

# What's Brewing | A Changing Church after Covid19

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

congregation, church, online, change, trends, pandemic, community, patterns, mission, new expressions, technology, faith, ministries, collective creativity

## SPEAKERS

Kelly Phipps, Blake Smith

### **Blake Smith** 00:28

Hello, and welcome to What's Brewing, a series of the Project Zion Podcast where we answer the questions What is mission? And how is it being lived out in Community of Christ. I'm your host, Blake Smith. And in today's episode, we're going to pull the camera back a few feet and look at the role that the COVID pandemic has had in forcing the issue of change as it regards doing and being the church. And in turn, that requires a new way of looking at how mission will be carried out in the days ahead. My guest for today's podcast is Kelly Phipps. Welcome, Kelly.

### **Kelly Phipps** 01:02

Blake, good to be with you.

### **Blake Smith** 01:05

Once you give us just a synopsis a little rundown on who you are Kelly, so that our our listeners understand why this is important to you.

### **Kelly Phipps** 01:14

Sure, I appreciate the opportunity to be with you. So I live in Kansas City area with my wife, and we have two adult children. Professionally, I am Professor of Management at Rockhurst University where I teach mostly in our MBA program. And I as well as undergraduate courses. So that's what I do professionally and active in a couple of congregations here in the Kansas City area.

### **Blake Smith** 01:46

Great Kelly, we are really glad to have you with us. And especially because of this work that you have done. You mentioned to me in a previous conversation that this has kind of come out of some of your conversations from this previous summer, and finding out what's going on in the church. So it's incredibly relevant. And we're glad to have you. So I'm just going to turn it over to you and I let you do your thing.

### **Kelly Phipps** 02:09

Perfect. Well, thank you so much. So part of the reason I wanted to engage in this conversation with you is, I spend a lot of time thinking about the changes that I see happening in Community of Christ, particularly since the pandemic. But it's probably would be useful for me to explain why I'm even thinking about this topic. And there's really a couple of reasons that the question of change in the church is of particular interest to me. And the first one I alluded to earlier, it's because I'm a professor of management. And I teach mostly courses in organizational behavior, and leadership development. And so many of those are graduate courses. And so I'm always working with students to think through what change looks like in their organizations. And so when I'm doing that with students, it's hard to not think about the organizations that I'm active in, and think about how change is playing out in those organizations. So I bring sort of a professional curiosity to the question of change in the Church. The second reason that I spent a lot of time thinking about how the church is changing is a much more personal one. About 10 years ago, I got ill. And as a part of my illness, I wasn't able to be present with my congregation any longer physically present in the building. And so I had some friends who were very gracious and wanted to help accommodate those needs. And 10 years ago, our congregation wasn't streaming our services. And so we got a camera and set it up in the sanctuary. And they made it possible for me to watch the services streamed remotely. And I was very appreciative of that. And so, for several years, that's what I did. I just kind of watched the services. But over time, I began to sense that watching other people worship wasn't really the same as being a part of the community. And it really left me wanting more. And so eventually, I started looking for other ways to stay connected with my faith tradition. And I'll be honest, I didn't find a lot of options. There were a few but they were, they didn't feel like a good fit. And then this thing called COVID came along and kind of a weird thing happened. I realized in talking to some friends one day that suddenly everybody in the faith tradition was in the same situation I had been in for years. They were trying to figure out a way how to stay connected in a community when we couldn't be together physically in person. And, not only was everyone in the same boat that I was in, I began to notice that other people were responding in really very creative ways to that problem and lots of technological adaptation and creativity started happening. And because of my experience being eliminated, or prevented from being physically present, I found myself very curious about what other people were doing. And so, because I have sort of a professional curiosity and a personal curiosity about this, I've been kind of taking notes on my brain looks for patterns and trends. And so what I'm gonna share with you today is kind of my observation of the trends that I'm seeing. And I just want to be clear upfront, these are just my observations, as an outside, somewhat outside academic to the church. And I know there are all kinds of changes going on in the church that I'm not describing. So this is an incomplete list. But I do think there's benefit in looking for patterns or trends that we might not have otherwise noticed.

So that's what I want to do is I want to share my sense of the patterns of change that I'm seeing happening in the church. To do that, it might be useful for me to start by describing a particular change theory that I use in my classes. There are a lot of theories about change, and why it happens and why it doesn't happen. And many of those theories attempt to address why an organization doesn't change. So in other words, what's causing resistance? So, the theory I want to focus on is known as Lewin's three stage change model. And Lewin's model answers that question why is change not happening? And answers that by by hypothesizing The reason change doesn't happen in organizations, is because people are stuck in their routines. They're stuck in their patterns. And so change doesn't happen, because they're, they're habitually doing what they've always done. And so, under Lewin's three stage

model, if you want to affect change in an organization, first step you need to do is disrupt that pattern. And he refers to it as we're frozen in our pattern. So he says, you thaw a pattern, you move the group to a new desired state, and then you refreeze them into that new routine. So why am I talking all about Lewins three stage model? What I believe happened was that COVID effectively disrupted our routines, and started that change process. And by disrupting all of the patterns we had, all the ways we'd always done church, change was pretty much inevitable at that point. But in Lewins model, he's really thinking about a plan to change. So an organization that you want them to move to this new desired state, you break the old pattern, you move them into a new state, and then you make that the new pattern. What happened in the church during COVID, was very much an unplanned change. So we had all this disruption. And now we're sort of waiting to figure out what our new patterns will be, what is the new routine? And so that new routine hasn't formed yet. And that's part of why I'm really curious and watching for new things emerging, because I'm paying attention to try to figure out where are we going to land at the end of this change process.

So with that very long introduction, I want to point out the three trends that I'm seeing in the church in North America, just to be clear, that's my context in the church. That's where I experienced the church, where I talk to people, where I'm watching. I am sure that there is all kinds of change happening everywhere in the church. I just don't have the vantage point to watch what that change looks like in other parts of the church. So what I'm sharing is my perspective on the change happening primarily here in the North American church.

So the first trend that that I have watched with great curiosity is the use of technology to support community building. I think we all watch this and experience this. So you know, I mentioned earlier when we couldn't be together in person, a lot of people way more technologically savvy than I am found ways to use all these tools to keep us connected. Some of those were brand new ministries, and some of them were things that existed before the pandemic, but just sort of blossomed as people were looking for ways to stay connected. But, it's not actually the use of the technology during the pandemic that I think represents the change for us, although that certainly was, that was really more of an adaptation for us. What I find interesting is that many of these new expressions didn't stop when we were able to be together in person again. And so the change really is the fact that these things we did as a short-term adaptation became new, long-standing tools, in use in our faith community. And what that suggests to me is that this use of technology created something useful for us that those ministries either augmented or sometimes even replaced our traditional congregational gatherings.

So the use of technology is the trend, the use of technology to support our community building. But that's a pretty broad trend. And I want to drill down a little bit more. And there's really several kind of patterns that I saw emerging in the use of technology. And many of these, like I said earlier, existed before the pandemic, but really sort of came into their own post pandemic. The first one is a pattern I refer to as the campground congregation. Many of you may be familiar with one of these in your area. It's a collection of people who all have some spiritual connection to a campground. And they use that connection as the defining element for their community. So they may stay connected virtually throughout the year, and meet periodically, maybe quarterly at the campground for retreats, fellowship and worship together. So it's a community that really is orbits around the congregation, and uses that as their central defining element.

So that's one example of a group using technology to support community building. Another example is what I call the non-geographic congregation. This is really probably an online congregation. But what I think distinguishes it most isn't that it's online, it's that they're participant participants aren't limited to a location like a city or a town. So it may be organized by mission center, so they might have some geographic boundaries. But some of the online or non-geographic congregations really have no geographic limits at all, and have members from all around the world. So these groups exist entirely online. And it's really their, how they go about living out the mission of the congregation exists entirely in an online setting, and their members aren't bound to any one location.

So a third example of using technology to support community building is, is a hybrid congregation. Now, there's a lot of groups just to be clear, that are using technology to stream their services. And I applaud that I personally benefit from that for a long time. But a hybrid congregation is something a little more than that. They're using the technology to incorporate members who may never attend, personally in that location. So some of the members attend in person, some attend online, and some may alternate between attending in person or online, depending on the week. What makes these congregations truly hybrid is that their online members are considered full members of the congregation. They're more than just online observers. So this means that they're involved in worship. They may participate in the worship services, prayers, speaking. The congregation may have online fellowship opportunities. And they may include people who are online in all of their programmatic planning. So as they're thinking about what the congregation will do, they're always thinking about how the online members will engage with those programs. So that's hybrid congregation as a third example of using technology to support the way we build community. So those first three are examples of kind of congregational expressions.

The last example is really not connected in any way with the congregation. And it's what I call an affinity group. So these are groups that meet online around a shared interest in some facet of the church's mission. So that could be peacebuilding, or church history, or specific priesthood office, or really any part of our mission. So these groups may never meet in person, but they gather online, they have shared online programming. And they really exist due to a group having a shared passion for some dimension of our mission. Actually, I'm involved in a couple of these. And I look forward to when those groups meet, because I know I'm connecting with people who have a shared vision of what why we exist as a faith community. And, and it allows me to not only connect with those people, but go deeper in those areas of shared passion. So all of these, I think, are examples of how we are using technology to support community building. Again, some of these have been going on for years, but COVID really disrupted our patterns. And as a result, people moved into this online space, and found new ways of connecting with their church community. So that's, that's the first trend I'm seeing of this expansion in the use of technology to build and support career.

The second trend I am observing is that many people who use those ministries didn't go back to just their old way of doing church when the pandemic allowed us to be physically present with one another. So instead, they remained active in these online communities. And as a result, what they had begun doing is what I refer to as actively constructing a personal support network, or a spiritual support network. So what do I mean by that, actively constructing a personal spiritual support network? So we've got this proliferation of online options that happen when, after COVID. And I'm seeing people pick

and choose the types of connections they want to be involved in, to meet their own personal needs and interests. So they might have previously thought of themselves as a member of some local congregation. But now, many people are thinking of themselves as a part of several different ministerial expressions. And they attend church in one place, participate in a book study or cell group sponsored by another group. And so in response, what started all these groups that started as a in response to social distancing, they stuck around and turned into this new category of ministry that's something above and beyond what congregation used to offer. So in practice, that means that people have this option to form and maintain broader networks in the church that they might have before COVID. And to speak to this personally, that's exactly what happened to me personally. I still feel very connected to my longtime congregation. But because I wasn't able to be physically present with them, when I heard about an online book study put on by a different congregation, signed up for it because I was interested in the topic, and I found myself really feeling like the people in that book study, were a part of my faith community as well. And so my network expanded. And I thought of myself kind of as an anomaly in that regard. And so people asked me which congregation I attend. And I found myself kind of saying this strange thing. I think I said it in my introduction, that I'm a part of two different congregations. And I felt kind of sheepish, describing myself that way. And what I discovered was that lots of people resonated with that and began to tell me about their own way that they were involved in multiple groups. And so it wasn't just me, people maintain the connection to their original faith congregation, their faith original faith community, but then had expanded their connections to involve some other ministries. So that's the second trend that I'm seeing. It's not happening with everyone. But I'm running into more and more people doing this, actively constructing personal spiritual support networks, many times using these new technological options. So that's the second trend.

The third trend that I'm seeing I sometimes refer to as the "hard conversations." It's when a group came back from COVID and found that the group that returned was smaller than what they were before COVID. Or maybe the group that returned just didn't have the energy to do everything they did, pre-pandemic. So I keep hearing about groups having these really difficult and wrenching conversations about how best to exert their energies. Now, sometimes, when I hear about these conversations, they're hyper-focused on what to do about the building. Do we sell the building? Do we keep the building? And I actually think that's probably not the place to start the conversation? When I hear it done well, groups are asking the question, "what does this group feel called to be doing now, in this moment?" And, for that reason, I call this trend focused ministries. So the third trend is what I call focused ministries. So we're not certainly not the only faith community that's struggling with diminished attendance post-pandemic. The demographic research that I'm reading suggests that let's track happening in lots of faith communities. And in many cases, it's the middle-aged adults that aren't returning. And, we don't entirely know why they're not returning. Initial research suggests that having taken a break from church they, the space the church once occupied gets filled with kids and caring for parents and busy careers. We don't know why that group may not have returned in full force. But as a result, many congregations are realizing that they're not going back to the way they were pre pandemic. And so they're having to ask these hard questions. What can we realistically do with the people that remain? And the trend that I'm seeing is that congregations are choosing one or two dimensions of congregational life that they feel particularly equipped and called to pursue in this moment, and focusing on that, and really letting the rest go. What they choose to focus on differs from group to group, it might be small group fellowship on visiting, food pantry, or it could be any dimension of

congregational life, or the church's mission that they choose to focus on. But., what really distinguishes these groups is that they're letting go of what they used to do, some of what they used to do, and really focusing on one area. Now, all these trends are naming them as separate trends. But they're, obviously have some connection with each other. And in some circumstances, this is possible, because the members are feeling like, there are other options, they can log on and worship with another group. And maybe this small group, they're part of should be focusing on something else, small group fellowship, or home ministry, or whatever it is they choose to focus on. So there's some connection between how these trends are working. But really, this third trend is that groups are choosing to narrow their focus of their ministry, in light of a smaller group that may have less time and energy to commit. So if I bring all these three trends together, here's what I'm seeing ... COVID hits, and all of our patterns as a church get disrupted. And a whole lot of change is launched in the church. In response to that wave of change, a lot of very creative people found some technological solutions to help keep us stay connected. And those efforts were so successful, that people wanted to keep using them even after we were able to meet together again. So with all these new options around, church members are mixing and matching their participation to create personal spiritual networks. And as traditional congregational groups may be shrinking, some of them are using this moment to focus their ministry in specific areas. So those are the trends that I'm seeing. And again, those are just my take on what I'm seeing from talking to people around the church and listening. And obviously, those are trends and, you know, talked about change sort of got launched by COVID. And we haven't landed anyplace yet. Where those trends take us is really an open question.

And so the implications of those changes are really what I want to talk about next. So obviously, there's innumerable implications to this. But I really want to focus on three, what I see is three implications to these trends that we should be focusing on. And those implications really have to do with three things ... leaders, youth, and active membership.

Let me take those in that order. Start with leaders. So when I'm teaching a course on on organizations, the term that we use to describe the process of preparing the next generation of leaders, we sometimes refer to that as succession planning. So the idea behind succession planning is that an organization has the new leader, already trained and ready to step into the role occupied by the previous leader. But if I look at the trends that are underway in the church, our future may look very different than the traditional church we're used to. And so for that reason, I want to suggest that succession planning is really not a very helpful way of thinking about what the next generation of leaders needs to look like. Because if we think of it as succession planning, we will be looking for leaders prepared to lead the church as it was, and not the church as it's becoming. And so when I think about what leadership development needs to look like in the church, it's a whole lot less like preparing them to be pastors, or congregational leaders. And instead, I'm interested in empowering leaders who share our sense of mission, and helping them create what's emerging in the church. And if I'm honest with myself, that's probably going to mean people younger than me. And let me explain why I say that. I'm what, for those of us who are older, building community online, is very much a learned skill, I still find it very difficult to build what I think is durable, authentic community, in an online environment, I can do it. But it takes effort. And it never feels entirely authentic to me. And the reason for that is, I'm a late adopter of these technologies. I was a fully formed adult when all these technologies came around. But for my younger friends, and my friends who are members in the church, building, online community is a completely

natural expression. It's something they've done their entire lives. And so if ever there was a moment, when we needed to be empowering the next generation of leaders to help us build the church of the future. This is that moment. Now, when I say empowering young leaders, I don't mean dumping the problem on them or asking them to fix it. I mean, taking those individuals who are passionate about our mission, and asking them to imagine with us, what it would look like to build our community in an online setting, or at least use online tools to help support the communities that we're building. And the reason we need to be doing that, empowering young leaders is that if I, as a middle-aged man built that online community, I can guarantee you, it's not going to be very good, and it's probably not going to attract young people. And so empowering young people who know how to use these tools, use them naturally, and see the new tools as they're emerging, empowering them, to build out what the next expressions of our faith community look like, that's really going to be imperative. If this if these new online expressions are going to become a natural expression, a natural and durable expression of what it means to be Community of Christ. So that's the first implication I think about the next generation of leaders.

The other implication I think about pertains to youth. So for every generation, just for every organization to survive, it's got to have an effective way of passing its values and beliefs on to the next generation. And for as long as anyone alive can remember, that's been done in our faith community through Christian education. But if I think about these trends I'm describing, I'm not sure what Christian education looks like in an online context. If our trend is toward online communities and smaller, more focused local ministries, we need to be thinking ourselves about how we raise help raise the next generation of disciples. Because nurturing and supporting new disciples is central to our mission, and the online communities that I'm describing these ministries, they are really useful at helping us keep helping us, those of us who are already disciples stay connected to one another. But I'm not convinced that it's the best method for onboarding or bringing on new disciples or nurturing new disciples in what used to be Christian education. And part of the reason I'm skeptical about that really has to do with my own experience, teaching online during COVID. My, my wife and I were both educators. And I have nothing but respect for teachers and administrators who did amazing things to maintain continuity during the pandemic. But even with those best efforts, what we're learning is that online education, that doesn't have an ongoing relationship between the educator and the student, is just not as effective. If, if it's all entirely online, and that relationship doesn't exist. So I don't have the answer to this. But I do know that if this is the direction our faith tradition is going to move, and that's a big "if." If we are moving toward blended communities and online and smaller local communities, then we need to be actively thinking about how do we attend to the needs of young disciples in the, in the midst of that transition. So you know, we're going through a lot of change, but the outcomes aren't determined. We have a lot of say in where we land with us. So we need to name this challenge, the challenge of attending to the needs of our youth. And we need to put our collective creativity behind it. Because if we don't, all these new online communities we're building, will end up simply being a way to support the last generation of church members. And that would be a terrible loss. So we need to put our collective creativity behind how do we help new disciples grow in this blended context, blended online, and face-to-face.

So the last implication I want to talk about has to do with this idea of active membership. So every organization has to have its way of measuring Who's In Who's Out what it takes to be a member in good standing. And for whatever reason, for many years when we intended it or not, we tended to

judge whether someone was active in our faith tradition, whether they regularly attended services on Sunday morning, we could argue all day about whether that was ever a very helpful measure. But it tended to be how we thought about whether someone was active or not. But if we're going to be a church, where people are actively constructing diverse spiritual support networks, what attendance means is going to need to change because attending on a Sunday morning in a physical building becomes a pretty meaningless measure of whether someone is active in our movement. And I'll just use an example I can imagine someone who engages online with a campground congregation, they log on for church history lectures, and maybe active with a local food pantry sponsored by the mission center. If that person is not considered active in our movement, I don't know who should be. So if we're moving to a future, where there are many avenues to participate, some of them online, we need to let go of our old norms that might prioritize one form of participation over another and acknowledge that if you care about our mission, and you are working with us to advance that mission, and you're a part of us, and we welcome you. So that's really what I wanted to share.

So in conclusion, I think the church in North America is going through a period of rapid change. And I don't think I've mentioned this yet, but that change from my perspective is happening at the local level. There's all kinds of innovation happening in Mission centers and congregations all over the church. And that change that's happening at the local level, is really charting the future of the church. And in my personal opinion, the young people in among our movement are positioned very well to lead what that new iteration of our church should look like. And we need to be actively looking for ways to empower and support them in it. I have already benefited from being a part of some of these new expressions. And I look forward to all the new expressions that are to come both as an observer and as a participant. So Blake, that's what I wanted to share. What are your thoughts or questions?

**Blake Smith 35:48**

Oh, my gosh, Kelly. First of all, let me just say thank you for all of that. It's been very, very helpful information. And obviously, well thought out. I don't think anyone who's paying attention to church life in particular, or even post pandemic life, in general could walk away from this episode, not having resonated with many of the reflections you've shared here. I mean, I know that I've experienced most, if not all of those patterns and trends just in the small area that I serve. I want to say that I really appreciate your expanded understanding of community and belonging, I think that's a critical piece for me, and a piece that we often miss, because our history has been to be very insulated and inward looking. So that's helpful. There are so many questions I could ask, but I know that's not the purpose of this particular episode. Seems to me like, there's so much more to explore and discussed, I was wondering, having identified these patterns and trends, and given your affinity for the church and sacred community, what would be your hope, as a result of your research and observations?

**Kelly Phipps 37:08**

That's a great question. Part of the reason that I was interested in sharing my reflections is not because I necessarily am an expert on all of this. So it's kind of funny, I asked you what questions you have. I'm secretly hoping you had none, because I don't have answers. The questions we need to be asking more of one another. What I hope happens from this episode, is that people begin discussing with one another, what their experiences have been using technology to connect, what their hopes are, what's working and what's not working. Part of my hope is to name some of what's happening, and to



acknowledge that we're still in the middle of that change, and the outcome is not determined. And, and so I think collectively, as a faith community, we need to be owning the change that's happening, and moving ourselves from a position of individually trying to solve the challenges where we sit, and collectively learning from each other, from what we're trying. There's, I've personally never experienced the time of radical experimentation in the church, like we've gone through in the last four years. And yet, a lot of that is happening in semi-isolation. Congregations, small groups, mission centers are trying stuff. But we need to be finding ways to talk with one another about what we're learning, developing best practices, learning from our personal experiences. I gotta tell you, part of what why I resonate with hybrid congregations, is from my experience being an observer of a congregation. And it's, it was, for me, my first experience in a long time, being a visitor, an outsider. And that's a great way to learn. And so we are all experiencing the church through new vantage points. And I, so my long answer to your great question is, I hope the outcome from this is a whole lot of conversation, and a whole lot of exploration and learning from one another.

**Blake Smith 39:39**

Well, thanks, Kelly, I particularly caught on to your phrase collective creativity. I think that that says a lot for, we have such an incredible resource and like you said, I don't think anybody actually has experienced this kind of radical transformation in the church or otherwise, even probably most of our older membership who, of course, have seen some significant and radical changes in the church. But this fast-moving, ever-changing pace that we're in is new to all of us. So thanks for that. And thanks for the encouragement, I hope that our listeners are hearing that and will begin to engage in some of that collective creativity, because we do have a tremendous resource among our community, trying all different kinds of things. And it's about sharing both the successes and the failures, and the mistakes and, and the things that you're learning every day. So I would encourage everybody to be a part of that as well.

**Kelly Phipps 40:38**

So there's another point on that that I want to point out. So the pandemic disrupted our patterns and disrupted them in a way that really didn't give us a whole lot of lead time to plan. I think about this through my professional lens as well, about two years before COVID hit, I've been asked to teach one of my first online courses. And as an educator, that's kind of a daunting thing to teach your first online course, seems almost comical now to say that was daunting. Everybody's done it now. But, back then, it was a totally new thing for me. And I spent 18 months designing that first online course. And then COVID hit, and I had like three or four days to turn all my other courses into online courses. And so many of us were caught off guard, and found ourselves trying to do online church without really any preparation. And, and so we were experimenting, that was the only way to do it. But if I think about it through the lens of an education mindset, when I'm preparing a class to be online, it I cannot take an on-ground class, and just move it online. I have to completely redesign the class. And I have to redesign it because I have to think about it through the vantage point of the student. I'm always thinking about how will the student engage with this material? And how will they engage with one another. Because if all I do is move my lecture online, that all I've done is turn them into an observer of an of a class that happened years ago. And so an online community is formed, when there is an active opportunity to engage with one another, both among the participants, and among those who may be, you know, physically present in the building, if it's, if it's a hybrid context. So I would encourage people

to one, when I say experimentation, I mean more than just what we tried in COVID. That worked or didn't work. What did we learn from that? And what is the next iteration of what we're going to try to do, because community building online takes immense amount of effort, and thought, and I want to make sure we're not just hanging on to what we did during the pandemic, but we're actually building on it, and improving it based on what we learned.

**Blake Smith** 43:34

That's great. I was just wondering, because your comments have made me think of a text that has been helpful. And that's all and asked you certainly as an educator, is there any resource that you might recommend that you found helpful that might help folks who want to explore this deeper themselves? I didn't prepare you for that. But I wondered if maybe there was something that come came to the top of the list.

**Kelly Phipps** 44:03

You know, I don't have a specific resource to recommend. What I personally had benefited from is observing what others are trying in multiple contexts. In the middle of the pandemic, we got a group of corporate executives together in the Kansas City area and asked them you know, what they were struggling with? And their universal answer was "maintaining corporate culture in an in a remote work environment." They were just stumped about how to do that. And they immediately turned to one another and saying, What are you trying, you know, they were doing virtual water coolers and online social hours and small group discussions like they were. They were trying to find ways to maintain the continuity of the culture and Actually, what one of the executives shared had been most helpful to him was taking an online class. By being watching how online professors were doing it, gave him ideas for what to do in his corporate setting. And so what I would suggest to people is, look at what other churches are doing. But also look at what other online communities you're a part of are doing. How are they use? What tools are they using? How are they staying connected? What are they using an email reminder thread, using teams? Are they using zoom? So finally, because it's that cross pollination across industries, that's going to give us new tools to try that maybe we wouldn't have had access to otherwise.

**Blake Smith** 45:53

Again, great information and great insights and advice. So I want to thank you, Kelly, for taking your time to be here with us. I am especially again connected with a lot of what you've said here. And it's real helpful to me in the ministry that I offer. And so I hope it will be helpful to our listeners as well. I would add to your comments, to encourage conversation with one another talk about what you're doing. Don't try to be somebody else's version of a new expression, because it's going to look different in different places. Thank you for being with us today. You've been listening to What's Brewing of the Project Zion Podcast series. You can find us at [projectzionpodcast.org](https://projectzionpodcast.org) Have a great day!