

Lizzy: I'm like imploring, I'm imploring everybody to get out here and like whatever way it is—whether it's TikTok or Instagram or your website or you know, marching pride parade, but like, we've got to.

Laura: Yeah. And like a lot of our colleagues will put their sermons on like their sub stack or their website and that gets shared. I mean, there's just so many ways to share the way that we encounter God and ... with our communities. And so, yeah, please think about it.

Brandon: Hi, I'm Brandon Nappi.

Hannah: Hi, I'm Hannah Black.

B: And we're your hosts on The Leader's Way, an audio pilgrimage from Berkeley Divinity School, the Episcopal Seminary at Yale University.

H: On this journey, we reflect on what matters most in life as we talk about all things spirituality, innovation, leadership, and transformation.

H: Hey, Brandon.

B: How's it going, Hannah?

H: Oh, it's going well.

B: I think I know why you're laughing.

H: Yeah, well, the thing is we shared our rodeo experiences last time, but we forgot a critical one.

B: Well, you know, when you go somewhere as big as Texas, it's not easily exhausted in one episode.

H: There's a lot to report back. It's true.

B: So much. And there were several theological references during the rodeo itself.

H: That was a surprise to me.

B: It was definitely a surprise. And namely, one of these bulls that these amazing bull riders were riding, I guess if that's the technical term, was very interesting. Oh, do you want to... I'll leave the reveal to you.

H: Well, the thing is, I never thought in my life I would have a favorite bull involved in bull riding, but it is the bull known as Spilt Communion. You know, We were like fish out of water, and that

was something I understood. Or I also really didn't... I didn't...

B: No, that's a great way of saying it. On the one hand, I was like, they've rolled out the red carpet for us, right?

H: Yeah, like they saw us coming.

B: Yeah, it made me really hopeful that maybe the liturgical tradition is alive and well in Texas. Like, right? There's lots of communion and people would know what that meant.

H: Yeah, well, even the announcer got a good chuckle out of this and was saying, like, "Well, maybe he spilled communion. Now he's going to spill this guy off his back."

B: Right, and then I think he even said, "Yeah, and maybe even the holy water will be spilled."

H: It did just keep going.

B: I wonder how many folks know what holy water is in this crowd. Oh, yeah. It was... And, of course, it was a lot of suspense. No one seemed to be hurt.

H: Well, it was touch and go there for a while. I

B: It was. One dude definitely took a bull hoof... A hoof to the shoulder. To the shoulder. You know, my mirror neurons are very sensitive. So I just get very anxious in moments like that, but he seemed to walk away. I don't know if he was the one that won for the evening, but you could walk away with a few thousand dollars.

H: Yeah, and I don't think he did win, but as far as my experience of the evening, he won my heart. Well, Brandon, let me tell you a little bit about Lizzie McManus Dale for our listeners. I'm going to keep it short and sweet, because we'll ask them to share their stories during this episode. But the Reverend Lizzie McManus Dale was ordained in 2020 and is the founding planter of Jubilee Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas. You can find her on Instagram and TikTok where she has tens of thousands of followers that she shares her church life with.

B: And I'd like to introduce the Reverend Laura DePanthelo, who is the associate rector of St. Paul's in Pittsburgh, which is actually in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania. She has been an Episcopal priest since 2019. She's worked as a chaplain in a trauma hospital in Trenton, New Jersey. She's also a certified Kripalu yoga teacher, which makes her really, really interesting to me. I love yoga practice. These two humans are just really fun, really cool, exceptionally wise.

H: And we should also mention that they have a new podcast called "And Also With You," which the day this is released, you can head on over to "And Also With You" to hear Brandon and I on their podcast and then them on our podcast, in what I've been calling the Disney Channel crossover episode. Lizzie really hit the nail on the head when she said it's like that "New Girl/

Brooklyn Nine-Nine” crossover episode. That’s one of the best crossovers of all time. But now this is the best crossover of all time.

B: Indeed. It was pyrotechnic. I feel like if you were here, you would have seen a fireworks display, which might have culminated when Laura told us that her nickname is Mother Peaches, which could be the best nickname on the planet.

H: Yeah, I’m jealous of that.

B: Yeah. I’ve been trying to think, like, how could I have such a cool nickname? Dr. Blueberry? No, it’s not possible.

B: That’d be a strong nickname, Hannah.

H: I mean, it’s not.

B: Well, I mean, if you want to go in that direction, I would happily plant the seeds all throughout Yale Divinity School.

H: So email us at Berkeleycommunications@yale.edu with your nickname suggestions, please, or DM Berkeley at Yale.

B: OK, now we need a nickname episode. I’m so excited for this conversation. Dear listeners, you’re going to love this one.

H: Well, welcome, Lizzie and Laura, to the Leader’s Way podcast.

Both: Yay! Thanks for having us.

H: I am so excited you’re here. I have to admit, I’m fangirling just a little bit, just a little bit. Try to keep it real.

B: This is amazing.

Lizzie: So sweet.

B: I had some insomnia last night and I was imagining various, like, commercials that would entice people to listen, and y’all were larger than life. And sort of like in the Taylor Swift video.

Laura: Did we get like a, did we get a nice jingle? I could go for a jingle. Okay.

B: There were crowds of people like running after you and then Hannah and I were like, “We’re here, too!”

Lizzie: The panic I feel.

H: Yeah. Now that's ...

Lizzie: That's very sweet. If there were crowds of people chasing us, I would just lie down and be like, take me now. The zombie apocalypse is happening. I don't want to live.

H: Oh my goodness. Well, we've had a stellar cast of characters on this podcast. You're our latest stars and it's just, it's fabulous, fabulous to have you.

Laura: Yeah. I think I saw that you guys had Rowan Williams recently, so it was really nice that he could open for us and that, you know, he was kind of...

Lizzie: Like when indie artists open for the big leagues.

Laura: Yeah, you probably never heard of him, but, you know, thanks for coming out and supporting him. It really means the world to his career.

H: His career could take off.

B: Yeah. When he gave you that shout out, it was really sweet. Really humble.

Laura: Yeah. Thanks so much.

Lizzie: I mean, Laura really launched Rowan's career.

Laura: Yeah. I can say that.

Laura: Thanks for having us today.

H: Well, clearly I know who you are. Really the world knows who you are, but we would love to dig a little bit deeper, give you some space to talk a little bit about your vocation stories. I mean, I came across each of you on TikTok and then, you know, saw when you launched your podcast "And Also With You," but how ... how did each of you get there?

Laura: I can go first. Yeah. So my name is the Reverend Laura DePamfalo. I am the associate rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania, which is the Diocese of Pittsburgh. And I've been there for coming up on five years and I did not grow up Episcopalian. I don't know. The Episcopal Church is often called a destination denomination. It's very much my truth. And so I grew up kind of evangelical PCA denomination. A Presbyterian church, and just a few other kind of non-denominational churches in suburban Boston. And then was Anglican in college and didn't entirely know what that meant, but I just really liked the church that I went to. And then as I learned more, I thought, mmmmmmm, not the fit for me. And so actually in seminary is when I became Episcopalian. And so I went to Princeton seminary for my MDiv. And you

know, when I showed up there and told people I was Anglican, a lot of people were like, "Okay." And then the Episcopalians were like, Oh, come with us. And so I did and never looked back. And so I entered the ordination process in Diocese of New Jersey. I was ordained a few years later and then wound up getting this position at my current church. And I never imagined that I would do digital ministry. Like it's not something that I, yeah, it just, it wasn't ... it wasn't on my radar.

But then a few years ago, a little thing called the global pandemic happened. And I had been at my church. I was ordained in a priest in December of 2019. And then the pandemic came, and just kind of all of the ministry that I had been kind of stepping into was pulled out from under me. And of course ministry still continued, but it just looked really different. And I personally, I found myself with more time at home and I started scrolling on Tik Tok for just my own personal enjoyment. And I really liked it, because it's made in a way where you really like it. It's very fun to scroll. And actually a friend of mine from seminary was a Presbyterian minister, Carrie Olson. She was on Tik Tok making videos. And she is just not the kind of person I ever thought would make Tik Tok videos. Like not to say anything, you know, mean about her. It's just, I was like, "Oh, Carrie, she's got a lot of followers." And so then I just started uploading a few, like, you know ... when you have an empty sanctuary and you're just kind of like, "What do I do? You're like, "Oh, no one's going to see me make this embarrassing video of me twirling around in vestments. Like how convenient." And so I did, and they took off, and that's how I encountered Lizzie.

So Lizzie will tell her truth in a minute, but we have never met in person. We will later this spring, but we've never been in the same room. And I feel like that's just ...

Lizzie: The universe is not ready.

Laura: The universe is not ready. I feel like that's millennial ministry. Like, I have so many internet friends and colleagues who like I meet at conferences over time, but we've never actually met and I talk to them all day. So it was just a kind of funny thing that happened. But yeah, so Lizzie and I just became friends. And then I noticed like a lot of people would reach out and ask questions to us, you know, "Wow, I've never seen a female priest!" or "Wow, I didn't, I didn't know that you could be affirming of LGBTQ people and be Christian." Like so many people have never heard those things before, which to us is like, "What?" To many of them, yeah, blows their mind. And so they would reach out, but I don't have time to be answering to all of their questions. And it wouldn't be a good use of our time because we both have full time parishes. And so I kind of was wondering like, how can I have these conversations and speak to these wonderful questions and also not spend all my time doing that? And so I was thinking like maybe a podcast is the way to go, but I don't want it just to be me. I want to have a conversation and Lizzie and I had connected. And so I was like, let's let's do a podcast. And it took well over a year to actually ever launch an episode. But that's kind of how "And Also With You" was birthed and came to be. And we started that in the fall, and it's it's been a fun journey. But Lizzie, do you want to share kind of your road to getting here?

Lizzy: Oh my gosh, I would love to. And I just have to say that like there's so many points in this story where Mother Peach's aka Laura DePamfalo was my hero and still is. The podcast would

not exist without her. No, it's not true.

B: Can I hear first the Mother Peaches reference? Is there a story?

Laura: So, my last name is DePamfalo and some people call me LDP and I went to college in Georgia. And so I would just say like, sometimes it'd be LD pumpkins or then someone said LD Peaches. And so then I just on the internet went as Laura Peaches so someday when I applied for a job, they wouldn't look up my they wouldn't find me and I –and it worked. I fooled them. I have a job now.

B: That is such a power nickname. Wow. Okay.

Laura: Yeah. So Laura Peaches some places. But yes, Lizzie, speak your truth.

Lizzie: Oh my God. Okay, so it's funny. I have a very similar and also very different story. So I grew up as sort of mishmash of denominations. I was baptized Roman Catholic and like in a very Irish Catholic, Southern, Catholic family, moved a bunch as a kid, and like the one sort of consistent institution of my life was the Catholic Church, and I loved it. I know a lot of people come out of Catholicism who are women clergy, right? Who have like sort of battle scars, but I had just like a really beautiful, very multicultural experience and really have, still, deep friendships and abiding relationships with Catholic sisters and priests who were very formative to me.

But all that ... at the same time, my mom had felt called her whole life to be a priest, which obviously was not an option for her in the Catholic Church. And she actually, she was a social worker who had spent most of her social work career in campus ministry or adjacent to Catholic ministry and then transitioned to be a stay at home parent for the like early years of mine and my brother's lives. And then when I was in fifth grade, my parents very rudely took us away from the Catholic Church because my mom was really, I think, feeling this call, and started attending a Methodist Church, a United Methodist Church just because, and this I always emphasize: their friends invited them. Literally. Their friends were like, "Hey, it seems like you really value church. Why don't you come with us?" And it was not like they had researched "What kind of denomination do we want to be a part of?" Literally –they were invited. And I say "rudely" because I was devastated, and the greatest trauma of my life was that they had already cast the Christmas pageant at the United Methodist Church. So I didn't get to audition to be Mary and you stopped being in the Christmas pageant in fifth grade. So I'm still bitter about it. It's fine. Thank you for your consolation. And apparently I caused a real stir. I didn't know this, because I asked to be Joseph because I was like, "Well, who's the next biggest character?"

Laura: We're not ready for that.

H: I'll be the supporting lead.

Lizzie: Exactly. That's all that my little fifth grade mind was thinking.

Lizzie: Literally a decade later, my best friend was the parish administrator for this church and the children's ministry's team were still talking about the scandal of this.

Hannah: Out of the mouths of babes.

Lizzie: Truly. Which I just feel like kind of is a funny foreshadowing story of my ministerial career.

Hannah: Yes, of Father Lizzie.

Lizzie: Truly. Yeah. I just want to do this thing. This is just my truth. But apparently that's going to cause a lot of waves. So we joined the United Methodist Church. My mom discerned her call. Her story is her story. It's a beautiful story. But she enrolled at Duke Divinity School right down the road, because I was in Chapel Hill, North Carolina at this point. And took four years to get her M. Div. Worked full time, raised kids full time. And so just was a huge inspiration to me for someone at 40 shifting careers that really ... I mean, it was a career shift, but she also was like ... It was more like a career fulfillment. It wasn't like she was transferring from finance or something. So I had a sort of blended time in the United Methodist Church, in that I was in the fishbowl of being a pastor's kid, which made me very certain I, 1) never wanted to be a pastor and 2) never wanted to marry a pastor.

But also just had a lot of really beautiful, gorgeous memories I really cherish of knowing God, of knowing God's people, of being loved and cared for by that church, of worshiping God in the beauty of holiness. It was a beautiful sanctuary. It was a church plant, which again is a thing that later in my life I look back on and I'm like, "Oh, that's interesting that that was very formative to me." So by the time I got to college, I went to school actually in Massachusetts. I went to Mount Holyoke in Western Mass. I was very ready to not go to church. I was ready. I was like a true pastor's kid, ready for a break. That lasted like three weeks. And I looked around in the tiny town of South Hadley, Massachusetts, and was like, "Where can I go to church? I can go where I can walk." And there were basically two options in town. And one option was an Episcopal church. And I was like vaguely familiar with that. But I walked in to All Saints South Hadley, which is, 1) just a beautiful sanctuary. And 2) their priest is still there. The Reverend Tanya Williams, who's still a dear friend of mine, was so hospitable. And the liturgy felt like the Catholic church that I had grown up in, which felt very familiar. But they had women in leadership, which was really cool. And on the first Sunday, Tanya was like, "Let me introduce you to my wife." And I was like, "I'm sorry, what?"

H: "Surprise!"

Lizzie: And I was on my own journey at that point, I was coming out as queer. So that was a huge thing for me at that time. And it also was a huge thing that I could show up in a liturgy that felt very quiet. And that I could just be present and I didn't have to sort of emotionally manufacture anything. The elements of evangelicalism that I needed to deconstruct from and I needed to break from were really offered to me in the Episcopal church. And so the whole time I was like, "Well, I'm never gonna be a pastor and I'm never gonna marry a pastor, but I'm curious about religion, so why don't I major in it?"

And I dove deep into studying queer and feminist theology and womanist theology. That's what I ended up writing my undergraduate thesis on. And I'm like riding this wave. And I'm like, "Yeah, I don't really like church or ministry, even though I'm all about it. So I think I should go to divinity school so I can be a professor." I saw these things, it's like, I would say this to my friends and they'd be like, "Okay, Lizzie."

So a couple of things happened. One, that priest, Tanya, asked me to do an internship my senior year for academic credit. That was how she enticed me to do it. Where I got to preach once a month, which I realize, to be a senior in college and to be given not just like the midweek service, like the Sunday morning dual like 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Eucharist. And partly now that I'm a solo clergy person, I'm like, "Ooh, I really get it."

H: How smart.

Lizzie: But to be trusted with that was huge. And actually it was like in the praying process of preaching, it was like something that tapped into my love of creative writing. I know this is terribly shocking, but my background in theater, it connected all those things. And it was like Jesus was saying to me, "This can also be yours." This can also be yours in that it is God's, but it is something, a place where I could be my own self. So through that internship, and through falling in love with my now-spouse, who I was very reticent to fall in love with because he felt very called to be a pastor and I was like, "Nope." But ... God has a sense of humor. Through that, I found myself at Duke Divinity School. And like Laura, I was really well into seminary before I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church. And so I had maintained this attending an Episcopal Church, keeping my Methodist membership. I called it a dual citizenship, but it was going into divinity school and eventually finally actually realizing in my first ever Easter vigil that God was calling me to be a priest that I was like, "Okay, it's time to put my name on the dotted line." So it's funny. To me, this story was me kicking and screaming, but on paper, it's like, "Homegirl, you were in your second year of divinity school." Yeah.

Laura: It was, yes, you were fully compliant.

Lizzie: Yeah, got it. And so while I was in divinity school, I read this book by Sarah Coakley called *God, Sexuality, and the Self*. So good. And she has this great chapter about the language we use for God, specifically "Father," in the Trinitarian formula. Because for years, what had sort of held me back from being an Episcopalian was I was like, "There's so much masculineist language in the liturgy, and Methodists are actually a little less fussy about liturgy." So there was like a little bit more, just an interesting thing to think about. But she had this line that she said, So basically, (this is the super quick Lizzie summary) Father is not a gender term, and we can understand that God is beyond gender even as we use this sort of ancient, often-misunderstood-as-very-gendered formula, 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' So she said, "So can feminists call God 'Father?' Not only can they, but I think they really must because we are the ones who can incarnate and embody a different understanding of God beyond gender." And that line was like, "Okay, not only is this suturing up some wounds I have around the liturgy, I was also like, I think I'm called to be Father Lizzie." Which also calls back to my Catholic roots,

because all the priests I knew growing up went by “Father,” and my mom's now a pastor.

And I was like, “If the Methodists had called my mom “Mother,” little 10-year-old Lizzie would have been mad.” I'm not saying every pastor's kid feels that way, but I would have. So in my discernment process, I started to think about the name that I wanted to go by, and Father Lizzie was what emerged. So I was ordained in 2020, June 2020, through a series of events that ended up in Texas to do with my husband John and I had both done our Anglican years at Seminary of the Southwest, and had found work out here in the diocese of Texas and really loved it. We had no connections to Texas and now we're very rooted here, really happy here. But yeah, I was ordained in June 2020, two weeks after George Floyd was murdered. And so there was the full COVID ordination of 10 people in the sanctuary masked and 20 feet apart and no music, but there were protests happening all around outside the sanctuary so we could hear that. That was the music of ordination. And the first thing I did after being ordained was walk right out in the streets and join them, and it was a really terrible time in the world. And there was like all the global tragedy of global pandemic and racial reckoning. And there was like my deep personal private tragedy of ... I was ordained and then went home to do church on Zoom. Like that sucks. No one was having fun. And I, like Laura, downloaded TikTok, I started scrolling and I actually saw Mother Peaches, AKA. And what I really admired about Lauren, I think this harkens to your story about Carrie, is you were not on TikTok to be a personality. You were doing actual pastoral ministry on this digital platform and utilizing it in a way that I thought was strategic and smart. You were aware of how the app works and what captures people's attention, but not like saccharine or over the top. It was funny, it was lighthearted, but it was theologically robust. And I was like, so this isn't like Joel Osteen on TikTok, this is what it actually means to do ministry.

And so I started making content on TikTok, which was in part for fun and in part because I was like, I feel like I'm playing dress up every day. You know, I would do my makeup, put on my collar and sit in front of my laptop. And that blossomed and actually completely unrelated to that through work in my diocese, I was called to be a church planter. And so that's founding a new community. I like to say that I'm the midwife and God is giving birth to it. And we started, I got to pick the name, Jubilee Episcopal Church, in July of 2022. But what's the sort of wild story about Jubilee is that it's taken off like a rocket because of social media. So the like quick stat is that in the year 2023, we had 200 first time guests that we documented; it's probably more than that. And I had them all fill out a survey and of the people who filled out the survey, 75% of people who came to visit Jubilee came because they had seen my personal social media and had taken it as invitation to Jubilee. So digital ministry has ended up actually having a huge impact on pastoral ministry, which is not something in June of 2020 I would have ever imagined.

And concurrent all this Laura pursued and was like, “We should do a podcast.” And I was like, we totally should. And when she reached out in like July of 22, I was like, “I have a five month old and a new church and I really want to do this. And I understand if you need to go to a different direction, but like I need a few months.” And she very patiently waited and we started to dream and we took a long time to think about it too, of like how we could in these long form ways answer these big questions we got. So that's how “And Also With You” was born.

Laura: Yeah, we wanted it to be like a sustainable thing because like we're not paid to do it. It's a labor of love and— we have gotten money. We have a Patreon like and other people have

funded it and really grateful for that. But yeah, we have full time jobs and families. So it's like, we need to do it in a way where we can do it the best we can with what we got.

Lizzie: Yeah in a way that honors the questions, right? That like let them cook.

Laura: Yeah. Yeah.

B: Thank you both for telling your stories. It's I feel like the most sacred thing in my own ministry. It's always been to just bear witness to people's stories. So it's not like hearing your story is the prelude. Like it's the main event and our conversation today for me. And two things that really seem common, as you talked about like the issues that are simmering, whether like we're working with seminarians or as a spiritual director, the question that always inevitably comes up is, "How do I know what God is calling me to?" Right? It's a discernment question. And for both of you in your vocation story ... it wasn't altogether clear to you and you were trying different things. And so for all of us, but especially those who have a very specific thing that they're discerning, could you go describe a little bit about your process and what were you looking for? Was it a feeling? Was it some kind of feedback? How do you know that you're in the place where God is calling you to? I'd love to hear both of you just reflect a little bit about that.

Lizzie: I feel like it is a tension between deeply practical pragmatic things that are just the facts of life. I love a job that allows me to read. I love a job that allows me flexibility in my schedule. I love a job that gives me a lot of creative space, which ... people I think don't often think of the priesthood as very creative, but it's like I'm writing a term paper every week, which I enjoy. Not every week, but you know, and creativity and crafting community and creativity and spirituality. So part of that is just practically when I was looking around at like jobs that were available. I knew I wanted something that would allow those parts of my spirit to flourish. But then it was also these like very specific touchstones.

So the story from the Easter Vigil of when I felt called to be a priest was my husband and I being good seminarians were like, oh, we know that like this church probably needs help with things. So we went to the rector and we're like, hey, where do you need volunteers? Like churches always need more people to say, "What's the thing that no one's volunteering for and helping people?" And she's like, "I really don't have any acolytes for the Easter Vigil." And we were like, "Right, sure, we'll do that." Methodists do Easter Vigil that are sitting quietly in a sanctuary overnight, looking at a bunch of candles. It's like an altar of repose.

H: So you weren't ready for like a musical theater production.

Lizzie: When she said meet me out by the bonfire and we had 15 minutes to learn that this thing was going to be two hours. I was like, "Man." And then we got up there to light the like 8,000 candles on the altar once you get in the sanctuary, right. And I knocked over a candelabra, nearly burned down the church, and two little 10 year old boys who were the usual acolytes came up to tell me how to do the thing. So I was like, I sat down. I was like, "I'm the stupidest human who has ever existed." I was like, "Oh my God," I was humiliated. I was on the verge of tears. Like it was, uh, and ... and the gospel lesson that year is actually the gospel this year for

the Easter Vigil. And it was the Markan text of the women at the end. It says they fled for fear and amazement and told no one. And I heard God very clearly say, "You have been fleeing for fear. Flee to me for amazement." And I do have these like voice of God moments. And I realized that not everybody encounters God in that way, but I think what made me open to receiving that, because when I got home and we were having dinner in our kitchen, I looked at Jonathan, I said, "I think I'm called to be a priest." And he went, "That's what you got from that experience?" Is that ... I knew frankly that I was really unhappy. Like I was in a happy marriage. I had a lot of stability, but when I imagined a career, I knew that –I don't dream of labor, right? But like I, I dreamt of something with purpose and with joy and something that, um, I could see, in the slow roll of time, tangible difference in people's lives. And I knew that ministry was, was a place for that. And I also knew that it was terrifying and it was one of the most vulnerable, risky things. And I kind of needed God to sort of like chuck me under the chin and be like, "Baby girl, wake up." But I also, I kind of needed to know that I was miserable with like the other options, you know? And so I think that takes a lot of self honesty, right? Because there are much safer paths. There are much more financially secure paths than taking this big risk. And I really valued joy. So Laura, I'm curious what your thoughts are.

Laura: Yeah. How do I know what God is calling me to do or to be? Well, I think for all of us in the church, it's in community. I mean, you, you hear other people validating your gifts. And so it's similar to Lizzie, like people giving me opportunities for leadership from a quote unquote "young age." And I can think about that from honestly like middle school on in the churches I was in being given responsibility and feeling just kind of a draw to that helped validate like, yeah, maybe I do have some gifts that are well suited for ministry. And then, really feeling like my purpose in life was to help connect people to God even from a young age. That's like really what I felt called to. And like growing up in churches where there were female pastors, but they were always the children's pastor or the women's pastor. Like I remember sitting in church, the senior pastor had an example of how one year for Christmas he asked for a Bible for Christmas and that's, or maybe it was his birthday. And that's how he always knew he was meant to be the pastor. And I was like, I'll never asked for one of those for my birthday. And I just remember thinking like, and I'm ... I'm a girl, like I can't, you know, I'm ... women should not be senior pastor. Like I remember thinking that very clearly. So for a long time, I would articulate that call to help connect people to God in other ways. You know, there's, there's many, many ways we can serve God. Of course, ordained ministry is not the only one, but over time, just kind of realizing that people had been cultivating and encouraging me in the church. For me, it never really felt like a resistance. It kind of just felt like that's where the path had been leading all along. And suddenly I realized, "Oh, this is where the path is leading." It's always been leading this way. And I think about this for all of my ministries in the church and even the social media stuff, like, really the only reason why I'm doing all this is to help connect people with God. Like in priesthood, you know, it's, I do that through sacraments, but I did that through TikTok too. And I do that through our podcast. And so every time I am thinking about my ministry, like that's my ... my goal is to have that connection and, and to facilitate other people encountering God as well and finding their way. For me, like that's what discernment comes down to. Like if I'm going to take on a project or do something, like, is it going to speak to this call that, that I think I have in my life and that helps me evaluate what is worth my time. I think a lot of it though, does connect

to community because that's why God gathers us to be able to speak truth in other people's lives and encourage each other.

H: So some of the most interesting stories we've heard on this podcast have been when we've asked people about their earliest experiences of God. I don't know if you have stories like that or if you'd be willing to share stories like that. Does that touch on anything?

Laura: Mine like aren't deep. Like I remember the first time I prayed for something and I got it. We were playing duck duck goose and like preschool. And I was like, dear God, I want to be goose next. And I was. And I was like, God is real. God is real. I am four. God is real.

H; So sweet.

Lizzie: Like, really sweet.

B: Duck duck goose was the best.

Laura: Yeah, it's a great game. It's a fabulous game.

B: It still holds up.

Laura: And you know, God speaks through Duck, Duck, Goose. Amazing.

Lizzie: I have one. I feel embarrassed because it's like very deep.

Laura: "Yeah, yours is really shallow?" Okay.

Lizzie: No, it's my ... No. It's okay, I'm the cringe one of the two.

Laura: Go off. Come on.

Lizzie: So I really felt called to be a priest in receiving my first communion. I didn't have the language to articulate that. It's not like I was like eight years old being like, "I'm called to be a priest someday." But I would lie to my mom about when choir practice started at the Catholic church that we were a part of, which is hilarious because I'm sure she knew what time it was. And I would lie to her so that I could sneak into this enormous sanctuary that had a giant crucifix. I mean, like twice-the-size-of-a human-being crucifix, hanging like, from the ceiling, so that I could go sneak up to the altar and lie prostrate in front of it for 20 minutes before choir practice.

H: Like all children.

Laura: Yeah, I was totally just playing duck duck goose.

Lizzie: And I couldn't even tell you why, like because I remember Becca was with me once and she was like, "What are you doing?" And I was like, "I don't know. I just really want to." Yeah. And it was years later that I learned that that's like a big part of the ordination, like vows; like you, there's a part where you lay down. So yeah. And like much ... when I think a lot about children's spirituality, which is something we think a lot about, Laura and I, in our jobs. And we've talked about it on the podcast and we think about as parents is like, children don't always have like beautiful erudite language or whatever to articulate. But that doesn't mean that there's like ... Honestly, I think I just always had such a live sense of who God was and that God wanted me to worship her.

H: Yeah. Yeah. This is bringing to mind a story you recently shared on your podcast of your child going in and feasting on the consecrated host.

Yeah. So we didn't have childcare last summer. So my husband and I took turns bringing our daughter to our church's nurseries, like a privilege that we have, like a child room in our jobs. And I was like busy writing emails and all of a sudden it was very quiet and I looked up and I heard, and I was like, "Oh no." And so I went running around this like little half to the ... to our tabernacle, which is just like a pretty jar because church plant life. And she had taken every single one of the gluten free wafers out that were consecrated, and had eaten all of them as her snack. Snacks. And then I was like, "Baby, what are you doing?" She went, "Jesus!"

Laura: It's so funny, Lizzie. This past Sunday I went to our first and second grade Sunday school class and they're preparing for their early communion. And so I was giving them like a lesson about Eucharist and one girl at the end, I was like, "Okay, ask me like any question you've ever had." And one of the kids asked, "What if I don't like how it tastes— like, the wafer? Like what if I just don't think it tastes good? Can I just not eat it?" And I was like, that's like a freaking good question.

And so we had a, we had a whole discussion about how it's not like eating cinnamon toast bread, you know, like it's not like ... we're not doing it for that kind of pleasure. It's a spiritual nourishment. It was really interesting because like she's just in second grade and to have that. And so I was telling her, I was like, "Yeah, you're not going to like ... make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with these wafers." Like they're not, they're not tasty unless you ask Lizzie's child. They are just delicious.

Lizzie: She's ... so actually this past Sunday, she was eating bread in our preground, which is like our children's area. 'Cause they had like not, not communion bread, just like bread from the snack table, but she had not come up with her grandpa for communion, which is what she normally does. So I came around to her, which I, you know, I try to go like to people who are in wheelchairs for distribution, but I went to her, and I like looked at her, and I called her name and she like dropped to the bread she was holding, walked over and held out her hands like, ready. She's two!

Laura: She could teach us, our second graders.

Lizzie: Oh my God. Well, you know, give her a few years and then she'll be like, "Why are my parents priests? This sucks!"

Laura: "Why aren't there raisins in this bread?"

H: There's something profound about that because words are the hard part. Connecting with God, it comes so naturally to us, I think. And actually we make it so difficult. When it does not need to be.

B: Yeah. We make it so difficult. And I was just thinking, I think back, Lizzie, to you sort of prostrate in the church. I feel like we need to do a whole episode on the empty church and how powerful that is to have. And I don't know if this is the case as often now as it was when I was a child, right? Like so many churches were open back in the day and you could wander in and be in these temples, these wombs, these quiet, beautiful spaces, right? And I just, I wonder about, maybe for both of you, like what the role is of the empty church in your ministries. And I don't know, maybe I'm leading the witness, but just, I just love this idea that even before we say a word, like just the simple silence is enough. Yeah.

Laura: Our church isn't closed, but it's not like open for people just to like stop by and light a candle and pray. And that might be more to the kind of suburban culture of it all, more than any like deep theological thing. But I do think, you know, even though Sundays, I think at both of our churches are very joyfully chaotic, loud, noisy, there still are parts even in the service where you're quiet and you know, there's not a lot of room in our lives to be quiet. And especially we can really always have our AirPods in and *never* have quiet. So I think even if the churches aren't open in that way that maybe Lizzie experienced as a child, although now I'm thinking and I'm like, yeah, kids probably could sneak in our sanctuary and like, what's happening when I'm not there? But you know, I think there still are ways that like we're able to encounter that stillness in the church.

Lizzie: Yeah. It's, I'm really touched by this question because a lot of what I grieve and celebrate in church plant life is one and the same and that is around space. And so for the first four months of Jubilee's life, we met in my living room and ... or we were doing like once a month pop-up services basically wherever I could find someone who would host us. There was like a public park in the like region of Austin that we're in there, where we did a couple, we did our Christmas Eve service. We did our pet blessing. We did our first, our pride Eucharist, our first public service at a plant shop that was like very tickled that we want to use their like event space with disco balls everywhere. And it was very fun. And then we have our own disco ball. And then we were popping up in a restaurant for a while called Cafe Eden and which was just the most like perfect.

H: How appropriate.

Lizzie: And they had this gorgeous flower wall that inspired us too. So when we signed the lease in our space, so we meet in a strip mall between a dentist office and a mixed martial arts studio.

So literally on Saturday we had our Lent retreat and there was like pow-pow-pow-pow happening. And you know, the walls are thin. And also in the complex, there's a great Palestinian restaurant and there's a Dairy Queen, there's a scuba shop and the print shop where we get all our bulletins made. It's just ... it's ... and it's busy. There's a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot of foot traffic. So on the one hand, it's a strip mall. So like, is it, you know, a gorgeous aesthetic Gothic space? No, it's not.

But on the other hand, I was really touched actually in my bishops committee meeting a few weeks ago, I was like talking about the sort of long-term vision for Jubilee. And it is actually not that we build a building from scratch, which is what a lot of church plants, you know, they eventually want to, which is the church plant I grew up in is— actually we joined them when they had built their church building and they moved out of the elementary school cafeteria. I want us to refurbish a space. I want us to buy like a restaurant that's gone under, something like that and turn it into a church.

And I really have a vision for how that can still be like a beautiful church, churchy-church space, right? Like not just church in that church is the people we know that but like aesthetically, you know; but that's not always easy to convince. Like, you know, when you're like walking around a dead Applebee's, it's like, "Yeah, could this be a church?" Like, but my bishops' committee all were like, "Well, look at what we've done here. Like we can make anything beautiful," which like ... Oh, and because we've installed this big flower wall, we have this big space for the kiddos to play. We have art everywhere. And it's been this like slow roll of, How do we craft and carve out this space that is already sacred by our being here.

But to the gift of I think church spaces being *art* places, right? Historically, like places where artisans and artists could like be, you know, given free reign to express, you know, that that's still happening. And we don't have to be bound by a certain time period's aesthetic or vision of what is beautiful. And I think often what is beautiful about Jubilee is not gorgeous Gothic arches—as much as I love those. But that, like, we have children's toys absolutely everywhere. And it's a space where all the kids come in and they like know exactly where their things are. And it's a space where people feel very comfortable. And it feels very hospitable to a lot of people who would be very intimidated to walk into a big empty church.

We also have a cardboard cutout of Dolly Parton in the window, which I did not put there. Parishioners put it there, which I love. And honestly, more people stop when I'm in the church during the week, people stop and knock on the door like, "Why do you have Dolly Parton?"

H: That's amazing. I think I've told you this before, Lizzie, but there was a time that I was at the Bishop of Ely's house in the UK. And I went to go to the bathroom and I'm sitting there in the bathroom and there's a little table next to the toilet with a book on it. And it's just *The Wisdom of Dolly Parton*. Yes. Because this, I mean, like a house attached to a cathedral, everything else is like big paintings of old white men. The bathroom literature was ... Dolly Parton.

B: I love it. Like, if it's going to be a while, you need Dolly.

Laura: Yeah. She'll help you through. She'll help you through. And she's very committed to literacy. So we love that. You know, it all works.

H: Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. I cherish that. I do want to say that. I love that. I cherish that. I do want to make sure we ask you as queens of digital ministry, accidental queens of digital ministry, if you have any advice for other church leaders who are navigating either their social media presences, their internet presences, their church's internet presences.

Laura: Yeah. Yeah. Lizzie and I have spent a lot of time thinking about this for other people in our own ministries. I think a lot of times digital ministry is often a distraction for people from the ministry in front of them. I'm not saying it's always that way, but I think some people think, "I need a really good website and I need a TikTok for my church and I need a Twitter for my church," and you don't. Really what you need is a website that's up to date that says what people can expect when they find your church that gives them a picture of what your community is about and tells them when and where to show up to do it. For a lot of people, for most people, people's churches, that's enough. Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm so clergy. I don't have time to have this and that." It's like, yeah, that's fine. You don't actually need that. The way that the algorithms have changed now, it's not even worth your time to do TikTok. Lizzie and I started doing it because we genuinely loved it and enjoy it, but sometimes people will be like, "Oh, can you make a video for this?" We're just like, "No." We don't get paid. It's actually a lot of work and both of us don't even make that many TikToks anymore because the world has moved on and that's fine. Even if you were to, the algorithm has changed so much now that-

Lizzie: Yeah, stuff that would have gone viral gets like a thousand views.

Laura: It's not the best way to connect with your community. The best way to connect in your community is to go out and be part of your community and tell the story of what you're doing in your church to your community. Do they know that you're doing this wonderful, amazing thing? How can they join in on it? That is the best advice I think we can give. Sometimes when I see colleagues dumping all this time into, "My church just got a this or that," I'm like, "Okay." If you genuinely enjoy it maybe, but I think a lot of the times it's just an extra burden on people who already feel very burdened by communications. My biggest advice is just do whatever you do. The simplest thing you can do the best you can. At this point of the year, you shouldn't still have Christmas information about your upcoming Christmas service on your website. We're heading into Easter. I don't know when this will be broadcasting, but we're months and months and months past. Just make it as easy.

One other thing Lizzie and I have thought about in some of our episodes in our ministries is if an alien was to descend upon your congregation and spoke perfect English, if that's the language of your congregation, how would they make sense of what's going on? They know nothing. A lot of times we create content for people who are already Christian and have the language or some of the language.

Lizzie: Holy Eucharist, Rite 2. No one knows what that means.

Laura: Right. What is that? An alien certainly wouldn't know. We really think about what we do for the aliens who might be showing up. I think it's silly and it's helpful because just define your terms. I think a lot of times in the church this discussion comes up where people say, "Well, if

you explain it all away, you're getting rid of the mystery." It's like, "No, there's always going to be mystery when we're talking about that."

H: The mystery lives elsewhere. The mystery, that's covered. You don't have to make it up.

Laura: There's so much mystery. Yes, there's still a lot of things I don't have answers to. I think sometimes though we tell ourselves that to just make excuses for why our websites suck or something like that. If you think about it, what is someone who has no Christian language going to think about your community if they show up or they go to your website? That to me is a helpful framework.

H: I like that.

B: So helpful.

Lizzie: I would add to that, I've got three things because I think Laura did a really good job. I gave a talk recently and a lot of people were like, "How do you get your congregation ready for new people who are going to come in?" I'm like, "Well, that's honestly the internal work that you need to be doing before you launch an Instagram page or update your website." Is your congregation ready for change? If not, ready them for that change. Because if they're a bunch of old folks who constantly say that they want new people and they want young families, young families in worship these days are loud. That's not necessarily culturally held across every single demographic, but most churches I know who are thriving don't have nurseries where people just drop their babies off and then go to church. Sometimes that happens, but more often than not, parents, especially dual working households or multiple... Sunday morning is family time. So is there room and space for kids in your worship? And not just is there stuff for them to do, right? You have a little worship bag for them or you have a playground or whatever, but is the community ready for a squally baby? Or is the priest going to be flustered?

H: Are they about to get glared at?

Lizzie: Right. And how do you set the tone for that? And also how do you set the tone for multicultural ministry? How do you examine your music and your liturgical style? Do you expect silence as reverence? Or do you have room for other forms of spiritual expression? This doesn't have to be anathema to the Anglican tradition. Our liturgy, you really can't break it. You know what I mean? Like, Jubilee is super loud. We just have tons... It's a loud, echoey space. It's a small space, so we're all on top of each other and we have tons of kids. And so it's just noisy. But one thing that I've done that I love to share is everybody gets a sanctus bell and they're just like these little bells I bought online, that sound really nice. They're like a whole cord, so we have several sets of them and also some bells I got at Goodwill and I have cues in the bulletin for when they ring the sanctus bells. And two-year-olds will sit still and pay attention to the eucharist.

H: They're ready. Yes.

Lizzie: Yes, Right? And I just know... And that's just one thing that actually just kind of organically started in our congregation because we had a parishioner who brought their bell and they just loved to ring it. And then that spread. Kids wanted bells.

And so I know that there's other little hooks in the liturgy of things that we can invite them into, but they're not going to be perfectly still. So the first thing is, are you ready for change? Ready them for change. The second thing is, who is your target audience? This is a sort of marketing term, but who is not in your church? This is what Laura's saying, *alien language*. People who are not in your church, they're not Episcopalians, who are moving from Cleveland to your city or wherever. It is people who are coming either from other church traditions that have very different language and very different theological emphases. Of course, you'll have a few Presbyterians and Lutherans and Methodists and Catholics, but most of the time it's people who are leaving evangelical or high control spaces. I really think it's almost a multi-language situation, but also it's people who have never been to church or who have been very disaffected. And so thinking clearly about that and also thinking clearly about how we articulate why we want you with us.

Because it's like, do we want your money? Do we want you to be butts in our seats? Or do we actually care that like, "Wow, the church has systematically told you that being queer is a sin or being a woman means that you're fundamentally responsible for men's actions and we're sorry. And actually we realize that God is still speaking in your life, that you still need a sacramental life and a spiritual community that can be hospitable to you. And we have that, and we want you to be a part of it. And there's room for you, like deliberate space set apart." So use that in your marketing language. And that doesn't have to be like some big fancy marketing campaign. That's as simple as something— you go into Canva, they've got pre-made graphics for you. It's free for a nonprofit and you take 20 minutes and you bang that out. Like, I'm serious. And this is like the videos that I think do the best for Laura and I are not the most, like, erudite. It's like me spinning around in a chasuble being like, "God loves gay people!" And it blows people's minds. And it's also very, very short. I've spent a lot of time recently thinking about like the sort of ... tiers of audiences. There's the wide, like, you know, the wide net of like ... someone's just scrolling and they're just going to see you. You have five seconds to catch their attention on a TikTok or Instagram reel. That's it. And then there's the folks who follow you, but they're not like, you know, these are the people I sort of think in parallel to, they come to church once every six to 12 weeks. Right? And there's also folks who you need to kind of, you can't just say, well, like "Last week in my sermon ..." and then move right along, you've got to like build an offer. So the same thing for social media is like, you've got to find ways to keep hooking them in and keep explaining and invitationally saying "This is what's going on." And then you have the folks who are super involved, right? The people on your altar guild, AKA the people who follow everything you put out online. And so just think about your audience, think about who you're trying to reach and do research in your area, who demographically has moved to your town, who's not going to church. That information is actually out there.

And then the third, I think exactly what Laura was saying is, "Tell the story. I spend so much more of my energy on social media, trying to think about it as a formation space because if people can't give the sort of traditional four hours on a Sunday morning right now—hour for church, hour for coffee hour, hour for Sunday school, whatever, I try to think of ways that I can help teach them because they will look at their phones. And so I've got a lot of prep, be like,

What is Lent? What is Holy Week? What to expect? That stuff is not so much marketing as so much as it is internal formation. And those are two different things.

Laura: Yeah. And also that is part of the reason why we created our podcast too, because we were getting people reaching out saying, "I'm 40 and I'm the youngest person in my church. And we don't have a small group or we don't have regular formation like adult forums. We're actually more focused on keeping the lights on right now. It's the season we're in." And so we thought, what content can we make to help encourage people in their faith? Many people who are in churches that don't have the space to make these kinds of resources. So that is something Lizzie and I think a lot about.

H: I will say too, something you do so flawlessly, and ... I'm trained as a dancer, so it reminds me a lot of watching a ballerina do her thing where you're like, "Oh, she's just prancing around. How delightful." And you know, like the blood, sweat, tears and skills going on in the background. Like what you guys do is, you make this podcast that's accessible to somebody who doesn't know that much about church, but I'm listening to it like my life depends on it as a PhD in theology. And it's so good because there's this richness, but then you translate, you translate to everybody.

Laura: Yeah. That's really what we're trying to do. I feel a lot of pressure to outline every episode and go in thinking really deeply and I just, that's the way I work.

Lizzie: And I am the chaotic bisexual. I was like, let's wing it.

Laura: And Lizzie was like, we'll be fine. And I'm like, no, no, we need a script. If I go off script, I will blank out. It's the same thing at church. If you give me a microphone, I'm just talking. On Sunday, I was like inviting the congregation to like roll the donkey around the church. Like, cause I went off script. They were just like, what's going on? That is our audience though. We're very happy when people with Ph.D.s in theology listen, but also we are not claiming to be people with Ph.D.s in theology. Like we are, we are just trying to have conversations and explore and you know, I'm sure we've said some things that are wrong. And like, I know we've said some things that people would articulate their own way. So we sometimes joked, "Well then, get your own podcast, you know, like if you don't like the way we're saying this," like, but we're... I'm fine to be corrected. Like I'm not, you know, we're not trying to be like just so wise, but we are just trying to have these conversations. And I think that's speaking to a lot of people, which is really, really exciting.

Lizzie: It is. And if I could say, first of all, thank you Hannah for saying that. That's just like, it's really kind. It's just a lot. It really does mean a lot, because I know that the people who are listening to y'all's podcast are leaders in ministry in, in academia, in parishes, in non-parochial ministry. I just want to make my like imploring plea. I think for so long, Episcopalians and other like, smart, progressive, very small denominations have seen what high control spaces do, whether that's like conservative Catholicism, evangelicalism, right? And been like, disdainful of the populism of it –have been disdainful of it. It's like, "Oh, people only like that because it's

dumb” or “People only like that because you can say it in five words:” God has a plan for you. Like it's entertaining. Right. And like, y'all ... we're losing. We're losing real bad. And I'm not trying to say that they're like our existential threat or competitor because they're not. They're the beloved children of God who are also co-laborers in the vineyard. But in a, in another election year, in a time of terrifying polarity in this country, we have something really special in the Anglican tradition and we have got to freaking tell people about it. And that means doing cringy things; that means being silly. That means like, yeah, it's, is it the deepest, most profound queer theology thing to be like, “God loves you if you're queer”? Like, no, it's not, but it also *is*. Yeah.

H: And nobody's hearing it if you're not saying it.

Lizzie: So this... this is life or death for people. I mean, like it is really life or death. And like coming from the American South, living in Texas, it's my plea. It's my plea because I, the number of people whom I encounter in my real life, in my real parish ministry who are like, “I had no idea. I was actively suicidal. I thought I couldn't have a relationship with my family. I thought I could never be welcomed through a church again until I saw your silly little Tiktok video.” And I'm not trying to say that as like, “Oh yeah, I'm some great savior.” I'm not. I'm like imploring, I'm imploring everybody to get out here, and like, whatever way it is, whether it's Tiktok or Instagram or your website or you know, the pride parade, but like ...we've got to.

Laura: Yeah. And like, a lot of our colleagues will put their sermons on like their substack or their website and that gets shared. I mean, there's just so many ways to share the way that we encounter God and with, with our communities. And so yeah, please think about it.

H: Yeah. I love that you're naming this because as you've been talking, I've been hearing an undercurrent of evangelism.

Laura: Oh yeah. We love evangelism. Yeah.

H: Wait, okay. Tell, tell me a little bit about that.

Laura: Well, I was raised evangelical and like, as much as I want to get the baggage that is associated with that out of my head, like it's just so foundational to what I understand a Christian to be like. I grew up in church plants myself, churches that met in schools, churches that built buildings, churches that spun off from other churches. Like to me from a young age to be a Christian was to be having a church plant, being evangelical, like ... looking back— so cringe, like the things I would, you know, oh my gosh. I remember like forcing a bunch of my friends to watch the Passion of the Christ. Uggghhh ...

H: Classic move.

Laura: I was doing my best.

Lizzie: I have so much love for teenage Laura and Lizzie. Oh my God.

Laura: We were really trying. But, you know, but, but ... okay. So take away like the cringy form it took, but the heart of it was, I mean, honestly, the same thing I still feel called to today: to connect people with God. So like, that's how I knew to do it. And so what Lizzie and I are trying to do in our ministry is like show people a different way to do it. And like, we're not the first people to have like Tiktoks or Instagram. You know, there's so many of our colleagues who are doing this too, of course, but like we are just, you know, talking about like ... Lizzie's church shares prayer, like collects a lot. And then from there, like your parishioners can share that with other people. Like we're just giving people tools and they do.

Lizzie: And they do and they do. And they reshare clips from my sermons.

Laura: Yeah. So it's amazing. So we're just doing it in a, in a way that makes more sense with the theology and our current understanding of God than maybe, you know, I had growing up, which is fine. But yeah, we really like evangelism and we don't think it's a bad word and I'm not willing to give evangelism or the concept of evangelism ... or God, I'm not willing to just hand it all over to the people who are doing it in ways that I find not so helpful.

Lizzie: ... To billboard Christianity that wants to punish and terrify. They don't, they don't ... they don't own the Bible. They don't own God. They don't own evangelism. They just don't.

Layura: Yeah. So we are, we're trying to claim it, reclaim it.

B: Well, at the risk of making what I think must be like the 14th Dante reference in the, in Leaders Way, because we do that a lot.

Lizzie: I was waiting. I was waiting.

B: I mean, isn't this like ... willingness to go high and low, formal and informal, what Dante was doing? Isn't it what Jesus was doing? In service of love, we have to be able to speak many different languages, right? And that's the piece that y'all just radiate. It's just so palpable that whoever is listening is so deeply loved. And thank you for that. Because as you say, this is life and death for a lot of folks. And I'm just so thankful for the ministry that you're doing, both in your parishes and on the podcast. We just, we need your voices more than ever. And I'm just so thankful to share with our listeners all the amazing work that you're doing.

H: But we can't let you go without asking our traditional last question.

Laura: Yes. Please ask away.

H: What is giving you hope?

Laura: Right now? Right now?

H: Yeah.

Laura: For me, like so, okay, one thing I also just want to say before we conclude, thank you for watching our TikToks and comparing us to Dante. Like yes. We are shaking our booties.

H: Dante would have been a TikToker. Jesus would have been a Tiktoker. Absolutely. Yeah. When we were having-

B: Sculptors are working already on your busts in Florence, definitely.

Love it. This is like when Bishop Vinny was like, Jesus would have had a Peloton. Or maybe not had one, but he would have been a spin cyclist.

Laura: As a Peloton rider myself, yeah. I agree. Jesus would have a Peloton.

H: The economics don't work, but the-

Laura: Whatever. Someone would have given him one.

B: We're going to blow up Peloton's economic framework.

Laura: Yeah. He can borrow mine. Yeah. So what's giving me hope, like very personally, is that in 17 days, but who's counting, I go on sabbatical. So I just have to make this final push through Lent and Easter, and then I have three months off.

H: Yay!

Laura: So that is so selfish and personal, but if we're being real, that's where we're at right now.

H: It's not selfish to not burn out.

Laura: Yeah. So yeah, I'm pretty hopeful. I got some plans up my sleeve for that, so I'm looking forward to it. So yeah.

Lizzie: What's giving me hope? So many things. I was also recently on vacation and went to several different churches and they were just absolutely full. And what's giving me hope is, I've had so many conversations with parishioners recently who even just in the year or two years that they have been at Jubilee have had just a total transformation in their relationship with God. And they came in nervous and afraid and with a lot of trauma, many of them. And to see ... it's actually possible. For years, it was just this deep hope that I had, that the church wasn't going to die. We're resurrection people, we have a story about death, can we believe it? Was something that I prayed and I thought, but then to be handed this opportunity to be like, "All right, well, try it." And to see that God is doing it ultimately, but that it is ... I really feel like we are deep in the middle of a reformation and a revolution. And that is really encouraging. And it's going to be messy. It's going to be messy for the rest of our lives. But change is possible and that change is

leading us into, I don't know, the Mary Magdalene way and I'm here for it. And thank you all for having us. It means a lot to have a big institution to value our... little pod!

H: Oh, that's so silly.

B: Thank you for listening to The Leader's Way. We hope you were encouraged and inspired. To learn more about this episode, visit our website at berkeleydivinity.yale.edu/podcast.

H: Rate and review us and follow the podcast to make sure you never miss an episode. Follow Berkeley@Yale on Instagram for quotes from the podcast and more.

B: Until next time,

H: The Lord be with you.