

# Nice to Matcha | New Leader | Shannon McAdam

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Shannon McAdam, Community of Christ, Council of 12 Apostles, ordination, calling, Vancouver.

## SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Robin Linkhart, Shannon McAdam

### **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 Shannon McAdam, 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, Shannon will be ordained during a worship service at that same conference Shannon, it is so good to have you with us today. Welcome. Thank

### **Shannon McAdam** 01:06

you, Robin. I feel so lucky that I get to spend some time with you today.

### **Robin Linkhart** 01:10

Well, thank you. I feel the same, the same blessing to be with you. I so enjoyed being with you this last summer at reunion at Samish Island. Now you have been a guest on Project Zion once before, but today, we are going to get to know you much, much better. So let's start with the basics. Take a minute and just introduce yourself to our listeners.

### **Shannon McAdam** 01:35

Thank you. My name is Shannon McAdam. My pronouns are she her? I live on the west coast of Canada, on the traditional territory of the Kwikwetlem and Coast Salish people. It's I live in the suburbs of Vancouver, if that's a better reference point for you, in some place called Port Coquitlam. I live here with my husband, Matthew, and our big collection of board games we're really into playing board games. We both love to cook, and I love to do some gardening, and we live right next to a river, and I love walking along the river in my spare time as well. I've been working in technology for the past 16 years in different roles, most recently in business sales, where I get to support entrepreneurs, which I love doing. And I attend the Vancouver congregation of the Community of Christ, where I'm an elder. And I actually it's very funny how timing works, but I was presented with a call to High Priest that I accepted just shortly before I then was presented with another call to Apostle. So it's been a few months of that for me, and I'm also serving on the Mission Center President team for Canada West as a in a volunteer capacity.

### **Robin Linkhart** 02:58

Thank you, Shannon, so we want to hear all about your growing up story, like, where did you grow up, and what was life like for you in your family and in your community, and some of your interest and hobbies we know you like to cook and you like to play board games. That's wonderful. And where was God and faith in the mix of all of that?

**Shannon McAdam 03:21**

Thank you. Well, I grew up in this area, in the suburbs of Vancouver here, and I attended the Vancouver congregation. I don't know when I was little, I loved that we had a big backyard that I would play in a lot, and that was, like my favorite thing to do is roam around the neighborhood and climb trees and things. I— church family was really important to me from really young age. We attended church pretty much every Sunday. And yeah, I think one of the interesting things about here on the west coast of Vancouver is there's not as many church goers, just in general, as in other places around North America and so a lot of our were kind of rare group of people that went to church on Sundays. And what you know, one of the thinking back to my really early childhood memories, and I really have a vivid memory of my own baptism and our pre baptismal classes. Actually, we had one other church family in our neighborhood who had girls about the same age as me, and we had someone come to their house, and we'd sit around their kitchen table and like, say the Bible verses we'd memorized. And I just remember feeling really cared for by this person I didn't really know well from my church, but he would come to their house and teach us, and I think that set a real groundwork for me of, yeah, my church family. And then I also vividly remember my baptism, because we got baptized in the church font, and it didn't have a hot water tap, and so. So the dads were boiling pots of water in the kitchen and running them into the font, and it was quite the production. But it was a really memorable experience to be baptized with my friends and actually a young adult woman who was just joining the church at the same time as well. And I also remember my confirmation really vividly, because I I really like, you know, when I was little, we were told feel the Holy Spirit is going to be put on you and your confirmation. And I was like, what does that even feel like? Or but I really had a feeling of warmth and and I was overcome with tears, actually, which was kind of a new experience for me, but at the same time, I'd witnessed my grandfather crying when he was ministering and filled with the Holy Spirit. And so I was like, oh, maybe this is what it's like. And for me, kind of all my life. Since then, tears have been one of those signs for me that God's really close by. And yeah, I I'm a bit of a crier now myself as a result. And also my grandfather was actually a big part of my church growing up. He was He and my grandma lived in Chilliwack, which is a little further out of the city, and would often come into Vancouver for special church events and classes and things. And once I was a teenager, they were almost always picking me up and dragging me along with them. So I went to church history seminars, and I think I took a ministry of the 70 course, and like, basically whatever grandpa and grandma were going to I got picked up on the way, and was really so I was really deeply formed in that experience in the church. And I really appreciate the congregation I grew up in. I don't know I sometimes felt like I didn't fit in in school and things like that when I was a kid, but I always felt really at home in my congregation and felt accepted there. And I was, you know, challenged at a young age to I was bit of a shy kid, but they're like, Oh, you can do a reading or a prayer. And so I was able to grow and, you know, not be quite that shy kid anymore, because I was able to get up and do readings and things in church. And the other thing with my congregation is they quite, and I think and still quite pride themselves on being really forward thinking and willing to question what's happening in the church. And so, for example, like when I was a kid, they brought forth, you know, legislation to World Conference about women's ordination before that

was a thing, and open Communion before that was a thing. And so being formed in this place where it was okay to question the status quo, and it was okay to, you know, try to open the doors wider and make the table bigger for more people, was a big part of what it meant to do church. So it wasn't just about like a personal faith type of thing. It was also, how can we make the world better for more people? And how can we make the world of our church better for more people. One of the frustrations I had as a kid is that no one would give me easy answers to things, which, looking back, was probably one of the best gifts that I was given. But it was frustrating when I was like early teenager, that no one would kind of tell me what to believe. But later in life, I realized that was really a gift, because it helped me learn how to build my faith from my experiences and the people around me and our tradition in sort of my own way, while still being formed in this church that has, like, yeah, lots of beliefs that are important to me as well. So it was a really as a I really like as I was thinking about my young life. It's, I feel really lucky for the place that I grew up and the people that I grew up with. I went to church camps as a kid every summer went to reunion. I often, especially in my later teenage years, I felt like church camp was like the one place where I could really be myself, because I could talk to my friends about God and the meaning of life and all of these big questions that I was wrestling with, and those were not something I could talk about at school or things like that, but it's something I could talk about at camp and feel really open about. And so yeah, and I think probably there was a really, like, kind of a turning point year for me, was when I was 16, the summer I was 16, I had the opportunity to go to IYF (International Youth Forum) and Spectacular. So the one time I went to Spectacular, because this is a big trip to take from over here, an expensive trip, in some ways. And so I raised money in my local congregation and was able to go. I was not a sporty person. So Spec was I sang in the choir and things like that, and cheered on all of my friends in their games. But I had, I had a really bad summer, I was reading a book called The Dance of the Dissident Daughter by Sue Monk Kidd, which is an early sort of feminist theology, not really like an academic text, but more of sort of like a popular book, and it was really opening my eyes to different ways of thinking about God and about my faith. And I grew up in this place that was quite liberal and open to those kind of ideas. And when I was at Spec, I really felt bit confronted by very male language about God that I wasn't as comfortable with. We'd used a lot of gender neutral language about God when I was a kid, and so I found it a little bit, yeah, I wasn't sure if I belonged, because it's like, this isn't quite the church that I know, but I, you know, tried to keep an open mind about things. And I was sitting in the choir one morning, and we had just rehearsed getting ready for the morning worship service, and someone came up and said, Oh, the the person that was supposed to pray in English this morning backed out at the last minute with someone pray from the choir, and my hand shot up kind of involuntarily, and I was like, Oh, I guess I'm doing this. And they're like, Oh, thank you. Really appreciate it. You know, here's we'll give you the mic, yada yada. Here's when it will be. So we had a morning worship, and I came to my turn to pray, and I took the mic, and I decided to start my prayer with loving mother God. And I don't know, it still gives me shivers to say that today. And by the time, I don't really know what else I said in that prayer, by the time I got to the end, I was like, oh, man, people are going to be coming with pitchforks for me, and I'm going to be like, but pretty much no one said anything. One person, one man, came up to me afterwards and said, Thank you. We need to hear that more often. And I was able to sort of process it with some friends. They were like, Shannon, that's, that's, we're glad you said that and things like that. And I had a real sense coming out of that, that maybe there was more to my relationship with God than I realized, um, in terms of becoming a leader and not just someone who just kind of went by how things were, and I loved International Youth Forum, IYF, I had a my first visit to the temple, and it was just an incredible,

incredible experience. 1997 the temple was still really new, and it was Yeah, and just to have that place filled with teenagers and the experiences in worship were just so beautiful. I still like remember the feeling of being there and feeling a part of things a church much bigger than just myself and my local congregation. And I started to think about maybe someday I could work for the church, and that would really feel like a calling for me and so kind of talking to different people, and my mom was very supportive. Mom was always supportive of everything, and she's like, you know, people have told me that if you do, or if you're serious about wanting to work for the church, someday you should really think about going to Graceland for university, which I had never thought about doing before. And so I decided to start exploring that, and was able to scrounge up as many scholarships as I could, applied to everything under the sun that I could find, and I was able to go, which was, yeah, a big, big part of my journey.

**Robin Linkhart 14:28**

It's really exciting. So what kind of studies did you do in high school? Do you call it high school in Canada or...

**Shannon McAdam 14:36**

Yes, yeah, in high school, it was just, it kind of like General Studies. I really found a love for computer science when I was in high school. And I, yeah, I loved working with computers, and I also, actually my other favorite thing in high school was choir. Of course, I love to sing and drama. I really from that shy kid to this young woman who really enjoyed being on stage and acting. It was a big change, but it, yeah, it was some of my favorite times in high school. And I had some really wonderful neighborhood friends who, yeah, they were, they were all sad when I said, I'm going to be going away to Iowa for university. They a lot of them were like, I was about where the potatoes come from. I'm like, no. I was right in the middle, but yeah, it was. It was a really important time for me. Yeah,

**Robin Linkhart 15:34**

So you're off to Graceland. You've, you've had some really deep experiences with the divine in lots of different ways, a very rich sense of community in your congregation and lots of support for pushing boundaries and asking hard questions and exploring. So you're off to Iowa in middle America. So tell us all about college, and then what comes after that, as your ministry expands and you take on various church roles and your career,

**Shannon McAdam 16:09**

Yeah, I mean, I still call great going to Graceland, my big intercultural experience. So because for I know it sounds a bit weird, but going to moving to the Midwest from the west coast of Canada was really I had a lot of culture shock, and I didn't realize it at the time, I think, entirely, until I'd been kind of through my first year that I was just there were so many things that were so different from home that it was a hard it was a hard time for me, and I would say, overall, I'm really glad I went to Graceland. I met some amazing people there, but there were some really hard times there for me as well, of that feeling different from other people and feeling wondering how much I belonged, and trying to understand things like American politics and how divisive that was for people. And yeah, it was all very, yeah, very foreign to me, which I know is probably hard to understand, maybe for some of your American listeners, but hopefully people, and I think sometimes people assume the US and Canada are really similar, and

in some ways we are, but there's other ways that life is like is very different. And so I really felt that in being there, but I'm really grateful in a lot of ways that I had that experience, because it gives me some empathy for other people who experience those sort of culture shocks and things when they experience different places. But I did have some places where I really felt at home, actually, my house, my Paloma, sisters at Graceland always made me feel like I belonged. And I have so many fond memories, I think, you know, I was a very, very serious child, a very serious teenager, and my experience at Graceland, I they definitely helped me loosen up. And I have fond memories of our shenanigans of mudsliding and painting the bell and all of these silly things that I learned to really enjoy. I even, gosh, my senior year at Graceland, we climbed the water tower and rappelled off the side like, man, if you had told me I was the serious, you know, rule abiding teenager that I would do those things I was, I'd be very surprised. So I had a great time, and I I was a house chaplain and a crescent and a house president, and so in those ways, I really learned a lot. I learned a lot about myself as a leader through those experiences, and began to think of myself that way when I was at Graceland, I had my major was in information technology, and I took a lot of computer science and business courses, and I loved that I was, I was the only woman in all of my computer science classes was, which was a little bit crazy to think back to. And so, yeah, just that feeling, feeling a bit different was that was part of it, but, and then I also minored in church leadership. And so I was able to take courses in, you know, theology and biblical studies and pastoral care and in the church leadership program, actually, they we had these small groups, small reflection groups that would meet regularly. And I have such fond memories of that group of people as well, because they were also really asking hard questions and exploring, what does it mean to be part of this church, let alone the future leaders of this church. And I always felt like it was a really safe spaceto ask questions and be myself as well. And I had, you know, a lot of formative experiences in my Graceland year. Years, I spent a summer doing as an intern at church camps at Lewis River Campground in Oregon, which was great because I'd never been to anything but my own camps at Samish Island. And so it was great to see how other places do camp. And then, as kind of a result of that, and some other things that were going on, kind of in the world at large, the IT jobs we were all thought we were going to have, were starting to disappear, and wasn't as exciting of a field, and so there weren't as many job opportunities. And so the encouragement of, oh gosh, so many, so many loving professors who supported me in discerning that I would go to theology school and do a master's degree right after Graceland, Tony and Charmaine, Shella Smith, Don Compier, Patricia Eppinger, yeah, just really, really well, Bob and Barb Mesley, supportive, supportive people, and I ended up I was in the Honors Program, and so I did my senior honors thesis on feminist interpretation of the Bible. And it was so amazing to go from having been that teenager at Spec saying this prayer to Mother God, to be in this room at Graceland filled with people excited to learn about feminist interpretation of the Bible from me, and it was just really affirming. And so I ended up, I will say one other kind of contextual thing. I had been there at Graceland for four years, and I was because I was there through 911 being in the US was feeling less comfortable for me at that time, and so I decided I wanted to move back to Canada, and then I was able to get accepted at Vancouver School of Theology in my home town, and that meant I could live at home with My parents, and so I did a master of divinity degree at Vancouver School of Theology, which, again, was like such an amazing experience. And actually before I graduated from Graceland and my final semester there was actually when I was called to elder, which was unusual. It was apparent, I think, if I remember correctly, it was the first time that priesthood calls came out of the Graceland congregation. It was something that Blake Smith had been an advocate for, is identifying calls when people are in university that maybe their home congregations hadn't had a



chance to see the type of leadership they were able to offer. And so I was one of that first group of people to be called, and I was ordained. I decided to wait and get ordained at home. I still remember a friend was like, well, it's not like, It's your wedding or something. I was like, but it is like for me that sacrament of ordination was just as important to my life and who I am as getting married, and so it was really important for me to do that with my family and friends at home, and that's another fun memory I have is of my ordination service in the Cedar chapel at Samish Island, which is a grove of trees with wooden plank benches. And there was two of us, myself and Chris Phelps, actually, who was on that other podcast with me. We were both ordained to elder in the center of a circle of people and a circle of trees. And to this day when I'm looking for a place in my mind to go to, to call myself, it's that cedar chapel that I go to as a place of confirmation and safety. So it was with my fresh ordination to elder that I went to theology school. And it's an ecumenical theology school, Vancouver School of Theology so people from all sorts of different denomination, both Christian and actually Unitarian Universalists as well. And Wow. What an eye opening experience to study with all of these different people from different backgrounds, I found my friends pretty quickly, amongst other people who came from what were called sort of free church traditions. So a friend who is a Baptist, a friend who grew grown up sort of like a Mennonite tradition. And then we also adopted a friend who was Catholic, a woman who is Catholic, who knew she was probably never going to get ordained, but wanted to study ministry anyway, and so we were very good friends, and good they were great, kind of, you know, co conspirators to have through that experience, because it was a little bit odd to me. Sometimes I still remember the first time sitting through an Anglican worship service, and I was like standing up and sitting down and saying these certain words, and I had no idea what we were doing, and just trying to follow along by the end. And even now, I do love those Anglican services now, and I love following along with the singing and everything. But I got to study with some amazing professors. I got to study with Sally McFague, who's like the grandmother of feminist eco theology, and she was my theology 100 teacher in her Yeah, I think she was probably in her 80s at that point in time, anyway, just a force to be reckoned with I learned so much, and I was able to use my congregation as a sort of study subject for my more practical classes. It meant I had to unpack a lot of what it means to be Community of Christ, and it really made me think, think deeply about is Community of Christ the place for me, because I was shown all of these other different Christian traditions introduced to them. And in the end, I decided, partly because of some of the beliefs, and partly because of sometimes the baggage you packed yourself is the baggage you know the best around my own. Because every Christian tradition has its own baggage and history. I'm like, Well, this history I know really well, but I also things like our model of ministry and the way that we share in lay, lay ministry and the way we ordain. A lot of people that really spoke to me about the the inclusiveness of our church, and that was really important to me, and so I decided to stick with this little church that could and after I finished my master of divinity degree, I even started a second master's degree, because I thought I wanted to get a PhD. But partly through that second degree, I had the chance to become a part time paid pastor in Vancouver, and so I decided to stop going to school and take on that part time job, and I simultaneously took on another part time job with the company that I've worked with for the tech company I've worked with for the last 16 years. And so that paid pastor job was really hard for me, because it I was still quite young in a lot of ways, and I was still I was saying yes to everything, and I figured I could do everything, and I I burned out a little bit. I wouldn't say a lot, but I realized that it was a hard thing for me to balance these different expectations around having two jobs, having a life as a young person, dating, and all of these different things at that time. And so I decided to end my time as pastor, partly because I was offered a full time job with the

this tech company, and decided it was the right choice for me, and to give volunteer ministry was what felt a lot better for me at that time. And so I continued doing a lot of volunteer work in my congregation, you know, counseling at camps and helping direct retreats, and I got involved in the nurturing spirit retreats here and the creating connection program a little bit. And I, yeah, I just found that being a volunteer in the church was the best path for me at that time, and was, you know, something that had been modeled for me by my family through the years, and I did, I looking back on like I did so many things. I was on the theology formation team for a little while. I was, I helped with, I know there was this young adult podcast that some people tried to start, and I remember taking a recording around to people in my congregation, interviewing them, like just all sorts of things. I also did a year of summer of World Service Corps. I volunteered in Detroit, and had an amazing experience there. So yeah, all sorts of different interesting experiences, volunteer wise. I found myself in and then in my career that I ended up stepping into, from a part time job for this tech company to full on career, I ended up in different lots of different roles in sales and technical support, in operations management, in training and development, and so it became a place where I was able to develop a lot of skills, and I felt really is really inclusive environment, and I felt really valued for my skills. And it was great to have a job where I actually just at the end of the day clocked out and could leave it behind, and I was able to devote my downtime to church, and ended up on the board of a local non-profit here that's run by church members called agape society. We were in a house for folks that young people who need a little bit higher level of support and learning to live independently. And so that being on that board, being president for a little while, was really a great experience for me. And then I don't know, somewhere in the midst of that, I met my husband, Matthew. I think we met actually when I was pastor. We dated for a little while, and then we were both like, we thought, like, oh, maybe this isn't as serious as we think. Let's just be friends and date other people. So we were friends for several years, until he and I were both single again, and he's like, Well, I really like you, Shannon, and I would like to get back together. And I was like, Oh, well, I don't know, yada yada. I had excuses, and so I we stayed as friends, and I was out on a date. A few months later, I was supposed to go on a date, and the person canceled at the last minute. And I was like, my first reaction was, Oh, good, now I can go hang out with Matthew. Instead, I was like, Oh no, I am dumb like, clueless. I Matthew is the only person I want to spend time with. I don't want to go on these dates with other people. And so I went to him and I said, I know this is crazy, but can we revisit that question you asked me a few months ago. Can we get back together? And he's like, it's for real this time, Shannon. He's like, we're not messing about, like you are the person I want to be with, and that's all. And if you're in, you're all in. And I was like, Yep, I'm all in. I often. I don't know if people are familiar with the movie When Harry Met Sally, but there's this line at the end where Harry says, when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with someone, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible. And that's definitely how Matthew and I felt. And so not long after that, we knew we wanted to get married at some point, but we weren't sure when, and we need to save some money first. And so we moved in together, and my congregation was okay with that. They were okay with me continuing in my priesthood ministry while Matthew and I lived together, they realized that I was having a partner at home to support me, actually, in many ways, made me a better minister and a stronger person, but my mission center kind of caught wind of it, and they were not happy and asked that I resign my priesthood card temporarily until I got married, and that was really hard because there were a lot of people in my congregation that were really angry about it, and a lot of folks just feeling like rules were being abided by arbitrarily, without consideration of the individual person and what I was contributing to the congregation and things like that. And my congregation, again, was so supportive.

There was this one spiritual mentor and friend of mine who, before every communion service, she would drag me into the back to pray a blessing on all of the priesthood members that were going to serve communion, and she didn't want me to ever feel like I wasn't an important minister in the congregation. I get a little bit choked up thinking about it, feeling so loved, but it did impact how my feelings towards the church and I went through a time where I was I was still like running a spiritual practices group every other week and involved in kind of the spiritual side of things, but I took a step back from a lot of the other ministry and volunteer roles that I was in. And because I wasn't sure how I felt about everything, and eventually we did get married, and we had a beautiful wedding that I loved, and my priesthood was reinstated, but it I always felt this after that, I felt a little bit of a disconnect, of like, Is this really a place for me, but some people in my congregation decided to put some legislation forward to World Conference to try to push for more acceptance of priesthood members in different types of relationships, which, of course, got tabled or referred to the First Presidency. But thinking about, you know, that context I grew up in, where, instead of just accepting things the way they are, instead questioning and, you know, trying to push for a broader, a bigger table, and the broader a bigger circle, and so that I slowly started to kind of get more back involved with different church things. Sadly for Matthew, it was a really bad experience for him of the church, because he was new. He didn't know anything about Community of Christ. And here his, you know, kind of first a big experience of it was his beloved being hurt by the organization. And so it was a really hard time for him as well. And so, yeah, I started kind of slowly getting back involved with things, going to camp for one day or two days, and slowly, kind of building back up my involvement. And then the pandemic came, and we were all I was working from home, and our mission center president was stepping down, and had asked for a group of people to volunteer to take on the role in a volunteer capacity instead of the paid capacity. And this was not something that I had thought about ever doing, but several people reached out to me and said, Shannon, we think you would actually be a really great person for this role, given your background in technology and your leadership skills. And it really made me think about, oh, maybe there is a spot in leadership here for me. And so I thought about it, and decided to say a conditional Yes. And my conditional yes was that I would not do it alone. I needed to have other people with me and and, yeah, I guess that kind of takes us up to 2021, when I became part of the mission center President team for Canada West.

**Speaker 1** 38:00

And what a year to do that in the middle of a global pandemic and on the heels of some really hard things in your life and your journey with ministry and with the church. So you took it on a kind of a conditional basis. So what brought you to stepping in, being all in, so to speak, in that team of how many were on your team for Mission Center President?

**Shannon McAdam** 38:30

Yeah, that at first, there was three of us, myself, cat Goheen, who I had actually gone to Vancouver School of Theology with. She and I were companions there. And so smart, and so so so much spiritual depth, and actually. And the third person at the time was Gwen Beer, who's my auntie, and she's such a oh my gosh, and she's just been called to 70, which is a huge joy to I am. I am so excited for her to that call. But anyway, but Gwen is just has such a big heart and is so practical I needed. I wanted someone on our team who have that kind of practicality to them, and in terms of, like, how I ended up saying yes to I have to credit in a lot of ways my grandfather and my mother, my grandfather was



District President back in the days before mission centers, and we had districts as a volunteer. And my mother was involved with district leadership as a volunteer, and I realized that I could, like even in a volunteer capacity, do pretty big things and contribute to something, and maybe in this capacity of further leadership, help help drop like us, to draw that circle wider and build that bigger table and push for the changes in the church that I was hoping we could make. And, yeah, and then. And more recently, Gwen discerned that she was ready to step away from the team, but had the really wise discernment to invite someone new to be together as a group of four. So Becky Middleton has been our other companion on this journey, and I will say, like they've been such an amazing group of women to work with like, it's been such a blessing. And early on, we decided, you know, if anything seems, ever seems really hard and we feel really alone, that's our cue to, like, call someone else or send a message to someone else in the group and say, like, Hey, I'm doing this really hard thing, and it's I'm not sure what to do, or I'm not sure what to say, and just remember that we're not alone in this leadership, and that we're here for each other, and that has been a huge gift to me, and a huge part of being able to, yeah, continue that, find that balance between the work, work, full time, work life, and having another job that's not paid on the side as well, which has some really, really busy times and some really easy times. Yeah,

**Speaker 1** 41:17

I love hearing your story, and I've heard doing these interviews, I've heard a few other stories of as we moved into understanding that we needed to walk into the future with shared leadership and a volunteer model for roles that for so long in the past had been sustained full-time employed ministers, but, you know, you brought something up that's part of our history, and I love the way you bridged it into understanding the volunteer role as a Mission Center President, and that is our district presidents were always volunteer For decades and decades and decades, and that was a big job, and those folks shouldered a lot of responsibility and shared that and with other volunteers who pastored and who were in variety of councils and lots of different functions. So I love that, that that was a way for you to live into this, and that you had a grandfather that modeled what that looked like.

**Shannon McAdam** 42:27

Yeah, my grandfather is Alf Beer. I don't know. Some people might know him. He's a little bit famous in the Pacific Northwest. And, you know, it's really funny. So I was at the local Chilliwack congregation here had a anniversary event last fall where they celebrated their 50th anniversary of being in their building and 100th of anniversary of being in Chilliwack. And they had all of these, like artifacts, quote, unquote, of like old district newsletters and things. And so I was looking through, and there's this newsletter from, I don't know, it was early 1980s and they were talking about how, you know, they really need more people to give generously, and they need more volunteers to help with the work of the church and all this. It's like, oh, man, we could run this article today in our mission center use letter and say pretty much the same things. And it was, I don't know it was really, yeah, it was fun. And also, I don't know, in some ways comforting to know that people were asking the same questions and wondering the same things, yeah, back in the day,

**Robin Linkhart** 43:39

That's awesome. Well, I want to take a little side trip now and talk about a different topic that's resident and we've heard, heard it threaded through your story. It may seem odd, but often, as ordained

ministers, we can be so consumed by the doing of ministry and church life and all you know, everything else that we carry in our life, that that we find ourselves neglecting the being aspect of discipleship and ministry and the continuing need of our own souls. So Shannon, how do you nurture your relationship with God?

**Shannon McAdam** 44:22

That's such a good question. There are things that I don't know. There's sort of, I would call them, like my non negotiables, like at least once a year I make sure I get to a spiritual retreat. Usually it's Samish Island, because that's my spiritual home, where I can spend days in silence and contemplation and being in nature and filling my cup back up. And, yeah, the nurturing spirit retreats I've attended there over the years. Sometimes I get to go more than once a year, but I always go at least once. They have really, really helped sustain my spiritual journey, and I've learned so many different spiritual practices as well that I've been able to take into my daily life. I The my other thing I, you know, I've always had a kind of often on again meditation practice, but a few years back, I was in a really difficult time at work. In my work life, I was not getting along with one of my colleagues very well, and he accused me of always being so negative. And I was like, that's not me at all. Like, mostly people complain that I'm too positive. So I don't understand where this is coming from, but I took it as a sign that maybe I wasn't showing up as my true self, um, at work and maybe in other places in my life as well. And I decided to get really regimented about starting my day with a meditation practice. And in those first few time, few first few months, it was a guided meditation that I would turn on on an app, and I would sit early in the morning before I started my day and listen to that guided meditation. And it really helped me begin to root myself back into my true self, my the self that God wants me to be, I think, in a lot of ways, and to meet with the Holy Spirit on a regular basis. When I felt a little bit more back to myself, I decided to make it more. I call it daily ish, so I try to, like, you know, four to five work days a week. I'm up early in the morning, and I've tried different practices lately. It's usually pulling a card from like a spiritual deck of cards, and contemplating the images and the words there, and beginning my day in that kind of way. And it has really helped sustain me for the long haul. And I never thought I would be a part of the kind of person who got up early to meditate every morning. But it turns out, it has just been a real gift to my life and to staying connected with God. And then my other non negotiable is every night since I was about 12 years old, I write in a journal and reflect on my day, and that helps me kind of keep track of how I'm feeling and what is important to me. Kind of like, I don't know if folks are familiar with the Prayer of Examen, which is a spiritual practice, so that's kind of what my daily journaling is. And then, actually every week, on Monday nights, I have a group of women. I join online and we pray the Prayer of Examen together and then share about our lives. So all of those things help keep me connected to God and tuned into the Spirit moving in my life. I love I love that Those all sound really nurturing. I just kind of felt my spirit, just kind of sink into a center as you're talking. It was really wonderful. Alright, so we would love it if you would tell us about receiving your call to the office of apostle. Well, it was very unexpected. Let me tell you that it was and it's really funny sometimes how God works in our lives. I want to go back a little bit to the spring of last year. So spring of 2024, I was scheduled to go to Toronto and my Mission Center President team role to represent our team as a memorial service for Dar Shepherdson, who had recently passed, who was the Bishop of Canada up until the time that he passed away. And strangely enough, a few weeks before my own sibling Joy had gone into the ICU, and we really weren't sure how long we had left with Joy at that point, but Joy kind of rallied a bit, and so I decided, well, I'm gonna go take this trip and be there, because it's important. And I was kind of

looking forward to getting away for a couple of days too, because it was a pretty intense time. Is you can imagine, I was in a pretty tender space, but the folks in Toronto welcomed me so warmly, and I felt really, I felt a sense come over me that I was doing the right work at the right time, and I was sitting during Dar's Memorial, and someone talked about how Dar had worked in a corporate job for 16 years before coming to work, work in Community of Christ. And I was like, Huh, that's funny, because in a month, I'll have worked at my job for 16 years, and I wonder when I might leave my corporate job and go work something else. And I ended up having a little conversation with Art Smith at the time to say, you know, art, I know I've always said that I love where I work and I love being a volunteer, but listening to Dar's story today made me think perhaps this is a question I need to revisit again. And Art and Art was like, Oh, I'm happy to talk to you about that at any time. But I said, Yes, let's talk later. A couple weeks later, my sibling Joy passed away, and it was a really hard time, and I took some time away from work to to be with my grief and my family and be with myself. And so that kind of idea faded a little bit into the background, but then it just kept going to church things and hearing the hymn "You Have Come Down to the Lake Shore". And there's this line in the hymn about leaving behind your small boat to seek other seas. And every time I heard that hymn, I cried and I could not and there's a verse about you need my hands of my exhaustion, and I was just Yes. It felt like every time I heard that hymn, God was saying, Shannon, I have a call for you. And I was like, nope, nope, nope. And so I was actually I was scheduled to meet with Art he was in town for that Chilliwack anniversary party that I mentioned earlier, and he and I were going to have a virtual meeting with Stassi to talk about leadership development, because it's an area I'm really passionate about, of just helping form young leaders and encourage people in leadership in the church to grow into their gifts. And so we had this meeting scheduled, and we sat down, and I quickly realized that this was not going to be a meeting about leadership development. And I was presented with this call to Apostle, and I was very, I did not know what to say. I still don't know what to say sometimes, and but there was that, you know, feeling in the background that I'd been having, and I said, thank you. And said, I will need some time to think about this. And then so that was like on a Friday, and then the next day, I drove out to Chilliwack for their anniversary party and our celebration. And as part of the celebration, we got to go see one of their former church buildings that they had been in, and we walked into this building, and I turned to the side, and there's this little alcove, and hanging on the wall was like a plaque with some words printed on it, and it said, perhaps this is the moment for which you were created. And was like, Oh, okay. And then down in the basement of this church was a bulletin board, you know, as church basements have, with this net with fish in it hung over a map of the world. And that was, it was like, I don't know, I felt a little bit like Jonah or something like running away from God's call, but God was not going to let up easily. And that evening, at the end of the hymn sing, after all the songs had been sung, the pianist started playing, "You Shall Go Down to the Lake Shore". And I was like, okay, okay. And I talked to a couple of close spiritual friends about the call. I talked to Matthew a lot. He was the first person I went. I actually drove to his work after my meeting with Stassi and Art, and said, We need to talk. And over the course of the next month, I realized that, or we realized it was a call that I could accept and step into. And since saying yes, it has felt a little bit about like, I don't know, getting on a roller coaster ride on something, because there's been, you know, ending my current job and saying goodbye to colleagues who I love dearly and have been amazing supports, and, yes, beginning to build what's going to be a pretty different life for us as I try something totally new.

**Speaker 1** 55:29

Yeah, so this is a brand new chapter in your ongoing adventure with God, and it's already starting to change things for you. What else has been unfolding in these last few weeks.

**Shannon McAdam 55:48**

I mean, it is, I do have an unfolding sense of trust in God in a lot of ways that I don't know. I've had a lot of self doubts in this time and felt a lot of imposter feelings like, who am I to be called? But then I think about all of the people in the Bible who were, you know, unprepared, unqualified, and yet God called them anyway. And so I feel like I'm in good company that respect. And yeah, I think, I mean, in some ways, not much will change, because I will be, I won't be moving, I'll be working from home. I'll continue to live here, and I'll be, I'll be adding some traveling, and I'm going to have to tidy up my home office here again. But yeah, it's I'm preparing myself for a new way of life in some ways.

**Speaker 1 56:52**

Yeah. So Shannon, 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 movement, this peace movement, this journey people and the heart of God's vision for all creation?

**Shannon McAdam 57:16**

Yeah, I you know, I think hope. I heard it said that hope is a muscle, and I think it is something that we have to do regularly so we can keep it limber. I think what brings me hope is that, like I've said, building the bigger table and drawing the circle wider, I think we have so much to offer the world. And I think when people hear about us, they're like, Wow, what is this church? And I am hopeful that there are many people who I don't know how to put it, except who need us, and they don't know yet that they need us. People who are longing for a spiritual home, longing for a sense of community, and I think our church is really uniquely positioned to give people that sense of home and that sense of open open place to explore and ask questions and be faithful and through it all, and journey together through it all, knowing that we're not alone. And so I think that's my hope. And also I don't know, on a personal note, I so many times during my time as Mission Center President, I've said, Oh, if only I had more time to do this or that or the other thing, if only and so I'm hopeful that some of the the hopes that I have for our church, that I can be even one little, little piece of helping make that make that possible.

**Robin Linkhart 58:58**

Okay, is there anything else that you would like to share with us today, Shannon, that I haven't asked you about?

**Shannon McAdam 59:06**

No, I think, I think that's good. I've really loved spending time with you, Robin, so thank you for this opportunity.

**Robin Linkhart 59:15**

Oh, thank you. It's my joy. And thank you so much for making time to be with us here on Project Zion Podcast and share your story with all of our listeners. Shannon. <Thank You>. If you would like to hear more from Shannon, check out episode 766, in the what's brewing series where she talks with others about combined reunions in the northwest. That's part one. Part two is episode 769, to meet other

leaders who are taking on new leadership roles at Community of Christ 2025, World Conference. Check out our Nice to Matcha 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.