

What's Brewing|2023 World Conference Resolutions|Sandee Gamet

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SPEAKERS

Carla Long, Josh Mangelson, Sandee Gamet

Josh Mangelson 00:17

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

Carla Long 00:28

Hello, and welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla long. And today I'm so excited because I'm here with a dear dear friend, Sandee Gamet Hi, Sandee. Hello, Carla, Sandy and I have known each other for years and years and years. But we really got to know each other well, when she was living in Germany with World Service Corps, volunteering for the church. And I was working in Europe, as well. And we got to travel together all over Western Europe. And we just had a wonderful time and I am super excited to talk to her today. So she might tell you a little bit about that herself. I'm going to ask you, Sandee, go ahead and tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do.

Sandee Gamet 01:09

Okay, Carla. So as Carla said, my name is Sandee Gamet. And I worked for the church as the Peacebuilding Specialist from 1999 to 2015. I still volunteer in that capacity as a consultant and trainer for the church because when I retired, the church didn't have the capacity to hire a replacement for me. So I said that I would continue to be the point person for the church until someone was able to be hired in my place. And yes, I did go to Europe and live there for six years in Berlin and provided ministry to wherever I was asked by our Mission Center President, Joey Williams, at that time, and I had a couple of projects. One was to help the Dutch congregations develop a new Dutch hymnal, which was an amazing experience. So we have a new hymnal now in the Dutch language. And it's based primarily off the 2013 Community of Christ Sings hymnal, but also additional Dutch specific hymns. And also, I was pastor for a congregation for a while in Castle and helped develop youth safety protocols for Western Europe, which is in the process of going through the legal system at church. So and just lots of other little things. And now I'm spending my time with two particular focuses for the World Conference. One is the online exploration sessions to explore people's thoughts on different resolutions and also to

organize the discussion and information sessions which are in person on Friday and Saturday of World Conference, the discussion and information sessions in person. I've been doing things since 2002. World Conference, so

Carla Long 03:08

So you certainly do not like grass grow under your feet. Sandy, you're, you're always busy. I love that about you. And just hearing about what you did in Europe. Just took me back to those wonderful people in Castle and our wonderful Dutch friends. I'm so glad that you had that experience. And I'm so glad that I got to experience that with you. Yes. So Sandy, on today's podcast, we're going to be talking a little bit about those resolutions for World Conference. And because you're an expert. So I was hoping that you could talk a little bit about the resolutions as a whole and why we as a church should take these so seriously.

Sandee Gamet 03:45

Yeah, so resolutions at World Conference are divided in different categories. So we have some "A" resolutions and the "A" resolutions come from the First Presidency. And we have three of them. And they're all having to do with bylaws. So bylaws have to have time for presentation to the church. And they can only, the bylaws can only, be changed through legislative action at a World Conference. So business of World Conference is about helping and allowing the church to move on in its business. So it's an imperative part of an organization. So we have three of those. We have one that's a "B," called a "B" type of resolution, and that one is an election of the University Board. But that's something that happens every World Conference. So it's pretty consistent with what we do in the past. And we have a "D" resolution any resolutions that are noted as "D" resolutions come out of the Bishopric and we have one of those which is about budgeting and auditing. Then we have nine resolution shins that are created by jurisdictions of the church that come to World Conference after their Mission Center has approved the resolution to be sent on to world church. And we have nine of those, we actually in reality had ten, but two resolutions are so similar on baptism and membership that they chose to combine them. So G-4 and G-4a are now being considered as one resolution, although they are, are written independent of each other one in Minnesota Headwaters Mission Center, and one in Eastern Canada. So without consulting each other, their resolves and were as as are so similar to each other. So that's kind of an overview.

Carla Long 05:52

Well, that's a good overview, because it feels like we don't hear about all the other letters very often we just hear about the G letters. And the discussions are all about the G letters. But the other ones are important to the other ones, keep the church going, like all the housekeeping stuff that we have to talk about, and make sure the conference agrees with, so on and so forth. Those are super important, too, because the church kind of stops if you don't have those kinds of things in place. I'm especially interested in the financial ones at this moment. I don't know why. So I was hoping that you could maybe just dive in just a little bit deeper to those resolutions, you gave us a really great overview. Could you talk about a few of, you don't have to talk about all of them if you don't want to, but maybe just dive into a little bit more. And just tell us a little bit more about those resolutions, just in case there's someone listening who has not been reading up?

Sandee Gamet 06:40

Yeah, it does take some focus to look at the resolutions. So I can quickly kind of go through them. The first one is G-1, the climate emergency. And this one has come out of the United Kingdom, just as some background because I had lived in Europe and was connected with things that were happening in Great Britain, I know that they really throughout their Mission Center have really made a concerted effort about the climate and informing their congregations and doing things to address how individuals and congregations in the Mission Center can address what they've named as the climate emergency, you know, resolutions have two parts, whereas and resolved. The whereases is are the justification. So it's like saying because such and such has occurred, we think this should happen. So all the whereases in the entire resolution are the justifications, "why should we consider supporting this resolution?" The resolves are the parts that we actually vote on in conference, the whereases do not get voted on, just the resolved. And so the resolves are "what should happen next?", what are they hoping out of this resolution would occur, then they're really encouraging people to be more aware, and for the church to take steps to address what we can individually and corporately at all levels. So that's G-1. G-2 is a recommendation to move a section, section 116 of the Doctrine and Covenants to historical records. And they're asking the First Presidency to consider moving it because they feel like it is not who we are today. And so we'd like to see it moved. So this involves whole groups of people, groups of people of the majority, who are Caucasian, and those people who are affected by this resolution, those persons of color, in particular, African Americans at that time. So it will be an interesting conversation, to hear how persons who are personally affected by having this section in the Doctrine and Covenants might respond to the request to move it to a historical place. G-3 is a resolution on racial justice. And this is really calling us to be inclusive, to really be more intentional about our inclusivity and recognizing that there are injustices that occur that deny inclusivity to all and they're naming racial justice as one of those items. G-4 and 4a I already talked about is baptism and membership. And there has been a conversation. Oh, gosh, I don't know. Carla, you can maybe remember at least for two conferences prior, even at the conference where we discussed about baptism being available to those with prior Christian baptisms at the age of eight, knowing what they were choosing to be baptized to. So now as the conversation continues, then we have two resolutions asking the First Presidency to consider whether the requirement of being 8 or knowledgeable about the choice of baptism is continued to be required. I just put these two resolutions side by side with each other to see what the comparison was. And it's just amazing that one comes from Minnesota Headwaters, and one comes from eastern Canada, without consulting each other how similar the whereases and resolves are. So those are being considered as one because they are so similar. Do five universal scripture access is asking that the church consider making the scriptures available online, that are peculiar to Community of Christ. And our core languages are English, French, and Spanish. So having those available online, which would be Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, since the Bible is available in a variety of ways to persons digitally, they have considered you know that there could be a cost, I think it names that in the resolution. And so that will be something of interest for people about what the implications of that would be to the church. G-6 is asking that the conversation that's been happening over the last three to four years now, about non-violence has an opportunity for some more clarity, that there be more consideration about the implications. And the way that the language is expressed, they're looking for what is named in the resolution as "plain language standards," in order for everyone to have a better understanding of what I guess is being discussed. This resolution is quite lengthy, and complex. And so I think that persons who are coming to conference need to take some time to really look this resolution

over carefully, because it is so long, and it takes a lot I think to really capture everything that they're wanting people to consider. G-7 is a resolution on marriage. This is something that I encountered when I was in Europe, is that, I had grown up with how we do marriage in the United States, and going to Europe discovered how different how people define a committed relationship, how the levels of what is considered to be a legal kind of relationship in Europe and in other parts of the world. So the apostles have been challenged by the various differences across the world, being an international church, and so are bringing to the church then the request that they be able to make some determinations on marriage and marriage like relationships, still keeping the issue of monogamy and faithfulness as part of the expectation. So that's from the Council of 12. G-8 is opposing Christian Zionism. You know, this one, I think many people may not know what Christian Zionism is, I needed to do my own personal research to just understand what that is. And I remember two conferences ago, we had doctrine of discovery that came before the conference. And I did not know what that was. And so it was really helpful for persons who understood to be able to explain, but that resolution actually took another World Conference to come to some conclusion because of the lack of knowledge. So hopefully, people will take time to do some research and understand what Christian Zionism is. Then our last one is G-9, compassion for refugees and World Refugee Day that the Ecumenical and Interfaith Team. And, refugees are all over the world. I had the privilege of being in Europe at a time when we had a congregation in Brussels, Belgium develop, and that congregation is made up mostly of Congolese refugees, and to hear their stories of how long they lived in refugee camps before they're able to move to go to another place is just astounding. And so I think for people to look at this, and to determine their own sense of how this might be important for the church and the request that more information be provided to help educate the international church about this issue. So those are the resolutions.

Carla Long 14:59

Thank you for that. For talking through those, it's a lot of information to take in. Yeah. And so because it's a lot of information to take in, I know that you have these different online events for people to be able to talk those through. You know, sometimes when you're on the conference floor, and a resolution is presented, and you listen to what people are thinking and saying, you need time to process that verbally, at least I do. So what I feel like you're offering is some online resources for people to talk about these and see how they feel about them. Can you tell us a little bit about what's going on with that?

Sandee Gamet 15:34

Yeah, this is a first time, I have thrown out the idea in years passed about something online. But it didn't ever take root. But this year, I was contacted by the directors of Rio conference, and asked if perhaps we could consider doing something online, before World Conference. And so that was a really exciting opportunity, and the first time for World Conference to do something like this. So what we have called them is exploration sessions. And we chose that name on purpose. So I have a team of six people that I've worked with in developing what we are providing to the church, we use a platform called Zoom Event. And zoom event is a little different than zoom. So you don't get just a little click and like you do to kind of go into a church service or some other kind of events. So Zoom Event is a way that people are able to register, so that there is an opportunity, there's some security that is provided by needing to register. It's free. There's no cost to being part of an exploration session. When people go into the world church website, there are a couple of ways that they can find exploration sessions, they can go and

click on the big block that says World Conference, Learn More. And if they click on Learn More, and they scroll down, they're going to see exploration sessions, they're going to see a sentence that says, Please read preparation instructions that's really, really important and helps them know how to sign in, how to register, all of the things they need to know before coming to an exploration session. And then they can choose when they want to participate. So the Zoom Event sets things up by the week, we have five sessions. And I developed them at different times. So that we can hopefully hit time zones from the east to the west, and into Europe, as best we could. At this point, those registrations for the Zoom event through the church are in English. I didn't have the resources to have registration process in Spanish, and French, but all of our presentations, PowerPoints and script, they are in French and Spanish. And they can be accessed and can be used in congregations or mission centers, French speaking, Spanish speaking, without having to go through the world church. So it's available on all our main languages. So you can register. You just choose the topic, and your registration is good for all five. You can go in you can go to all five sessions if you want. And the times are all listed where you can go in and register. So you do need to register, you do need to have a zoom address. So if you don't have a Zoom account, you can just go in and create a free zoom. You don't have to download anything, you just need to have an email and a password. And then you use that on the Zoom event. Once you've registered, and if you want to go in on Tuesday, at the 6:30 time, then you follow the email that sent back to you. So you do get a confirmation email, and you click on the "View Ticket," that little blue box and it takes you on a little road of signing in and finally joining what they call the lobby but and there's a group there. So we have a facilitator assigned who leads the group through the script that we have developed for the session. And we have a zoom host. These are all volunteers. I've just been thrilled with the number of volunteers. I've sent out words to some areas that we had connections with and said you have zoom hosts that could be volunteers for providing the Zoom Tech experience people who are good at facilitating. I've got 31 volunteer facilitators and about 25 Zoom hosts all volunteers from across the United States and Canada, who are providing this, we have 45 sessions. So we're going up through March 18, I believe. Yeah, it's amazing. So people need to be prepared to participate. Everyone is expected to share their thoughts. And they'll be done in breakout groups. So we knew that in zoom experience, it's hard for if you've got 25 on screen for people to all have a chance just like it World Conference, if you've got 2000 people seated and the resolution comes up, a person speaks for it. And then we have someone who can stand and speak against it. We might have five, maybe eight speakers at the most and, out of 2000, that's really a very small number and it's whoever gets to the lecterns to be able to be recognized. So we wanted to make this an opportunity for people to really have the opportunity to share and to share authentically, without worry about what somebody is going to think about what they're saying or how they express themselves. So we have guidelines, confidentiality is one. Being visible, we expect people to have their cameras on so people can see each other's faces. That's so important to communication. And for a sense of safety. If I'm going to be vulnerable and share something I really believe in, it's important to see people and how they're receiving what I have to say. And we hope for diversity, we hope for people to come from all sorts of different perspectives to join in these conversations. That's how we learn. And so they're guided by questions. So the first question is, what out of your life experiences brings you to your perspective on this resolution? So sharing what we've experienced maybe our experience in another place, or what I have encountered personally in my life over time, or, as I've read in what I've considered. So that's the first question. And then the breakout group comes back. And they have a second question. And they go back into their group and process this next question. Come back for a third question. And we're also

asking people to think about not only what the thoughts are on their resolution, but what questions might they have? What concerns might they have. And then these groups stay the same all three sessions, because that way, they're building this sense of sharing, that becomes important for safety, and for being open about what you're really thinking. And then at the end, then there will have been a recorder in that group, they have created a summary of what they have thought about, questions they might have, how they've come to view the resolution, and that without names. So we're keeping this confidential. There are no names ascribe to what's been said the summary is shared at the very end. So we all come back to the big group. And so all 25-50, however many have signed up for that session, get to hear each group's summary. So we're hearing so many more different thoughts than we would normally experience at World Conference, even in the discussion sessions at World Conference. When we have those on Friday and Saturday, a group of 30 people to 50 people are in a one room, you still don't hear a lot of different voices in the time that we have. But hearing the summaries of those small groups hopefully really expands what people think about, adding new insights or other ways of thinking about what the resolution might indicate for other people. So that's pretty well, the experience and it's very similar at World Conference in person, although it's not scripted with questions. It's more of a just giving people an opportunity to come to the mic and share their thoughts.

Carla Long 24:14

Well, that is a huge undertaking. That is huge, Sandee, so many volunteers, so many different sessions. I love how you tried to make it open to whoever wants to do it and make it at normal times during the day and not at four in the morning or night. Which you and I both definitely know, having worked in Europe before. That has happened before. That is amazing how many opportunities people have to discuss these resolutions if they want to. Thank you so much for doing that. And just so people know they can go to the World Conference, part on the website, cofchrist.org, click on World Conference, and then where do they go after that?

Sandee Gamet 24:56

If they scroll down, they'll actually see a section called exploration concessions.

Carla Long 25:01

great, I just want to make sure people heard that. So if you want to be a part of those, there still sounds like there's a lot of opportunities to be a part of those. But hopefully, you'll get to jump in on talking about different resolutions. Now, Sandee, you've mentioned once or twice about getting to talk on Friday and Saturday before World Conference, can you tell us a bit about what that looks like, and when those sessions are?

Sandee Gamet 25:20

Yeah, on Friday afternoon, there's a session that starts at one, and it goes for an hour and a half (1:15 to 2:45). And then a second one from 3 to 4:30, on Friday, and then Saturday morning at 8:30 to 9:45. And then, the World Conference first business meeting follows right on after that, I think at 10 o'clock,. We have all of the resolutions in the schedule. So the schedule is now with communications. And so will be published, probably there may be a handout at registration, I'm not sure how they'll handle that since they're on before World Conference starts. And usually they have the first bulletin available when people register early there. And so maybe the information will be there. But I think that all of the

resolutions have two slots. And so it may be on Friday at one and maybe then the same resolution at three o'clock or it might be on Saturday. So you have to look at the schedule to see when you'll discover those sessions, and they're all held in different spaces in the Temple. Then we also have information sessions, and information sessions, or sessions that are devoted to the World Conference teams. So the Peace and Justice Team, the Diversity Inclusion Team, the Human Rights Team. It's optional. So they get to choose if they want an information session, but the Stewardship Team. The Peace and Justice Team is, when they have their information session, they are also including the persons who are getting the Peace Award. So that's also included in their session. So people can come to those sessions, ask questions about the reports, the teams have to include a report in the information that's printed for the World Conference. So they can ask questions about the reports what the team is doing. So really, those information sessions are just that sharing what the team is doing, and for people to hear it and to ask questions about the work of the team.

Carla Long 27:38

Wow, I love how many opportunities people have to learn about what's going on, not just the resolutions, but everything else. And I think it's really, really cool. What you're all doing. Sandee, you just have everything at your fingertips. You're just ready to go.

Sandee Gamet 27:51

Yeah, well, I have to because it's a constant moving organism.

Carla Long 27:54

It truly is. Thank you so much for all of this. Thanks for going through those resolutions. Thank you for telling us how we can get more information. Is there something else that we should know? Before we close out the podcast? Something that you've wanted me to ask? And I didn't ask?

Sandee Gamet 28:10

Oh, well, I don't think so. I just think that, I guess I can share what someone shared back with me about their experience being part of an exploration session. The person said, "I thought that the resolution was a, what we'd call slam dunk was an easy yes or an easy, no." And so this person had already kind of figured out the easy answer for them, because it just seemed pretty clear. But after they have participated in their small group and heard what other people were thinking, they realized that this was not an easy yes or no, that the issue, even though the resolution was short, that the complexity of the resolution was big, and was far bigger than what they had anticipated, causing them to think more about whether or not the direction they had thought that they would vote was the right direction. And that is exactly what these are all about. It is listening to each other. It's one of the main components of discernment, listening to each other, listening to God, and God speaks through each other too. So I just find them imperative to our deliberation process, that we have opportunities to hear each other and take in other people's thinking.

Carla Long 29:33

I love that you said that because you know sometimes I feel like we just listen in our own social circle. And usually we surround ourselves with people who agree with us and people who are on the same page with us. And in these groups. It sounds like you're inviting everyone to come, anybody who wants

to come and share. So you do get to hear a diversity of opinions, of beliefs of life experiences. This is why I am where I am. Super important that we don't just faction ourselves off in these small little groups and continue to be isolated, I love that that's happening. I think that's really, really cool that you mentioned that thank you for doing that.

Sandee Gamet 30:07

And life experiences sharing those. We don't really do that often. Usually when we're talking about whether I think that this should be supported or not supported, you say, yeah, it should be supported. And here's why. And we give justifications, but we don't share our life experience to what brought us there. And you know, we can't argue, we can't debate with each other's life experiences. And they are foundational to the conclusions that we come to. And I think those are so insightful and help us have more space, empathy, compassion for another's point of view.

Carla Long 30:45

Absolutely. Ah, Sandee, thank you so much for this podcast. Thanks so much for taking us down that journey and reminding us that World Conference is more than just hugging people in the hallway.

Sandee Gamet 30:57

Oh, that's a good part.

Carla Long 30:58

That's a really, really good part. But it's really important that we come prepared, we come ready to go. Because you're right when the resolution hits the floor, and only five to eight people get to talk about it. That is not enough to be prepared for learning as much as you can and making your own decision. Yeah. Sandee, thanks so much. You were wonderful.

Sandee Gamet 31:17

Well, thank you for the opportunity. It's been good to talk about it and good to talk with you.

Carla Long 31:22

Absolutely. And I'll see you at conference.

Sandee Gamet 31:24

All right. We'll do a big hug in the hallway.

Carla Long 31:26

Absolutely. Bye.

Josh Mangelson 31:38

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