

Coffee in the Swarm | Savannah Marshall

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

church, Afterglow, Graceland, congregation, community, clubs, housing system, Sariah

SPEAKERS

Savanah Marshall, Levi Triplett, Mike Hoffman

Levi Triplett 00:27

Welcome back to Coffee in the Swarm, a Project Zion Podcast production coming to you from Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa. The Swarm is our on-campus snack bar in the Newcom Student Union. This year our podcast is co-hosted by campus chaplains Alayah Farrell and myself, Levi Triplett, and it's hosted by Campus Minister, Mike Hoffman. Coffee in the Swarm is where we interview students at Graceland who are connected to the Community of Christ. Today, we are with our first guest speaker Savannah Marshall. Savannah. How are you?

Savanah Marshall 00:57

I'm doing good. Thanks for having me.

Levi Triplett 00:59

Of course, of course, we're glad to have you. So tell us about yourself. Tell us tell us your story.

Savanah Marshall 01:05

Um, so I'm originally from Woodbine, Iowa. A small little town basically just like Lamoni. I'm the youngest in my family. I just have an older sister. And then obviously my mom and dad. The high school I went to, a small high school, like I kind of mentioned earlier, I graduated with like 40 in my class. So that allowed me to do basically everything in my high school. So I did all the sports, all the clubs, all the extracurriculars you can think of.

Mike Hoffman 01:30

So, there was 40 in your class. How many were in the total school?

Savanah Marshall 01:35

In the high school? I think it was around like 100-150. And then the total for the whole school, I think it was like 450 maybe. Okay, so very

Mike Hoffman 01:45

450, like from kindergarten through high school?

Savanah Marshall 01:48

Yeah, pretty crazy. Yes.

Levi Triplett 01:50

That's about what mine was. Very, very small.

Savanah Marshall 01:52

Very small.

Levi Triplett 01:53

Um, so tell us a little bit about shooter your major in your house a new year.

Savanah Marshall 01:58

So I'm a sophomore this year. My major is elementary education, with a reading endorsement and a minor in psychology. I'm on Sariah. Go Sariah Sailors. I love my house. And then here at Graceland, I just do a bunch of different clubs and stuff on campus as well as choir. I'm not a student athlete. So that allows me to spend a lot of my time with a lot of different extracurricular activities, like different clubs and stuff on campus. So yeah.

Mike Hoffman 02:23

So you're not a student athlete.

Savanah Marshall 02:25

No, I am not.

Mike Hoffman 02:26

In this day and age is like crazy.

Savanah Marshall 02:30

It's crazy how many people I have asked me like when I'm talking about my grace and experience. So you just came to Graceland, for Graceland. And then I'll be like, Yeah, I just came to Graceland.

Mike Hoffman 02:42

So tell us a little bit about the clubs that you mentioned.

Julie Wheaton 02:46

So, I'm in the Community Development Club, which is a club through Max Pitt. We basically just work on projects in town, or bigger projects. Like last spring break, every spring break normally, they go to Guatemala, and do projects like that, which is pretty cool. Really enjoy it. A lot of my friends were in that club. Max just kind of put me in it. So I was almost like, forced to be in it, I guess. But I really like all the people. And then ...

Mike Hoffman 03:08

You should know he does that all the time. See, he meets somebody goes, Oh, I'm signing them up.

Julie Wheaton 03:13

When I was coming in my freshman year, I asked my parents and my sister, I was like, What is this like community development class? I mean, I was like, What is this? I'm so confused. And then I was like, Oh, it's just a club, whatever. (Yeah.) And then I'm also a part of Enactus, which is kind of like a business club on campus, which, with my major doesn't really make sense while I'm in it. But I really enjoyed that.

Mike Hoffman 03:35

Yeah, another thing that you just got signed up for, I don't know. Yeah,

Savanah Marshall 03:38

I actually right before the club fair, Jared Doty gave me a letter in my mailbox. I was like, "We want you to come," which is pretty cool. Because my older sister who came here, she was also part of Enactus.

Mike Hoffman 03:48

Was she a business major though?

Savanah Marshall 03:49

She was communication, social media marketing, so more in that realm where I'm elementary education. But I really enjoyed that club. I part of the events committee. So just planning smaller events on campus. But also, last year, I had the great opportunity to go with a group of four other people to Dallas, Texas, and actually get to present one of our projects at the National Convention, which was like one of the coolest experiences ever, because I never thought I would do something like that. So that was really awesome.

Mike Hoffman 04:16

That's really cool.

Savanah Marshall 04:18

Oh, and then something else that I do is I'm in charge of Afterglow this year with my roommate, Kayla. Pretty awesome.

Mike Hoffman 04:24

So, for those of you listening, just in case you don't know what Afterglow is, Afterglow is our student band/worship service on Wednesday nights now, which I know that's probably what you guys know, but it used to be on Sunday nights, but we moved it to Wednesday night so. Largely because there are so many student athletes that aren't available on Sunday night, so. Cool!

Levi Triplett 04:48

So did you say that you were Community of Christ back in Woodbine? (Yes.) Okay, so, what was that experience like back home?

Savanah Marshall 04:56

Um, so for me, we actually moved to Woodbine when I was six, so basically that's all I remember. I got baptized when I was eight through the church, which was pretty cool. It was nice that I got to like, experience that and it wasn't like I was just baptized when I was first born, like, I got to make the decision, which was pretty cool. I got to do it with some of my friends too. But our congregation was obviously small. I grew up in a small town. So that was something that was also cool, because then I got to participate a lot in church. So whether it was like reading scriptures, or praying or doing like the offering or something like that, I got to be involved in a lot of in the services. But yeah, it was just our congregation was pretty small. And it was most of my friends to which was cool. So it was like we had the old people, like the older the older people. And then we have like our parents, and then all the young ones. And I think like, at most we maybe had like 20 people come in? (Oh) yeah, like we had not very many. But honestly, I kind of liked that are Congregation was small just because then I knew everyone and I felt like I had a good connection. I also think that's a big reason why I had no issue like speaking in front of people and stuff is because I started at a young age through church with people that I always felt comfortable with.

Mike Hoffman 06:08

I was gonna ask you because you're so outgoing. I just wondered if that was part of the you know, yeah,

Savanah Marshall 06:13

That's definitely something because like, I mean, I remember when I was younger, I'd get nervous, like, Oh, Mom, I have to talk at church. And she'd be like, you literally know all of these people like Grandma and Grandpa are sitting there. You know, and then grandma and grandpa after the services would be like, remember, for the old people, we got to speak loud and slow, so we can understand. So then they give me like little tips here and there too. So that was always cool.

Mike Hoffman 06:36

Yeah, that's cool. Where were you born? If you weren't born in Iowa

Savanah Marshall 06:39

I was born in Independence, Missouri. (Okay.) And then like, I was like six months old, we moved to Blue Springs. And then my dad is actually originally from Woodbine. So we moved back there. His parents are still there and stuff. And I lived there for 12 years. And actually, the summer going into my freshman year of college, they moved back to Grain Valley, Missouri. So now we're back in the Kansas City area where originally I was born.

Mike Hoffman 07:01

So your parents are back in Missouri? (Yep.) So when did they move?

Savanah Marshall 07:05

Going into my freshman year.

Mike Hoffman 07:06

...of high school? (Of my ...) college, oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We moved when our daughters when our oldest daughter was in college, too. So yeah, so

Savanah Marshall 07:15

Yeah, So I always knew we would move back to the area at some point, but I was definitely not prepared for it to be right after my senior year of high school. I was like, there was a big thing for me because you know, I lived in the same place for 12 years of my life. Change is not a very good thing for me. So that was ...

Mike Hoffman 07:31

So, does Grain Valley feel like home to you?

Savanah Marshall 07:33

It does now. I will definitely say like, up until Christmas break last year, I still had boxes in my "room" because I hadn't lived there since my parents moved, so would have been July of 2022. That's when they moved there, and I decided to stay back in Woodbine with my grandparents to spend my last summer like high school summer with all my high school friends and stuff like that. So this summer, it was a lot of adjusting because it was my first full time like actually staying there, but it's definitely now home to me. Yeah, that's really nice. (That's cool.) Yeah.

Mike Hoffman 08:03

So what what really brought you to Graceland?

Julie Wheaton 08:06

So a lot of my family has come to Graceland, like a lot of my family. I don't exactly know like what number I am in my family. But I'm telling you, like a lot of my family has come here. You know, my parents came here. That's where they me. Sister came here. And then just a bunch of like cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, stuff like that. So I actually, because I'm the youngest in my family, like in my whole family. I was like, I'm not going to Graceland. I'm going to be different than everyone else in my family. I'm not going to Graceland. I'm going to be the trailblazer and be different. And then, you know, senior year rolls around, I got to start looking at colleges. And I had visited to other colleges in Graceland was my last one. And I was thinking okay, like I talked to Michele Dickey-Kotz which is, she's a education professor here. And my big thing was like I love Graceland. I knew I loved it had felt like a second home because I've been coming here since I was a little girl for homecoming and stuff like that. So I was like, I just got to make sure the education program is good. That's my make or break. Within like a minute talking to her. My dad was like, I knew you were coming here. She she was so awesome. Really? She really pushed (Michele was? Michele Dickey-Kotz). Yes, she was so awesome. But then also just like, felt like a second home to me. But also something that really pushed me is the housing system here. Like it's so many other Yeah, so, so different than any other college? (Right.) And, yeah, I really enjoy the housing system. I love that I'm part of a house and Oh, surely

Mike Hoffman 09:31

Was your mom in a ...? You said earlier that change wasn't really (Yeah), like, so this was very familiar to you, and probably less change than if you

Savanah Marshall 09:32

My mom was on Sariah (Oh, really?) I was which I already knew some girls who are on Sariah so I kind of was like, Oh, that could be a good option. But then I was like, it'd be even cooler since my mom was on Sariah (Yeah), if I was on Sariah so yeah, I would say like family was a big reason but also like comfortability is a big thing for me. Like I knew I could never go to a big university. I know a lot of my friends in high school were like, I gotta get out of the small town. I'm gonna go to a big university. I was like, no way Jose. Oh Yeah, and I even remember, it was, I don't know, maybe like June, July ish. I looked at my mom and I said, I think I might have made the wrong decision about what college I'm going to. And she was like, whoa. And I was like, Don't tell Dad, I don't want him to be mad. And I was like, I just worried that maybe I chose Graceland because it's comfortable. And because it's Yeah. And she said, Savannah, that's just the kind of person you are like, that's not a bad thing. And then she was like, you know, you can always transfer which this is the best decision I've made. Like, I love it here. And I love how involved I can be on campus and stuff like that. So I don't regret my decision. Yeah. Anyway, but for for a minute, I was worried. I was like, oh, did I just make it because I was scared to try something new. But now I'm glad that I made it.

Mike Hoffman 10:51

In truth. It's still something new. I mean, even though it's small and comfortable, (Yeah), to a degree, it's still a big change from high school.

Savanah Marshall 10:59

Yeah. Oh, 100%. Yeah. 100% like being totally independent. Like, not having mom and dad with you all the time. Yeah, it's a big change. It's a big change. Yeah.

Levi Triplett 11:09

Alright, so moving on. Now, your sophomore, you've had lots of experience with Graceland. So tell us tell us about how your experience has been.

Savanah Marshall 11:18

Um, so like I said earlier, I'm not a student athlete. So that gives me like quite a bit of free time to just kind of do whatever. But even though I'm not a student athlete, I would still say I'm pretty busy just like other student athletes on campus, because I'm in all the different clubs, like I was kind of explaining earlier. But I think like a big part of my Graceland experience is the different connections I've been able to make through all the clubs. Like I look at some things and like, I don't, for example, through the housing system, like some of the girls on my house, I don't think I would really be friends with if we weren't on the same house. And that's just how like Graceland is, with all the opportunities, it provides you something else about me. I also am an admissions ambassador on campus.

Mike Hoffman 11:56

So I guess if you've got two jobs on campus, (yes), as a student.

Savanah Marshall 11:59

I do afterglow. And then I also give tours and work in the admissions building, which I love that job. I love giving people tours and advocating for Graceland, like come to Graceland. But I always tell people like Graceland is really what you make it. Like they give you all the opportunities to be the most

involved, or least involved as you want. I always recommend being the most involved. But my experience has been nothing but good here so far. Um, you know, I think I had kind of a rough first semester of my freshman year, that was just like transitioning stuff, though. I feel like everyone kind of might have a hard time transitioning. But yeah, I think my Graceland experience has really been nothing but amazing. And I hope it continues that way, because I'm only a sophomore. So I still got two more years ago.

Levi Triplett 12:43

So what's been your church experience like here at Graceland?

Savanah Marshall 12:47

So coming in my freshman year, I remember during Welcome Week, we had a Club Fair. And I remember seeing the Campus Ministries table. And you know, obviously I am Community of Christ, and obviously we are like, affiliated with Community of Christ and stuff. So I had thought about going over, but then I was like, oh, maybe not, I don't know. I got talking to Jared Doty about Enactus. And, you know, whatever. So didn't really do anything. And then two of my friends, Nico and Danny, they were in charge of Afterglow last year, and they were like, You need to come. And I was like, What is this Afterglow you're speaking of like this is I had no idea idea what it was. I remember I didn't go to like the first few. And they kept saying like, Come. And I was like, You're not even explaining to me what it is like, I don't know what's going on. And I think the first one I went to, was the Halloween one in the Shaw or something, or there was one in the Shaw that we went to. No, it definitely wasn't helpful. It was one of the Shaw, I remember there was one in the Shaw. And I don't remember who the speakers were, but one of the speakers had us, like take out a piece of paper. And we were like writing our list of loved ones or something. And then we sent like a nice message to them or something. I remember doing that. I wrote a message to my dad and sent it. And I was like, this is really cool. Like, because I'm not the churchiest person ever. Obviously, I grew up going to church and stuff. But like, I'm not the most churchiest human in the entire world.

Mike Hoffman 14:05

What does that even mean?

Savanah Marshall 14:07

Like, I don't know how to maybe we should cut this out. But I just like we went to church, but it wasn't like, I don't know. Maybe we should just cut that out. Because...

Levi Triplett 14:19

This is raw. This is good.

Savanah Marshall 14:20

No, we're not....

Mike Hoffman 14:22

I mean, So for instance, I mean... I really am curious about this because because for me church isn't like... church is about building community.

Savanah Marshall 14:34

Yeah, no, I agree.

Mike Hoffman 14:36

I everything you've described sounds like church to me. So that's what

Savanah Marshall 14:40

Well, I guess, church

Mike Hoffman 14:41

But I mean, that seriousness...

Savanah Marshall 14:43

I think maybe in other people's views.

Mike Hoffman 14:47

Yeah. So I know this is unrelated but I in a in a couple of weeks. I'm going to do a workshop in a congregation and they want me to explain what church is like at Graceland. They want me... You know and I keep going... this is so different. I mean, your experience talks about the difference between what it's like at a home congregation. Maybe I mean, you know, and...

Savanah Marshall 15:10

What made me want to keep going to Afterglow? Is it cuz it was like, church through community and connections. I'm not saying that's not what my church was like at home. But it was also people all my age. So easier to relate. Where like, right church back in Woodbine, obviously, you have like the older people, you have, like my parents age stuff. And then you have us kids. (Right) So, to me, I mean, church always felt like a community. But this was just a new sense of community because it was all everybody was my peers. Yeah. So then I remember being like, this is really cool. Like, I'm gonna keep going to this. And then I went to after Well, every single week after that, which was really awesome. I remember, like, you know, when I was kind of struggling first semester with being homesick, and stuff like that, there were times where, like, Afterglow was my place to like, reset and not have to worry about anything. And it was like, my time to just like, clear my mind of everything. And I could just be there with the people I loved and that kind of thing. So that was really cool. So that's kind of like my church experience here. And then that's kind of also a reason why my roommate and I, Kayla, were like, You know what, maybe we should do it next year, because I think it made me closer to a lot of people. And like, I always tell people, like, if it weren't for Danny and Nico, and like other people being like, Oh, I'll keep coming. I probably wouldn't ever went. Because I didn't know I had no clue. It's not like a house thing, or like a big COSA event or anything like that. It's a smaller thing on Wednesday night, you know, so I'm glad those people pushed me to go because now I feel more connected to a lot of people. And I feel like I'm getting the church experience, you know, where before, I probably wouldn't have been as connected with the church here. As I would have been, you know, back at home.

Mike Hoffman 16:56

Yeah, that makes sense. That makes sense. And this is, you know, church or whatever you want to call it here is very different. Because it's like, it's everybody is the same age, which is so different than most, maybe every other congregation that we ever think about. So yeah, yeah.

Levi Triplett 17:13

Alright. So earlier you mentioned elementary education and psychology. So are you looking to go like a coaching or teaching or something else?

Savanah Marshall 17:21

So um, yeah, I want to be a teacher. I found out this summer through the job that I had that I thought that I wanted to teach like upper elementary, maybe middle school. Yeah, that went out the window. Definitely not middle school. I definitely changed my mind this summer about that. I actually love the little ones like lower elementary is I think where my heart set I just love those little stinkers. They're awesome. But um, with that, I also the reason why I have a minor in psychology is end goal I'd like to after I graduate be a teacher for a few years, get my masters in school counseling, and then become a guidance counselor. That's what my dad does. So kind of following in his footsteps some. Growing up, like I was always intrigued in his work, like always intrigued, like, I always be like, I don't know, the the brain is just so interesting to me. And like how, figuring out how why people act, the way they act, and like how it has to do with stuff. Like psychology classes are just so interesting to me. So, and just hearing because I he would come home from work. And I'd be like, Dad, how was work like I want to hear and obviously you can't, he's not going to share everything with sharing some experiences like he would have with kids and stuff. Like I was like, I want to do that. I knew I could never do a job where I just sat at a desk all day. No way Jose, I'm too much of a people person. I gotta be up. I gotta be moving. I have to be interacting with people constantly. That's like the way it fills me up. So I just kind of like figured out that kids were the way I wanted to go rather than people my age.

Julie Wheaton 18:47

What age does he... What age?

Savanah Marshall 18:50

He's middle school. So he's, he's a middle school guidance counselor. So when we lived in Woodbine, when we first moved back, he was K through 12 guidance counselor, oh, for two years, I don't crazy, like crazy. He'd be like, I would have a lesson plan with you second graders. And then I go into my office to work on transcripts for colleges, and I have to be like, give me a second to reset. I'm in second grader mode, I need to get back to senior level high school mode. And then after the two years that we were first there, then he was just fifth through 12. But now we...

Mike Hoffman 19:20

What do you want to do as a guidance counselor? What age? Do you want to stay with a little kids?

Savanah Marshall 19:25

Honestly, I don't know. Okay, because I think with that, maybe I'd want to go older. But also I tell people like that's my goal right now. But who knows, I might change my mind and be like, I just love teaching. And I just want to keep teaching. But right now I do think like maybe middle school guidance counseling would be cool. Just because, you know, they're at that time in their life where they honestly need someone the most because a lot of things are changing at that time in your life. So yeah, I'd really like to do that. That's kind of like my end goal in life.

Levi Triplett 19:54

That's awesome. So I guess when you're teaching little kids it would just be kind of nice. Generally teaching every subject.

Savanah Marshall 20:02

Yeah. Which at first why I was like, Oh, I can't teach the littles, it's because I was like, I have to teach these kids like, how to read, and how to write like, that all falls on me if these kids grow up not knowing how to read, they're gonna be like, it was their first ...

Mike Hoffman 20:15

Oh Savannah. It's even weirder than that. So my wife taught kindergarten, several years. And and she and I got into this conversation one time, and I said, Well, why don't you just have line up? And she looked at me, she goes, Mike, they don't know what a line is.

Savanah Marshall 20:28

Yeah, they know.

Mike Hoffman 20:30

Oh, my gosh, I never gonna teach little kids. Yeah,

Savanah Marshall 20:34

It is crazy. Because this summer, I worked at a church camp. It wasn't through Community of Christ Church. And I was able to teach some classes and stuff and just work with kids. And I was with...

Mike Hoffman 20:45

How old were they?

Savanah Marshall 20:46

The kids that I've worked with the most were the rocket group. So they were going into first grade. So they had one year of school, so they knew, which I liked because I was like, so I would be like, you know how to line up. I know, you know how to line up because you went to school, and you did this. But that gave me a real like eye opening experience. Because also, I'm not the most patient person in the world. Like sometimes ... this summer, my patients got a lot better. because when you have 30 6 year olds running around, and you have, they're not going to understand right away what you're saying, or what you want from them. So that that was something that ... I got to learn, I got to learn which I mean, I'll get better as time goes on. But I just realized I was like, Oh my gosh, they're so fun. One, they think I'm the funniest and coolest person ever. So that's really awesome. And two like, it was just crazy all

the connections I made because my last day of work, like kids were like crying because I was leaving, I was crying because I was leaving. And I was like these little kids, like, you spend all that time with them every day. And just thinking about even being a teacher. If you think about it, you're spending more time with people's kids than they're spending with their kids. And just so it's like connections you can make and like the impact you can have on their life is just so like awesome to me.

Mike Hoffman 21:59

Yeah, definitely.

Levi Triplett 22:01

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

Savanah Marshall 22:07

I would say for me, something that I think like we should continue to work towards is like bridging the gap between the older generation that's going to the church and the younger generation. Personally, I think my church in Woodbine always did a really good job of that. Noel Scherer shear, you guys know, like Adam and Nicole, their, their dad, he was a pastor and would preach sometimes about our church. And he always hears, we're always my favorite, because he just knew how to bring the message and have it be able to relate to like us younger ones. So like me and Nicole and his kids and stuff like that, but also, like hit home to my grandparents as well. Don't know how he's doing it. Like don't know how he's doing.

Mike Hoffman 22:46

I wondered if you knew what, like, well, like...

Savanah Marshall 22:49

I remember one time, like, he started his message. And he was talking about like a TV show that like everybody would know about and was talking about, like superheroes or something. And then like, tied it back into the message. And it was something that I was like, Oh, this is cool. I can relate to and like my grandparents could also relate to. So just trying to continue to like, bridge that gap. Because I know like right now there can be such a big generation gap between the people who are going to church, which isn't a bad thing, because I think both generations can learn from one another, which I think is really awesome. I had just so then like, that's just kind of how I grew up having the person who is giving the message, being able to reach all groups in the church.

Levi Triplett 23:31

But is there anything else you'd like to share? Um,

Savanah Marshall 23:34

I don't think so. Thanks for having me. That's really fun.

Mike Hoffman 23:40

Thanks for doing it. Yeah,

Levi Triplett 23:42

Well, I think that about wraps things up for today's episode of Coffee in the Swarm. Thank you for listening. This is Levi (and Mike) signing off until next time,