



Jeff Hoffmeyer: [\(00:02\)](#)

I would say our faith is built for liminality, it's built for the in between.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:10\)](#)

You're listening to the Faith & Work Podcast where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor and society through our daily work. Well Merry Christmas, everyone the gang's all here. This is the penultimate episode of the Faith & Work Podcast for 2021, so we're throwing a virtual party with members of the Denver Institute staff team. I am Joanna Meyer. I'm the Institute's director of public engagement, and I'm joined by Brian Gray, our COO and director of the 5280 fellowship.

Brian Gray: [\(00:39\)](#)

Good to be with you, blessed advents people.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:43\)](#)

Brian's Episcopalian so he is very, very picky about the difference between advent and Christmas.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:54\)](#)

Also joining us this Jeff Hoffmeyer, our VP of advancement. Hi, Hoff.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: [\(00:58\)](#)

Hey Jo and Merry Christmas everyone, early.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:03\)](#)

Dustin Moody, our communications director.

Dustin Moody: [\(01:06\)](#)

Hey, everybody. Merry Christmas.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:08\)](#)

And last but not least is Catherine Sandgren. She's our podcast producer and also coordinates our communication strategies and events. Hi, Catherine.

Catherine Sandgren: [\(01:16\)](#)

Hey, good to be here.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:19\)](#)

So over the years one of my favorite things has been this loosely structured round table conversations with our Denver Institute staff. And if you've been listening this year, you know we've had some all-star guests, truly amazing thought leaders and culture shapers. But it's also insightful to hear from mere mortals what it's been like this year and what we're learning as the year draws to a close. So in the midst



of the ongoing pandemic weirdness, our hope is to offer some insight and encouragement about work and life in this season. So, to get us started to celebrate Christmas, I would be curious to know what Christmas music you guys would commend to our listeners.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: [\(01:55\)](#)

Jo, I can jump in because I think this is the right answer. I have to go with Handel's Messiah.

Joanna Meyer: [\(02:01\)](#)

Amen. Amen.

Brian Gray: [\(02:03\)](#)

I think it's the best music for Advent, much to the indignation of my children who have been forced to listen to the Christmas portion on the way up to go skiing for many years, but I love it. Can't get away from it.

Dustin Moody: [\(02:17\)](#)

I'm going to be a little neurotic with this one, I love all the Christmas music. I find myself listening especially to instrumentals and orchestrations. I find lyrics to be a little distracting when I'm working or trying to focus on something. So all of your favorite Christmas carols are available as orchestrations on your music platform of choice. So if that's changes things up for you, that would be my recommendation. And also Kelly Clarkson's new Christmas release Christmas Isn't Canceled, Just You. So if you need some spill in the tea and throw in some shade, add that one to your rotation.

Catherine Sandgren: [\(02:51\)](#)

Yeah I'm definitely not as well versed as Dustin, but I've been listening to Sandra McCracken and her 2019 Christmas album. So that's a solid one, love it.

Brian Gray: [\(03:03\)](#)

Okay, so I'm not so curmudgeonly about this whole Advent thing as I like to make fun of my fellow Anglicans for sometimes being so, but I really do love advent. The Dentist music in particular, just leading into Christmas. So a couple records that are really fabulous future of forestry have EEPs over the years with Advent music and then a band called the Brilliance has released a Christmas record, which is soaring and instrumental and just gorgeous. And then the surprise Advent song that people usually don't think about, you too. The song is actually called Christmas subtitled Baby, Please Come Home. And in classic Bono Riffing fashion, he's likening a distant missed lover to the second Advent and coming of Christ. So at least for a little fun and upbeat, you got to play that one and listen to the poet Theologian.

Joanna Meyer: [\(04:02\)](#)

You know, my mom was raised in South Africa. She was a missionary kid and so she was trained in British schools because it was a British colony at the time, it's part of the col Commonwealth. And so my mom is



just determined to instill a love for British Christmas music in our family. So it's the Cambridge singers for me. If it's loud and have as brass and a pipe organ, I'm happy. As a gift to our guests we have created a Denver Institute 2021 Christmas playlist which we will be giving to you in the show notes and it's awesome. It really is a multicultural mix of tunes to brighten your holiday season so you can check that out. As you guys reflect on 2021, I'd love to start with Dustin. What do you have to celebrate about this year?

Dustin Moody: ([04:43](#))

Yeah, so as I was thinking through this question, Joanna, my family and I are kind of in a spot of having worked through some pretty big changes in 2021 and still to come some this month and early next year. And it's left us in a spot of kind of wondering what does the future look like with some pretty big questions. But even in that season throughout that time we've just been able to celebrate and see God's kindness and provision through the generosity of his people in big and small ways. And we just hope to be able to be conduits of that sometime again in the future.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([05:19](#))

Yeah, I love hearing that Dustin I would say Joe actually just the four of you and the rest of the Denver Institute staff, I'm so grateful for. I'm new to the team, I've been working for Denver Institute for about four months and it's been a surprise to me just that God opened up this door but I'm so grateful and it's been a real blessing.

Joanna Meyer: ([05:41](#))

I am celebrating still what I saw God do through the women work and calling event this fall, as many of you guys know that's an area that is near and dear to my heart, the topic of women in work. And this year we saw the event go global. It was truly astonishing through a partnership with compassionate international we had women participating from 26 different countries, which is just mind boggling. And it's been encouraging to receive the feedback that even though there are deeply different cultural variations of how women experience work there's some things in common. And so I was just so moved by hearing one of our African participants, seeing an email where she was talking about how meaningful it was to see one of our speakers share a photo of her presenting at a professional setting with a baby strap to her chest. And this woman from Africa said, "I needed that reminder that God can use all of my different colleagues in tandem with each other." And so that was just such a gift to participate in that this year.

Joanna Meyer: ([06:34](#))

So in contrast for us to think reasons for celebrations this year has still been weird just when I think we're done with the pandemic, it keeps on giving. It really is the gift that keeps on giving. So I'm curious to know from you guys, what do you think is still weird about pandemic life? Dustin, maybe you could lead us off on that one.



Dustin Moody: ([06:52](#))

Yeah, I think one aspect of weirdness is that we're still talking about it. I think earlier this year, over the summer, we had kind of collectively hoped we would be done at some point or learning, to live with it in a different way. Now we've got the Omicron variant and all sorts of other things that we're still talking about and the way that that impacts our work and our habits and our routines, we're still dealing with right? So part of the weirdness is just that this is still a topic that we're talking about, but I think it's also helpful to kind of take a step back and think that, as we've talked about before both on this podcast and at other events. The pandemic has created a lot of disparities or revealed a lot of disparities that we may have not paid attention to before. Statistically three out of four workers are doing better than they were this time two years ago.

Dustin Moody: ([07:37](#))

That's not to say that our situations aren't without challenges, whether you're a parent doing education at home for a while or taking care of loved ones who may be immunocompromised. But statistically, a lot of us are doing better in certain ways than before the pandemic started. But that quarter of a people, quarter of workers who are either frontline workers, healthcare workers things like that are in a much tougher spot. And the class and justice issues that the pandemic has brought, I think are still something that we're having to grapple with as a culture and as employees and, and as brothers and sisters.

Jeff Haanen: ([08:13](#))

Hi, I'm Jeff Haanen founder of Denver Institute for faith and work. And I would like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community. Whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25, \$50 or any amount your generosity will support Denver institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors and society through their daily work including this podcast. To say thank you as a monthly partner you will receive a welcome box. You'll have exclusive access to private digital content, personalized vocational coaching and discounts for Denver Institute content and experiences. To become monthly partners, simply visit [DenverInstitute.org/give](https://DenverInstitute.org/give) or see the show notes in today's episode. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Joanna Meyer: ([08:59](#))

Yeah, I've been surprised at how...I lead our public events here at the Institute. And so we're still trying to navigate, what does it look like to have a gracious approach to public health restrictions? How do we understand that people have differences in how they want to protect themselves in the community and what does it look like to be gracious in the midst of that? So it's really fatiguing, I've been surprised that we're still wrestling with those questions. So when I think about the season that we're in I would describe it as a liminal space. And this is one of those words that when I first heard it I had to go to the dictionary. So if our listeners have never heard it take heart, I'm going to give you a definition.

Joanna Meyer: ([09:36](#))



I often think of liminal spaces like a threshold, it's a space and time or an experience that's between what was and what is next. It's just that in between space, a place of transition and waiting often it's a situation where you don't know what will be lying ahead of you and it can be characterized by ambiguity or disorientation. Gosh, this totally describes our working in civic life these days. I'm still coming to terms with the fact that here in Metro Denver, we're still wearing masks again, we've put our masks back on. So I'd like to know, how is this liminality affecting your work and life in this season?

Brian Gray: ([10:17](#))

Personally, I've talked to a lot of leaders who are experiencing decision making fatigue, just tired of making decisions. And I still am feeling that, so many times I make decisions and then remake them. Or had hoped that I would have a better attitude actually about some of the public gathering restrictions that we appropriately want to put around gatherings for our programming. And I thought because I've done this a couple times already it'll be fine the next time we do it, no I still have a really cruddy attitude. Dustin mentioned earlier "What's weird about it is we're still talking about it" but we're making decisions that feels like there's the disorientation is that there's new information, it comes out all the time. And so it's actually extending that liminality quite a bit longer.

Brian Gray: ([11:09](#))

And a friend offered an analogy that's been really helpful, sometimes when you're thinking of a trapes artist, if you're holding onto a trapes that artist has to let go of the first trapes to be in between and actually untethered before they grab onto that thing that's next. And I feel that in life, I feel church. I feel that in my groups of friends who are making decisions about career and family and otherwise, and it feels like that in between time has been really lengthened.

Catherine Sandgren: ([11:42](#))

To add to that I would say personally, the ability to reflect and rest and kind of regather my thoughts and my goals looking into the future has been really difficult during this time. And I know that's like a personal thing, but also it does extend to social dynamics and relationships with other people. And I know it's probably not unique to this time specifically with Christmas and the New Year coming up but I do think the past year and the pandemic added a whole nother layer processing that people are still having to go through and that affects you. And it kind of draws out the process of being able to say "Here I am, where do I want to go? And how do I get there?" So I've really felt that tug of "I need space to process."

Joanna Meyer: ([12:31](#))

Our prayer for our listeners is that they would carve out an hour or two and really spend some time of value, waiting the year before it's over. So I think about where we're at I really feel the weight that a lot of our organizational leaders must be feeling because just when we think we can move forward and think "Okay, everybody's back to work in January" We realize "No, that may not be the case." And so it's



very hard to live in that between space where you can't think concretely about what decisions you'll make. And yet in the midst of that, God really is at work in that sense of being in between and I'd like to share a quote from Richard Ruhr.

Joanna Meyer: ([13:05](#))

Brian is an admirer of some of Richard Ruhr's thinking, but we do want to offer a qualifier that Richard roars is a little bit theologically wonky, but he has some great insights. It's true, it's true. So here's what Ruhr said. "Liminality is a good space where genuine newness can begin. Get there often and stay as long as you can, by whatever means possible. This is the sacred space where the old world is able to fall apart in a bigger world is revealed. If we don't encounter liminal space in our lives, we start idealizing normalcy." Which is so true, what insight does the Christian faith offer to help us navigate this in between space?

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([13:49](#))

Joe, I would say I theological kinkiness aside I'm glad to stack hands with Richard Ruhr on this one. I would say our faith is built for liminality, it's built for the in between. Even if you just think about the two primary Liturgical seasons of the Christian year one of which we're in of course Advent, the second one Holy Week. If you think about Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, it's actually Holy Saturday that's at the heart of that passion movement of our faith. And in this season I was kind of joking with Brian at the top of the episode, "Is the advent right now? Are we already celebrating Christmas?" It really is important to own this season of Advent and a writer whose become really important to me in that regard is Fleming Rutledge.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([14:40](#))

In fact Joe, I bet we can link to some of her work in the show notes. But Fleming Rutledge is really kind of the patron saint of Advent and she makes this point from Second Peter that we are both to "Wait for and hasten the coming day." The day of Jesus Christ and his Second Advent, what does that mean? How can you both wait for something and actually hasten it? Well, that's the tension of advent and here we are in that moment. Advent, it is an in between moment and Karl Barth, great theologian of the 20th century. Gosh, listen to all the names I'm dropping Fleming...

Joanna Meyer: ([15:22](#))

Dropping the names, huh?

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([15:23](#))

Karl Barth they're just coming. But Karl Barth says it's always Advent in the Christian year and I think true and our faith is built for the in between. So as hard as it is as much anxiety as comes from being in the in between our faith is really built for it.

Dustin Moody: ([15:42](#))



I have nothing to add, that's a great explanation from Jeff. I think to make it practical and applicable what I've found myself questioning and thinking through is "What does it look like to live faithfully in an in between space?" Whether that's Advent and we're talking about that kind of waiting season or just other areas of life where I am looking towards or hoping for a future promise from the Lord. Just sitting with that and thinking through what does that look like in my life has offered a lot of comfort in this season of Covid and waiting and wanting to get past it or get to the next thing. But just sitting with that tension has been helpful.

Brian Gray: ([16:19](#))

I think we have an opportunity to take a lot more seriously of listening, very, very small day in day out scale. I grew up in a tradition where the nature of God's will and hearing from God was always a very big deal about the very big issues for very important people. And in liminal space, in between and transitions we're reminded with God life is here also. And so the question is, God how do you want me to live this moment on a podcast? Do you want me to consider my task list this afternoon? And the way I think about myself and accomplishment this afternoon? So between moments, these really small everyday kind of quota experiences, that is the with God life. And so I think the Advent season reminds us of that but also this in between and waving reminds us of that.

Joanna Meyer: ([17:19](#))

Yeah, it helps me to realize that I am not the only one that's currently experiencing this nor am I the only person in the history of the church who's ever struggled with that sense of being in between. You think about scripture, all of the biblical heroes lived in that sense of prolonged waiting, lack of clarity about what might have been immediately ahead of them and just that sense of trusting God. I think about the Israelites and how many mornings they woke up to eat manana when they were in the desert 40 years of that and how discouraging that must have been of not knowing when it would end and yet trusting God for the moment. And so we can find hope in that. That is part of the Christian experience and God meets us in that. On a more positive note, practically speaking what's made your life easier this year or more enjoyable? I'm calling this section hacks and hopes.

Dustin Moody: ([18:10](#))

Well I will start, I would say grocery delivery and drive up, pick up a Target have been amazing. And I hope they never go away.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([18:22](#))

I second that Dustin, I've spent more time outside this year than ever and the bar was our already pretty high. Particularly in Colorado, we're used to spending time outside but the other night I had a cocktail with a friend outside, there were some snow flurries coming down. I never would've been outside normally in that kind of moment but it was beautiful. And so more time outside I'm hoping to hold onto that.



Joanna Meyer: ([18:48](#))

Yeah, I've started keeping a blanket in the trunk of my car because you just never know when you're going to have a wonderful social opportunity outside.

Brian Gray: ([18:56](#))

You said hacks and hopes, I felt like a hack and in terms of any great tips I'd handout around muddling through the transition I'm more of a hack than anything. However, I tell you what the last year I committed to reading old predominantly fiction and some great novels and it has been one of the richest things that I do outside of work and family is to and discuss it. Just finally moved the brother's care of my two read list and onto my red list and onto my favorite novel I've ever read.

Brian Gray: ([19:38](#))

I think fiction has been a really deeply life giving thing for me in the past year.

Catherine Sandgren: ([19:52](#))

I would say mine are more fun and going easy going. Hand sanitizer in the car, why has that not been a thing before? Maybe you guys have been doing it, but I have not. As well as just a good pair of slippers to wear around the house. So I'm also grateful that Denver Institute we have, and I know we're privileged in this way to be able to work from home three days a week and work in the office two days a week.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([20:17](#))

Wait Catherine, you didn't have slippers before the pandemic.

Catherine Sandgren: ([20:21](#))

I didn't have good slippers Hoff, that's the difference.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([20:24](#))

Okay, all right you upgraded.

Joanna Meyer: ([20:26](#))

What makes a slipper good?

Catherine Sandgren: ([20:29](#))

You have a solid base of the shoe that you can go inside or outside and then it's wool lined or fluffy lined.

Joanna Meyer: ([20:38](#))

That is a good slipper.

Brian Gray: ([20:41](#))





Same page 100% by the way. Yes, slip on slippers from Sanuk. So they are indoor outdoor. This is the new work shoe, two days a week for me I'm wearing the house slipper.

Joanna Meyer: ([20:54](#))

Brian, we're going to link to that slipper in our show notes.

Brian Gray: ([20:58](#))

Okay.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([20:58](#))

Let's have a wear your slippers to workday on one of our in the offices.

Brian Gray: ([21:02](#))

So you're talking about Monday and Friday because that's what I do.

Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([21:07](#))

No, I'm talking about Tuesdays and Thursdays when we're in the office because I want to see Catherine's slippers. I definitely have a pair to show off so...

Joanna Meyer: ([21:17](#))

I have two hacks that have really improved my year. The first is I just started on Friday, I'm doing something called the Interosseal Technique. Which is, I have pandemic back like a lot of people do my back has just been really sore and not getting better. And so it's this intentional stretching thing and it's a little bit woo woo. The woman who does it is up in Boulder so I'm not surprised but what it is your therapist stands on you. They apply pressure to specific muscle points on like your leg or your arms. They use their foot to push down really hard and you flex your toes for example, in specific ways. So it kind of releases things that are going on with your fascia, whatever fascia are. And so I'm very hopeful, a few friends that have had ongoing back pain have found this to be the solution that really has brought relief to them.

Joanna Meyer: ([22:03](#))

So we'll see, I'll let you guys know if the Interosseal Technique is one of God's creative goods in this world. So that's one of them. The other hack is finding a female friend that you can have really intentional conversations about your career development with. So I'm taking some online courses through Cornell University on women in leadership so every three weeks my friend Hillary and I get together over dinner. We're taking these online classes together and we debrief what we're learning and what this means for our own growth and leadership. So I think more women need to be more intentional about having professional buddies they can shoot the breeze within this area. Okay, how about hopes for 2022? What are you trusting God for and hoping that he will do in the coming year?



Jeff Hoffmeyer: ([22:42](#))

You know Joanna, I have a hope for more Sabbath. That's been something that just naturally I've had more of during the pandemic, just more time at home. And then with this job I've taken at Denver Institute, previously I was a pastor. Now all of a sudden I have this thing called a weekend, which I've really enjoyed Saturday and Sunday off. And there's just a clear runway for me to step into that command from scripture. All commands in scripture are simultaneously invitations but to honor the Sabbath, to remember it and to keep it. So I have the hope for that and the spiritual and the relational fruit that I know will come out of that

Brian Gray: ([23:29](#))

Mine's actually similar, this hope is for me personally but I think it could apply to a lot of our listeners is I'm hoping for being more intentional around my yeses and my nos. I tend to make too many yeses and they are too soft and too easy. Meaning it's hard for me to back all of them up. And so therefore the no that is consistent for me is a no towards my own self-care. A no towards slowing, a no towards running as much as I'd like to be doing.

Brian Gray: ([24:00](#))

And so similar to hop with Sabbath, Sabbath is probably one of the practices that's most nurturing to me on Sundays but I'd like to have a little bit more white space and slowness by saying no more often. So my hope is that'll happen and my goal for five or six years, I have not gone through the Ignatia exercises, which is usually a nine month process when it's a part of exercises and daily life. And so something I've always wanted to do for spiritual formation and so my hope is that by the time I get to the fall I have made this practice a rhythm enough that I'll have an hour a day to add to my life for prayer, which is a part of the exercise.

Dustin Moody: ([24:47](#))

This is a bit of a throwaway hope but take it for what it's worth, I am hopeful similar to my question earlier that COVID and pandemic takes up less space for all of us next year. My hope is that if we do another one of these at the end of 22, we're not talking about the weight of pandemic and living and working and what that means.

Joanna Meyer: ([25:05](#))

Yeah, wouldn't be a gift. My hope for 2022 is that the body of Christ would lead in love in the world and that can sound very vague and wishful thinking. But I think for a significant portion of the last few years we've had a combative attitude towards each other in our community. And so my prayer is that we would be asking ourselves, what does it look like to tangibly express the love of Christ in our world? And how can that just change the tone that people would see the gospel more clearly through the practical ways that we live? So that's something I'm praying for the coming year.



Joanna Meyer: ([25:40](#))

Well, thanks to all of you. I love getting to learn with you and from you in these conversations. So thanks for the time and joining us for a little a bit of a party today. I'll bid goodbye to you guys and then we'll come back with a few announcements and details for our listeners.

Joanna Meyer: ([25:55](#))

Thanks to the Denver Institute staffing for joining us for this penultimate episode of the year. As we said in the broadcast there are a number of things we want to provide for you in our show notes. The first is to remind you that Business for the Common Good tickets are on sale now. That's a live in person event and also an online gathering Friday February 25th, we'll gather together national thought leaders and business leaders who are sharing a vision for what it looks like to walk with God in the business community. It's amazing and tickets are likely to sell out so now is the time to act and make those purchases.

Joanna Meyer: ([26:27](#))

Also though our show notes will include four amazing things, Santa's bag is full for you guys this year. We have a link to the Denver Institute Spotify playlist, which is amazing. We will also link to Fleming Religious book Advent, which is actually a really thick book comprised of awesome short chapters and essays. So it's something you can dip into and out of throughout the Christmas season. We will link to Brian's favorite Sauk slippers if you're doing some Christmas shopping. And finally, we'll also link to the Sabbath ebook if you're interested in what it looks like to include intentional biblically guided rest into your work week, so amazing gifts for you guys. Thanks again for joining us and we'll hear you again in two weeks.

Joanna Meyer: ([27:13](#))

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