

What's Brewing Live Event | Hybrid Ministry: Connecting People Beyond the Building

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, ministry, connection, inclusion, hybrid ministry, worship, children, technology, community

SPEAKERS

James Clark, Kelly Phipps, Blake Smith, Jude Vickery, Carla Long

Blake Smith 00:27

Hello and welcome to What's Brewing, a Project Zion Podcast series where we ask the questions, What is mission? And why does it matter? This is actually a special What's Brewing episode because it's our first live event here at Project Zion Podcast. We encourage you to submit your questions and comments via the chat feature of your platform. Zoom users, please send your comments and questions by direct private message to Kelly Phipps. Submissions from Facebook and YouTube participants will be transmitted to Kelly by our production manager, Ashley Pozo. And I'll take this minute just to introduce her. Ashley Pozo serves as the Production Manager for Project Zion Podcast. And she will be handling the behind the scenes stuff for us tonight. And, she's going to be monitoring feeds as your comments and questions come in. We're going to do our best to have our panelists respond to those questions either as we go along, or near the end of the event. We have some time for that set aside as well. As you may have guessed by now, the man on the scene who will be sorting through those comments and questions and passing them along to the panelists is none other than my friend and co-host Kelly Phipps. Hi, Kelly.

Kelly Phipps 01:43

Hello, Blake, good to be with you.

Blake Smith 01:45

Good to be back with you to Kelly and thanks for being a part of this. For those of you who may not know Kelly, Kelly is a lifelong member of Community of Christ. He currently serves as a Professor in the Helzberg School of Management at Rockhurst University, where he teaches in the areas of leadership development, organizational behavior, and conflict management. He also conducts research on the topic of spirituality and leadership. If you don't know him by his name alone, you might well know him as Jill Phipps' husband. Near the end of last year, Kelly proposed a podcast idea to us at Project Zion Podcast based on his observations of changes that had happened, were happening, or perhaps needed to happen in the church, in a post-COVID 19 world, and I had the honor of doing that episode with him. If you're interested, and we would encourage you to go and listen to that, it's episode 641, and can be found on projectzionpodcast.org, or any of your favorite podcast platforms. So Kelly, I'm gonna ask you if you want to give our listeners a little bit of an idea of how we got to this live event?

Kelly Phipps 03:02

Sure. Thanks, Blake. So the short version is, for a variety of reasons. I was looking for online ways to connect with the church, and I've been looking for years. And there weren't a lot of options. There were a few. And then when COVID happened, that changed dramatically. And so out of personal curiosity, I began kind of tracking all the new things that were happening that I knew about, and started, my brain looks for patterns in things, and so I started noticing some trends and patterns. And that's about the podcast that I did earlier, was about those trends. But in my conversations with people about the online and hybrid ministries they were doing, a couple of things really struck me. First one was this unbelievable wealth of creativity being expressed, which is maybe a fancy way of saying, no two ministries were alike, each one of them was doing it very differently. The second thing that struck me is that many of the people I talked to expressed a desire to be in conversation with other people who are doing hybrid ministries. There was a sense that they were kind of making it up as they went, and would love to hear what other people were doing. And so you (Blake) and I had a conversation after we recorded that episode. And the idea that came out of that was creating a space where people could share what they were learning in the midst of their experimentation. And I am so grateful that you followed up on that and made this opportunity happen. And I very much look forward to hearing what we learn tonight.

Blake Smith 04:49

Thanks, Kelly. And yeah, part of that, I think was, I asked you at the end of that episode, or near the end of that episode, if you had any of the answers to the things that you were seeing, and your answer to me was absolutely not, but that we had lots of that right here resident in Community of Christ. And so we're hoping to tap into that, and hopefully start a larger conversation through this episode, to encourage folks to give it a shot and try it because it is really important that we consider our options in hybrid ministry. So speaking of that, I know and I want to acknowledge that in Community of Christ, there are lots and lots of expressions of hybrid ministry across the church, from low key book club discussions and small groups to high end energetic worship experiences. And our panelists tonight represent a small sampling of what has been done around the church. We hope, again, that it will encourage a wider conversation about the types of ministries that can be done by our congregations, small groups, new expressions, coffee house gatherings, et cetera, et cetera. We did specifically call this episode Hybrid Ministry because we realize that our capabilities with hybrid technology stretches so far beyond worship. So let's meet our panelists. First on our panelists list is James Clark. James Clark and I recently met when doing an episode on the Reaching Out Centre of Streetsville, Ontario, where James serves as the financial officer and a member of their leadership team. So welcome, James.

James Clark 06:33

Thank you. Hi, everybody.

Blake Smith 06:35

We also have on the panel tonight, Jude Vickery. Jude Vickery is a team member for the Chicago Mission Center Sunday ministry, and that comprises worship and Sunday School, where he serves as the production and tech guru. He also serves as the assistant Financial Officer for the Mission Center

here in Chicago Mission Center. So he wears many hats. Welcome, Jude. [Pause] And last but not least, we have Carla Long. You might know her as host extraordinaire of the Percolating on Faith series and several other series here at Project Zion Podcast. And then there is ... oh she just got a new job. It's part of ... Oh, the Presiding Bishopric Yeah, that's it. You probably wouldn't recognize that seeing that she's wearing sparkles tonight. But welcome, Carla.

Carla Long 07:31

Thank you, Blake. And yes, I'm feeling very sparkly. tonight. Thank you so much.

Blake Smith 07:36

It's great to have all three of you with us. And as you'll hear tonight, as they share a little bit about their ministries, hopefully you'll get an idea of the reason why I have asked them to be here tonight. They represent, like I said, a sampling of some of the types of ministries and even the reasons why hybrid ministry is important. So we're going to just go around with our panelists here. I'm going to start with James, and James, if you'll just give us a brief introduction of yourself so our listeners can get to know you better. And then maybe also, if you could just give us a little summary of your overall ministry so that everybody can understand what you're bringing to the panel tonight.

James Clark 08:15

Will do. So, James Clark. I'm the CFO for the Reaching Out group in Streetsville. Ontario, Canada. Nice to be with you all tonight. I've been in the Community of Christ my entire life. So to see this shift to hybrid ministry is quite a change from what I have been a part of my entire life. But, but great to see, and a great offering for everyone. As we'll talk about more tonight, our ministry for Reaching Out really is about, "For Everyone Born a Place at the Table." We are all about making sure that our space is inclusive, and anyone who walks through our doors is able to be a part of our gatherings, both online and in-person. We are trying very hard to insert ourselves into a new community. We've just recently opened a building back in September. And so we are really trying to become a part of that community and show what Community of Christ can be in that area.

Blake Smith 09:10

Thanks, James. Carla, how about you?

Carla Long 09:13

So my name is Carla Long, and I'm a counselor to the Presiding Bishop and a member of the Presiding Bishopric. I'm a mother of two adorable kids. Lia who is five. She just started kindergarten. And Ari, who will turn four on Leap Day. So that's, it's coming up this month, and he is super duper excited. Some people keep telling him he's going to turn one. And he is quick to remind them that they are absolutely wrong. He's definitely turning four. My husband, Kuzma, is from Ukraine and he is a Seventy in the church. And my job before my current job, I was a Seekers Minister in Utah. I was the pastor of the Salt Lake City congregation in Utah and I was working in Seeker Ministries and so that's where most of my expertise? Oh, gosh, it's so scary to say the word expertise. That's where most of my knowledge about this comes in handy. So I'm gonna be talking a lot about my time in Utah.

Blake Smith 10:12

Great. Thanks, Carla. And you all heard it. She is the expert on the group. So please direct all your questions toward her, send them through Kelly, but direct them all toward her. Okay. And Jude, how about you?

Jude Vickery 10:23

Yeah, my name is Jude Vickery. I'm an Elder in Community of Christ. Like James, I've been in the church all my life. And in fact, my dad was, my parents had been in, great grandparents, it goes on multiple generations in the church. So I have a lot of history. I've served in Mission centered leadership, for most of the last 20 years, in one mission center or another. And I've been a pastor, youth leader, counselor, and various other roles throughout that whole time. I'm somewhat of a musician. I have a lot of, I have some experience with sound equipment, including recording, and recording development, including live sound for like bands and things like that. I've done some of that. I'm also a photographer. If you've been looking, you know, see the pages of the Herald pictures in their bulletins through the Sunday morning bulletin if you get those. And also publications that the church puts out, oftentimes, they will use some of my work there. So it's likely that you have seen it, even if you didn't know it. And then I've also been right in the middle of the tech world, and how it relates to Community of Christ on all of these local areas where I've been working, including bringing that tech, to bring people and tech together. So that makes ministry more accessible in terms of what you see, like words on screens, how we connect with each other, and so on.

Blake Smith 11:52

Jude, thanks. For those of you who are looking at Jude and saying, Gosh, that face looks familiar, it may be because you've probably seen them either hanging from the rafters or climbing under the tables at Conference taking pictures. He likes the up and close view. And also I wanted to say, I forgot to mention when I was introducing the panelists, in case you picked up on the fact that they all have a financial connection, you do not have to have a financial connection to do hybrid ministry, though it doesn't hurt to know someone who does. I will just say that, but you do not have to be a financial officer or a Bishop to do hybrid ministry. So Kelly, I'm gonna turn it over to you for questions for our panelists.

Kelly Phipps 12:32

Yes. So before I do that, actually, I get the benefit of seeing all the conversation going on on the side that you don't have. One of the things we had hoped to happen in this gathering was for people to be sharing some resources I've already heard about one I was unaware of. I'm going to send it all out to you. It's courtesy of Dukkier Bishop ... passed this along. Apparently a Facebook group. I'm sending it out to everyone Facebook group committed to Community of Christ audio visual technology and social media ministries. So to resource I wanted to make sure I didn't drop in the comments in the last minute of time, so you didn't have a chance to capture it. So with that out of the way, let's start with our first question to our panelists. And I'm really curious to know, what about the context of your ministry drew you to consider a hybrid format? So what about what you were trying to accomplish caused you to consider hybrid?

Carla Long 13:37

Well, I'll go first, Kelly, I'll jump in if that's okay. [Kelly: Please.] Like a lot of people. Our foray into hybrid worship ministry came during the pandemic. I was pretty serious, though about taking the challenge

and turning it into something that can be helpful for the church. And I'm really glad I took that attitude because it would have been really easy to get like mired down in all of the craziness that has to happen behind the scenes. But it turned out to be such a wonderful thing for the Salt Lake City group. Now, there are a few things that I want to mention. One, when we were in full lockdown for the pandemic, I wanted to find ways for people to interact with the church and not just in a worship way. And I'll get to that in a second. As to worship though, we would have zoom church three times a month. And then once a month, we would have church on different platforms, Facebook, YouTube, just like we're doing here tonight. Because sometimes I think zoom can be too insular. That was a really great ministry tool for people who are interested, but not interested enough to go on to zoom. It's really easy when it just pops up on your phone and you're like, Okay, I'll give that a look. And they say, I'll just go in there. Now, secondly, I wanted something for people to find if they were looking for us, so I started a YouTube channel. It's called Bishop Carla K long, and it's full of little sermon, it's no more than five minutes long on all sorts of topics. Some of those topics are meaningful for seekers in Utah. And some would be interesting for any kind of church member. I also thought it'd be a really good time for us to get to know people better. So during the pandemic, during the height of the pandemic, when we weren't seeing anyone I interviewed church leaders of, of all types about all kinds of topics. And I also interviewed members of the Salt Lake City congregation to check in with them. That was a little series we called "How you doin'?" which was really fun. You got to know people in your congregation on a deeper level. Now, one of the most important things I think, though, about the Seeker Ministry in Utah, is that most of the seekers who comes to the church, of course, in Salt Lake are from the dominant religion in Utah. And it's a pretty big deal to walk through the doors of another church when you're a member of that dominant religion in Utah. So for instance, I, when we did have church in person, I would see people sitting in the parking lot in their car, just holding on to the steering wheel in our parking lot, just wondering if they had the courage to walk through our doors. Now, now that we do a hybrid worship, at the Salt Lake congregation, it's a lot easier for people, they don't have to like, immediately walk through the doors and like change their entire life and find the courage to do that. They can jump in on a hybrid worship, they can watch on Zoom, and they can get to know us in a way that is not intimidating. That is not scary. And when and if they do walk through the doors, they already know, the pastor's face or the presider's face, and it's really not as scary. So it's really interesting. And I know this wasn't true everywhere. But in Utah, at least, we grew the congregation during the pandemic, because we have found a way to make it less intimidating and less scary. So it was actually a really, really positive thing for us to do.

Kelly Phipps 17:20

Thank you, Carla, How about our other two panelists?

James Clark 17:28

For Reaching Out, we were in quite the same process as you are, in terms of the pandemic sort of facilitated the need for hybrid worship and hybrid gatherings. We were also in the process of looking for a building. So, we needed a way to have people meet, but at the same time, be able to feel connected, and feel like a part of what we were still trying to do. Even though we didn't have an actual space, which is something we wanted. It's always interesting to try and run the programming, hybridly. We have a program we'd like to run with a lot of kids involved in activities and crafts. So we took the time to try and take packages around to a bunch of the people in our congregation, and then everybody did the

craft at the same time. So we're trying to find new ways to make that a reality. Sometimes it's as simple as finding stuff around the house that we can do. And sometimes it's something as easy as, let's join together, let's have a meal and talk. There are many ways that you can, you can do that. But I think one of the key things that has been important is that it doesn't just have to be on Sunday, at 11am. You can do that anytime anyone's willing to set something up. And that can really be impactful. Sometimes a Tuesday night can be better than a Sunday afternoon. It just depends on what people are doing and what they're interested in. Our ministry for us is very important in terms of trying to keep people engaged and involved and bring that sense of we can connect with anyone, even if they can't get to us on a regular basis.

Kelly Phipps 19:11

Great, thanks, James. Jude, how about you? What about your context drew your group into using hybrid ministry?

Jude Vickery 19:20

Yeah, like the others have mentioned, the pandemic was really part of the thing that started it all off where people were unwilling or unable to meet in congregations in their local congregations even with each other to start with. And so that process led to coming up with a way that we can, we could at least meet online. But further than that, was that here in the Chicago Mission Center, we have a lot of congregations that are becoming smaller and smaller. And so in with that meant that resources are also getting less and less for each one of those congregations. And so, with the experience of being online already, the idea was born out that maybe we could get these groups to gather together. And so where ours is a little bit different is that we actually have several congregations that all meet together. So we have one congregation, several congregations, each of these congregations will meet together in their building. But then as a group will join onto the online hybrid worship with other congregations. And we will all meet together in the same worship. And so it really all, part of it became a necessity to be able to share resources from all of these different congregations. Because when we're all together online, you can have somebody doing something from any of the locations, all joining together to create one worship.

Kelly Phipps 20:59

Great. So I have been kind of taking notes as I'm listening. And there's really two themes that I heard people keep repeating. The first I expected, and that is intentional efforts to create a sense of belonging for people doing more than just connecting on the screen, but something that made people really feel like they belong. The second one was, kind of surprised to me, and that's the extent to which each of you talked about an invitational part, your hybrid ministry, making sure I think, Carla, you talked about being insular avoiding an insular approach, making sure that the hybrid ministry is reaching out not to just the people are already connected, but creating a bridge to people who aren't. So thank you for sharing those examples. Really instructive! I'm getting questions. And I want to make sure we come back to those. There is one question I want to pose and folks may want to address it in their responses. A question is, from a pastor who's wanting to start a hybrid ministry, to the LGBTQ plus community, using an online service and a podcast, and his question is, "do you have any outreach advice for the queer community who are scared or resistant to engaging the Christian church?" So I want us to not necessarily pause what we're doing to answer that question, let's move forward without further

questions. But I want maybe as you're responding, if you have advice, you can work that into your in your subsequent questions. Blake, I'm gonna turn it over to you.

Blake Smith 22:47

Well, thanks, Kelly. And I do think I saw like Carla might want to make a comment on that. So why don't you go ahead, Carla, and do that. And then then I'll ask my question.

Carla Long 22:57

Don't I always want to make a comment? Hi, Bennie, it's good to hear your question. So the thing that popped into my head immediately was that just build a community, you know, one of the series that we did at the How you doin series in Salt Lake, people love to talk about themselves. And what was really cool for me was that people, others love to hear those interviews and love to listen to those interviews. And then at church, the next Sunday, when we'd have our chatting time. After church, people would bring up those interviews and talk about and say, Hey, so and so I didn't know you loved this book, and this movie, I love this book and this movie, and then they made another connection. So like, for me, if, any way that you can build community and build those connections, it... a community just happens if you do that. So I always for like, letting people talk about themselves, allowing that community aspect just to be born at that time.

Blake Smith 24:03

Thanks, Carla. We may have some additional responses to that question as we go along as well. I want to change the question here just a little bit and hear from you guys. What are some of the lessons that you've learned along the way with hybrid ministry? So maybe, perhaps, what are some of the difficult hurdles you had to overcome? Or what was easier than you thought? Or what was that one thing you wish you had known before you started? And let's start with Jude this time,

Jude Vickery 24:37

Thank you Blake. So, yeah, one of the one of the things that's interesting about our situation where we have, we have people that are live in some places, in a very particular place, joining with people who are online, and sometimes when elements of the of that worship are happening, it's right there in that location. And people who are the people who are busy doing their part of the worship, oftentimes forget about the people who are joining online. And so we have a, there's like almost an imaginary wall, where they'll address everybody that's local to the room, because that's what we've done. That's how we've been, you know, taught for years and years and years. But looking beyond the camera, and beyond the microphone, to all of those people that are joining in this hybrid way, it is difficult for people to overcome, sometimes they can't just automatically see past that wall. And, and aren't as inclusive to all of those people as they otherwise could have been. Or could be. And so that's been, that's been one of the struggles that we're dealing with, with people who are new to the process. Now. I mean, you can get over it, it, it can take some time to do that. And some, you know, some gentle reminders, you know, that, hey, you need to, you know, as a tech person, part of what I think about is that you need to treat the microphone, you need to treat the camera, as another person. And when you do that, you're not just connecting to one other person or just connecting to the camera, you're connecting to everybody that's watching, you know. And so, people oftentimes will walk off away from a microphone, for instance, and then say something to the local, the local crowd, and nobody online can hear that, you

know, so that's one of the things that I'm doing oftentimes. I'm a background guy, I'm typically not out in front, I tend, I tend to be in the back running, running hardware, and making sure that everything is connected. But you know, I'm usually wearing a set of headphones, so that I can monitor what everybody else is hearing, that are connected in an electronic way. And if I can't hear it in this ear, and I only hear it in this other ear, then that means somebody's being left out, and I'm usually making some kind of a signal on my headphones. It's like, hey, you know, repeat that, you know, so anybody who is at the microphone, they need to repeat what they've been saying. So that everybody that is connected, everybody that's part of the group can hear everything.

Blake Smith 27:19

Thanks, Jude. I appreciate that. James, what about you in the Reaching Out Centre?

James Clark 27:25

So for us, I think one of the hardest things to overcome was to be okay with chaos, and be okay with not being in control. You know, whether it's someone taking too long to get off mute to say a call to worship, or there's a dog barking in the background, or what have you, people singing off of mute, and not always on key, it happens. But, you know, our gatherings are usually so set in what we want to do, okay, we'll do our call to worship, and then we'll have our message and then we'll take up the offering. But, you know, being okay with that chaos, and that unknown happening, has really helped us. But, the only way you can get over that is with time, and trying to do it over and over again and trying to get better every time. Something that was easier than I thought it would be would be the uptake and the ability of people of all ages to be able to get on these devices and connect and speak and be able to enjoy the service. It took time. It took energy sometimes I was IT. So a phone call during the week to try and test it to see if it worked, and then try to replicate that on Sunday. You know, is is something that that happened for us. But I think it it becomes easier over time. It just takes practice like anything else. And I think one of the things that I wish we had we all had hindsight on was a bit of training, having some time to have people around and train on this. Obviously a pandemic and lockdowns is in no one's playbook of the future. But you know, having to do that in real time sometimes on these gatherings before the service starts is something that that happens, but it's it just takes time and effort.

Blake Smith 29:14

Great. Thanks, James. And Carla?

Carla Long 29:18

Well, what I was gonna say was a lot of what Jude and James already said, I, I, we had a big learning curve in the Salt Lake congregation to remember to like repeat things into a microphone if something was said in the congregation or, or make sure you do everything you could possibly do to make the people online feel as if they are actually there, and they're an important member of that congregation. And so, I mean, that means allowing them to give to the disciple's generous response, making sure you remind them to have bread and juice ready if its communion. Anything that you could do to make them feel like they are in part of that community is really important. And that was a big kind of a learning curve for us. The other thing that I wish I would have remembered more often is that the people online, were incredibly forgiving, and loving and caring. And thank goodness they were, if something messed

up, and for some reason, they had no sound at all, sure, they would let us know. But they would say, You know what, it's totally okay. When they would see me like scrambling up front or trying to figure it out. The people online were just so kind and just really, really generous. And I was so appreciative every single time. And I made sure to message the people who were there to say, thank you so much for your patience. Well, we'll do better next week, or we'll do better again. So those are the two things that, those are the two lessons that I learned in a really, really big way.

Blake Smith 30:51

Thanks, Carla. And as Kelly said, with the last question, there seems to be some themes. I think the one that stands out for me is the intentional inclusivity. And really being open to hearing the feedback that comes in so that you make people feel welcome, whether they're gathered in a local place, or whether they're logging in from online, I know that there are lots of things that we don't consider because we've done things in a certain way for so long. And I think one of the distinctions that stands out for me and it sounds like you have all captured that is understanding the difference between streaming, and hybrid. So tonight, we're actually doing more of a streaming thing, although we are taking comments and questions from everyone. This is kind of a one-way communication in a lot of ways. But in the hybrid ministry we do, making people feel welcome seems to be really part of that belonging aspect that Kelly was talking about earlier, as well. So we all know also that in our worship, so let me speak from my own worships the places where I've been there rarely, consistently perfect. So there's always a snafu, or somebody forgets it's their turn, or those kinds of things. So giving ourselves some grace with that as we engage in hybrid ministry is expected. And I think as Carla mentioned, a lot of times, people are just gracious that we are trying the best we can to include folks, and they can tell if we're doing that. So, but technology often gets in our way, as it did a little earlier this evening. And speaking of technology, I want to spend a couple of minutes with the questions of technology. And my question would be what kinds of equipment or resources does your, the version that your ministry uses, what does it require to do that hybrid ministry? Is there a bare minimum that a congregation would need to get started? Is there special software required? And I did hear the need for training, but can someone with little training make this happen? So a question for you about technology and what it requires? James, you want to get started? I know you mentioned a little bit about training already. How about you get us started here?

Jude Vickery 33:21

Sure. Yeah, I think I think that one of the keys that we have found that we do need is a solid sound system. I think, you know, having that microphone being able to project sound, especially if you're not able to tap into a sound system specifically. So we're at the point for us where the microphone and the speakers is our way to project sound into our zoom meetings. We're trying to figure out a way to get those connected into a sound system specifically. So I think that's a really key piece of technology. And one thing that goes with that is someone has to stay on and monitor what's going on online. Jude, you made a great point about hearing what people are hearing, but at the same time, being able to answer questions in real time on chat, if I can't hear this, or this, I can't see or whatever, will help you get better in real time. And sometimes, those can always be fixed right then and there, but at least you're aware of them and can focus on them for the next time. We use Zoom specifically. We've invested in Zoom at

Reaching Out, so that we can, you know, use it on an ongoing basis for whatever we need, both from a service standpoint and from a from a planning standpoint, for our services and for our budgets. So we felt like that was a good opportunity for us. But there are other platforms you can use such as Facebook as well could be a good one for you as well. But there is some setup there too. I think anyone with minimal training could do this. I think there is, people have gotten used to logging on to Zoom calls and other online platforms based on the pandemic and work and other things. So I think there is a level of simplicity with that. I think these platforms have tried that. But there is there is a level of IT-ness that does need to be there, that you do need to understand what you're doing in order to be able to help other people, you know, with their issues. But again, I think, you know, Carla made a great point as well that people are just thankful that you're trying and thankful that you are, you know, doing our best out there, and they are quite gracious and thankful that it makes it easy.

Blake Smith 35:28

Thanks, James. How about you, Carla?

Carla Long 35:34

Yes, so during the pandemic, I don't know, it was '21, or '22. But a group of international church members got together led by Robin Linkhart. And we created a document on how to do this. And we worked really, really hard on it, there's like pictures in it. And if people are having a hard time figuring this out, you can find this document, it's called "Supporting Hybrid Worship," it's at Herald house. You can find it Heraldhouse.org. And it is a fabulous tool, if I'm sure that it needs updating at this moment, but it for the most part, if you're looking for to get started with something like this, that's the place to go. I could tell you what we used but I'm not I'm not super IT type person either. So what I use, maybe we kind of hobbled and some stuff together to make it work in Salt Lake, I think they have a better setup now. But that document, "Supporting Hybrid Worship." would be a really, really great thing to look at.

Blake Smith 36:40

Thank you, Carla. Thanks for bringing that up. And we'll make sure that that reference is also in the show notes as well. And Jude how about you?

Jude Vickery 36:51

I start off laughing here, because I mean, our experience is so much different than what has been explained so far by Carla and James, in that, you know, we have large, several large groups that are meeting together and where were we I can see broadcasting from but where our control center is so that we can kind of monitor all it back ends, we have a live group that meets there as well. So not only do we have the maintaining the connection to everybody outside of the congregation that we have to pay attention to, we also have to maintain all of the connection inside the congregation for everybody that's there. So that they feel like they're a part of it. Because even the people sitting there can feel outside of what's going on, if it's all directed only at what's going on online. So our, probably unfortunately, for Blake, I've been involved. And I make things very complicated, sometimes in terms of the actual hardware setup, but that makes it much more streamlined for us to actually do what we need to do. So, we actually have three people that on most Sundays are running all of the hardware required

to make this the congregations of various different of our different groups all beat together in one large worship. And that extends even to, we have TVs in the front of each of the congregation so that they can all see everybody else that's on Zoom, that has that has a computer and a camera that faces the congregation. So then where we are, we get to see the congregation. And so they see us we see them, it's full two-way, you just have to think of it in terms of if you were sitting with your phone and on Zoom, but you can be looking at a congregation that way, and the whole congregation could be looking at you. So there are multiple levels that we have to deal with there. When I say that, you have to do that. Absolutely, absolutely not. Because it all depends on your unique situation, are you a congregation that is trying to just reach out to some of those people who are siloed at home and can't travel to your congregation? We have a number of those people, then your hardware setup is going to be very simple at that point, to get that done. If you're trying to do more like what we're trying to do, or what I shouldn't say trying to do, we are doing it, we have all of these congregations joining together, then it gets more complicated, the more layers that you're trying to add. And so it's very unique. I can't just go down through a list like Carla said and give you a list of everything that we're using because it probably won't do really, it won't suit you justice in your situation without somebody who can help you actually get that get that set up. But that doesn't mean you can't start simple. A lot, oftentimes, when we started this, I started pulling together antiquated equipment. I mean, I call it Frankenstein. I mean I was pulling old equipment from everywhere. I mean, it was a piece of this and a piece of that. And we had low quality this and low quality that, but it was to patch things together and make it see how we could work, how we could push piece it together, make it work. And then what did we need to change? So I was doing it on very low budget, before we actually spent money to make, to get our, some high dollar equipment that makes things easier because we knew what needed to be made easier.

Blake Smith 40:27

Great, thanks, Jude. Well I think as you've heard across not only the answers to this question, but our others, you see that spectrum of ministries and costs and levels and that kind of thing. As Jude has mentioned, what is being done where his ministry is here in Chicago is something that has kind of evolved over time. And it is different than what was done with the secret ministry certainly in the beginning. So we don't want to discourage you from that, we just want you to see all the possibilities that are out there. So I'm going to turn it back over to Kelly, I'm sure that we have some things brewing in the chat that we might want to address.

Kelly Phipps 41:08

All right, thanks, Blake. So um, couple things I wanted to comment on, are actually comments in the chat that I want to share with everyone. Mark Sadler pointed out that their group, they mounted a TV in portrait mode, just to display the chat window of Zoom in the sanctuary to keep folks online engaged and more connected with those who were in-person. So another suggestion how to use technology to create that sense of connection between the two groups. It was also pointed out that their ministry started with a cell phone and a Face Timing member that wanted to be in the Sunday school class one day. And so you can start as big or as small as you want. And then Brad Williams asked the question, any suggestions for connecting with children or youth hybrid Lee? What works well, with that population? any of the panelists or anybody else have suggestions for that?

Carla Long 42:11

I could, I could say something about that. We had a Sunday School for class on Zoom for the kids. And, you know, one thing that they really, really loved, there's a way for them to draw on the screen. Oh, gosh, I don't, I can't quite remember what it's called. Annotated, maybe. And so like, you can throw, like, one thing I did was I put like a hidden pictures page up there to try and grab their attention. And they got to circle all the little hidden pictures, like you used to do and highlights that you loved. Whiteboard on Zoom. Thank you, Robin. And so they they actually really love that we also used to have act out a story. And everybody was acting out in their own little screen, everybody got a little character. And that was super fun, that kept them really, really engaged. There's also, I don't know if it's still going on. But there was a book club for kids that was still going on. And I'm seeing that, yes, it's still going on. And they do a peace practice which is a spiritual practice. They read a book together, they they chat together, and it's become this beautiful community, this book club, and it's just really done really well. So a book club could also work together online. We had so much fun, I actually really enjoyed teaching the kids on Zoom. Oh, and tons of lessons can be found on allthingsarespiritual.org.

James Clark 43:36

That's a great call out I was gonna say as well for us. For those of you who listen to the podcasts that I was on a couple of weeks ago, we talked about a little bit all in Sunday, and our sort of intergenerational programming for everyone. But during the pandemic I mentioned, you know, we didn't have the ability to see each other in person and we had to resort to doing things hybridly, including, you know, having some sort of gathering meal together and activity together. And you know, something as simple as trivia games, where kids can type in the answer and feel like they're involved in what's going on. It's reminiscent of school for them. So they understand how it works and understand being connected, but it's a way to, you know, get them involved and to just keep their interest and the fact that they all know how to use this technology, some of us some of them better than me in a lot of ways. You know, they're able to engage and feel a part of the conversation, which is always super important.

Kelly Phipps 44:38

So, Dukkie, passed along, Dukkie Bishop passed along some free resources, and I posted those in the chat. Also, she pointed out that her 16-year-old is attending Sanctuary on Facebook. It's a youth group in Michigan somewhere and also point out Cahoots as a great tool for youth with use with youth. I do not have any other questions in the chat right now, one just came in. Oh, Robin Linkhart posted, I think for everyone, the kids book club designed during the pandemic. And Gail Rottenberg asks, Could we have the link to Chicago ministry to log on to some Sundays?

Blake Smith 45:31

Yes, I'll put that in. I'll put that in the chat.

Kelly Phipps 45:35

So I don't have any other chats questions coming in. But I do have something that I would love to hear from the panelists. And that is, what's on the horizon for you. What are you thinking? What are you thinking about trying next? Or would love to have the resources to try next?

James Clark 45:59

That's a great question. For us, we, I've mentioned that I'm going to beat this drum again, talking about All-in Sunday, and trying to have that intergenerational piece, we would love to be able to have a North American wide All-in Sunday, where we continue to get groups from all over North America to be involved in sort of early morning gathering, then we have a meal together in some way, and then a craft or activity afterwards. Reaching Out would love to do something like that in the future, given the resources and coordination of that, you know, I think that kind of ministry could be very important for people of all ages. And we found that that connection between, you know, some of our more seasoned members and some of our younger members has really been impactful for both of them. And it's a way to engage everybody. So for myself, and for Reaching Out, I think that would be a really interesting thing to do. And see all the people on here tonight, I think that could be super successful.

Carla Long 47:03

Well, I'm no longer in the space I was. But as a member of the Presiding Bishopric, I just want to say, "stay tuned," there could be something on the horizon, that would... is going to be really exciting coming up maybe later this year. So just stay tuned. I can't say too much about it, because it's still taking shape and forming. But we're definitely making some plans and hoping to find new ways to use online worship and ministry, and we're pretty excited about it.

Kelly Phipps 47:40

Jude, anything you want to add?

Jude Vickery 47:43

I was gonna say, I mean, we don't have a lot specifically planned, but what I can say is that we're excited about the fact that in the way that we're doing things that we've been able to jump past, you know, geographical boundaries, for instance. So I mean, it's not uncommon to have an apostle come and speak for the worship service. Art Smith just spoke this last, you know, this last Sunday. So, we've been able to reach out, we've had speakers that are from all over the world, but all over the country, and they can join us without these boundaries of being very local, to where we are. And that's, that's a really exciting thing, because you can hear some of the best speakers where otherwise, they wouldn't normally just be dropping by your congregation on a regular basis. But for us, we get to have that, you know, as we reach out and arrange this stuff, and that's, that doesn't just happen. I mean, you have to plan it and get to where you bring people in, plan out far enough advanced, sometimes it takes a year. But if you're intentional about it, you can, you can do some really good programming by using a hybrid method that otherwise you wouldn't have access to. And that part of it is very exciting.

Kelly Phipps 49:05

So one of the questions posed in the chat is, is there someone who can come out and help us with our hybrid stuff? So I guess the question that I'm posing is, are there resources people are not aware of, or people who are willing to be an assistant to people who are trying to help with this or at least journey with them?

Jude Vickery 49:35

I'm assuming we're talking about more of a hybrid like a, an equipment process of trying to put some of that together. I mean, is there or is it the whole thing? Any more follow up on that?

Kelly Phipps 49:50

I don't know the answer to that. What I would suggest is, if you are willing to be of an assistance to someone who's trying to set this up, if you could message Blake or or myself and let us know, we can be sure to pass that name along. I don't want to call anyone out and volunteer them for a specific assignment. But I know there are folks on this call that may be willing to do that.

Carla Long 50:23

I would just say, of course, go speak to your mission center president or mission center financial officer, they, they probably know what's going on in your mission center, and maybe someone around your mission scenario closer to you would be able to jump in and give you some good advice to I've

Kelly Phipps 50:38

I've already had three volunteers.

50:40

Oh, excellent. I would just add, I would just add to that, that hardware wise, I mean, there are there are people who specialize in hardware and almost every sizable town. It you know, think past the money for a minute and you bring these guys in to design something that works. But you have to have a plan. What what is it that you want to accomplish, and when you explain that to them, they can give you hardware, you know, examples of what they could do, and they could range anywhere from the cheap to the expensive, but some of those guys are, are really in touch with what the new stuff is, and the stuff that it does. And you can bring them in and have a system designed for you that would make that work.

Kelly Phipps 51:33

So I hope it's okay that those of you who messaged me volunteering, I'm going to read your names. You may be frightened by that idea. But I very much appreciate your willingness to, so Bennie Blevins said, "I'd be happy to help." Michael Buttgen said he'd be willing to help as well. Benny Blevins, and Mark Sadler, all said they would be willing to assist. So again, that was one of our objectives was to start connecting people. And so thank you very much to all who are willing to volunteer to, to help. And so those of you who are looking for someone to help you get things started, those are some names that we can like, and I will capture those names. And you can email either Blake or myself. And we'll pass those names on to you if you didn't catch them when I was reading them. I think we're at our time. Blake, I'm going to turn it back over to you to wrap this up for us.

Blake Smith 52:45

Well, thanks, Kelly, I just I do want to say it was something that came to mind for me that I want to just lift up and we won't take the time to go into it now. But when we are doing hybrid ministry online and projecting to other folks, specifically things, if we're also streaming or posting, we need to be real careful about copyrights, and doing the right thing. There may be some things that we think we can get away with, but the ethical thing for us to do is to observe the copyright laws and to abide by those things. So I will tell you that there is nothing on YouTube that is legal to use in streaming, except if it is on the Community of Christ channel or otherwise explicitly offered up otherwise general content and YouTube is not legal to use. And there is no license is unless something happened in the last few

weeks. There is no license that would allow that. So if you have a CVLI license, just because it says video license, it does not include YouTube, if you have a CCLI and a streaming license that allows you to use the master recordings from particular artists, that gives you only the sound audio version that the right to use that. Your CCLI license and your one license will allow you to reprint the lyrics. Nothing covers the video. So I want to lift that up and say that if you have any questions about that, please again, check with your mission center leadership or your pastor. And if there are additional questions, you can always reach out to me as well. I have put my email address in the chat. And we'll make that available in the show notes as well. I just want to thank you all for being here. I want to start with my co-host Kelly, who gave the initial prompt for this whole conversation and the acknowledgement that we have so much in resources available to us here in Community of Christ if we could just make connections, So, Kelly, not only thank you for the original episode that we did, but for being a part of this tonight and for kind of getting us to this place. It's been very helpful.

Kelly Phipps 55:00

If I could share one last thought, the image that keeps coming to me over as I've listened, I grew up in a relatively small congregation. And so for me, this idea of being a small group connected to a larger community was always a part of my church experience. And everything that you guys are talking about doing is just that, connecting smaller groups of people to a larger movement. And so everything we're doing is consistent with our identity and our mission. And I'm so grateful for the work you're all putting in. So thank you.

Blake Smith 55:35

Thanks, Kelly. I also want to give special thanks to our panelists tonight who agreed to be put on the spot. So James, and Carla and Jude, thank you for all you are doing and have done and for all that is to come for all of you who are doing hybrid ministry. Thank you. I want to give special thanks also to our production manager who's been behind the scenes feeding those questions in and watching multiple feeds, she is doing something that I cannot do because I cannot multitask. So thank you, Ashley for helping us to get this going. And when we do our next event, it will be even smoother in the beginning. Finally, I want to thank all of our participants and listeners, all of you who support Project Zion Podcast in all of the series and the things that we do, especially here tonight, in this live event for making this a success, we hope that we'll be able to do some additional live events in the near future. And we hope that you'll be able to join us for that. If you have topics that you'd like for us to consider for future episodes of Project Zion Podcast, whether it be a live event or just an episode that posts through the podcast platforms, please send those ideas to projectzionpodcast@gmail.com. Now we will review them I will promise that we'll be able to cover every one that might come in. There are some topics that we have to be very careful about as the church leadership and the church as a whole works through them. But we do welcome your input for that and your ideas and thoughts. So to hear more from Project Zion Podcast, of course, you can go to projectzionpodcast.org, or find us on any of your favorite podcast platforms. Thanks for joining us. We hope you have a blessed day and as my boss and the Executive Director of Project Zion Podcast, which I also shouldn't say thanks to her for giving the approval for this, Apostle Robin Linkhart, end her episodes by saying, "Go out and make the world a better place. You guys take care."