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Project Zion Podcast

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

Mike Hoffman 00:33

Welcome this is Mike Hoffman, campus minister at Graceland University. Welcome to this edition of Coffee in The Swarm, which is a part of Project Zion Podcast. And I'm really grateful for Julie Wheaton, who's my co host now. Say Hi, Julie (Hey!) and Julie and I will be interviewing Emily Hill today. So Emily has a great story about being here at Graceland and a member of the Community of Christ. So we look forward to this time together. So let's get started. Julie?

Julie Wheaton 01:04

Yeah, Emily, so why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Emily Hill 01:08

Yeah, so I'm from Longview, Washington. Here at Graceland, I am a fifth year senior. Long story behind that. I am on the shalom house. (Yeah, Shalom!) And some things that I have done here at Graceland, I have been a part of choir, I've been a part of the yearbook and campus ministries. My major is allied health, and I'm concentrating in physical therapy.

Mike Hoffman 01:36

Alright, so Allied Health tell me what what do you do with allied health as a major? Or where do you hope to go?

Emily Hill 01:42

So there's a bunch of things that you can do in terms of being a major in allied health. For me, I really want to go into Pediatric Physical Therapy. I know a lot of people will go into athletic training coaching, some chiropractic. It's kind of like that health and movement science.

Mike Hoffman 02:01

Very good.

Julie Wheaton 02:02

So with that, Major, I know this is kind of like a weird question. But like with learning about, like, the way that some of your like your bones work, or some of your joints work, does that make you more like conscious of what you do with your body, like whether that has to do with exercise or stuff like that?

Emily Hill 02:19

For sure. I find myself kind of like, sometimes I'll be walking, I'll be like, Oh, my gait is off today. My favorite thing is to just sit and watch people, people watching in this room on campus, and you just kind

of noticed like, huh, they're walking up here, like a weird way. Or like, you're like, oh, they are doing this sort of thing, which involves, like, these sorts of muscles. It's just very much like inside my head of what is happening internally?

Mike Hoffman 02:50

Does it ever come out of your head? Like, do you rush up to somebody and say, do you know you're walking wrong?

Emily Hill 02:56

I have done that to a few of my friends. I know so Salume, who is one of we love Salume. She did this challenge where she was doing 100 squats. And so she started with like, one to five squats a day. And from there, she built up to 100 squats. And like at some point, she started recording herself and I was like Salume, like you the one thing that you could do better is like going down to this certain level and holding it and then going back up or like making sure like you don't invert your knees.

Mike Hoffman 03:33

yeah. Wow. Don't you watch me! I'm an old guy around here. It's like yeah, like you could do this a lot better. Oh, that's, that's really cool. That's really good. And Pediatric Physical Therapy, right? (Pediatric Physical Therapy) That's really cool. I never really thought about it being necessary, but I can see why it would be. So with pediatrics, it would be like, what ages if you did it?

Emily Hill 03:58

I think it really depends on where I decided to go in terms of Pediatrics. So if I want to work with people who are more so specified with athletes working with like maybe high school athletes, or

Mike Hoffman 04:11

that would still be considered pediatric?

Julie Wheaton 04:15

About 18 Right. Yeah. Okay.

Mike Hoffman 04:17

I was thinking like babies or, you know, really young children or something.

Emily Hill 04:21

You know, that is another way that I could go.

Mike Hoffman 04:23

Yeah, but it but it's not that exclusive the way so, so cool. Okay, so yeah. You're from Longview, Washington. (I am. Yeah.) Which is in the very Northwest. Northwest corner of Washington State right.

Emily Hill 04:43

No, actually. It is the Southwest southwest corner.

Mike Hoffman 04:48

Okay,

Emily Hill 04:49

We are actually right along the Columbia River.

Mike Hoffman 04:53

And right close to the state line with Oregon as well.

Emily Hill 04:56

We right up there right after it. Okay. We kind of boarder on the Columbia River we have a place called Willow Grove in Longview. We're kind of like outside of Longview. And then we have a bridge that connects right to Rainier, Oregon.

Mike Hoffman 05:11

Cool. So what? What was your what church did you go to when you were there?

Emily Hill 05:16

I went to the (Yakima) Valley congregation shout out to them. And I started going there when I was about six years old. So I wasn't really like, my, well, my family is like fifth year generation for me. My great grandparents were there. My grandparents, my mom and my uncle when they were young. But I myself didn't start going until I was about six. (Okay.) And of course, I fell in love with it and decided that I was going to just try as hard as I could to make it every Sunday do anything that I could to help within services. And then from there, just my ministry.

Mike Hoffman 05:58

That's very cool. Very cool. Yeah. And actually, before we got on the air today, we were having a conversation about Lewis River campground, because Lewis River was also where she had all the camps and reunions this you went to and it's where I'm actually for the first time I've been asked to go out and be help with reunion next summer. So I'll be it's my first chance to go there. So So Emily and I will be reunited next summer.

Emily Hill 06:25

It will be exciting. Can't get rid of me.

Julie Wheaton 06:32

So Emily, like what made you want to come to Greece? And were you a part of SPEC? Did you go to SPEC?

Emily Hill 06:35

I did, I attended spec, my junior and senior year of high school. But before SPEC and before high school, I knew that I was going to Graceland. (Really?) Yes, so I think it was about I was in seventh or eighth grade. And I knew quite a few people just from being a part of like the Northwest delegation. I knew Dane Mahi. He was from Lamoni, he attended Graceland. And so I was like, that's a college.

That's a part of this faith community. I am gonna go. And then I think it was my junior year of high school my brother ended up coming as a freshman and he attended all four years here as well.

Emily Hill 06:36

Okay, so it's sort of natural for you to come here that especially when did you and your brother overlap at all?

Emily Hill 06:55

We did. Yeah. He was here for my first two years. last few years. (Okay.) Which we both experienced the 2020 pandemic together.

Mike Hoffman 07:32

Oh of course, yes. Oh, yes. What a what a time. It's like nothing we've lived through before. So but but you know, speaking of a pandemic, things are pretty much returned to normal here at Graceland, I think.

Emily Hill 07:53

I think so. Yeah, I mean, as normal as it could be, I was talking with Claire Lambert, the other day. And I realized that I and only a handful of other students are students who remember Graceland pre pandemic. (That's true.) Because it would have been our freshman year. Wow. And so we had that full year of just full Graceland university experience, no Zoom, no COVID procedures, no, nothing. And then sophomore year was the year that it hit us.

Mike Hoffman 08:27

Yeah, that's, that's really interesting that it sort of leads us to our next question we were going to, we're going to talk about the Graceland experience, which is sort of this ambiguous phrase, but generally, people know what you're talking about when they when they talk about especially if you're tied to the church, and to Graceland, there's some familiarity with that. But for at least while you or your and other students since then, the pandemic sort of change what that Graceland experience might be to some degree. I mean, yeah, so I have two questions. One was the Allied Health major. So it's a relatively new major to Graceland. So when you decided to come to Graceland that wasn't, was that part of your plan? Or was it suddenly become part of your plan?

Emily Hill 09:15

It originally wasn't it um, I knew coming to Graceland, there was sort of a major. I had never really been specified or advertised for people. So a lot of people when I was first coming in, who wanted to go down the route of physical therapy, they were actually put into the biology major. And so my freshman year my first semester, I was a biology major. And it wasn't until I learned that a lot of the courses that would get me to grad school would actually be helpful in terms of being an allied health student.

Mike Hoffman 09:51

Gotcha. Well, interesting. The other question that made me think of was like just the Graceland experience a little bit. So What would you say was the biggest challenge during that the pandemic that

impacted your Graceland experience? I mean, you know, like, is there is I don't know if that's even a good question. But is there anything you can just like? Oh, yeah, it was.

Emily Hill 10:15

There's quite a few actually, that kind of, I think, majorly impacted. I think one of them is, in terms of me being in a very hands on nature, having to do zoom and hybrid teaching became very difficult at times, we had to do more so like, theoretical, like, Okay, say we have a patient and we're looking at this and wanting to fix this. Well, we have to then imagine what it's going to look like, instead of rather, being able to, like palpate people or being able to, like visualize in front of in front of you, someone actually doing it. And then another thing, too, is like, just on the halls, anyone who's went to Graceland knows what the res life is like. And we are very close with one another. There was a few times where it was like you knew one person who tested positive, and then all of a sudden everyone on hall and everyone you knew how to quarantine. And it just affected kind of your daily schedule, how you lived not like two weeks, you were in quarantine. And it just it was a little difficult when you knew that like, okay, I have these assignments, or I have this event that I really want to be a part of knowing that you can do that because you were in quarantine was a struggle.

Mike Hoffman 11:44

Yeah. Yeah, sometimes I forget about all the things that we went through. And you know, and I know for students like, like you, you know, one of the things was, well, why can't Why can't the university just make up its mind about, are we doing this or doing that? But none of us really knew what to do. I mean, it was like, we were all sort of learning together about it. So it seems now like sort of figured it out. Yeah. Good.

Julie Wheaton 12:12

So I know that you are like, a part of campus ministries here at Graceland. So what can you say about like how church life has been here for you, the four and a half years been here?

Emily Hill 12:28

I mean, church life has, for me personally really changed. I'm back at home, it was really difficult because we didn't have a lot of people my age who frequently attended church, and it was more so in older generation that led the sermons and services and coming into Graceland, it was a whole new experience, because it was very much student led ministry, I could connect to people my age connected people with the same experiences that I was going through. And knowing that I can now be a part of campus ministries, and also take that back with me to my home congregation. It's just really nice to be able to use what I've learned in terms of spreading not only just like, in terms of Sunday morning worship, where I know that we talked a lot with campus ministries, about spreading outside of the sermon based services, but being able to then be like, Okay, so this is what we want to do in terms of our ministry and outreach to be like, Okay, this is what I want to do within my hometown community, let's figure something out within my own congregation.

Mike Hoffman 13:42

That's good. Yeah, one of the recent changes that we've made here is it's not that we've won't have any Sunday morning worship, so we're doing communion service on Sunday morning. But we're now

focusing on Wednesday night service. Which, you know, both of you two are both involved with. But, you know, how is that how has that transition this year been for you? I mean, is it? Is it sort of fulfilling, that you'd hope for?

Mike Hoffman 14:09

Well, it's not normal for, okay, I wouldn't say all of us, but at least college students to get up early on Sunday morning. And even though it wasn't terribly early, it was still, it was still a thing that isn't sort of within your normative. I don't know, (schedule) schedule! Yeah, good way to put it. Thanks, Julie.

Emily Hill 14:09

I definitely think it has been very fulfilling, very smooth. I think for a lot of students, like they can agree it has been somewhat of almost a blessing in terms of ministry. I know we struggled with getting the numbers and getting people to regularly attend. Yeah. And to see,

Emily Hill 14:49

So it's just to see like, afterglow all of these people coming in (it's poppin!)

Mike Hoffman 14:55

Yeah. So for those of you that aren't familiar with Afterglow, it's a Wednesday service, but it is a it is led by a student band that yeah, that Danny Debts and Nico Farrell are heading up and and Ben long our chaplain president has been involved in Julie's been involved in it. It's, it's, it's really it's done amazing things because we've had over 60 Students attend pretty much every time you've offered it so far this semester. And I do not remember the last time we had 60 students. So it's really exciting. I know, it's not all about numbers, because it's really about everybody's experience. You know, I appreciate what you said, though, about that experience. Now. You're a priest in the church as well. So you were ordained when? I mean in terms of your college experience?

Emily Hill 14:57

So I was ordained the 26th of last December. Okay. Yep. So we're coming on about one year of me being in the priesthood.

Mike Hoffman 15:48

Yeah. Yep. And, yeah, and I know you've served communion here. Did you get a chance to serve communion back at your home congregation, too?

Emily Hill 16:13

I have not served communion at home. I have done other things, though, in terms of my ministry, what else? What else have you done? So actually, during Pride month, I led some discussions in terms of being an ally for the LGBTQ community and how, as individuals who call ourselves disciples can easily become allies for those who need a safe space.

Mike Hoffman 16:39

Very good. That's very good. Yeah. And actually, we're recording this October 14. And so this has been National Coming Out Day it was this week, and I don't think this is Pride month, but

Emily Hill 16:52

It's Graceland's Pride.

Mike Hoffman 16:58

Yeah, well, we, because Pride Month is when we're not in session, either. So so that's sort of why it's Graceland Pride Month, I guess. So. Very cool. Very cool. Yeah. Okay. So with World Conference, 2023 on the horizon, too, you know, there'll be legislation and before long, we'll be trying to elect delegates from Graceland, that kind of thing. So one of the things that, I guess that we typically want to know from you is sort of like, what are your hopes and dreams for the church in the future? Maybe not just your local church, which you've been good to share about, but you know, if you could sit down with President Veazey, or any of the church leaders, would you?

Mike Hoffman 17:38

Is there something you tell them?

Emily Hill 17:40

Yeah, so one thing that I've been very passionate about is being able to be a safe, safe space within the community for people who need it, not just like, when I spoke about the LGBTQI, I mean, just like, really, any people, minorities, those facing poverty. I feel like as Christians, it's really our goal not to be in a congregation not to be in a building, talking about these things to actually be out in the community and doing these things. And I have seen a shift within the Northwest delegation, and the northwest congregations and I'm not sure I know, a few other mission centers within the United States have also been doing this. But there is a shift in terms of ministry, and quite a bit discernment about what it means to be a Christian and what it means to have these enduring principles and to follow through with the enduring principles and to make Christ's mission our mission.

Mike Hoffman 18:48

Yeah, that's really good. Yeah, no, I know, I, I sometimes wonder like, you know, down the road, when I go back to a normal ministry, I don't know whether campus ministry says quite normal, but But you know, like, going back how my time here will have how it will change me how you all have changed me. I mean, it's like, I think that's a lot. So we'll see. But a very good, good, I appreciate that.

Julie Wheaton 19:17

Well, was there anything else that you think we forgot or anything else that you'd like to say right now?

Emily Hill 19:22

Honestly, I would love to give a shout out to Jodi and Trey Bernhardt. So for me personally, I feel like my ministry began in high school because of them. So they, I believe are retiring from caravan, which is a youth thing. It's was youth ministry or Youth Center for Christ. That's what it was. And so it was high school students could join this group and we would travel to different places for like, one weekend a month from January up to May. And we would go to different congregations we would put on services where there would be a skit, we would sing. And then there would be a testimony service held by the campers and then also opened up to the congregation as well. And then there would be during like that

June month, we would have a week long trip, doing different things where we would travel, we would do community service, community outreach, and then also once again, continuing our sermons and services for the testimonies. And I feel like I would not be here where I am today, if it weren't for Caravan and the amazing staff and Tori and Jody for leading that. And so just shout out to them for all the hard work that they did. And shout out to the caravan for continuing to do that. I know several people from my home congregation in the Northwest who came to Graceland or has done other stuff within the Mission Center, who were a part of caravan in one way or another.

Mike Hoffman 19:23

That's really cool. So it really sounds like a really impactful youth ministry type of thing.

Emily Hill 21:17

It really is, yeah. I think that was what kind of opened my eyes up to wanting to do more than just the normal Sunday morning worship services.

Mike Hoffman 21:28

That's spectacular. Well, thank you for that shout out. That's very good. Okay, well, this has been our Coffee in The Swarm with Mike and Julie. And today our guest was Emily Hill. So we appreciate you being here, Emily.

Emily Hill 21:45

Thank you for having me. Thank you so much.

Julie Wheaton 21:47

Thank you.

Josh Mangelson 21:56

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