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SPEAKERS

Nancy, Joey, Jim, Mark, Adam

Jim 00:04

welcome to Table Talk. It's a podcast where United Methodists across Tennessee and Western Kentucky can connect with one another in deeper conversation around the issues of life and faith. My name is Jim Hughes. I'm an elder in the legacy Tennessee conference. I've been serving churches for about 48 years now and I'll be your host. In the late evening of December 10 2021, a violent tornado moved across Western Kentucky. 22 people were killed in and around the town of Mayfield, and hundreds more were injured. The damage was catastrophic. Mayfield first UMCS building was close to destroyed a few miles down the road from them. Christ UMCS building was untouched. In the aftermath, the two congregations began to share space. Together, they found healing and worked to rebuild their community. Today we'll be talking about the power of our connection, and how it can help us to move from grief to hope. Joining us today are a group of clergy who are very much involved in this situation. Mark Stevens who serves as the pastor of Christ UMC Adam rush, who serves as the pastor of Mayfield first UMC, their district superintendent Nancy Johnston Varden. And Joey Reed, who served as the pastor of Mayfield first UMC up until this past July. We're glad you are all with us today. Mark. First, for those who are unfamiliar with the area. Can you tell us about the town of Mayfield as well as the history of Christ and Mayfield churches?

Mark 01:43

Yes, Jim the Mayfield is in far western Kentucky, we're right at the comp almost at the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers. It's a the town came to be in about the middle of the 19th century. And and it's was known back in the 40s and 50s. For its clothing manufacturing. Later on tire production plant, it was a great place to grow up less than a dozen stoplights in the entire town. Because of that growth that happened in the in the 40s. Actually, Christ UMC was born out of furniture, there was a group of people, seven charter members that signed on, and they found a basement that's not too far located from where we are now. And they met there from 47 until 59. And then the church that we're in right now was actually built in 1959. It's been a long, long relationship between first and Christ. We never ever in our wildest dreams would imagine what we're doing right now, which has been

Jim 02:59

wonderful. That's great, Mark. Thanks very much. So Joey, the tornado hits. And we've heard you say that the second phone call that you received was from Mark, the pastor of Christ UMC down the road, can you tell us about that phone call? Sure.

Joey 03:15

The phone call that I got first was from a colleague who meant well, but the facility was just not going to be big enough for two congregations to exist in. And when Mark lit up my phone, we had a very brief conversation and said about the business of planning a worship service for that Sunday in a building without power. It took us less than 10 minutes, the rest of the time, we talked about the things that you talked about in the aftermath of disaster. How are He Is everybody okay? How are you coping? How are you making it through? And it was it was a very natural conversation.

Jim 03:55

So the two of you concocted a worship service for both congregations to participate together?

Jim 04:32

And Joey Do I understand that that first worship service was during Advent?

Joey 04:41

Yes, the the service was for the second Sunday in Advent, where we were discussing joy, and I thought I'm gonna have to change everything about this sermon, but the longer I looked at my notes, the more I realized that because joy is something that is not done. And then upon external circumstances that the sermon was actually going to speak directly to the issue at hand. And with just a few changes, I preached the same sermon that I had planned to preach that day.

Jim 05:12

That's great. Thanks, Joey. Nancy, I'm curious from your point of view, especially as a superintendent.

Nancy 05:30

So Advent one, which was the last worship service that was conducted at Mayfield, first, United Methodist Church I was present for and seeing the context of ministry rejoicing in that my daughter had gone with me, we enjoyed it. And then the next Sunday that Joey just got finished talking about Advent to that building was no longer going to be a worship place. And that kind of just immediacy of loss really was present in my own mind as I drove to be a part of that worship. And as I drove through so many other spots of other United Methodist churches, then communities that were being affected, but to walk into that, to walk into that building, to be towards the back to just be observing as I had the Sunday before, and to have a bit of, within the midst of the chaos and crisis that was so around us in Western Kentucky, it felt like such a holy ground, because it was like, they're got each other, we're in this space and worshiping and as Joey said, the theme of joy. Was there people hugging and being with each other, and it's like, we're, it was a small moment after very love, we're gonna be okay, we're gonna keep leaning into each other and going forward.

Jim 10:58

How has this affected your understanding of what it is to be connected through United Methodist tradition?

Joey 11:46

I think the very first thing that that we talked about was the indicator of things that were to come, marked willingness to host us for that worship service, and then the subsequent conversations to have us come out and move offices. Mark, walked into the office and waved at everything that was there and said, I can move any of it that's in your way, I want you to have this place as your place of work. And that was just the beginning of all of the connectional resources that were brought to bear. Robert Craig brought it brought in the UMCOR connection, and help to energize and empower the laity who were already looking for things to do to make a difference in the lives of survivors. We had Nancy's able leadership throughout this process of how we were going to walk together, and what it meant to share a parish, that shared parish model was something that we had talked about, as we were making our way through disaffiliation conversations across the district, how are the churches that remain going to work together. And it's fortunate that she was leading us ahead of that time, so that we were able to fall into this relationship much more naturally, the connection has been fantastic. In those early days, I got phone calls from across our conference and actually from across the jurisdiction and even from some places outside the jurisdiction. The the resources rolled in from our United Methodist brothers and sisters on a regular basis, to the extent that we had over a million dollars that we were able to disperse to survivors and building projects and various ways of putting Mayfield back together alongside the long term recovery group and some of the other agencies that were there, and working. So connectionism was at its strongest in those days, and our ecumenical work was almost as strong.

Jim 13:39

And so joey for you. Would it be fair to say that it was the hospitality, that sort of grease the wheels to make everything kind of happen?

Joey 13:49

Well, we wouldn't have had a place to call our own. We wouldn't have had a desk to work from we wouldn't have had a place to plug in phones if it hadn't been for that hospitality.

The expectation was, as we were moving in that we were going to just come in and overwhelmed these these board generous folks they were, they were getting into something that they didn't realize was going to overwhelm them. And marks that at best. It was like someone's great at coming in with all their trunks full of stuff. And we did, we stored as much of it elsewhere as we could, but we still had a lot of things that we were bringing along that would make the offices function. And we tried to be as as gracious as we could and to step lightly, and all of my folks had explicit directions, you know, we're not here to take over. We're not here to talk about Emerg. We're here as guests, and we're going to be as gracious as we possibly can be. So that that that hospitality factor that Mark referred to, we were, we were aware that we were, we were coming in with taking up quite a bit of space. And it was going to be close quarters for a while, but that that that prophecy did not come to pass. Within six months, we were best friends and we were working on shared projects. We were working on ways to bring about some improvements that Mark's team had been talking about. We brought some resources to bear and some extra hands to lift the load. And in those early days of mission work, our folks hit the streets side by side

with folks from Christ UMC and those who couldn't go out and do repair work or canvassing. We're happy to stay back at the building with Mark and and bring in all the resources that were coming at Mark. There were trailers that just kind of lined up along Broadway.

Mark 14:21

Jim, I feel like I need to interject here that that this was a church wide feeling. Say yes, we met the Monday after our worship service, our Administrative Board met, and we voted unanimously to do it. And then I can remember that conversation and one of the things that that one of the leaders said, was that this this church doesn't belong to Christ you MC that this is Christ's Church, and it's shared with Mayfield, Firth and any other church down the road that needs to be a part of it. So that feeling of of Well, we call it a hospitality but a feeling of connection NASM was there from the get go from everyone at Christ.

Mark 19:06

We had our first worship services Sunday after the tornado and is about 10 minutes after we were finished. Somebody tapped me on the shoulder and said there's a trailer a 35 foot trailer here field from Jackson, Michigan, and they just called to find out where the closest Methodist Church was. It was still standing to the tornado. So that trailer came in an hour later one from East prayer Missouri an hour after that one from Central Indiana and and we found ourselves we became a supply center for town and we did that for about a month. And then after that we we consolidated supplies at the fairground and we we got a call this is every time I think about this I shudder a little bit at the delightfulness of it. We've got a call from a closed to Bible College in town, and they said, We've got to get rid of some beds, because we're going to need this space for offices for people to move into. Do you need any beds? So we said, Sure, and long story short, we have work teams for the last two years. And I say all this, again, to bring us back to the part of the conversation where it was, we could not have done that the Christ as a small church. We could not have done that without Mayfield. First, we locked hands immediately in this process, and I'll throw this in as well. And then I'll clear. We talk about the blessing that we have been that that we have been for first, but let me tell you, the folks that Christ have been blessed. I don't know how many folks have said it's nice to see cars on the parking lot on a Tuesday morning. Because they were not used to that at all. They were not used to the activity. And it's it's, it's been a great shock. I'll put it that way. Can I say it? It's been a great shock for us to, to be able to, to see activity and see life where there once was limited life.

Jim 07:01

Nancy, how has it affected your understanding of the connection?

Nancy 07:10

Oh, it is connection embodied. There was not been a moment, as I said, of hesitation of, we're gonna be together in ministry. And as a district superintendent, who gets the opportunity to, as I said, the show up and small moments, these have been two of the last two years, these have been some of the joyous, the most joyous chart conferences a DS could have. They cause there have been not only what

the pastors that are on this podcast have experienced, but the laity giving thanks for each other. You know, to be able to say, our Sunday School has grown because we're offering it together, or even as in the case of Christ, we have a Sunday school class to go to because we're together. There's been the ability for each of those to take up a large amount of work, but to take up their own parts of that work. Christ with the hospitality, for people coming for supplies, for assistance to be an office place to be a place for work teams. And then for Mayfield first to have, we have a place to go to as we tried to figure out what our next phase is. And to watch pastors, and it's been the case with all three of these to be put in such close proximity to each other. The hallways are very narrow you're in, and that they have grown even in their own ways of being shepherds and pastors, because they've had another person right there to lean on to talk through things. And I think, Joey, and Adam, and I think Mark would all say that they've all become stronger leaders in this kind of season, because they had each other to lean on. Yeah.

Jim 09:19

Thanks, Nancy. I appreciate that. Adam, I find myself wanting to ask you, you are in a difficult position, walking into the midst of this after had already sort of begun. So I'm curious about your perspective, and your role as a leader in that in that kind of a thing?

Adam 09:37

It's almost felt like a family. You know, ever since I arrived, I feel like I've been welcomed into the family that's already been established between Christ. And first, before I came, there was Wednesday night meals, were just starting, you know, we just started those back in the last this last August. And when you we get around the tables, and we start fellowshiping together, it's not just first people, there's Christ there, too. And we're having those tough conversations, or we're having those joyous conversations. And that's why it is we're around the table together. And that's kind of what I, you know, I've been trying to push to with us together, because that's the foundation of our United Methodism, is our connection around the table, and how we are called to be together as one. And really, the big focus for us has been mission. When we, when the people are serving, they are the most joyous.

There is a sense of hope now. They've gone through the grieving process. As a church. Joey walked him through that hard times. And through those times of grief and what's to come. The month before I came, Joey invited me to start the process with architects and doing the interviews So the seat be at the foundation of the new excitement has been even more hopeful and exciting to me being their leader in their shepherd, they, they are in a place to congregations, I think both congregations are in a sense of being woken looking forward, they want to see what God is calling him to do next, each day, they want to look forward to seeing where they can be in the gaps with the hurting in the community. And then also with the building, they are there. They're excited what we could do out of the building, what can we do out of our new building? What can we what's all the ministries that we could be doing, even with a larger space that we would have, as Joey could attest to the old building kind of had some limitations? Now they have this kind of fresh opportunity to see where God's calling him next into the future. So the kingdom. And

Jim 16:24

and I think this is a testament to all of your leadership. I mean, this couldn't have been an easy transition to do, and probably still not. But you all seem to be reading from the same page, which is really, really hopeful.

Jim 21:23

That's terrific. I find myself wanting to shift the conversation a little bit to the reality of the grief, because I think it occurs to me that all churches go through seasons of grief. I'm thinking about, for instance, what I was thinking about Joey, so he was the pastor at Mayfield when all this happened. And then he moves. And I'm wondering how difficult that may have been a different sort of death for the congregation. I'm wondering, I'm wondering what you may have learned about your congregations. In the in the grief out I have a quote that says grief doesn't change you it reveals you. And I'm curious as to what was revealed in your churches that you may not have known? Can you help me with that?

Joey 22:19

In the very first days after the storm, people would gather on the sidewalk next to the destruction, looking at what used to be the sanctuary and the leaning structures of the annex the education annex, and they would, they would simply break down. And a lot of our friends and colleagues would would try to console us by saying well, it's just a building. And we knew that that wasn't the case. That was the architectural structure. That was the repository of hopes and dreams. Children who had been baptized there, couples that had been married there, folks who had been laid to rest after funeral services that were conducted there, to say nothing of the decades that nearly well, more than one century of, of memories that are built Sunday by Sunday. And Wednesday by Wednesday and every other day of the week that people came by the church, there were there were memories that were being bulldozed as the structure finally came down. And we knew that we could not look our people in the eye and say, well, it was just a building, you know, cheer up, it'll be okay. We realized that we did have to go through a grieving process. And we grieved for as long as we could, until people started saying, you know, that's, that's enough, we've got to move on and start to help others. And when, when that help was needed, some people started helping even before the grieving process was over. And that meant, that meant that some folks short circuited their grieving. So I'm sure Adam is still dealing with some folks who are grieving through this process. But there are a great many people who, who took the time to stand on that sidewalk and look at the remnants and to, to catalogue those memories and to cherish them and to give them over to God and thanksgiving. But as we moved forward, grieving continues to this day. And

Jim 24:13

yeah, thanks for teeing that up, Joey. For Adam, are you still feeling a certain amount of folks who are in the process? And how are you helping them?

Adam 24:25

There's still a few that would, you know, they'll see an old picture of the church sitting now or seeing it online. And we're seeing a picture to destruction as we cope through through some of the FEMA documents and they'll say, Oh, I remember this and they'll just bring those memories out. But then they'll start after they say that, they'll say, Well, what we're going to be doing next is even greater, and that hope that hope is almost overwhelmed the grief. They have become so hopeful and excited. They

just can't wait. Can't wait to see what God has for them. And so there is some that are kind of the grief has lingers there. And that's just not that's normal with grief every day, you know, some days, you'll have some bad days, and then you know, you'll have those good days. And that's kind of how they've been facing it. I think the big thing that I hear a lot, you know, a couple of weeks ago, we had some storms come in, and they have a lot of stress or PTSD, or most of anytime there's a prediction of storms. So that that in itself brings a lot of grief out to from what I've recognized. So in those moments, you kind of just have to present just being present with them. And that's been my focus.

Jim 26:22

Well, and shared trauma is a powerful connector for people. And so I'm sure you've seen quite a lot of that. So Nancy, I was curious from, again, your perch from 30,000 feet, maybe you are a unique part of the connection. And so I'm curious as to what you were able to do to be helpful to the churches that were suffering through that sort of a trauma,

Nancy 27:02

not just these churches, but all of them. There were quite a few that were hit. And I think one of the biggest things that I saw was the amount of the local, the conference, and then the wider connection that sought me out to make sure that anything that was needed. You know, I've only been a district superintendent at that point in a very short time, I've only been one for three years, I would have never have imagined that there would be people that would pick up the phone and call this office and say, I'm just here as a fellow United Methodist, please tell your churches Mayfield for what do we need? What can we do? We're going ahead and sending money so that you can give that specific first specific needs. And I think it was also all the local churches knew not to inundate aid and real centralized disaster places. They just knew to contact me. And here's what we can do. Here's what we and I, you know, we just became a communication point. And the list of people that donated the people, the list of people who said, give us a call. And now the list of people throughout our connection that now are coming as work teams that still haven't forgotten us is that I got to be the individual that that saw that large of a response of the entire connection. And fortunately, it has enabled us to respond in different ways. And all of our disaster areas in western Tennessee, there was a small part of my coverage area that was western Tennessee, and then throughout the areas that we're talking about, because that work continues to go on. And still some of those folks who contacted us in the beginning days are being tapped. Even now, you know, there is that need. We all know from disasters that made it need is, please don't send stuff. Please don't make another pastor have what Mark had to go through and have tractor trailer after tractor trailer. The beginning need is prayer and funds. And then we will let you know and I think a lot of people knew that and helped prepare us and we're still using some of those funds. So that work teams that are going to be coming in and a number of them coming in through uncor and through Robert Craig as our disaster response court. They're going to be coming in late fall all the way through summer and you know, it is a long journey to to go through the all that grief. It is a long journey to get to the place where people are We're all put back into their homes and put back into their churches. And you build a town back as well. Yeah,

Jim 30:07

You guys have such a powerful story. And I, I don't know if anybody's writing it down. And maybe it can be used in the future as a template for how churches can do this better you can teach and I hope that you will even think about doing that. I wanted to kind of get back to Adam and Mark real quick. Shakespeare once said, give sorrow words. Because the grief that doesn't speak breaks the heart. I'm curious as to how you encouraged people to speak their grief. While this was going on, to help them to heal.

30:56

I always tried to make myself available, of course, you know, our congregation, we had two people that were really affected by the tornado out of out of all our folks. But But there's still, as I said, Before, there was still just grief driving around. We had some conversations as a church, about what we were feeling about memories, we were driving through town, and we could not remember we couldn't really know where we were, honestly, simply because there was no not landmark one left. And I know in the weeks following the tornado, we had that conversation a lot. So So basically, we encourage our I encouraged my folks to grab me. In those moments were everything that they that they knew, every everything that they held as security that had been there since most of them were were children, was gone.

Joey 32:01

I remember the moments that we spent, I would I started driving over to the to the old parking lot. And sitting just before lunch, and just after lunch, because folks would come over not only looking for, you know, things in the wreckage, which wasn't all that safe. We tried to discuss that. But they were looking at the at the site, and they were they were doing their remembering and doing their grieving. And I had more pastoral care moments, I think on that sidewalk then, and I did visiting and folks homes that have visited in several homes to help process some of this grief. But I think the real turning point was when Baker Dunn was baptized, we we baptized Sarah and Jeff son, in front of the remnants of the sanctuary. And for a lot of folks that was that was the turning point. That was the connector between the past and the present, we knew that the Baker was going to be a symbol of hope for the future. And that that very chilly baptism took place. Right out there on the front steps, which was just about the only thing left standing underneath the columns. The roof had caved in and the sanctuary was nearly completely destroyed. But we had those columns out front and the steps. And we gathered there to baptize this precious child. And it was it was a it was a salve. For many, it was a way for them to turn their grief and their mourning into hope. Yeah,

Jim 33:31

it's such a beautiful symbol joy that I'm sure that that was a really powerful moment. I want to follow you on something too. You left Mayfield and you were appointed to call your veil. And I'm aware that call your veil has had a trauma of its own in the last year through conversations about disaffiliation. And I'm wondering whether or not the grief that you are experiencing or have experienced in Collierville? Are there lessons learned from what happened in May field in Christ that you could take with you to be useful there. And Nancy, you may want to weigh into this as well, you have a pretty good perspective of that too.

Joey 34:14

The move for me was, was something that I needed and didn't know that I needed. I realized that after I moved that I was still dealing with a lot of trauma and grief of my own. But when I got here to call your Ville and realize that that their disaster was similar but very different from the disaster that I just moved away from. I started to draw those similarities and to figure out how I could use what I had experienced over the last year and a half to put into words and then into action. Some some real solutions for how folks we're processing their own grief and trauma. I'm serving under Dr. Deborah Sutter through who is one of our greatest pastors She's just absolutely phenomenal. But as I came on board, you could tell that she was tired, and she was ready to take some time away. This, the past few weeks have marked the year anniversary of that vote. And, quite frankly, Deb was was carrying quite a bit of the load since the staff had been practically cut in half, including the loss of one of our clergy. When I got here, I helped people to understand that the way through grieving was to reach out to the people around you and to, to offer that assistance that they needed and to receive the assistance that they might be feeling in their own lives and their own hearts. And as I was helping people to understand that I started to understand that for myself, because the the folks here started asking me, how are you doing with processing your grief? And how are you making your way through trauma. And it was only then that I began to realize that I hadn't done a very good job of accepting and receiving that help that was offered throughout the connection. It came through on a regular basis, the phone calls were, were a normal part of my day, the cards kept coming and kept coming. But I, I realized that I had to be the one that stopped and received that in order to be healed, in order to accept what was going on in my life. You have to stop fighting, you have to stop the battle, you have to walk away from the the aggression and the stress. And you have to take note of the wounds that you have incurred. And once I had done that, I realized how much rest and recuperation I had needed. And how much had already been provided by the folks that call your bill. So it was it was it was not a difficult thing for me to then turn to them and say, We have to let some of this go, we have to begin the work of healing. And to do that we have to lay down the sticks and the stones that have been forced into our hands. And we have to recognize that the mission field is waiting for us. And as soon as we are healed up as soon as we are ready, there is a hurting and broken world that needs transformation. And we need to do that one neighborhood at a time. And as Deb says one block at a time. So we set about that, that as a as a goal for what we were going to do and made Deb's time away a part of that healing. And we've had some very pointed conversations about how we still love the people who left but we have to let them find their own way now. And we have to let some of the hurt that we've incurred and some of the hurt that we've inflicted. We have to do make our peace with that. And not only to forgive but to be forgiven. And it's it's been a powerful few months here. And it's been a very difficult year for the folks that call your bill. But I like to think that they're looking over the disaster that they've experienced. And they're learning something from the disaster that I experienced

Jim 37:58

as beautifully said joy. Thanks. But Nancy, what about you anything to add? As

Nancy 38:03

we have this conversation as we think about grief and sorrow, you know, our, our main Christian way of doing those lament, and it feels like with the ways in which the pandemic and then tornado and disaffiliation it feels like it could be looked at as a long season of lament. But as Adam in his fresh eyes coming in and seeing so much hope it just helps lead us to that prayer of thanksgiving. Yeah, we're

gonna have to keep when you have the kind of destruction that you know, a physical tornado does. When you have the kind of division that happens with disaffiliation, there's still going to be moments that we're going to catch ourselves and we're in lament. But I think the great thing is now, our prayers of Thanksgiving just seemed to be growing more and more in the midst of that. And so it's hope. We're giving thanks that colleagues could work together. We're giving thanks that churches that were in different ways expressing mission are doing them together. Now, that's hope. We had clergy, we have clergy gathering at this district office not too long ago. And it's all those that are here. And they are finding new connections to their churches when there were others that they had to let go and they're finding other ways to work together. We have a group of churches in this area that it was difficult over the last few years to hold a Holy Week services together. But now that we see who's staying in the connection, they are reinstituting doing Holy Week services together and I give the cry of Thanksgiving with each of those and each of those times as it grows and grows. Great. Thanks,

Jim 39:57

Nancy. Just a couple of other questions and then So we'll be like, short answer questions for you. And I'll start with Adam and then go to Mark, and Joey and then the Nancy. Can you can you tell me what excites you about ministry? Now,

Adam 40:12

what excites me is the people, seeing them excited about ministry wanting to be present with the hurt that's around our community in our world. And then also, what excites me is to see the the change the excitement of what could be, and where we are being called to. And it's a little different than the way we used to think so pulled and pulling and stretching that we experienced, you know, even in ministry is exciting to see others struggle with that, too.

Jim 40:50

That's great. Thanks, Mark.

40:52

conceptualism is what brought me to the door of the United Methodist Church. Oh, and this season has done nothing but but proved again and again and again. So I'm grateful for that. I'm also grateful. The downtown churches were destroyed not just First United Methodist, we disciples church was destroyed, the First Presbyterian was destroyed St. James ame. So we have come through a season now and actually begin when when when Joy was here, of ecumenicalism, we are we are a matter of fact, we're planning a sunrise service with four other churches here on our lot. And they're all welcoming. They're all in the same shape that that first is, you know, no place to worship, or they're worshiping like in schools. So the opportunity to do something with other churches, other sisters and brothers. It's been great for the last two years.

Jim 41:51

Good. Thanks, Joey.

Joey 41:53

I'm absolutely stoked to hear that mark. That's wonderful news about the ecumenical revival that's taking place in may feel. That was that was sort of on the wane while I was there. And I think that part of it had to do with all of the cultural and political and theological divides that we were experiencing, not just in the United Methodist Church, but across the board and mainline Protestantism. And what excites me now is to echo what Mark and Adam are saying is the possibilities, the hope that the the folks in the pews have now, we have been distracted for far too long, practically the entirety of my time as an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. And we are now turning away from those those stressful squabbles and the arguments and the pointless battles over the way we do business and how we are organized and structured. And we are moving into a new era of, of ministry that seems to have its roots in what Wesley was trying to get us to focus on. And that is to live in a way that is holy, that is set apart to to bring about that that love of Jesus Christ that our neighbors can see rather than having to be taught in a Sunday school class or to be handed a Book of Discipline, for Pete's sake. It's it's much more organic and much more natural now. And this season of ministry has been one of the best that I've been able to experience and it began while I was still at Mayfield. Great,

Jim 43:21

thanks, George Nancy.

Nancy 43:23

Oh, it is our clergy. Our clergy excite me so much. Bishop maca. Lilly says this, and it is so true. None of us none of us have been educated as pastors for the church we now have and our clergy are getting that memo and going. So what do I need to have to be missional to put Indeed, our neighbors ahead of everything else. And what is our what is our unique calling me that each of these places, I could spend hours going and talking about our CL FM's our CLM, our licensed local pastors and our ordained pastors that are giving so much in so many new, innovative ways, and we're all just sitting there saying, We've got everything in our basket that we need to continue to grow and grow and grow the kingdom of God. And we're just going to make sure that on our watch, that's what we're doing, and that it doesn't need to be tied to buildings, but it can be it can be out in anywhere on the sidewalks and I just say amazing things from all of our clergy.

Jim 44:36

Well, Nancy and Joey, and Mark and Adam, we're so grateful for you to be with us today. You really do have such a story to tell. And I hope you'll have opportunity to share that everywhere so that others can draw inspiration from it. So we thank you and if you'd like to learn more about anything that we've discussed today, visit our table talk WEBSITE AT T w Que [umc.org/table talk](https://umc.org/table-talk). And if you'd like to add to this conversation, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at table talk at TWK umc.org. Thank you all for being with us and those of you listening thank you