

Coffee in the Swarm|Addison Cole

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Graceland, Afterglow, church, friends orchestra, family, theater, congregation, cello, hopes

SPEAKERS

Addison Cole, Mike Hoffman, Julie Wheaton

Mike Hoffman 00:27

Welcome to Coffee in the Swarm, a Project Zion Podcast production coming to you from the Lamoni, Iowa campus of Graceland University. The Swarm is our on-campus restaurant in the Newcom Student Union. This year, this podcast has been co-hosted by student Chaplain Julie Wheaton and myself Mike Hoffman, the Campus Minister. It's where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to Community of Christ. Julie, how are you today? And what can you tell us about our guest today?

Julie Wheaton 00:55

I'm feeling good. A little tired today really, but my 9am got cancelled, so I got to sleep in a little bit.

Mike Hoffman 01:02

And we're not too far from finals. Right. So yeah.

Julie Wheaton 01:06

So today's guest is Addison Cole. And what's your major Addison?

Addison Cole 01:11

Okay, so um, I'm Addison, like Julie said. I'm Business Administration, and Accounting with a minor and Social Change. And also do like other stuff on the side that isn't part of my major. So like orchestra and choir and stuff like that.

Mike Hoffman 01:27

Very cool. So and you are in your first year here at Graceland?

Addison Cole 01:31

Yeah, I'm a freshmen.

Mike Hoffman 01:32

So what instrument do you play an orchestra?

Addison Cole 01:35

I play the cello.

Mike Hoffman 01:36

Oh, yeah.

Julie Wheaton 01:36

I love the cello.

Mike Hoffman 01:37

I do too. Is it always sounds like a human voice.

01:43

That's it. That's what it's like. The human voice range. So that's why it's like, it's got the most like, I don't know, rich. So actually, I play the cello. And then my twin sister, Audrey, plays the violin. And then my middle sister, Cassandra, plays a viola and my oldest plays a cello. Not the cello. Sorry, the violin. That was my mom's doing because it's a full quartet. Yeah, so then every time it's like Christmas season... yeah.

Mike Hoffman 02:13

That's really very cool.

Addison Cole 02:14

Like instrumentally, as we expressed interest, my mom was like, Okay, great. Who's playing violin?

Mike Hoffman 02:22

There was no question about it. And you're all sisters, right?

Addison Cole 02:26

Yes.

Mike Hoffman 02:26

So if you had a brother, he'd have to play the trombone or something.

Addison Cole 02:30

Yeah. My dad plays trumpet, but he's just so yeah, she's very, my mom is very musical. She was a flute major. So like, music has been her whole life. And she's just in her my like, my papa was a music professor at a college and like, he's done like opera and stuff like that. So just very, very musically inclined. So whenever we started, you know, expressing interest, she was like, great. Let's start now. Yeah, yeah.

Mike Hoffman 02:59

So where are you from? Oh, that might be good to know too.

Addison Cole 03:03

Yeah. I'm from San Antonio, Texas.

Julie Wheaton 03:06

I was just there. And it's so nice.

Addison Cole 03:08

Oh, it's beautiful. Y'all were up when you say it was.

Julie Wheaton 03:10

We stopped in San Antonio for spring break. Down there it's so pretty.

Addison Cole 03:18

Port A is a nice it's like two hours away from my house. Like, yeah, like we had..

Mike Hoffman 03:22

What are you calling it?

Addison Cole 03:24

Port A is like one of the ...

Julie Wheaton 03:25

Port Aransas

Mike Hoffman 03:26

Yeah. Okay.

Addison Cole 03:27

So that's like, only two hours away from my house. We don't go there very often. But like, a lot of times, if it was like, like, we have senior skip skip day, like that's a thing that you could do in one day. That's like an outing. So like me and my friends, we went down there for a day. Yeah, I honestly like Port A is like two hours from my house. So that's like the closest like nice beach. But my grandparents live in Los Fresnos, which is like, probably four to five hours south from where we live in San Antonio, Texas. But they're only an hour south, really an hour away from South Padre Island. It's like the very, very edge. Yeah. And that's like a really... that's the beach that I went to because I would always be there for like the entire summer. That's like, where my entire extended family lives. So

Julie Wheaton 04:09

It's really pretty, too. I've been there, too.

Mike Hoffman 04:12

Me too. So that's very cool.

Addison Cole 04:15

It's where my dad grew up. I was he always would be like, oh, yeah, we just take weekend trips all the time out there like his prom and they just all went out to the beach. I was like, that's so cool. Yeah,

Mike Hoffman 04:26

I think I've told you but I have a family connection to Bandera County, Texas. I have a great, great grandfather that was the first sheriff of Bandera County. So you know, maybe we are related somewhere.

Julie Wheaton 04:48

So what was it like like, how was your church life there like in San Antonio?

Addison Cole 04:53

It was really good. The congregation that I went to was the Shenandoah congregation which is the one in San Antonio. So um, I was it was mostly me my sisters. Other than that, it's a good 50 year age gap between everybody else so, but at the same time I just had, like so many grandparents at that point.

Mike Hoffman 05:16

Yeah, there is an advantage to that.

Julie Wheaton 05:20

Graduation, Yes, exactly.

Addison Cole 05:20

Graduation I had like a separate graduation party just with like the people from my church.

Julie Wheaton 05:28

I know. I know.

Addison Cole 05:31

There's so sweet though. Yes, yes, I still keep up to date with that, but it was really good. So my dad was a pastor the entire time I grew up there. So a lot of staying there later, you know, weekend work workdays, stuff like that. But it was really, really good overall. And I loved the community. I also like, especially saw a big change during COVID in our church, but like, you know, in a, in a really good way, because a lot of churches had to shut down. And they were like, figuring out how to do that. And my dad. He's just kind of the type of person that like, if there's a problem, he will just work at it from every angle till he figures it out. Like he's just like, Yeah, I just kind of like went and tried these 27 things. And I'm like, okay, like, he just always finds a solution. Yeah, so he worked really, really hard to get within, within the week of it shutting down, we had online services. And those originally started just like out of our living room, like stuff like that. But then it started. We started like building different, I don't know, like, foundations for it, so he got a tech team with like people. And so we would have a weekly slideshow, and there'd be operating that they'd be operating how to do the spotlight people, they'd mute people, they work on getting the transitions down, we'd have zoom calls every Saturday at I think it was three o'clock where we would practice for the service. It was like just 30 minutes of like, practicing transitions and getting everything put together. And then we, in order to get hymns to work, because that was something that was like once that was done it really affected everybody. So we ended up finding that it was better if we had recorded hymns. So we recorded them. And we had a trailer in our backyard. And so it was like every Friday night, we'd be like, Okay, these are the five hymns we have to

record before the service on Sunday. And then over time, I mean, we recorded like, I don't know, close to 400 hymns that are saved on our phone.

Mike Hoffman 07:40

So a group of you from your family would go out there?

Addison Cole 07:43

Yeah, it's just all six of us would go...

Mike Hoffman 07:44

All six of you, that way when people? I mean, I assume people would maybe sing along. Cool. Yeah. So at least,

Addison Cole 07:52

It was the more than just one voice singing it sounded like you were singing with the congregation. So we started doing that. So I just have like my entire, like, audio. I'll get a text from my parents and friends being like, can you check if you have this hymn? And then we like uploaded them onto a database so that now it's all filed. So we don't even have to record hymns anymore, because we have like almost all of them. Yeah. Yeah. So we've been we've been figured out that apparently some of the other churches up north started like, using our hymns. So we're like, Oh, that's cool.

Mike Hoffman 08:27

I know that actually, we've done that some here at Graceland, and it's used in other churches. You know, recordings... So

Addison Cole 08:34

We call it our Cole Choir. And that's what we would do on Friday nights.

Mike Hoffman 08:37

The Cole Choir

Addison Cole 08:38

Yeah. We found that the trailer had the best like sound and we'd play around with like, we'd record the beginning and be like, Oh, that was too loud. Let's turn it down. Like that. So my dad worked really hard to get a platform for that. And then, um, so church services have been running really smoothly. And he's still it's now like, back in, oh, it's mixed. And he's like, fully intending that it's going to be like, we're gonna have online as an option, because especially with our older congregation, a lot of them don't feel comfortable coming in person and understandably. So.

Mike Hoffman 09:09

Well COVID not really completely.... Oh, no. That's really nice. That's good that, you know, they would Yeah, your family would think about the older people and take care of them.

Addison Cole 09:21

Like the cameras that they have. So we have like probably four or five cameras set up around. Okay, they're all just like our old iPhone fives that have been sitting around not being used.

Mike Hoffman 09:31

That's ... wow...what a good use of Yeah, wow, I hadn't even thought about ...

Addison Cole 09:34

Yeah, so we just have like, that's why the transitions and stuff it'll be like oh, we're gonna use camera three at this point in camera two at this point. It's just because my dad works really hard to get that stuff thought out. And then the last thing that we did to like more of like build community or where like we couldn't see each other over COVID was we did Wednesday nights at eight o'clock. It was every other week. It was either just open chats with the anyone who wanted to join, or we did me and Audrey would host game nights. So we had to find ways to do games that weren't even just like putting a link in the chat was a little too tech savvy. Yeah. So we did like games that all you had to do was like, tell us what you like, say something, like Jeopardy or ... I think one of the favorites was Farkle. So just stuff like that. So now let me know if you also have like a database or it's like we can we have like six or seven games and they're ready at all times, just like on our phones that we're like, we can just put this on the screen. If ya'll want.

Mike Hoffman 10:38

You know, I'm really glad you've told us this, because I think we could use you in campus ministry. Music and games. And so, I have a question for you. What brought you to Graceland? I mean, you've mentioned your parents. Did they go to Graceland?

Addison Cole 10:52

Oh my dad did.

Mike Hoffman 10:53

Oh your dad do? Is that why you're here? Because of your dad or...

Addison Cole 10:56

I'm not here because he was here. He more put Graceland on my radar, if that makes sense.

Julie Wheaton 11:01

So did you go to spec?

Addison Cole 11:03

I went to SPEC my freshman year. And then my sophomore and junior year it was shut down for COVID. And then we were gonna come back this year, but three days before Audrey tested positive for COVID. And we didn't want to get anybody sick, so.Wwe were all signed up and everything, but we had to cancel. I did get one year. But um,

Julie Wheaton 11:22

Well, my sister went, and she got COVID

Addison Cole 11:24

Well, Audrey got it from camps. Yeah. Bandera didn't favor very good this year at camp. So there's a lot of COVID. But um,

Mike Hoffman 11:35

I trust it was pretty mild, though. Or, in most cases?

Addison Cole 11:39

In most cases it was. My, my parents specifically actually got it pretty bad. My dad was sick with a fever for about three weeks. And after that, I mean, yeah, they had lasting COVID for a couple months. But at the same time, it was like it was, It wasn't fun, because we, we were all like quarantined separated from each other as a family.

Mike Hoffman 12:03

And that's before you started this year, right?

Addison Cole 12:05

That was over the summer. So there was about a month period where like, I just didn't see my parents to be close to them. Or like because Audrey had it, we didn't want to re-expose them. And we're pretty sure she had a different strain. So it was bad. But at the end of the day, it was also like one of those that they had been vaccinated, and recently boosted. And they had such bad symptoms. And so I was, like, really thankful for the fact that our family had taken COVID so seriously. Like, my entire junior year, I never, I never left my house. I don't think I was ever in contact with anyone for that entire year, outside of my house. So the fact that we waited until the vaccine, and were like very safe about it, and like, wiped down our groceries, and you know, all that extra caution. And then they got it whenever they had the vaccine. I was like, Thank God, we took it that seriously, because if that was the symptoms with the vaccine. I can't, right? It could have been much worse.

Julie Wheaton 13:08

Because it's so individualized, like, it's so different.

Mike Hoffman 13:15

My wife and I both got it. And we had very different symptoms. I mean, it's yeah, so... Yeah, but so tell me again. No, no, no, that's a great, that's great information. Great story. So what brought you to Graceland? I mean,

Addison Cole 13:32

So um, my dad put it on my map, and I had I've had a lot of cousins come through here. So like Avery Danielson, you know, Avery, she was here. And Brian and Brianna came through. And so I had cousins that have gone through and my grandparents actually came here whenever it was still like a two year college. like a really long time ago.

Mike Hoffman 13:51

So you have some family connection. It was on your map. Yeah. But then, but then you had to make a decision at some point. Yeah.

Addison Cole 13:58

So I went to a really, really big high school, it was like close to 4000 students. It was really overwhelming. And it was like, you had to specialize yourself by middle school. And otherwise, you weren't really gonna get anywhere like my sister Cassandra who'd been playing volleyball for like, five years, but it was YMCA. So it was for fun. And it was something that she enjoyed doing. And by the time she got to middle school, she like, as an eighth grader only got on to like the C team for volleyball because it's like only club members got into the A Team starting in middle school. Like it was just that competitive.

Mike Hoffman 14:31

Yeah, I never really thought about how competitive

Addison Cole 14:34

It was. So and I was an orchestra, theater, wanted to be a choir kid. I did orchestra and choir in middle school, and I did have it in my schedule for theater. But then by the time I got to high school, I really had to make a choice of I had to pick one. So, I did originally my freshman sophomore year I did like theater and orchestra. But even with that though, like you can't like you don't your your schedules are too conflicting. You have rehearsals. Because I had theater rehearsal til seven o'clock about every single night, and then it was like, oh, but you need to be at this rehearsal for orchestra. I was like, I can't. And then they're like, Oh, you need to practice for this. So I just, I had some specialized myself. And even with that I got like, one role because of how competitive that department Yeah, you just don't really get, you (Mike: you don't get a chance to do a whole lot.) And that was really overwhelming for me, because I just wanted to like, you know, find everyone. And I just, I just felt very overwhelmed by that. And I and I struggled a lot with like mental health, like anxiety and depression sophomore year. And it's hard to do that in a big school because the teachers don't really notice you. They don't know. And it's very easy to disappear. And people just (Julie: It's not very personalized) not at all, not at all, even the counselors are very much just like they don't really pay attention to mental health at all. I know that, suicide was something that was very, very common to hear about. I have had, like, a lot of friends specifically who were like, have tried and attempted just because of how overwhelming it is. And so I hated it. I hated going to a big school I liked the opportunities it gave me and stuff like that. But I knew that I wanted to go to a small college. I wanted to like, I've always had this like mindset of like, I'm smart, and I can work hard. But I wanted college to be the time to like find myself. So I was like, I don't want an Ivy League education. Yeah, I want to just like, become the best version that I can be and then prove myself when it comes time to like,

Addison Cole 16:09

Try different things maybe that you couldn't do in high school. So what are you doing at Graceland that would be an example of that? I mean, yeah, so Well, we've mentioned you play the cello, so you're in the orchestra.

Addison Cole 16:39

I'm doing just like a lot of things that I don't think I would have had an opportunity otherwise. So I'm doing orchestra, I'm doing choir, I am doing Afterglow, and like, singing is not like, it's something that I think I found more therapeutic. Growing up, because my mom and my sister Cassandra was so so good at singing, and it was like, it's so beautiful to listen to, um, it was more of something that I would like, watch. And, and I love that. But then I also, like, because I was in such a big school, there weren't opportunities... and I had to not do choir in my high school.

Mike Hoffman 17:33

Did you sing at church at all? I mean, I mean, like, a solo or something ... as a member of the congregation and things like that?

Addison Cole 17:44

Even though I'm like, I'm unlearning the concept of that I have to be the best at something to enjoy it. And so like Afterglow has been that for me, where like, every single week I've, I've slowly gotten to the point where like, at the beginning, I sat down and I was like, Oh, my God, I was like, I did like this practice, but and I was like, super critical. And now I sit down with my friends afterwards. And I'm like, it could have gone better. But I had fun. No, and that's like something that I've really enjoyed.

Mike Hoffman 18:10

Afterglow is our Wednesday night worship service now, which is now our primary worship service. We've started back having Sunday evening or afternoon worship services, but Afterglow has certainly taken off this year with good attendance. And yeah, so it's given you a chance. That's good to know. It's given you a chance to (Addison: Yeah, it's been it's been really fun) sing and not be perfect. That sounds critical. But I don't mean it that way. Yeah.

Julie Wheaton 18:37

So do you think that helps, like, describe your Graceland experience?

Addison Cole 18:41

Yeah, very much. So like just being able to be involved in, like, whatever I am excited about. So like, like being on, like, HoCo (House Council). And being able and like, I hope to run for House President in a few years. And that's like, something that I'm excited for. And like, just like that, but just being able to be involved and like, not have to be like, the perfect upstanding person and being like, I can make mistakes. It's okay. Like, it's...

Mike Hoffman 19:10

We actually all do. But, yeah, but like so many times, we don't talk about them. Yeah.

Addison Cole 19:19

And I was really lucky to have such a good like family to where, like, my high school time, even though school was like, really, really hard. I still, like had my family and we have these fun moments together and stuff like that. So it wasn't all horrible. But it was just also this point of like being like, I want to just like, be me around other people rather than just at home. Yeah. And I feel like Graceland I saw that whenever I came and visited and it just made me excited to like, have a place where it's like, I feel like

you get so caught up and like growing up and being like, these are what I have to do. And like I'm a two year old at heart. And so I came here and then we're like, yeah, we have these silly little games about like that. Perfect. Yes for me. Yeah.

Mike Hoffman 20:03

So what do you hope to do? Like? I mean, I know you're just finishing your first year. So this is always a loaded question in my mind, but, you know, do you have thoughts about what you want to do? Like after you graduate? I mean, you know, who knows, it'll be, it'll probably change between now and yeah, the time you graduate. But, you know...

Addison Cole 20:21

So actually, I'm, like, in terms of like, what I want to do after I graduate, I've actually thought more about, like, outside of my career, if that makes sense. I'm still figuring out what I want to do in my career. I know I'm doing something in business, I'm finding, like, certain things that I like, I've enjoyed economics so far, and like trying to find that, but I haven't really specifically chosen what I want to go into. But I have thought a lot about, like, what I want to do with my life, outside of my career. So like, I ... Okay, so I want to like, I probably am going to move back to Texas, just because that's where my family is, and I'm really close to them. Um, in terms of like, wanting to have a family I, I want to adopt, like, that's just something that I've always been, like, more inclined to be interested in. And just stuff like that. And then like, this is super silly, but like me and my friends have already made plans that are like half jokes, but half completely serious about retiring. What we want to do, you know.

Mike Hoffman 21:30

Like what, when you're 25, or something?

Addison Cole 21:32

We've talked about it, and like, and my sister Cassandra, and Miranda and like, their friends, and we're like, we're getting getting a farm together. They're gonna be in charge of I'm gonna be in charge of like, the weird animals to take care of like the raccoons that are found. Yeah, like we'll take care of. Yeah, and so then like, other friends were like, I'll to the meals. Cassandra is gonna do the music. Other people were like, I'll do the flowerbeds. And like the parties, like, just we've talked a lot about... I've thought a lot about my future, but more in like, the broad sense.

Mike Hoffman 22:11

Totally fine. I mean, that's, that makes sense. Yeah.

Julie Wheaton 22:15

So what are your hopes for Community of Christ in the future?

Addison Cole 22:19

I guess, um, I have really enjoyed, like, seeing how accepting they've been in comparison to a lot of other Christian churches. So I actually have had this talk several times with like, Audrey stuff, where I often felt like I had to hide my religion, because of all of my theater friends were, a lot of them were LGBTQ community. I'm LGBTQ community. And so a lot of them grew up in Texas churches and

experienced a lot of religious trauma. Like that was just like, an overarching thing with like, mostly people that I knew were like, my parents did this to me. And this to me this Yeah. And so I just felt like I had to hide it. Yeah, and I'm not, and I've never been one to like, you know, be super like, loud about it. Like, I've just been, like, it's just, this is for me. It's something that I enjoy. Um, and so I think, then I started to realize that, like, I can do my part within my religion to like, make sure that that's not others' experiences. And so I've like whenever I tell people about the fact that, like, our church is accepting of LGBTQ community and has women in the priesthood, and they're always shocked, like specifically, the fact that as a like, three sisters and me, all of us are part of the LGBTQ community, and our dad's a pastor. And so people hear that and they're like, oh, my gosh, are you okay? I'm like, my dad is great. (Julie: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah.) And I think that catches people off guard. And so I've enjoyed seeing that. And I think in terms of the future, just like, being more like loud about it, just being like it there, there is a community if you are looking for it, like you will find a place and I think that for a lot of marginalized communities or oppressed groups, Community of Christ can be that place. it's just more of like, continuing to work on destigmatize it, and like, and then of course, our part working to destigmatize. But then also just being more like, these are like, instead of being like, oh, like, we're accepting like, whispering just like loud. Yeah. You know, being like, no, seriously. Yeah, we are here for you if you need it. Yeah. So yeah, those would be more of my hopes.

Julie Wheaton 24:54

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us? We did talk a lot.

Addison Cole 24:59

Not off the top of my head.

Mike Hoffman 25:00

Thank you so much for spending time with us. So that wraps things up for this episode of Coffee in the Swarm. Thanks for listening.

Julie Wheaton 25:06

This is Julie...

Mike Hoffman 25:07

And Mike signing off until next time