

Nice to Matcha | New Leader | Kat Hnatyshyn

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Community of Christ, Council of 12, Midlands Mission Center, ordination, calling, faith journey.

SPEAKERS

Robin Linkhart, Kat Hnatyshyn

Robin Linkhart 00:29

Welcome to Nice to Matcha, a Project, Zion Podcast series where we meet new people, leaders, movers and shakers. I'm your host, Robin Linkhart, and today I'm here with Kat Hnatyshyn, who has been called to serve in Community of Christ, Council of 12 apostles. If that call is sustained in legislative session at the 2025 World Conference, cat, will be ordained during a worship service at that same conference. Cat, it is great to have you with us today. Welcome.

Kat Hnatyshyn 01:04

Thanks so much for having me, Robin. I'm thrilled to be on Project Zion.

Robin Linkhart 01:09

Well, we're thrilled to have you, and I believe this is your very first time as a guest with us on Project Zion. And I'll tell you what, this is a great way to start, because today's podcast is all about getting to know you. So let's start with the basics, your elevator introduction, so to speak, just take a minute to introduce yourself to our listeners.

Kat Hnatyshyn 01:33

So I'm going to start with how to say my name. And you did a beautiful job, Robin. So, listeners can rewind and listen to how you said it. But Kat Hnatyshyn, if it's helpful, think mathematician, and then I usually always add that I married for love. So, as you can tell, I imported my husband in from Canada, and that then the last name came with it. So, Kat Hnatyshyn, if you don't look at it, it's not bad. I live in Overland Park and have been married almost 20 years. So, in March, it'll be our 20-year wedding anniversary, which hardly seems like that's possible. We have two boys, Jack is 14 and Pete is 10, and because my husband is from Canada, we also have hockey in our lives. And so, I don't think I can introduce myself or our family without at least sharing a little bit about the hockey piece of it. And they both both my boys play travel hockey, and it takes us all over the country as well, as we went to Slovenia in Europe last summer as well. So that's fun and exciting. Keeps us busy. I also serve as Mission Center President, team lead for Midlands Mission Center and a little of Midlands, where it is, it is the Northland in the Kansas side of the Kansas City Metro, as well as a good portion of Kansas. So we go all the way across Kansas to Manhattan and all the way down to Wichita. So that is Midlands, and that's who I am.

Robin Linkhart 03:22

Well, we would love to hear your growing up story, like where you grew up, what life was like for you and your family and in your community, any interests and hobbies. We always love to hear about that. And in the midst of all of that, where was God and faith?

Kat Hnatyshyn 03:39

Yeah, so I will say I'm a Kansas girl with a little bit of Oklahoma thrown in. So, I was born in Wichita. I live in Overland Park now. So, I started and ended sort of in Kansas. I am the baby of four kids. So there's I have three older siblings. My oldest sister is 12 years older, and I often remind her how much older she is than me in every opportunity that I have, I would say in terms of hobbies. I'll tell you the story my mom likes to tell, which is justification for me not being allowed to play sports later in life is that when I tried out soccer as a young child, before I would kick the ball, I would make sure that my uniform was perfect, my socks were good, my hair was fixed, and I also cried and cried and cried because I couldn't wear earrings. So, I know that that is not my hobby, but really what I remember most in the earlier days growing up was really just spending time with family and church was a huge part of my experience. So, we spent a lot of times with my paternal grandparents, and almost every weekend, would spend the night and then go to church with them in the morning. And part of that was my grandma taught the Sunday school class for four and five year olds, and I think she ended up teaching it for more than 40 years at the Wichita Central congregation, and so we, we actually attended there. My brother and I attended until we were done with her Sunday school class. Now, at some point, my family was asked to go to Webb Road. And the story I hear, and I don't know all the details, because I was really young, but after section 156, came out, this beautiful, brand new church. Webb Road lost enough people that they asked some folks from Wichita Central, then for those families to go over and to support Webb Road. And so my immediate family went to Webb Road, whereas my brother and I stayed at Central until we were out of Grandma's class and then we made it back over to Webb Road, but, but that was a lot of our activities, and it—looking at even the bulletin from my baby blessing growing up. I mean, I look at Wichita Central, and we had a paid pastor. We had activities throughout the week. There was a gym, and so there was just ongoing activities all of the time. And so, I remember just really being active in my congregation, and I remember, you know, being drug along with older siblings doing different things when I was young and just growing up. So, when I was seven, my parents got divorced, and so at that point, then we moved with my mom to independence, just for a short time. And I was seven, not yet baptized. So, when it came time for me to choose to be baptized, I did take my pre baptismal class in a congregation in Independence, but I wanted to be baptized, actually, at Webb Road. And so, I went back to Webb and I remember, I literally remember standing and asking Nancy Stone, who I wanted a woman to baptize me, and so I found a newly ordained woman to do that baptism. And so that is a memory. I remember my mom saying, if you want someone to baptize you, you have to ask, and, you know, tell them why you want to be baptized. So, I do remember having that conversation in the lobby of Webb Road, and so went back, got baptized, and so the next little bit, really, we spent time. What I remember is driving every other weekend for shared custody, all of those things that happen when you have just a split home. And so, while we were in Independence, my mom was a single mom. We had three kids at home because my oldest sister had already gone to college, and so she was working as many hours and as many jobs as she could to try to support us. And I mean, you can just imagine all that goes with that. So, the Summer I turned nine, my brother and I went to Wichita to spend time. We were supposed to be there for six weeks. But a few weeks in, my dad passed away in his sleep, unexpectedly, and so that, threw a wrench, our summer

plans, and, you know, really a somewhat turn of events and little bit of a change of trajectory. So, later that summer, um, my mom attended a singles reunion at Graceland, and she met who would soon become my stepdad, um, and I later also would call him dad. So, when I refer to my dad, um, I'm talking about my step dad going forward here, but so after they met, we moved to his hometown, in Skiatook, to Oklahoma, and so I was just starting. It was the first part of my fourth grade year. So, fourth grade. Starting a new school and a new place, and so a new journey, so new congregation, new friends, new all of that which, which was fine. So, Skiatook is just a geography. It's about 20 minutes north of Tulsa. And it at that time, I think there was, you know, just under 6000 people. We used to say it was the largest town in Oklahoma, but that's only because it had not been designated as a city and form of government and all that. So that's where we called home. And so I was there until graduating from high school. So, a little bit about what our life looked like. My dad, who was my step dad, Larry Harper was his name, and I would say that he had a huge influence on me growing up, he was a teacher, and he taught school there in Skiatook for 31 years. He did retire the year after he taught me. So, I often teased him that I put him into retirement because after my sixth grade year was when he chose to retire, and he lived his life to serve others. And so, growing up seeing his example, and so he would volunteer for almost every community organization you could think of and community events. He, he just did a ton. And with him being retired after my sixth grade year, he volunteered for American Red Cross and all of those different he did tons of the different walks in Tulsa. And he just served, served, served. He for American Red Cross, he did a lot of the disaster recovery type. He would monitor the the fire department radios, and he would dispatch if he wasn't on call to go out to the fires to provide emergency assistance. He was the one that was dispatching the volunteers to go and provide emergency efforts. So, so that was the example that I grew up with, was, you know, this person in our lives that that lived out their faith and lived out all that he did in collaboration with really worthy organizations. And so that that really had an impact. I he often talked about his favorite scripture, which was the story of King Benjamin, that talks about, when you're in service to mankind, here in service to God and so. So that was really impactful for me. And we also were really active in our local congregation. And we had a church there in Skiatook it was part of Tulsa Stake. So, this was before Oklahoma with its own mission center. But I would also add that, because my dad was a teacher, we would spend some summers going to other camps and reunions across the country. So, I remember one summer going, we went all the way down the south part of the US. And then we went up and went to Deer Park, and we went to Temple Grove. And, you know, even if we weren't doing a reunion, we might just go to the campground, and, you know, talk to, you know, whoever was there, and we would go to different congregations all over and so that meeting new people and forming relationships and knowing about the greater church that's beyond the local congregation was something that was ingrained when I was...throughout my life, I would say that we also spent a lot of our summers at our local campground. So, in Oklahoma, that's Saints Grove. And so, we would do, I mean, at that time, it was Tulsa Stake reunion, and then you had Cimarron District Reunion, and at that time, Central Kansas, so we're back to Wichita. Used to come down and they would rent out Saints Grove for their reunion as well. So, our family would go to all of those in addition to whatever camps. So so really loved going into camps and the camping programs. The, my local congregation was super supportive of youth. We...they really just invested in us. We did Youth Choir for many years. We had different programs. I had peers that I went to school with. I had teachers that were Community of Christ, and so there was just a ton of support with my local congregation, which was really helpful. So church was still a really big part in terms of other hobbies and other things, in addition to volunteering for all the

organizations that our family was involved with, I, since my mom wouldn't let me play, she's going to love this, by the way, so she wouldn't let me play sports because of the soccer experience when I was, like, four years old, I did band instead. So, I did band from early sixth grade all the way up through high school and even a little bit into college. But so that was fun. Did band, jazz bands, all of that. When I was 16, I wanted to do a trip to Greece and Italy that the school was sponsoring, and I knew that if I was going to go, I would have to pay for it by myself. And so got a job just working, and was able to save enough money to do that. And so just used to being really busy a lot of the time, but one of the questions you had was, where was where was God and faith and all of that? And I would say, throughout my entire experience, through the peaks and the valleys and feast and famine and all, all of the ups and downs of life, I can say that faith and relationship with God and my church community is what has sustained me and has helped me to be, I think, who I am, and it's the people and the relationships that have helped to mentor me and to help guide and strengthen me. So, so God's always been there. God and faith have always been there. And I mean, I can share lots of different examples, but they're all They're all impactful.

Robin Linkhart 17:39

That is an amazing story. And I have to say, for someone that spent much of their growing up life in a population of 6000 town in Oklahoma, you had a lot of wonderful opportunities to travel with your dad, Larry and gosh, just really see a lot of the church and what a what a can do, attitude, a high school trip, opportunity and you get a job and make that happen, that that's amazing. So, what did you play in band? What instrument?

Kat Hnatyshyn 18:11

So, I started out with a trumpet, and then I moved to baritone or euphonium, whichever you want to call it. And then my sophomore year of high school, I we got new band uniforms, and the majority of the bands would need to wear these feathers that were in the hat called flumes. And I didn't want to wear I didn't want to wear it so and there was an opportunity for me to switch over to a tuba and I could wear a beret. And so, for my sophomore year, I chose to do that. So, I played tuba sousaphone during the marching band portion, and got to wear beret, and, you know, we got to do some different fun movements with the tuba dancing and that kind of thing. But then after my sophomore year, even, I think, in concert bands, I switched back to euphonium, so that that was my main instrument. And what I, I think, did the best at, but, but, yeah, I did have a little bit, and then when I got to Graceland later on, which we'll talk, but we had one year of marching band when I was in Graceland, and then it, it went away. But they had enough euphonium players, and they needed a tuba player. And so, I actually picked up sousaphone for that fall semester of Graceland as well.

Robin Linkhart 19:46

So that's awesome.

Kat Hnatyshyn 19:48

Wouldn't expect me to be a tuba player?

Robin Linkhart 19:50

No, I yeah, when I thought maybe saxophone, when you said jet, you were in jazz band too, but that's awesome. I played flute in marching band and. We always watched out for the tuba when we had to pass. We tuck our flute down so we didn't knock our teeth out. Alrighty, okay, so you are in Skiatook Oklahoma, and you are graduating from high school. You're ready for college. Take us on this next chapter of life with college and beyond?

Kat Hnatyshyn 20:22

Yeah, so I graduated from high school and went to Graceland. And so there at Graceland, I majored in speech communications and was part of the CCLP, or Community of Christ Leadership Program, and so as a result, I minored in church leadership and religion. So, took a ton of those types of classes. I also was a Graceland rep and traveled to camps over four summers. So, I think I was officially a Graceland rep for three and then the fourth summer, they needed someone to pick up, I think, one or two camps. And so, I was like, Oh, I'll go do some of my favorite camps. Yes, of course I will. And so that was a fun experience. And some of my favorite memories of people that I met, and I even after I was done Graceland repping, there's a camp in Canada that I even went back to, just as a normal, regular person, because I enjoy the people so much so. So that was Graceland. I mean, I had great experience the my senior project was, which, for speech communications, has to be a communications project, but we had two other people that were with the same major, and so we worked together. And what we wanted to do is figure out, at Graceland, there's, there's a typical type of person that attends Graceland, right? So, you have, at that time, you know, church member, what? What is the typical type of person that would attend? And so, what we wanted to do is we wanted to figure out who was not typical, who would be on the margins, or who would be considered to be on the margins of Graceland and maybe not fit that mold. And so we did some ethnographic research of where we went and interviewed and we were asked standardized questions, but we wanted them to tell us their story, and we were able to weave in their words and be able to put that together in a presentation that went to leadership, that really helped to share their story of maybe not reflecting exactly what would be viewed as the typical Graceland student, but by being able to give voice to their stories and by being able to recognize their experiences, The goal was that we could widen that circle of inclusion and help them to be seen, and so that that was our senior project, and for me, that that's something that's representative of who is on the margins, and how can we Help them to be included. And that was a really great experience of being able to work alongside other people and to just listen and to hear voices and stories.

Robin Linkhart 23:54

that is, that is fascinating, as you're talking about that, I'm like, Oh my gosh, we could do that kind of research at a lot of places in the church, and I would love to read and hear the stories that would come out of that. <Yeah.> Okay, so when you you graduated from Graceland, then, because you did your senior project, tell us about your first jobs and how you met your husband.

Kat Hnatyshyn 24:19

Okay, well, I met my husband at Graceland, so he was recruited for baseball. So, he was a baseball player at Graceland, but upon graduation, his student visa is no longer active, right? So, he has to go back home to Canada, and I leave Graceland and I start working at a financial institution in the Kansas City area, and so we start the immigration process for him. Well, actually, it started with maybe I would

go to Canada. It's a lot harder to immigrate to Canada, and as a college graduate. It. I didn't have the points. They go off of a point system, or at least they did at that time. And as a recent graduate there, I mean, I'm the same as every other recent graduate. So, it was easier for us to do a fiance visa, where he would come in, and then we would have, it's like the 90 day fiance show. I think we could actually have been on it, I don't know but, but he was my 90 day fiance. And so we started the immigration process, which took about 10 months for him to go through that whole process. And then we had, you know, a few weeks notice of when he had to go to his visa appointment. And then, you know—I flew up there, and we drove from because he lived in Calgary, and so we drove to Kansas City and got married the very first Friday that he was in the country, because in order to get your work permit, in order for you to get all of those things started and settled, you have to have that marriage license. So we got married the very first Friday, so that a year from that date would be a Saturday, and we could have the big wedding a year later. So so we did that, and so got married. I was 22 years old, which now seems like a just a baby, but that's okay. We're still married 20 years later. So so we did that. And at the same time, after graduating, part of the CCLP requirements is that you also have to be engaged in a local congregation, and you're supposed to volunteer. I think it was five hours a week. So So I did that. I'm a rule follower, and so I got engaged with the Highlands congregation in the Northland of Kansas City, and worked with them and volunteered and helped with their worship planning and all of that. But while I was there at Highlands, I received my first call to the priesthood, and so while there, was ordained to the office of priest. So, that was my first call of saying yes. And so shortly after that, and I don't even it's in some ways, it's a blur, but the co-mission pastor initiative came out that program with world church, and so I was asked to go to coffee with Bob Watkins and Mike Hoffman. And at the time, Mike was working at World Church, and I don't even remember what capacity he was working in at that point, but he had been asked by the Shawnee Drive congregation in Kansas City, Kansas, to come down and be their pastor. And so, Bob and Mike had this brilliant idea of, hey, maybe Kat would like to be part of this co-mission pastor initiative, and she could be part of the pastorate with Mike, and you know, she'd be able to commit for this five years the co-mission pastor initiative was this combination of education classes, but you're doing it in collaboration and in community with others. And so they presented that idea. I wasn't unhappy at the Highlands. I mean, lovely congregation. And so the prospect of changing congregations and going someplace different, I'm like, Well, alright, well, let's, let's see what it's like. And so at this point, we were living in the Northland, I'm married, and so I'm like, Alex has gotta be part of this conversation. And so we decided to try out Shawnee Drive. So we go as a couple, and I think, you know, we're, of course, there with Mike and Nancy, and so we're experiencing Shawnee Drive. And you know, if you've been to the Highlands or Shawnee Drive, they are very different congregations. The Highlands is beautiful, and that's where we were married. And it's, I mean, just a beautiful facility. And Shawnee Drive is, I mean, it's. An aging congregation, the building it's it doesn't have all the flash. And so going to church, I'm thinking, all the things that Shawnee Drive doesn't have, and I'm like, Well, you know, it's alright, you know? Like, okay. And so go through the service, and then we get in the car to drive home after the service, and I ask Alex. I'm like, Okay, so on a scale of one to 10, what did you think? Because I know I've gotta get his buy in if we're going to make this move. And he's like, "An eleven." And I was like, what? Why? Why an 11? Like, I could see, you know, like, maybe a seven or an eight. But, I mean, he without hesitation, it was an 11. And I said, why? And he said, The people talk to me, and so it was the people at Shawnee Drive that brought us there, and that, frankly, keep us there. So that, for me, solidified what Community of Christ means, and we can't be in Christ without community. And so that was really impactful. And sometimes it doesn't have to be flashy, it doesn't

have to be big, and all of those things that that sometimes we think it needs to be it, it can be simple, and those relationships can be simple and and, and that really does make a difference. So. So with that, I said yes, yes to being part of the co-mission pastor initiative, yes to being part of the pastorate with Mike Hoffman and Josh Hewitt. So there was three of us, don't want to leave Josh out, and Josh grew up at Shawnee Drive. So I mean, when you think of Shawnee Drive, you think of Josh. I was 23 years old. I think about that too, and I'm like, What was I thinking? And so here we are. We've got a pastorate, we've got a leadership team. I soon am called and ordained to the Office of Elder, and six months after, I bet you know where this is going, but six months after I said yes and came to Shawnee Drive, I get a call from Mike Hoffman, and he says, So are you ready to become pastor? He had gotten a call to be Mission Center President in Kentucky, and so he was going to be moving. And so here it is, Josh and I are left without Mike to mentor us. And you know, are, are we ready to become pastor and, and, you know, big goal, you know, it was, I don't know, I don't know, but we'll lean in, we'll, we'll do it. So, I mean, I can share a lot about Shawnee Drive, and it'll make me cry, and it'll make me laugh. And you know, I can tell the story about our early sunrise service that we got really ambitious about for Easter one year, and we watched the sunrise over the Taco Bell dumpster, and we learned early sunrise Easter services are not for Shawnee Drive, but community events are so you know, biggest Easter egg hunts and family fun days and back to school carnivals. And this focus of really being in the community is, is really Shawnee Drive story, and there's I can really talk a long time about their journey that started way before me, and that still continues, but I can say that their love of those on the margins, their willingness to live into places where they have felt called, even when it is horribly uncomfortable at times, their trust and their faith to move forward. This community of people showed me and helped me experience what the hands and feet of Jesus could look like, and for that, I'm forever grateful. So for 10 years, I served as pastor of Shawnee drive. Part of the time was with Josh, part of it was with Dave Hall. Lots of memories, lots of experiences. So at this point, now married, bought a house, and we start our family. And so my oldest was born in 2011 and so we are now living in the house that we're in now. And we, at one point, we had lived in Lee's Summit, and we're still driving all the way out to Shawnee Drive in Kansas City, Kansas. And when we got pregnant, it was we. We need to be near our support system, and our support system is our Kansas folks, our Shawnee Drive people. So, so we bought a house out here, and this is where we started our family. So at that point, then I in 2014 I got a call from Stassi Cramm, um, and she shared that I had received a call to the Office of High Priest, and that was a somewhat of a surprise, and yet it wasn't a surprise. And so had had some conversation, and was ordained that summer, just before my dad, my step dad, passed away in 2014 so he was able to be part of that, which I'm thankful for as well. So, then I had my second baby in 2015 So Pete, and then shortly after that, I was called, I think it was Barb Borkowski. They were figuring out what they were going to do for Mission Center President for Midlands, and they had this fabulous idea of some shared leadership. And so, she asked if I would be willing to serve on the Mission Center President team for Midlands. And so that that occurred in 2016

Robin Linkhart 37:46

Wow, that's quite a journey Kat, lots of really Spirit filled stories and witnessing just the authentic way that people can respond to the call of Christ, very exciting. So, I just want to clarify too, because all of these roles that you take on and pastor is no small role. You're continuing to work at the Kansas City financial institution. So, you have a full time job all along, and you're building your family. So now you have two kids, and one is still a baby, born in 2015 and in 2016 you're asked to serve in this, this really

big role, Mission Center President, with a team a shared leadership model. So tell us about what brought you to saying yes to that role, and then take us on the journey with you, as you all live in to something new.

Kat Hnatyshyn 38:56

We started out with Don McLaughlin and Donna Fletcher and Sarah Tubbasings. And if you know those folks, you know that they are just wonderful people to work with and alongside. And so, I felt at that time, excited to be part of something new, to be able to share in a model that hadn't been done before, and I felt like I could bring something to this team, and I would be able to learn along the way. I mean, if you look at this, the skills and the gifts that all three of them had you just want to be around them, you want to soak them in. And so that was part of the Yes. And I mean, there were times I brought little Pete with me, you know, to our meeting. I remember sitting outside of a Jason's Deli, and I've got Pete in a car seat, and he's sleeping, you know. And here we are trying to divvy up different responsibilities for the Mission Center and and so, you know, we just made things happen. And in, I think everyone that was on the team at that time, it was, what can we do to help and we found that balance, we figured it out so, so we did that with Donna and Don and Sarah. And Sarah moved to Arizona, and then we had Don retired, and then Donna retired, and I was, you know, the last person standing, and so at some point, I also served as on the MCFO, as the MCFO of record, and I was on The President team. And then, when Donna retired, she or when Donna retired, then took the chair of the MCP, and we added Alan Keeler and Stan Trow to our group. And so we have been since that time. We've been serving with the three of us. And then we transitioned the MCFO lead first to Wim VanKlinken. I mean, I can't think of anyone else more qualified, other than Wim. And so he was our MCFO lead for a while, until he was called into the Presiding Bishopric, and then Steve Beckman has been serving in that role since then, so we've got a great team, but for all of Midlands, all of our leadership is bi-vocational and so we made the concerted effort and intentional decision that we wanted the administration to be volunteer. Really, to help alleviate some of the financial burdens, and to be able to put the dollars that we do have—we wanted it to be able to go into some missional positions. So we have had different positions that have been opened over time. We just filled our Peace and Justice Minister position. We've had a Young Adult Minister position that was paid previously. So we thought, well, from an administration standpoint, we can make that work so that we can free up somebody to be able to really provide the hands on ministry that the mission center needs.

Robin Linkhart 42:49

So when you first went on the team with Don McLaughlin, Donna Fletcher, Sarah Tubbasings, Don and Donna were they sustained in those positions for half time.

Kat Hnatyshyn 43:01

So Donna was, I think she was half time Don. Don had a little so they were employed prior to as well. <Right.> Um, so then the bi-vocational, the truly all bi-vocational leadership happened in October of 2019, and so when they retired, then it was all volunteer.

Robin Linkhart 43:31

So that's really a story of really authentically living into a new way of being, starting with a shared leadership model. And then I love the intentionality of looking at the funding available, the capacity for

funding, and deciding intentionally to reallocate those funds and and have a team that's all bi-vocational understanding. You know, we can do this as shared leaders. That's exciting. So that brings you up to 2024, are you still in the MCP team right now in 24?

Kat Hnatyshyn 44:06

Yeah, yes.

Robin Linkhart 44:08

Okay, well, we're going to take a little side trip here before we get to the the one of the main events of your story, and that is, it may seem odd for folks to hear, but often, as ordained ministers, we can find ourselves just so consumed by the doing of ministry and church life that we neglect the being and the continuing need of our own souls. So Kat, how do you nurture your relationship with God?

Kat Hnatyshyn 44:42

So this is a constant balance, and I have to be really intentional about finding the time and the quiet. I in my natural mode, and I can easily be very action minded. And I. Want to do, do, do, do, do I want to Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. That's my natural state. And so there's times where I need to seek out that quiet. I need to seek out the to try to turn off my mind and just bask in the silence. So, so I do that, I there's reading, I do music, but all of that really helps me to be able to rebalance and reconnect. But I have to be really intentional about it. And I can, I can sense when I start to feel a little off. And I, I do find those times and have to be, I mean, I have to schedule it in almost, because otherwise I will just keep going, keep doing.

Robin Linkhart 46:04

Thanks so much for sharing that. Okay, so it's 2024 tell us about receiving your call to the office of apostle.

Kat Hnatyshyn 46:18

So I got a text from Stassi, and she, of course, asked, asked to meet. So we met at a Panera, and she presented the call to the Council of 12. And my initial reaction was, oh, that's a big that's big change. So I mean, here at this point, been a bi-vocational volunteer for 20 years. We've got a 20 year career at a financial institution, this type of call isn't something that I can do bi-vocationally. And so there's, there's lots of things that are going through my mind at the time of the call. And it's, you know, am I able to leave my full-time vocation, which has been rewarding over the last 20 years. Would I be able to do that? The other thing that came to my mind is, am I enough? And what could I bring to this call? So I struggled with that a little bit and and, you know, I'm, I'm a process out loud type person, and so had a few conversations while discerning. My husband, I will say, who he is, almost always supportive. I he just goes along with me most of the time and is supportive of almost every yes that I give. And he, he was willing to journey with me and so, so that was, that was helpful in that that part of the discernment, So there was lots of thinking. And so what I was trying to do was get out of the thoughts and really sense where God is calling me, and what do I feel about it? And so there's things that I could think about, you know, I could think about, Okay, I've got some skill sets. I've got, you know, there's lots of things that I can add for my business experience that can be helpful. I also thought about, well, with a lot of our mission center leaders now, they are bi-vocational and so I would be able to bring to the table

a perspective that is unique and different than a lot of other colleagues that are in the council and that they have worked for the church for for a number of years, and here I am coming in fresh as somebody who's volunteered, has a family and also has worked full time, and so being able to bring that so those were some things that we're thinking part of my discernment, also, I had recorded my ordination to the Office of High Priest, and so I went in my phone, and I started going back to that ordination. And I just thought, well, let me just listen to it. Maybe it'll speak to me. Maybe there will be something in those words that could help provide some some guidance. And so I went back and listened to the ordination prayer, which was by Staaai who was my apostle at the time, but in her prayer, she talked about mission in the midst of difficult times, she gave a blessing to have courage on this journey, because there is a vision of hope to share. And that answered the question for me, the question of, Am I enough? The question of, What do I have to give and where am I being called and knowing that those difficult times are obviously not going to be easy. We, we know what is before us, right? We what we don't know, but we know that the unknown is before us, that we don't know the future, we don't know what the metamorphosis is going to look like. But to have the courage. What I do know is that I'm willing to lean in and to have the faith that together, as we companion with each other in this Community of Christ, that we will find blessing.

Robin Linkhart 52:05

Thank you. Thank you for sharing that with us and being so vulnerable, and what a beautiful, beautiful testimony of the affirmation of your call that thank you. So I know that this is still a new chapter that's unfolding. Maybe in some ways, it feels like it's just rolling across you. But as you lean into this, as you stay, as you say, as you lean into your ongoing adventure with God, how have things changed for you so far?

Kat Hnatyshyn 52:42

Well, so full time employment with the church will begin soon, so that that is actually really big change for me, I am thrilled to be able to align the passion of my soul with my profession, and so for me, that it's a big adventure, but it's also a big change. I also see the scope of my focus changing, of course, from Mission Center to, you know, the whole church. You're an apostle of the whole church, even though your responsibilities may be very specific, such as you know, somewhere in the US. But there will be unknown challenges and there will be unknown opportunities, which for me is exciting to be able to be with others and to see where the future is unfolding for us as a church

Robin Linkhart 53:51

Kat, what are your hopes for Community of Christ into the future? How do you see God moving in the world today, and how does that connect with our faith movement as a Peace Church and the heart of God's vision for all creation.

Kat Hnatyshyn 54:08

I often talk about, and I tell my mission center all the time, Community of Christ is a journey. Church, we are on a journey, and we may not know where we're going, and especially in the United States, but North America and other parts of the world, we are experiencing this great secularization, where all of the variables around us and how we Live out church has changed, and it's continuing to change. What church means to a community and culture looks differently than it did, you know, in the early 80s or or

even, you know, 20 years ago, it looks different, and yet our desire for deep, authentic connection and experiences with each other and with the Divine has not changed. Our compassionate view for those in the margins and physical action towards lifting others up who are hurting in our community, that has not changed. Our searching and asking of the hard questions of life has not changed. Our quest for spiritual meaning is that a hall time high, and our genuine need to be loved and accepted for who we are, it's real. So the church is a physical location in our congregations is one way to strengthen and build connections. But we can't limit the Community of Christ to just one way of doing. And so we as a faith community, we have to be able to live into this metamorphosis of who we're called to be. And I firmly believe and have faith that we can respond to the nudging of the Holy Spirit to meet people where they are. To feel that sacred calling and peace of Jesus Christ. We can be that faith community that truly honors and lives out to Christ intends us to be in our relationships with each other, and yet we need courage, courage to take those next steps into the unknown, courage to trust that there is hope. And I really do see it.

Robin Linkhart 56:30

That is a that is a call, that is a call, clarion call. Thank you. Thank you, Kat. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us today that I haven't asked you about?

Kat Hnatyshyn 56:46

I can solve a Rubik's Cube. There is my, yeah, just my random skill. So I can solve a Rubik's Cube. I am not as fast as my kid, but that was my, our COVID project was learning how to solve a Rubik's cube. So if I run into somebody and they have a Rubik's Cube, I'd be happy to solve it for you.

Robin Linkhart 57:06

Yay. I love that. I'm going to bring one next time we're together in Independence. Thank you so much for being with us today, Kat, it's been my joy and privilege to listen to your story, and I know our listeners will be blessed as they hear you share your story. Thanks,

Kat Hnatyshyn 57:26

Thanks for having me. Thanks so much.

Robin Linkhart 57:28

If you would like to meet other leaders who will be taking on new leadership roles at Community of Christ 2025, World Conference. Check out our Nice to Macha series. You can find the link in the show notes for this episode. As always, a very special thanks to all of you, our listeners, for spending a portion of your day with us. This is your host, Robin Linkhart, and you are listening to Project Zion Podcast. Go out and make the world a Better place. Take good care. Bye, bye.