And for sure the worst day was when I realized how big of a project it was going to have to be. Um, as far as the best, this is going to sound a little cheesy, probably. But I help Linda host the Coffee Buzz episodes. So I hop on Zoom, I send the link out to the First Presidency, I hop on Zoom. And I'm the one that's recording those episodes, while Linda does the actual interview. And almost every time I just get a chat with a member of the First Presidency. And so it's it's been so cool to see them again on a more human level. And I there have been a couple of times where like, it's just been me and Steve Veazey on the Zoom

meeting for like three or four minutes waiting for Linda. And I'm like, Hey, Steve, it going, you know, and again, it seems so cheesy, but it's like one of those pinch me moments because here I am with the president of the church on Zoom or with Scott Murphy or Stassi Cramm. And they're genuinely interested in my life and how things are going and how ministry is going here in Utah. And I mean, those those moments are just really cool. And again, being part of that production process truly is just an honor. So those are always my best days.

Robin Linkhart 1:38:34

Well, I'm so glad that you worked through your worst day ever, and that you have best days that are just kind of sprinkled through your monthly schedule as a project manager. Next stop is we're going to look at our series lineup and just kind of review those. And also let you know how you can use podcasts in your every day life in different settings, whether that be personal or with a group in lots of different ways. So we have talked about some of these series already Percolating on Faith thinking about God and growing in faith. We talked about He'Brew, She'Brew, New'Brew series on the Bible going through the Old Testament and the New Testament. Both of these series Percolating on Faith and the He'Brew, She'Brew, New'Brew, feature Charmaine and Tony Chvala-Smith, and Carla Long hosts Percolating on Faith and Karin Peter hosts the He'Brew collection. I want to take a moment too, to talk about the titles for our series because we are the Project Zion Podcast with a tagline: The Restoration Caffeinated, which kind of identifies us as a particular expression of the Restoration tradition, and we embrace our use of coffee. So we come up with creative series titles that in some way connect with coffee. Awaken to God's presence is the only exception to that and we talked about that earlier a series of guided spiritual practices with Katie Harmon McLaughlin and recently Tyler Marz has been adding to that lineup of guided spiritual practices. Holy Grounds, which is a deep dive in spirituality and Sacraments. Common Grounds which introduces you to the Christian Liturgical Calendar and Revised Common Lectionary. Cuppa Joe explores the people places and events of Restoration history, nothing is off the table and we dig deep. We do a lot of deep dives, don't we, Britt?

Brittany Mangelson 1:41:02

We absolutely do.

Robin Linkhart 1:41:03

We also have Cuppa Joe partners with the Historic Sites Foundation. They've done Summer, Autumn, and Spring series with follow up interviews with all the presenters. Chai Can't Even, Britt talked about this earlier, a sit in on chats with young adults, as they talk openly about life and faith and struggles and joys and why they choose to stay active in Community of Christ. Fair Trade features courageous people and the candid stories of their faith journey and what brought them to Community of Christ. What's Brewing is all about mission and lots of very diverse stories of how people of faith are living out mission in transforming ways. Coffee in The Swarm. This is with Mike Hoffman as he connects with, connects our listeners with diverse students who are on the go always busy and full of adventures to share about on their journey of living and learning. Steamers and Sodas is focused on ministry with and from children and teens. It's generally energy packed interviews, featuring ideas galore. Coffee Buzz, as we have talked about are the candid conversations that Linda Booth has with Community of Christ First Presidency. And seriously, they talk about all the latest happenings in the church and in the world. Coffee Connect is Linda's other series and it features her stories of life and ministry that are really true

inspirations to all the listeners. No Filter is a special series for sensitive and sometimes controversial topics because we really believe that faith is about our whole lives. And we need a place and a space to get real and talk about all of it. So we have rated it PG-13 with parental guidance suggested, and we put in an early bumper on that alerting the listener that this will be some sensitive information.

Robin Linkhart 1:43:24

And then we have our partners. So we already talked about Historic Sites. We also have a partnership with Europe, which developed during the pandemic with the European Peace Colloquy. They did follow up interviews with their presenters. And they named that umbrella series of Grounds for Peace. So it began as a partner series, but now it also includes other peace topics and it has become a series umbrella for us and we throw in anything that we do that has to do with justice and peace we put under Grounds for Peace. We also have a special series Toward the Peaceful One, which was a partner series with Herald magazine and the Communications Team at Community of Christ. The Herald magazine featured a series called Toward the Peaceful One in response to President Veazey's content that he shared at World Conference 2019. And the question, "Are we moving toward Jesus, the peaceful One?" Another partner is with the North American Climate Justice Team and that's called Climate Brewing featuring their Climate Change Colloquy. Okay, I think that covers all of our partners. Did you have anything to add to that lineup, Britt, before we talk about practical application?

Brittany Mangelson 1:44:52

I don't think so. I think you've covered it really well.

Robin Linkhart 1:44:55

Okay, practical application tips. Let's Start with Coffee Buzz. So as I said the First Presidency shares the latest news and hot topics for the church. And in fact, you can often hear things on Project Zion from them before that content appears in the Herald magazine. These are great conversation starters for priesthood meetings, classes, getting together for coffee chats. For example, Stassi Cramm recently provided the financial update to the church, related information very accessible way of hearing it. That would be great to use for any kind of meeting, gathering, or info session that you're having in your congregation. The Percolating on Faith and the He'Brews stories, they are kind of a ready to go Sunday school class you could watch or listen, the He'Brew series also has a YouTube component. You could watch or listen to those in class and discuss, you can have people listen to them before and then discuss. They also make great preparation, content, and research for sermons. They almost all have transcripts, which makes it super easy to do study. They're also appropriate for lots of different age groups, older teens, young adults and older. Awaken to God's Presence. This guided spiritual practice is terrific to use in a worship, they lasted about 10 to 12 minutes. So if you have a spiritual practice, in your worship, you could play that, it's ready to roll. You could use in retreats at the beginning or ending of classes and meetings, camping ministry. It could be used at home for spiritual practice, either as an individual or with your family. And also in the car. I mean, sometimes people are on the go all the time, and they could have their spiritual practice in the car on the way to work or on the way home.

Robin Linkhart 1:46:59

What's Brewing and Steamers and Sodas are great series that provide an opportunity for us to hear what other people are doing, how they're living out their discipleship and mission. And in the process of

listening to their stories and what they're doing. They serve as wonderful inspiration ideas, a source of prophetic imagination, you could use it with leadership teams, at workshops, at congregation retreats, I think you kind of get the idea of that one. Fair Trade and Chai Can't Even, Brittany talked quite a bit about these. So I think you have a real sense of what they bring if you haven't listened to those. I think about this as prayer and testimony in the 21st century, like it used to be an old time tradition of Community of Christ on Wednesday night, we'd meet at the church and we'd have prayer and testimony. That's kind of a practice of the past. But wow, think about getting together with a group and listening to some of these stories together and then reflecting and sharing some of your own stories or what came up for you as you listen to someone else talk about theirs. And then the other thing, and Brittany has touched on this already as well, is that when we are walking with older teens, young adults, seekers, or other spiritual refugees, they are asking lots and lots of questions. Questions about what we believe, who we are, all kinds of things. And we don't always have a good answer or an answer for all the questions that come up. Project Zion is there for you. Just put the topic, the question in the search bar, and it will pull up podcasts that connect with that question. So you would share a Project Zion episode with someone, a link with someone just like you would talk about a good movie that you have to see, or share a favorite book. You could even listen to the podcast together and talk about it, you know afterwards or tell them hey, listen to this and then let's get together and we'll have any other questions you have or we can talk about anything that's connected for you that came up for you as you listen to that. We also have a list of hot topics that come up for seekers and members. Things like LGBTQ+, women's ordination, common consent, Trinity, church history, difficult topics like polygamy, race, sexual ethics, theology, scripture, and spirituality. So those are relevant topics, hot topics with application not just to seekers and spiritual refugees, but lots and lots of people on a journey of faith seeking understanding. So that is a quick overview of the kind of content we have. And now let's turn to Britt to talk about some stats and data and our top 10 episodes. And you just take that away, Britt.

Brittany Mangelson 1:50:17

Yeah, so we monitor our stats pretty carefully. And so I have some to share with you today. So first, I'm going to go over our top 10 episodes. And just a note that by nature of podcasting, the episodes that have been up the longest tend to have more downloads because they've been around longer for folks to download. But that is not always the case for our top 10 episodes. So we're gonna dive right on into it. Our number one most listened to episode is episode number one, The Restoration from 20,000 Feet Up. That was posted on August 30, 2015. And that currently has 1604 downloads. Our second most popular podcast is episode 179, A Way of Life with Tony Chvala-Smith. That one was posted in April of 2019, April 2 2019. And that one currently has 1460 downloads. And I think that's really interesting that that one has so many downloads, considering how relatively new it is in the life of the podcast. But that also is one that is a companion podcast to Tony's book, which I know that congregations and different groups of folks have used as a study tool. And so I'm wondering if maybe that podcast has higher downloads because it has been used in some of the ways that Robin already suggested that these podcasts can be used in a group setting, for personal study etcetera. So we just think that that is interesting that that podcast has a considerable amount of episode downloads, considering how new it is. Our number three, our top third top episode is episode 83 With apostle Lach Mackay about the Word of Wisdom, that one has 1437 downloads. And that was recorded or posted on July 30, 2017. That one got picked up by a couple of predominant bloggers and folks who are interested in Restoration history. And so I think that that is why that one has a lot of downloads. And also people are just very interested

in knowing what Community of Christ has to say about the Word of Wisdom. Our number four episode is episode 34 with Wallace B Smith, that one has 1401 downloads. And that was posted on July 3, 2016. And again, I spoke about that a little bit. That was my husband Josh and I who interviewed President Emeritus Wallace B. Smith in the Temple. And I think that that one, it totally makes sense to be in our top 10 Because I've heard from a lot of people that that is one of their most cherished interviews that they've been able to listen to on PZP. Our next top episode number five is actually episode number 5 with President Veazey. This is the first time that we had him on the podcast. And that aired on October 20, 2015. And that has 1364 listens. That one's kind of funny because it is, we recorded it when President Veazey was out in Salt Lake for the Parliament of the World's Religions. And Josh interviewed him and it was in his hotel room and we still didn't have the greatest equipment, but we gave it our best shot and it's one of our most listened to episodes. Number six is episode 54 with Nancy Ross, that's kind of what sparked our Fair Trade series. And that one has 1159 downloads and that aired on December 13, 2016.

Brittany Mangelson 1:54:31

Our next episode (seven) is episode 42 and it's titled Why Hospitality. That one has 1156 downloads and aired on August 30 2016. That one was also recorded over the Parliament of World Religions. And then our next episode (eight) is number 40 The Problem of Evil and Suffering with John Hamer. That one has 1117 downloads. It was also produced in August, 2016, and also recorded during the time of the Parliament of the World's Religions. And then our next one (nine) is episode 15 with Dale Luffman, and the Book of Mormon to, the Book of Mormon's Witness to its First Readers. That one has 1096 downloads, and that one was posted January 19, 2016. And then our number ten most listened to episode is number 41, Percolating on Faith, the Trinity. That one has 1087 listens, and it was posted on August 23rd, 2016.

Brittany Mangelson 1:55:54

And then I went through and kind of picked out one episode that just kind of felt like a standalone episode from every year. This was actually really difficult process for me, because we have so many good interviews, but I'm gonna give it my best shot. And these are just kind of interviews that that felt like they were monumental, or pivotal or just really, really significant in the life of both the podcast and in the church. So in 2015, we chose episode number 2, which is titled Spirituality, Religion and the Prophetic Voice. This was with Katie Harmon McLaughlin and Dave Brock. And they really just put the Restoration in context and talk about why being a church of the restoration is significant in the 21st century. So that one was really good that talked about our unique prophetic voice and we just felt like it was an important podcast. In 2016. We chose Episode 36, our interview with Dick Howard, Dick Howard is, you know, one of the biggest voices in the church. He is a giant, if you will, in the church, he led Community of Christ on a very important discovery of self and of our history and looking honestly, at that history. And so in that interview, he was really candid about what that journey looks like for him on a professional level, as well as how that impacted his family. And then for 2017, I chose episode 79, The One True Church. So this episode, I think, Carla touched on it earlier, but it was really significant because not only did it talk about Community of Christ journey of letting go and shedding the idea that we were the one true church, but it also just puts the larger Christian Church in context, and why the idea of a one true church just doesn't really work. Episode 106, The Cause of Zion was my choice for 2018. This is Andrew Bolton and interview with Andrew Bolton. And he talks about nonviolence and

peacemaking and why Community of Christ has a unique voice in this conversation, and why that voice is both based in our history, and based in our theology. So that one was really good, and just kind of sets the stage of what we're talking about when we talk about Zion. In 2019, I chose the two part episode with Becky Savage, essentially on her master's thesis about the journey that Community of Christ took towards the ordination of women. And that episode was one of those times where I just really realized that I was recording an important history. And Becky shares, again, from both an institutional level and then on a personal level about how that journey impacted her. The interview, I didn't want to cut anything out and so we ended up making a two part interview. And so that is episode 165, and 166. And I would highly, highly recommend it. And then in 2020, I chose a really important interview with Matt Frizzell. This is episode 279 Peace, Justice and Conflict. And that was a really important interview because there was so much going on in the pandemic in the early, especially the early summer of the pandemic, when that aired. And Matt speaks very pointedly to the pandemic, to the racial tension that was happening in the States to the political divide and the polarization. And he speaks very prophetically and it was bold and challenging and just really a really significant interview that again just felt like a pivotal moment in 2020. And then finally for 2021, we have Episode 364, celebrating 20 years of Community of Christ. And that has Ken McLaughlin and Danny Belrose, who both served as Apostles and Community of Christ. Danny was the Presiding Evangelist at the time of the name change, name change. They have a really fun candid conversation with you, Robin, about what that was like, the process of being behind the scenes during that and how it was presented to the church and the significance of really channeling in our identity in our new name. So we would definitely recommend episode 364 in 2021.

Robin Linkhart 2:00:54

Thanks, Britt. That's been another way for us to walk through the history of Project Zion Podcast and those of you listening I'm sure you're making note of some you haven't listened to yet that sounded intriguing to you as Britt shared those. Let's take a quick look at what's coming up for Project Zion the rest of this year and into 2023. Karin Peter is working on an exciting series of theology and history in Community of Christ. This will be a series of 12 interviews with Tony Chvala-Smith and Lachlan Mackay. Lach will provide the history along the timeline of our history as a movement. And Tony offers the reflections of theological insight and how we moved and were shaped and formed theologically along that timeline of history. These will be 12 standalone podcasts, and they will also have a life on Cofchrist.org. When you look at the Learn About our History section, and that history from about a 10,000 foot look is shared over a timeline. These podcasts will be strategically linked along that timeline. So people who want to know more and go deeper, can listen to the podcast to enhance their understanding of our journey as a people. And next year in 2023 we have World Conference and Project Zion Podcast will be there. Britt, what else do we have coming up of interest this year or into next?

Brittany Mangelson 2:02:36

So one thing that I'm excited about is we have a tentative interview setup with the leadership of Harmony. They are rolling out a new welcoming and affirming workshop program that congregations can go through. And so we'll be talking with Parker and Linda about that, which I'm really excited about. And then I actually have, I'm working through my lists still of millennials in Community of Christ and folks that I'm going to have on for Fair Trade. The Salt Lake congregation is essentially going to be

hosting a baptism for a member, baptism and confirmation for a new member that's going to be in the Orlando congregation. And I have an interview setup with her to share her story of faith and so kind of more of the same, but it's really exciting. But then yeah, we're also going to have Harmony on to help congregations figure out how they can get involved to be more affirming and inclusive.

Robin Linkhart 2:03:38

Yeah, and Karin will continue her journey with Tony and Charmaine in New'Brew throughout this year, Carla will be continuing on her theological explorations as well as a little What's Brewing and other episodes that she does for us. Mike Hoffman, Graceland will be returning the end of next month up there in Lamoni so he'll have more students to talk to. And Coffee Buzz which has taken a summer break this year will be back with Linda Booth this fall. We're also, we only have a little over five months left to meet our 2022 transcription goal. We had about 14 volunteers sign up to help us do all the transcripts for the backlog that we had pre 2019. Several of our volunteers have had to drop out at this point in the journey, so if you have a sense of call to help us with our transcribing goal for 2022 Please contact me by email rinkhart@cofchrist.org or on Facebook Messenger. We also dropped something really special on social media this last Monday 1 August to help you join the celebration. So Brittany, tell us about the survey that's out there, how that's connected to prizes and when it will end.

Brittany Mangelson 2:05:07

So we really want to hear from our listeners, we really enjoy getting feedback because it helps us create and shape this podcast to be something that will be used. And that's what we want. So we've created a survey to get some feedback from our listeners. It's not very long, it will just take a couple of minutes to fill out. But it's basic questions. How often do you listen? Do you have any ideas for content, things like that. How do you use the podcast? And so if you complete the survey, you can find that on all of our social media channels. And if you complete the survey, you will be entered to win in our contest, and we have some prizes to give out. We have some mugs, possibly some T-shirts, but we're going to be picking a few winners. The survey will be open through August 12. And you'll need to provide your email address in order to complete the survey and the winners of the contest will be, or of the giveaway will be contacted that way. And then we'll just get your address and we can send you your stuff.

Robin Linkhart 2:06:15

Lots of prizes, don't miss your chance to be in the random drawing for winners. Well, I think that wraps it up for today. We are so excited to celebrate this 500th episode with you all of our listeners. Thank you for listening. We've had a great time sharing the story with you. Thank you Brittany for being here today. And for all the people that shared their voice from our team and for our whole team whether they were able to share it with you in voice today or not. This is your host Robin Linkhart And you are listening to Project Zion Podcast. Go out and make the world a better place. Take care bye bye.