

Episode 4: Hopes for the Future

Transcription

1) Leading with Accompaniment

Lyndon: Things are shifting more rapidly and quickly than everything, right? Look at the world, everything changes in 24 hours practically. And so, the idea that things are not shifting quickly in the church would be, I mean obviously we know it is, but it could shift more quickly even, just because that's just the way things are going. And we're discovering that's, that's inescapable. So we could embrace that and actually plan for the future rather than just letting things happen. So it could be encouraging to say, "How is Jesus calling us to follow him in radical ways and empowering young adults in ways that we accompany and give them tools. And not just say there's a rec room you can go hang out in. Which is great too, everyone needs spaces for that, but actually could be leading the way with accompaniment. Not like, we made a mess now you clean up our mess that we can't figure out. Not that. But, you know, we're in it together.

Michelle: That vision of sort of leading the way with accompaniment, right, that we don't sort of wash our hands of the church and say, "Okay Young adults you do with it what you can." But that um ... but that we find the ways to, you know, to step aside so that others can step in, but we continue to walk alongside.

Pause for Reflection and Discussion

2) Creating Multi Generational Church

Sarah: You know, I hope that we really truly can become a multi generational church of, you know, people – where people actually do feel like we are all the present of the church.

Gretchen: My hope is that the young adults that come feel like they are welcome. They're loved, they know that they're a child of God. That, uh, people see leadership skills in them, and gifts in them and open up the spaces for them to explore that. Yeah, there's relationship building, there's all those good things that can make us really good church for each other.

Michelle: Going back to the Baptismal phrase of the ministry – the mission we share. And uh I guess my hope is that this church continues to be a church where people of all ages can find - can live into what those promises, what we say those promises mean. And, that we'll be nimble enough to adjust, to be the church that the next generation can be – you know stays part of I guess.

Pause for Reflection and Discussion

3) Persistent and Patient

Anne: I hope they can be patient with us and persistent. And walk alongside us and teach us.

Gretchen: Hope that we can be patient with each other, as we try to work on this together, but yeah, also hope that young adults are patient with us as we maybe try to work a bit and find ways to be supportive.

Anne: Persistence goes with patience. Cause young adults can be patient, and they can tap us and tap us and tap us. I think both are important.

Lyndon: I hope to see a young adult Bishop in the ELCIC by 2030. Concrete goals, let's get there.

Pause for Reflection and Discussion

4) Hopes for Young Adults who have been Hurt by the Church

Anne: That we listen. That we listen to the hard stuff and hold it and apologise when we can. And just hold space for that.

Michelle: I hope that when we hear or encounter young adults with those kinds of stories that we don't minimize them. And that we don't compare them to our positive experiences. You know, that we don't disvalidate them, but that we own that their experience of the church is valid.

Sarah: We need to learn not to rush to say, “But we’re different. We’re not those Christians.” Cause, those experiences are so real, and so damaging, and so in need of care.

Pause for Reflection and Discussion

5) Holding Space for Discovery and Discernment

Gretchen: Yeah, I mean, accompanying someone might be not seeing them for a while. Right, but then saying, “Well we’re still here. We’re still open – you know the doors always open and we’re still here to be in relationship with you as a sign of God’s commitment to you as well, right. So, yeah.

Sarah: That, you know if we could get out of our own way enough to, as Anne said, hold that space, and do it respectfully enough that when and if those young adults, you know, people who have had that experience of any age, are ready to see if maybe there is something for them in the church, that we’re considered trustworthy enough that they might check us out to see if that’s, that’s a place they might find it.

Michelle: I also hope that we empower people to encounter God and love outside of the church and that we sort of release them to experience the good news beyond our own structures. Because if we’re just - if it’s just about like getting them to come to us then that’s not particularly helpful. But if we trust that God can encounter them even outside of our own structures and we remind them that God is encountering them in the midst of wherever they are whether or not choose to be part of our structure, I think that’s really important.

Pause for Reflection and Discussion

6) Final Thoughts

Lyndon: As you say, we’re not just waiting for CLAY every two years or whatever it is, but if in our Synods and regions if we have capacity to organise more regular events. I mean, Campus ministry has a bit of that structure where I am, where you can do retreats where you can do more regular – there’s a weekly meet up with students. So if there’s capacity for that,

that would be a way to, uh, to invest in young adult ministry. So we really just need, we need that kind of support, whatever that might look like.

Sarah: I think young adults are often – I think it's a demographic that's often kinda not focused on in terms of church things because, it's a - it's an unstable time and people are moving around and their maybe going to school or their maybe figuring stuff out or their moving or at protests 8 hours a day and don't have time – you know and that is a blessing. Right, that the fact that this is a time in people's lives when they don't have this like, you know, rock solid stability and they're not bogged down by all the woes of capitalism. That's an asset, and a resource to – and like a vital chapter of the life cycle that we as a group of, you know, people of faith miss out on if the only place where those conversations and questions are happening is on campuses.

Michelle: That we will continue to find ways to bring young adults into the conversation with us. So that we don't have – yeah, so that we just keep talking about it because I think if we keep talking about it, then we keep talking about it. And that, uh, and that's good.

Lyndon: One thing I experienced that uh, I served as a Lutheran pastor in the ELCA and that synod had an assistant to the bishop for youth ministry and low and behold, they had one of the best youth ministries around, cause they had like eight giant events per year for middle school and highschool. And so it's investing in those events

Anne: Finding those connecting points and those opportunities that we were so able to have. And so how do we keep those – nurture those things, those possibilities. And get creative about how we lift up young adults. And connect, it was – when you have those moments where you can connect across, even this conversation, right, we're across Canada. How do we make those things happen more?

Pause for Reflection and Discussion