

## The Leader's Way Podcast

### 31: Navigating Turmoil at the Church of the Presidents with Rob Fisher

Rob Fisher: And this congregation, part of what I love about them is they've been through a lot, the people here, especially the people who've been around, they've *seen* a lot. And being in a church with a lot of history reminds you ... I mean, this is a church that rode through a civil war, a literal civil war. We need to not give in, I think, to the temptation to be small minded, to be reactionary, to be reactionary. And if possible, it's a big word, it's ... I say this with humility, but to stay oriented toward what is transcendent.

B: Hi. I'm Brandon Nappi.

H: 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: Hi, Hannah. How are you?

H: I'm doing well. You know, it's fun to have the buzz of a new semester. I'm teaching this semester, which is always a grand old time. How are you?

B: I am great. I love the energy of the school year. I love the crisp mornings. I don't even mind seeing the school buses on the road and slowing you down. No. There's an energy. Even though I'm not teaching this semester, I'm teaching next semester, but just having fresh faces on campus, there's this sense of possibility.

H: Totally. I love back to school. It's like, it comes close to Christmas as far as the energy.

B: Oh, you're so right.

H: I wish I had a good reason to buy a pencil box. You know what I mean?

B: Oh my gosh. I think you should get a pencil box. I'll go get a Trapper Keeper. Did you have Trapper Keepers? Or am I dating myself? Do you know what that is?

H: What is that?

B: Oh my gosh. I'm so old. The Trapper Keeper is like a notebook, a high end notebook that you would have gotten. It folds, it has Velcro, you keep all your papers in it. There's a certain generation of folks who had, like, a bunch of them. Yeah. And of course, the Berkeley Center is coming along. It's almost nearing completion, and we'll gather in October with all our donors and alumni to celebrate the renovation of, our beloved house that, where our chapel lives, where Wednesday evening Eucharist dinners happen. So it's really super fun.

H: I'm excited to do some podcast recording in there. I think it's gonna be a good time.

B: Absolutely.

H: Well, this is maybe our first time doing a part 1, part 2. So what's happening now is our last episode was with alumnus and rector of St. John's Lafayette Square in DC, Rob Fisher. And this episode is part 2 of that conversation. We broke it up into 2 episodes because it was so rich and, you know, Brandon, I think we kind of felt like we were recording history in a way, because this episode is gonna delve into what it was like to be the rector of such a public church institution during 2020.

B: Yeah, that's right. I think a lot of people would remember when Donald Trump went and spoke in front of St. John's Lafayette Square. It was quite controversial. And we're getting a little bit of the behind-the-scenes of what led up to that day, what was actually happening while President Trump was there at St. John's. Yeah. And I feel like this history might not be documented anywhere else, actually. So it's a real interesting sneak peek. It certainly raises a lot of political and theological questions, and it speaks to our wonderful alumnus rector Rob Fisher's keen sense of leadership and what it means to be a Christian leader whose responsibility is to something much higher. And so, I'm so glad we can tell this story.

H: Absolutely. Please enjoy.

B: Rob, you've been in leadership there at St. John's through some really intense times politically, through Black Lives Matter protests, encampments happening around the church, and I wanna ask you about that. I wonder if you could sort of set the historical context. Maybe we can envision this church, footsteps from the White House. Can you say a little bit about the history? I mean, you, from time to time, have presidents sitting in your congregation. Can you just maybe set the historical context and then talk about what it's been like to lead there, especially in in some of the more intense moments during your time as rector.

Rob: Yeah. Absolutely. So, Saint John's was built in 1815 and completed, began first services were in 1816. And the architect was Benjamin Henry Latrobe. He was important because he was one of the few architects at that time that actually had trained. He had trained and studied architecture in Europe. A lot of the buildings built back then didn't

make it, you know, and a lot of his structures are still in existence. And he had worked on the original Capitol. He was one of the architects working on the Capitol and also on the White House. Then he left town. By the way, he was a favorite of Jefferson because Jefferson loved architecture. And I think Latrobe knew how to make Jefferson, like he would give him a (muffled) and Jefferson loved him for that. So the British War of 1812 ... they invaded. They burned down the city. They destroyed the White House, and Latrobe was invited back to rebuild the White House.

And so he was working on that project in the 18-teens, and they approached him and said, would you build a church? Otherwise, if you were an Episcopalian, you had to go all the way to Capitol Hill, which was like an impossible awful journey, or you had to go all the way to Georgetown. It was hard to get around back then. So they built this church as the neighborhood church for the neighborhood of the president and many who lived around here. And, Latrobe made a church of 4 equal sides. It didn't even look like a church, but it was a beautiful thing. And there's a watercolor we have that that he painted, that shows the church in 1816 with the White House behind it. The White House is still uninhabitable. It's a wreck. It's just a shell. And the Madisons were in the White House then, but couldn't live in the building. It was so bad. And there's, like, nothing else. There's, like, a cow, dirt, a couple of trees. And my favorite part of the story, and back to that theme I was talking about of grace, Latrobe refused to take any money. He said, "I'm building this as a gift to God."

I love remembering that because it's a special thing to think of. The space that he built, that he put a lot of love into, is still being used for exactly what he intended to give to the community. And, we've changed the space a little bit. In 1822, they added a bell tower. That was 6 years later, and we had to expand the space because the church wasn't big enough. And he sadly had already died, I think, in his early fifties at that point. So we don't know who built the bell tower.

But so Madison was a president at the time, and Madison and his family were offered a pew. Back then, you had to rent your pews. And so he actually said, "Wait a minute. Separation of church and state. I don't know if I can receive such a nice gift as a free pew that I don't even have to pay for. I come to church on Sunday." Could you imagine? And a negotiation happened, and, ultimately, it was decided that if he didn't decide where the pew would be, he could accept that gift. Isn't that funny? Of course. That makes total sense. It makes total sense.

B: Just like today, the level of self-reflection.

R: So the president's pew was designated. And it's actually a very cool thing. And again, the thread ... it lasts to today. It was not in the front, which is where the expensive and fancy pews were. And it wasn't in the back of the church. It was right in the middle. And I love that because us at our best being, you know, the so-called church of the presidents, at our best, we are hosting a person who comes for prayer. A person who has, I think, a special need for prayer and for what prayer can do. And to have the person sitting not in, like, a special throne-like seat, but in a seat just among the people in the middle of the room, a person among people at prayer. And so that is an important legacy, and the

president's pew has remained in the exact location it was since then. The pews, the boxes that existed during Madison's time and all the presidents that followed eventually were replaced in 1842, and those are our current pews. And we have a pew ... President Tyler was president in 1842, and he was an Episcopalian and made sure that the president's pew would be exactly --it meant a lot to him--it would be right where Madison and others had worshiped.

And we actually have the records of who has attended on Sundays. Every single president starting with Madison through Biden has attended at least one church service at St. John's. Not every single one has attended a Sunday morning service. JFK came as a groomsman, before he was a senator. He attended as a groomsman. And as president, I know, the one time I know he came was the installation service for my predecessor's predecessor in 1963. And I think he arrived-- There's a beautiful picture of him standing on the steps with the new rector. And he walked inside. I think he waved at the people, and I think he might have just left. I don't know. I need to look that up.

So my predecessor's predecessor was here for 30 years, from 63 to 93. There was a 30 year celebration of his ministry, and the president who came to that was Bill Clinton. And he spoke. And just imagine the change and being on this corner and watching it all firsthand from '63 to '93. Right?

And a little bit more of the history of presidents and what is meant to be to be a church for presidents or of the presidents, however you phrase it; Abraham Lincoln, famously would walk across the park alone in the evening, when we had evening services in the middle of the week, he would walk across alone and arrive a little after the service started and sit. And he did attend on Sundays a few times, but his main church was a Presbyterian church down the street. But in those evenings, he would arrive after the service started and sit in the last pew so that nobody saw him there. You can imagine what he might have been praying for during those years of the civil war. All that was on his shoulders. Only the priest knew he was there because the priest was looking out and facing the people. And then he would get up and he would leave just before the service ended so no one would know that they had been worshiping with him.

So that gives me chills. And that too is the pew that he sat in, and it is still in the same location in the back. And often on Sunday mornings, I mean, there's no rope. You know, anyone can sit there if they want to. It's actually often the place if we have guests who are experiencing homelessness, that's where they will sit, in Lincoln's pew. There's an incredible amount of history here. And I do wanna say for people who are listening to this, if you're able to come into DC, we have our doors--and this is important to me. We have our doors open Monday through Friday. And, of course, often on Saturdays, depending on what's happening, you know, weddings, funerals, and other things going on. And, of course, the flower guild, you know, and things like that, and of course on Sunday mornings. But it's important to me that given our location as much as we can to keep the doors literally open. You know, the doors are open Monday through Friday, 9 to 3, almost every week. You know, it kinda depends. Federal holidays change some things. And we do a service at 12:10, which is staffed by our own clergy and other volunteer clergy from the community, like retired priests who help out, which is just really important so that people can come and experience that place of grace no matter who they are.

So you were asking, I think also about, like, what are we gonna do during this election cycle? When I was at the conference that I saw you at, Hannah--I bet a bunch of listeners were there in in Houston earlier this year. I think it was March, and people were saying, "Oh, what are you gonna do?" That made me nervous to think about it, because it's true. But the mindset that I was in then really is still the same mindset I'm in now is, nobody can predict what is gonna happen. And in March, we couldn't predict what has happened in the last few weeks.

H: Oh my goodness. Yeah. If somebody had seen the future and told us back at Episcopal Parish Network what it was gonna be like in July, we would have said, "Go take a nap. You're crazy."

R: That's right. Exactly. Right? So we don't have any fancy special plans for the fall, but the basic plan is to stay mature. And in this congregation, part of what I love about them is, they've been through a lot. The people here, especially the people who've been around, they've seen a lot, and there's wisdom in having that perspective. One thing that I get a lot out of at a time like this is reading history. And when I read scripture, the benefit that I get of the perspective it gives, that our lives is a little blip, you know. And being in a church with a lot of history reminds you, I mean, this is a church that rode through a civil war, a literal civil war. So we need to not give in, I think, to the temptation to be small-minded, to be reactionary. There's so much to tempt us to all those things out and around.

My wife is a journalist. I care a lot about journalism. I care about media. I'm a consumer of media, but I will catch myself. I don't necessarily doom scroll, but I will get into a scrolling thing. And I realized that, you know, you are what you eat, so your media diet really matters. You know? And getting away from the headlines only and into long-form pieces, just staying grounded in all these things. I think the fact that we are a congregation that has diversity in many, many ways, it does help us with that call to stay sort of level and mature and above. And if possible, it's a big word, I say this with humility, but to stay oriented toward what is transcendent. And not get dragged into the baser levels of so much.

H: It seems like you and the congregation ... and I'm struck by how much you're talking about yourself as sort of part of this community. It's not just you over there. It seems like you and the congregation have learned a lot from institutional wisdom after doing things like living through the Civil War. But then have you learned anything in particular from living through the chaos of things like Black Lives Matter protests and vandalism? And am I right in remembering that your church is the one that former president Donald Trump was holding up the upside down Bible and brought ... you were all over the news. And, I mean, you couldn't have seen these things coming, and it seems like the church handled these events with a lot of grace. But I wonder if you have personally learned anything from these experiences.

R: Yeah. Thank you for saying that. You know, I went to a high school reunion recently. It was, first time back to my high school in a long time, and I saw some people that I

remember fondly and had not really been in touch with. It was so great to see them. And one thing that was a bummer was how so many people said, "Oh my gosh. We saw you on TV and stuff." That that was not the bummer. The bummer was that what everybody was so fixated on was that moment of the photo op with the Bible. As if that is the most important thing about St. John's Lafayette Square. That made me so sad. This church is so much more than that blip and really weird, you know, thing that happened.

So it was also kind of funny because there were many people who knew me, knew I was a priest. We hadn't been in necessarily close touch, but when that photo hit everything, one of the most famous images of 2020, people saw my name. And they're like, "Oh, now we know where Rob landed." I guess he had the ... because my name is right behind the president. Yeah.

B: Yeah. Oh, right. Yeah.

R: It's crazy. So, I got here in the summer of 2019. And I will tell you what I noticed right off the bat was this is a company town, as we all know. It was a company town where the company wasn't doing very well, you know. The livelihood and sort of the thing that makes everything run, and I could feel a heaviness in a big way during that time. And I was just still kind of, like, getting to know the place, getting to know the people six or seven months until, like, all of a sudden COVID and the world shuts down. And so then we are you know, like churches everywhere, we're reinventing so much of what we do. And we have the opportunity to become a church without walls and, you know, starting to explore the ministry of actually broadcasting, you know, sending out.

So that's all happening, and it's a creative thing and a challenge. And then George Floyd is murdered in May. And I actually, interestingly, happened to be out of town because my wife, her dream is for me to have, like, a teaching job or something that we don't have to be, like, on weekends working. And I shouldn't say this. She might hear it. I don't know. But,

H: I'm sure everyone would understand that that urge for a weekend.

R: A light bulb went off for her, and she realized, because I was recording my sermons on Thursdays, and they were being sent together at that point. That was before we did it live, but we would record everything and create, like an edited service. She's like, we can go away. And so we recorded the sermon on Thursday, then we hopped in the car and we went into part of upstate New York where there was no connectivity. We were at a little cabin, middle of nowhere in the Catskills. It was great. We're swimming in the river, and we were having a great time. In my sermon, I talked about George Floyd. It was Pentecost. I talked about breath and him being denied of it.

So then a lot happened, and I had no idea because I was disconnected from the world. Right? Sunday morning, the landline at the cabin, which was the only way to reach us, went off. And I was like, "Oh, some, you know, this is like a phone solicitation or something." I answer it, and it's my parish administrator, and she's completely losing it. She says, "Rob, you've gotta get back to DC as soon as you can. Things are going crazy." And the night before, that Saturday night ... you know, it makes a lot of sense. During

COVID, this area became empty. It was this blank canvas just open. Just totally, like, nobody, no cars, no one in any of the buildings, because there's not really a residential area. It's a downtown. Office buildings and stuff. And, with Trump in the White House, this was where people gathered naturally to express what they needed to express.

And in the nighttime, things did get pretty intense. And we had, like, a dumpster in the alley that we own right next to between us and the VA building. The dumpster had been brought down to the street. A big fire lit in it, never to be seen again. That dumpster is long gone. And, like, graffiti all over the place, and there was a little tea shop right next to the church that was completely burned to the ground. All these things were happening, and she said, "You know, we don't know what's gonna happen tonight." So we were aware that something big, you know ... and the church is made of wood. It was, you know, built more than 200 years ago, and it's fragile, you know, as a building. Most of the buildings around are stone and steel and concrete.

So I ... you know, we packed up. We had to close the cabin down and, like, turn everything off and like, hop in the car and rush back into town. I got into town just as the sun was coming down. And there was really nothing to do but to pace in my living room and look at the TV as it was going back and forth between channels. St. John's was on all of the big networks as ... and it was so crowded that night. And during the day, the peaceful protests were peaceful. It was just masses of people marching in the park and chanting and being with each other. But at night, it was getting super intense. And I started getting texts from people and they said "The church is on fire." And I was like, "No, I see the church right now on CNN in front of me, and it's not on fire. I do see a huge fire in the middle of h Street right next to the church, but that's probably what you think is the church on fire." And then they're like, okay. And then I got other texts from other people. It's like, the church is on fire. It was a very uncomfortable experience as you could imagine.

Interestingly, also, it was so many people that the camera crews couldn't move around the crowd. They were packed in. You know? They couldn't go from one location to another, so there would be, like, an anchor person and a camera, and the different stations had different vantage points. Well, it turns out that one channel I wasn't watching, starts with a F, was the channel that had the vantage point on the fire. That's why I didn't see.

H: Oh my goodness.

R: And finally, somebody sent me actually a text that had the video of the fire. And it wasn't our church building, fortunately. Thank God. It was the basement of our parish house building, which is a next-door building that became part of church property in recent decades, but it was built in 1836. It used to be someone's home. And in the basement of it, was our nursery. We've moved the nursery now is in a actually better location, but there were some steps. You can step down and out of the way and no one could see you. And no one knows who did it. There was a little glass window on an emergency exit in the nursery, and they broke the glass and threw a Molotov cocktail into the nursery. Now we'll never know who did it. There is a parishioner of mine who is African-American who is kind of a legend in the DC community, for his involvement in so many things. But he's been involved in civil rights including also gay civil rights. And he sent me ... every email this guy ever

sends me is, like, worth saving. He sent me --usually they're long-- this was a one sentence email. And he said, "Black people don't burn churches." Like I said, we'll never know probably who did it, but I believe that. I believe my parishioner and friend was a 100% on that.

And it's hard because after this very public fire in a church building, of course the world all has opinions. Right. Right. A lot of opinions.

H: And it's another one of these very tiny slices of the story of the church that now everybody's focusing on.

R: Absolutely. And so the next day, we had so much press. And actually that night, once the crowds cleared, the fire people couldn't get to the site because there were too many people. So the fire was just gonna do what it was gonna do. I mean, it was that intense. Right? It wasn't until ... I don't know the timeline. It maybe it was an hour later when eventually the crowds started dispersing. The fire trucks came. They put out the fire. They had to bust down doors to, like, get into the property. And we were so fortunate. I was so grateful that the doors were closed in the nursery, and it contained all the flames just in one room. Of course, that one room was completely torched. The smoke damage above it and a lot of other things.

I was actually called to come down. They said, we need someone to like lock the doors. And it was actually a joke. I arrived at the church about 1 in the morning and no one was really around. The ground was soggy. You know? There were some journalists pacing around saying, like, "We can't believe we missed that. Like, how did we not see?" You know, interesting, experiences and conversations. And it was a joke because there was no way of locking the door. It was all I busted and all that. But I was so happy to see that everything was intact except for the nursery. I got to send a message to the congregation in the wee hours of the morning to let them know.

And so the next day, all day long, the press from all around the world, literally, you know, the Today Show did a feature and like all these other things. And I was being asked to be on a couple programs in the evening. And I said yes as much as I could. And one of the shows I said yes to was a FOX News show, and it was prime time. And so I was here the afternoon of June 1st, and it was a beautiful day. It's beautiful blue sky. People were milling around. It was the picture of peaceful protests that were people from St. John's and from other Episcopal churches and other denominations, handing out water, praying for people, being with each other. And I didn't wanna leave, but I had said yes to this thing. And so I went. So I was in the green room. It was a studio that was very, like, you weren't in front of people. You were, like, in your own little room with a little camera pointing at you.

And I, just as I was about to walk into the room, I saw the footage live of all hell breaking loose all around the church. And I thought, what on earth is going on? What happened to cause the authorities to come in and beat people up and with the tear gas and all the things that were happening? And then I heard the audio, but didn't have any visuals because I was sitting in the room and they told me to turn all my devices off, And I am too much of a rule follower. I did it sitting in the room, and I was listening to the thing they put in my ear. And they, by the way, said, you'll hear what's happening live on the channel, and



just wait until someone talks to you. And when they talk to you, look at the camera and talk back. That was all the instruction. So I'm hearing them describe him walking across the park, and they're saying, oh, where is he going? We don't know. Where could it be? And I'm thinking, I think I know where he's going. Yeah.

So I heard it all described. And then when suddenly the camera was on and they were asking me, and I was on FOX, and they said, you know, "What do you have to say?" What I said was, "I think that what just happened and what he tends to do is really a distraction from what is more important. And what really matters is why have people been gathering. And that's that we've been seeing black and brown bodies destroyed in front of our eyes in this horrific way. And that's what we should be focusing our attention on, not on him and whatever he just did in front of my church, you know." And you wouldn't believe the hate mail, the racists, the phone messages, the emails, the letters, many of them threatening enough that we turned them in to the authorities.

H: Yeah. I bet.

R: And I chose the tone that I chose, kind of instinctually knowing that when you get into a mud fight with him, everybody loses. But even with that, the level of anger and hate that exists out there. And when I saw what happened on January 6th, I wasn't surprised at all because I had literally heard the voices of those very people telling me what they thought of me. One of the refrains that chills me still to think about, but many people said it almost verbatim. They said, "It's disgusting to breathe the same air as you because you wouldn't welcome our president."

H: Woah.

R: Isn't that ... what does that say, like, theologically? You know? And if you actually know your history, when he asked to come here or when he showed up on a Sunday, this church did welcome him every time, you know. And ... as we have done for all of his predecessors, we intend to do for future presidents.

So that's a bit of the story. We weren't able to use our space because of COVID and people couldn't gather inside. But one of the best things that happened during all that time was the opportunity to be out of our space, to be outside, to be in front, and to be with people. And I by the way, I'm really glad that Sam Wells is doing what he's doing with this whole Being-with movement that he's kind of creating with his book and the training and the courses that are out there. Being with is so important. And that was a saving grace was the chance to be with people. And I will tell you, it was complicated often. There's lots of different perspectives and ways people came at the different gatherings that were there. But the saving grace was that humans can be with other humans and find healing in it. And then we ended up having ... and I I don't think, I'm not gonna go into all the back and forth details. It's a lot. I would love to share it, but I I think it's too much. Eventually, after some things happened, the city put a fence around the church. They felt that they needed to because of an encampment situation and some other things. And it was a very hard thing to have a fence put around the church, and that fence stayed up for, you know, maybe nine

months, for an incredibly long time. And it if a city, by the way, and this is some advice to pastors out there. If the city wants to put a fence around your church, you need to ask them “What's the fence gonna look like?” We weren't picturing what the city had in mind. The fence they put up was an 8 foot tall non-scale fence that also had jersey barriers, these concrete barriers, like a moat all around, and they had 24 cops, 24/7, all lining. That’s what they did. It was heartbreaking.

And so the bishop and I and many others, we got in front of the fence. And it was the city's fence, and our church became outside the walls of our church. And then a wonderful thing happened. Some artists and some other civic leaders who are around, innovative and thoughtful and good people approached me, and they said, “We have an idea. We don't know how you think about it, but all the buildings around here have plywood boards on their windows, and we did too. And they said, “What if we did a mural project?” Of course, we said yes to it. There's about 20 artists painting 24 boards, all different sizes, sizes and shapes, and the most beautiful art. And what ended up happening in a mostly nonverbal way, though there were a few words, it was mostly nonverbal. For those roughly nine months that we had to endure being a church enclosed with a fence, we also had something that spoke above and beyond it.

And I would look out of my window right here where I didn't have boards because I'm on the 3rd floor, and I could look out. And I would see people walking by and just with their mouths hanging open, smiling, taking pictures and pictures of each other. I cherish that opportunity that we got to have and to do. We had a big mural of Bishop Tutu, and it said “Ubuntu.” And it was right in front of the main entrance that was not able to be used at that time. And a friend of mine, who was Bishop's chaplain in South Africa when she was newly ordained in South Africa was, you know, bringing him meals as he was ill. And she wrote me. She said, “Oh, I see you've got Bishop Tutu on your walls.” And I believe she was able to bring images so that he could see that too, which is pretty incredible. So we still have that art and, the art is still ... we're making plans for what we're gonna do with it.

H: Oh, good. Good.

R: (muffled) ... the windows, which is fantastic. And some museums that I I can't mention officially yet that are interested in making part of their permanent collections.

B: Well, I mean, thank you for your prophetic inspiring leadership. I'm so thankful for for you and your faith and your ministry and your willingness to share this story. It will help to support so many people, leaders and seminarians. And I wonder if maybe lastly, you know, as you reflect on everything you've just narrated and lived through, the kind of fragmentation, the kind of unpredictability, the intensity of those moments in the in the pandemic, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, as we head into kind of the unknown of this political season and in the ... on the sort of on the eve of the of the election, what is it, Rob, that brings you hope amid all the very real suffering and challenges of our world? What keeps you back at it each day being hopeful about your ministry and the church and the world?

R: Yeah, It's a really great question. I think, you know, back to what I said about media diet is important. And if you just fill yourself with all of the alarming and true stuff that's out there, it's gonna be very hard for you to remain grounded in any hope. I find that it's ... see inspiring people and inspiring stories aren't selling newspapers, or aren't selling clicks, rather, at this time. And so you have to turn that off appropriately. I'm not saying don't be informed. I get my hope with the incredible people that I see every day. And I would love it if one of the things we did as a church was to better lift those people up, the living saints that are around us, to tell their stories better, empower them better, connect them better, because they are here. They're even in DC, believe it or not.

And it's almost like a switch that you can flip. You know? Because we get flipped into this other mode, and we live there a lot. And yet we can change our gaze in the way that we look. And when we do, that's one of the best ways I think to reground ourselves in what is bigger than ourselves, which is the abiding reality of God's presence in the world, in our lives at every minute. You know, I love the phrase, I think it was Rob Bell who puts it this way, you know, when, you know, you suddenly ... some people say, "Oh, God just showed up." The reality is never that. It's we showed up. You know? And so that that would be my kind of the simple, but I think also potentially life-giving and very even salvific, word to say is for us to make sure that we continue to show up. Well, thank you all. This is really fun. It's good to talk.

B: My heart's very full. Rob, thank you for spending some time with us.

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](http://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.