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Annie: Hi friends! Happy Tuesday. Welcome to a surprise drop-in episode of That Sounds Fun. You know what that means. We're talking about that network. I'm your host Anne F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store.

So I'm just dropping into your podcast feed today to let you know the latest and greatest news coming at you from the That Sounds Fun Network. The newest podcast to join the That Sounds Fun Network is called Where We Are with Michael and Melissa Wear.

You remember Michael. He was recently on one of our TSF tour live shows. Also Episode 23, Episode 111, Episode 272. Basically, anytime I need a voice of reason for what's going on in the political realm, Michael is on the shortlist of experts I want to consult.

Well, he and his lovely wife Melissa who is equally as brilliant are teaming up on this podcast *Where We Are* which is a companion podcast to their *Reclaiming Hope* newsletter. *Where We Are* features marital chatter about the latest in politics, faith, and family life.

So here in our podcast amusement park, you know, that's we refer to our network where each of our podcasts is like a different ride or attraction in the amusement park, well, there's something for everybody. There's snack stands, there's wild roller coasters, there's a carousel, some relaxing swings, and maybe even a water ride to mix things up. You'll hear us talk about that exactly. And if you like one of the rides, there's a good chance you'll enjoy the others.

We love having a group of like-minded hosts with a wide variety of passions and area of expertise as a part of our network. And then we get to help with behind-the-scenes stuff like strategy and advertising and building community so the podcasters never feel like they're doing this podcast journey on their own.

So here's how this is gonna work. We're gonna talk a little bit, me, Michael and Melissa, and then we'll take a quick break and come back with a sneak peek of one of the upcoming episodes of *Where We Are*.

You're going to hear this but Michael and Melissa are actually doing two types of shows on their podcasts. Every Sunday will be a full episode of them sitting and chatting but Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday they're going to be doing *The Morning Five*, a five minute conversation that I think you're gonna love. You're gonna get to hear a little bit of both of those today.

So here's my conversation with Michael and Melissa Wear, hosts of *Where We Are*, the newest podcasts on the That Sounds Fun Network.

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Annie: Michael and Melissa, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Michael: So good to be with you.

Melissa: Thank you.

Michael: Glad to be with you.

Annie: Michael you are an all-star on That Sounds Fun, but Melissa, they don't know it's your first time and you're really the pièce de résistance of the Wear family.

Melissa: Thank you.

Annie: I believe it. This isn't a normal show, Michael Wear, because usually you come on and you help us make some big political decisions. But today, it's a little different because you're joining the network.

Melissa: That's right.

Michael: Hooray!

Melissa: We're so happy.

Michael: Big news.

Annie: This is gonna be so, so fun. For starters, thank you for trusting us to be your partner in this because we have long looked for a trusted show that would have some political conversations along with faith, life and culture. I mean, y'all have already been doing a version of this for your Substack audience. What made you even start into the podcasting world?

Melissa: Well, our Substack has been a place where we built a really great community of people who are super interested in politics but are not interested in turning the temperature up but are interested in turning the temperature down.

So we thought that our readers would really love a podcast form of our newsletter where Michael and I get to go more in-depth on certain issues each week and where people get to learn more about us as people so that we're not just, you know, words on a page on Substack.

And so the podcast is taken and we've gotten great response out of it. And it's been really great for us as a couple as well-

Annie: Really?

Melissa: ...because we're parents to kids under four. And usually our Saturday night recordings we're going to be recording a little bit earlier the week now, but our time for us to actually talk to one another...

Michael: Doing the podcast is like when we get to catch up in our life.

Annie: Do y'all like open a bottle of wine and like just sit down and hit record?

Michael: Literally. Literally. Yeah, yeah. No, it's great. It's like our date night. Yes, yes, we're in a season right now, Annie. So it's been great. I mean, really, it's a way to invite Melissa and I...

I think there are a lot of folks who talk about politics as they should. We're all sort of participants in civic life. I think what's helpful and in some ways unique about our show is that Melissa and I both have professional experience working in civics and in politics, and yet we're not grounded in that experience. We're grounded in the Gospel.

So I think there are a lot of people who don't have that experience, but sort of talk about politics, and that's wonderful, or there are people who are sort of political professionals and are kind of like mercenaries.

And we're saying, "Do you know what? God is so much bigger than the political fights that sort of happen on social media and in the news on a day to day basis. Let's kind of zoom out and think about how we can approach these issues as important as they are as Christians." And that's what we try and do on the podcast.

Annie: Yeah. Melissa, will you give a little bit of your history in the civic world? And Michael, we'll have you do it again as well for our audience that has missed the other episodes you've been on. But, Melissa, tell us a little bit about your history in this.

Melissa: Well, I'm trained in foreign policy. So that's where my training is in terms of politics. And so sometimes on the podcast you'll get episodes where I'm talking about something going on in the world. So when Russia happened, we covered Russia; when Afghanistan happened, we covered Afghanistan. So that's where my training is. That's where my professional experience is.

The other half of my professional experience, though, is in religion and politics. So I helped one international organization for about 10 years, designed their religion and politics programming. And I've done that in consultancy now. So for the past three years, I've been a consultant with Michael and I help clients navigate those kinds of issues, which has been a lot of fun.

Annie: Well, for you. For me it sounds like a nightmare. For you, you're like, "This is great. What I'm dreaming of." Michael, will you give a little bit of your bio again for people?

Michael: Yeah, sure. So I was interested in civics very early on in life but became a Christian after reading Romans when I was 15, and very early on had the vocational question of what does it mean to be faithful in public things.

And that brought me to DC and it brought me in a hotel lobby where serendipitously or providentially I met then Senator Barack Obama right before he announced he was running for president. And that meeting led to me working for him for his first presidential campaign in the White House and for his re-elect.

And then over the last decade, I've come alongside Christian leaders and organizations helping them to navigate public life. I've done some writing and speaking myself. But yeah, it's been an incredible sort of ride. And sort of this podcast, and sort of the work we're doing now is, you know, an outflowing of that experience.

Annie: It was so fun, Michael, to hear the response and not only of our live show where you were a guest in Philly? Yeah, it was in Philly, right?

Michael: Yeah.

Annie: But when people got to-

Michael: Hold on. Annie, I believe it was King of Prussia.

Annie: It was King of Prussia.

Michael: Not Philly specifically. There's a real turf war going on there, but yes, yeah.

Annie: We got corrected, for sure. King of Prussia. But it was so fun after your episode came out on the podcast to hear people who don't really know a lot of faith people who have worked in politics having these conversations, like you said. So that's really exciting for me.

I have to ask you a hard question. Because a lot of my friends listening and a lot of things I believe can lean conservative, and then I have some beliefs that don't. It feels like everybody's kind of a little bit of a mix except the very loud edges.

You're an Obama guy, and so that would lead people to believe you believe certain things. So if we're releasing a political podcast about civic life and politics, can conservatives trust you too?

Michael: Yeah, yeah, I think so. I've been really privileged to work with conservatives throughout my career. As you know, Annie, my job in the White House was to make sure that conservatives had a seat at the table at policy discussions. And then when I left the White House, I worked with a range of both Christian leaders and political actors across the aisle on issues like adoption and human trafficking.

You know, this podcast, there is no such thing as sort of a perspectivist sort of point of view. But I think we'll always be open, I think we'll always be inviting and not sort of browbeating. And really the point of the podcast is to invite people into a conversation and to...

So we do these weekly episodes that are conversations, and then throughout the week, Monday through Thursday, people will get five-minute episodes in their inbox in the morning. There are not a lot of opinion in dose. We open with prayer and then I just cover the top three news items that will help you.

We've already heard from parents who are listening to those episodes in the car with their kids on the way to school, and they're providing great fodder. So that's kind of the tone we're setting and the mission we have with this podcast.

Annie: That's great. Melissa, what are your thoughts on that? Like, how do we... because we all show up with some bias or some perspective. None of us are without perspective. How do we build things? Because I want to do this too. I want to build things where people who don't agree with everything I say... I don't agree with everything I say after time, right? But when people who don't agree with everything we say, how do we build a place where people are welcome even if we don't agree?

Melissa: I think it's all about posture a lot of the time. Part of what we've been trying to do in our work is help people build a posture in which you can be in situations like that, because we know we often are even at the dinner table with family where we vehemently disagree with the other person's position.

And what I mean by posture is, you know, taking ideas like, "Maybe I'm wrong about something. So I'm actually going to hold this issue, or this idea or this stance that I have lightly. I'm passionate about it, but I'm going to hold it lightly."

And then when you're moving forward with interacting with a person or group of people, no matter what the situation is, when you're holding things more lightly, even if you're passionate about it, even if you have a load of expertise on it, like I'll say, Yeah, my expertise is in foreign policy but I know I could be wrong day in day out. So I mean, that comes from obviously humility, that type of posture.

It's about obviously seeing Imago Dei in other people, oftentimes taking that kind of posture constantly. And a lot of times it's about reminding yourself of these things. So it's almost like disciplines for the public square taking these on.

Michael: One thing I've noticed, Annie, is I think you'd think that those who work in politics would hold their views the most tightly. What I found is that those who work in

politics, who have seen sort of the political process and been a part of it, they're actually the ones who understand how fallible we are and how there are unintended consequences.

And I think one of the biggest sort of things we want to overturn is, we have a culture right now that has conflated anger and bluster with conviction. That if you're shouting all the time, that means you really believe it. That's not something we believe. We don't believe that shouting and anger equates with actually believing something. Jesus is a really good model for that. So that's part of the ethic of the podcast, too.

Annie: One of the things I struggle with when we talk about politics, and I would love for y'all to speak to this, it feels like to me that a lot of people, my friends, myself included maybe in some ways, have issues that we feel like are uncompromisable. Maybe it's LGBTQ issues or its border, or it's abortion, or it's the environment.

And we go like, "In no way is anyone who disagrees with this a believer." Are there actually issues that are political in nature though... A lot of people would say though, some of those aren't political in nature, they're spiritual in nature, they're faith-based in nature. What do we do with that feeling of I can't compromise on this thing or these two things?

Michael: So I do think that there are principles and realities and truths that are just the truth. I hope our podcast will help cultivate is an understanding that the moment you bring those truths into politics, into governance, then you're taking the ultimate into the realm of the prudential.

Like you can believe something is true but how you implement that truth, now you're in the job of translation not in sort of one-to-one enactment. So you might believe that we have a call to steward creation. That doesn't necessarily answer the question of whether H.R.117 is better than H.R.163-

Annie: Sure. Sure.

Michael: ...and addressing that issue. And so there's actually a lot of room to say, "Yes, I hold these convictions. These are the convictions that I bring with me in the politics and priorities I bring into politics. But when I entered the political space, it's not that those convictions and those truths aren't real or aren't true anymore. It's that now I'm in the business of figuring out how to implement them in my particular time and circumstance. And to Melissa's point, that's something we could hold a little more loosely.

Annie: Yeah.

Melissa: That's right. I don't have anything to add to that.

Annie: That feels like such a scary part about talking about politics when you're a faith person, is that we translate "I have this strong belief in my faith life. And if your politics don't match my politics around this thing, we don't believe the same thing about Jesus."

Melissa: Right.

Michael: Yeah.

Annie: And that feels like a long jump to me.

Michael: Yeah, it's very tough. And it turns into a really like spiritually oppressive sort of environment, because you're trying... What happens when that environment is created is that you're really making an idol of your political views, and then that gets imposed on other people, and we end up confusing the gospel for our political opinions.

You're not going to be saved by your politics. That is not how it works. But it's a real problem. And again, I hope the podcast will... even in the way that Melissa and I talk about these things with one another as a couple, I hope it will provide people with a sense of freedom and lightness and joy when it comes to politics in a way that seems like pretty unimaginable to a lot of people in this environment.

Annie: You're doing it though. That's it. And I love the permission you're giving us. Like, hold your convictions as tightly as you want to in your life, be thoughtful when it bleeds into your politics.

Michael: Yeah. No, I think that's exactly right.

Annie: Yeah, that's beautiful. That is so helpful. This is why we've needed you to do this show. I mean, how unfortunate that midterms and Thanksgiving are so close together, right?

Michael: Yeah. Yeah,

Annie: I mean, are y'all gonna help us maneuver through these midterms? Like, what is happening, you guys? Everything is so big already.

Melissa: Oh, we know. And it's gonna feel like it's getting bigger and bigger because that's what these political seasons do is that they start so early and then they continue to

crescendo to the point where you feel like you're not getting off with a crescendo often. And so that's why you end up feeling tired.

And then when it comes to these situations, just going back to this, where before when you're presented with a time in which you can be trying to do that sort of balance of holding your convictions or holding the actual political stance lately, makes it really difficult to do. But honestly, that's kind of how our politics is designed right now to make you feel that way.

Annie: Wow. How rude!

Melissa: Yeah, I know. But for the midterms, yes. So what we've been doing already is we've been covering it each week, because usually each week there are at least a few races. Right now we've just been getting through the main primaries, obviously, and then the actual general will be in November for all the states.

There are many going on. And what you can expect on the podcast, especially on The Morning Five, the Monday through Thursday five minute is going through if there is a race that day on that Tuesday. And then in the long form, especially with our upcoming episode that launched a couple days ago, we go through basically what is the midterm, why do we have midterms.

We go through a lot of the basics because we understand that quite a few of us are probably operating like, Oh, yeah, this is happening. This is important. And I think I understand that. So we're going through the basics a little bit and then we go through what is happening basically on August 23 for those midterms.

Michael: Yeah, that's right.

Annie: Okay, so this is a perfect spot. Let's go and listen now to some of Sunday's episode of Where We Are.

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Michael: Melissa, as you look ahead to the midterms, what are you watching for? What do you think are issues that can determine the balance of power? And are there any particular races that you're interested in digging deeper on over the next few months?

Melissa: Right. So I'm really watching the economy right now. I'm watching inflation. The inflation reports that will continue to be released whether or not hotflation is gone or if we'll start to see a decrease. I'm watching to see what the Fed does in terms of decisions on interest rate, which there should be a big one in September.

The economy is one of the strongest drivers of voter decision-making out there. And so that's what I'm watching.

The fact that this past month, gas prices have dropped so much, inflation has started to sort of, I don't know, maybe reach its carrying capacity, and with prices on a lot of important commodities like wood and other things needed for manufacturing, or, you know, the housing market has sort of cooled down a bit because of interest rates. It's been a better month economically or economic news wise or even the narrative around it that it has been for like less than 9, 10, 11 months.

Michael: By the way, I don't know if you saw it this past week the price of the chicken wings dropped-

Melissa: Yes, I saw that.

Michael: ...dropped at pre-inflation levels. And you would-

Melissa: That's because the bill season is coming.

Michael: Yeah, it's because of the Buffalo Bill. There are a couple of Buffalonians at least that worked for the Biden White House, but you would have thought that the White House was completely staffed by Buffalo folks the way they were really trumpeting out, you know. The chicken wing is now, you know, more affordable. I've never seen a White House more excited about chicken wings.

Melissa: No, I know. Isn't it funny-

Michael: But they're looking for whatever they can sort of champion.

Melissa: When it comes to these price indexes, it's just so funny what commodities that they'll end up focusing on. Like, Oh, this particular product is some weird esoteric product, like a chicken wing is like a harbinger of the entire macroeconomic landscape. I mean, that's what economists do.

Michael: Yeah. Chicken wing and a prayer. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Melissa: So I'm watching the economy as one of the biggest sort of bellwethers tells for how voters may act. I'm watching when the Supreme Court returns sort of conversations, sort of like in terms of the mood that it brings because I do think Dobbs is important. I do think that Dobbs in the sentence there can last but how much and at what level will the sentiments for Dobbs last into November 8, which is far

removed from you know, June, July, from when, you know, there was pretty much the fervor?

But I'm also watching statistics on rates of violence in cities because violence and crime and gun control have all been huge issues over the past few months and have also driven a lot of voters and their sentiments and what candidates they're looking at. And then obviously immigration is another huge voter issue, especially in the south.

Michael: Yeah. Will there be another flashpoint-

Melissa: Will there be flashpoint?

Michael: ...in immigration between now and November? I think that's exactly right.

Melissa: That's right. One of the issues that I care about personally is healthcare. And so the prescription drug price legislation that just came down-

Michael: How soon do people start feeling the benefits of that or at least being able to more tangibly anticipate those benefits?

Melissa: Which is very much tied to the inflation conversation. How much do people feel like they have in their pocket right now to spend, because there's been saving somewhere with the Affordable Care Act or with prescription drugs or with their grocery store prices, or at the gas pump, name it? You know, they're building a deck on the back of our house. So those are the issues that I'm looking at.

Now in terms of key races, I mean, I am watching the Fetterman Oz race, just because they've made it such a spectacle. We have many, many thoughts on making politics of spectacle here at Where We Are, but I won't go into that. So I'm watching that race.

Michael: Don't tempt me, Melissa. We will have to talk about at some point. But you're exactly right. We won't talk about it here, but you're absolutely right, that race has turned into a quite a spectacle. I have no idea what issues any of the candidates are talking about, but it's become quite a spectacle.

Melissa: So I'm just interested from that spectacle perspective of what actually makes it through in the end to where people voting for. In terms of Governor races, I'm super interested in the Georgia governor's race, Maryland, our own state, that race, what's happening down in Texas with Beto O'Rourke and Abbott. Those are just to name a few. What are you looking at? I mean-

Michael: I think Ohio is going to be... You know, for a couple of cycles Ohio fell off as like the bellwether.

Melissa: Right.

Michael: I think we may be returning to Ohio being a critical bellwether at least in these midterm elections. Mike DeWine, the very popular Republican governor. Ohio has now had two very popular Republican governors: John Kasich and now DeWine.

And then I do expect the J. D. Vance-Tim Ryan race to heat up. And it's a very interesting race. You know, J. D. Vance is kind of an outsider, doesn't have a huge political profile, does have, I think, higher name ID because of how successful his book was. He has made a very conservative turn from sort of what a lot of people thought of him when his book was first coming out. Although if he knew about J. D. Vance, you knew that he had a background in conservative sort of Think Tank world.

What's interesting about that race is you have JD Vance. Then you have Tim Ryan, who Tim Ryan... his entire career coming up he was a moderate pro-life Catholic. And then we saw him flip on the life issue with many people kind of thinking, "Okay, this is kind of what he thought he needed to do to run for higher office and get Democratic support."

Now, what's interesting is though the political winds have turned in Ohio and Tim Ryan is now trying to pivot back as a moderate. So it's going to be interesting to see how that plays out, and if he's just tried to be too many iterations of himself or if there is a core that sort of comes through. What I can tell you is a ton of money is going to be spent in the state of Ohio on these elections.

[00:27:35] <music>

Annie: Okay, you guys, so The Morning Five. So that's going to be on Sundays we'll have a long-form like we just heard of the conversation over a glass of wine between the two of you. You're our only show that launches on Sunday.

Annie: I love it. Why not?

Michael: Perfect.

Annie: It's perfect. It's absolutely perfect. Michael, tell us a little bit more about how are you finding these Monday through Thursday articles? And how are you turning it around so quickly?

Michael: It's a lot. We record late the night before because we want the episodes to be relevant for folks in their mornings. So we want folks to have a sense of what's gonna happen that day, what's gonna be leading the news that day.

The core conviction behind why I started sort of these daily episodes is I think that there is unspoken concern that Christians have that Jesus kind of isn't up to the task of our politics.

Annie: Right.

Michael: And that it is just too audacious to pray about our political life or to think about... Because it's been so divisive in the past and because we feel uncertain about what it means to think Christianly about our politics, so many of us have just sort of quarantined off our political life from our Christian life, from our faith life.

So for five minutes in the morning, we open with prayer, we close with prayer, and then that prayer covers the news of the day. And my hope is that, you know, without being heavy-handed about it, that folks will, as they see sort of the news ticker throughout the day and maybe catch something on CNN or Fox News or MSNBC or they catch a news clip, that they build up the habit of praying over that or praying over the news that they come across throughout the day and over the conversations that they're having throughout their day with their family, with co-workers about politics. So really, this is a habit-forming kind of endeavor. It's just kind of a fun five minutes for the morning.

Annie: Oh, I love it. Oh, I can't wait. Okay, so let's hear one of those right here. This is yesterday's morning five. We subscribe to the show today, we can go back and hear Sunday's episode. This is Monday's morning five, and you can hear today's too. So here's Monday's morning five.

[00:30:12] <music>

Michael: Finally, last week President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law. One perspective the Inflation Reduction Act is a pared-down version of The Build Back Better plan. And some progressive activists have critiqued it for being too small for not including their favored provisions.

Viewed from another lens, for instance, you could look at the Climate Change Provisions and say that this is the single most significant piece of legislation for addressing climate change that has ever been passed. So that debate is playing out, will continue to play out.

But just wanted to talk briefly about the provisions of the bill. Basically it covers three areas: climate change, health care, and taxes. Under climate change, there's tax credits for carbon capture, consumer tax credits for some electric vehicles, new limits on the release of methane gas, and \$60 billion in incentives to increase domestic solar panel production.

Under healthcare, significantly Medicare will be able to negotiate drug prices and high cost drugs beginning in 2026. The bill also renews Affordable Care Act's subsidies or extends those subsidies, which is estimated to prevent millions of Americans from losing their health care coverage. Also includes a \$35 cap on insulin costs for Medicare patients.

So quite a few, both sweeping and pretty targeted health care provisions here that have been discussed by politicians of both parties. Most notably, President Trump spoke often about Medicare being able to negotiate drug prices.

Finally, under Texas, the bill puts in a 15% minimum tax on most companies that report a billion dollars or more in income to their shareholders. And what has come under significant attack from Republicans provides \$80 billion for the IRS. So it was signed into law last week.

Thought for this morning five: it'd be good to take the time, just to give you a sense of the significant legislation that was passed by Congress. And with that, that wraps up the news for this morning.

Let's close as we always do on this podcast with Dallas Willard's rendition of the Lord's prayer. Dear Father always near us, may your name be treasured and loved, may your rule be completed in us— may your will be done here on earth in just the way it is done in heaven. Give us today the things we need today, and forgive us our sins and impositions on you as we are forgiving all who in any way offend us. Please don't put us through trials, but deliver us from everything bad. Because you are the one in charge, and you have all the power, and the glory too is all yours—forever— which is just the way we want it!

Thanks for listening to The Morning Five. Hope you have a good day. Talk to you tomorrow.

[00:34:23] <music>

Annie: Michael the thing that amazes me about The Morning Five is... I mean, I already have a couple of things I listen to every day. Father Mike I listen to him read the Bible to me every day. I listened to a couple of news organizations. I try to listen to

two that tells me two sides of the same story every day. So yours feels like such a great five minutes of our day.

Michael: Yeah

Annie: Yeah.

Michael: And again, it's been so much fun hearing... It's for everyone. We have College students who listen and it's sort of how they fit their news in. But we just love the parents who say, "Do you know what? This is a great way to steward that car drive to school in the morning. And my kids are asking questions that I didn't even know that they were thinking about." And so it's just been a cool thing. And I'm excited to see how it flourishes on the That Sounds Fun Network.

Annie: Oh, I can't wait. I'm so glad our friends are getting... I mean, we joke a lot and say that we are the amusement park of podcasts. And so we want a variety of rides. We have a couple of rides that we're missing. And this was a big one.

Michael: You know, so in a way, Annie, you did take me to a waterpark.

Annie: After all these years. Michael Wear-

Michael: After all these years.

Annie: ...y'all are the water ride. Y'all are the water ride.

Michael: We didn't know it was a metaphor the whole time.

Annie: If you knew-

Melissa: Honestly, the first ride that came to my mind was the scrambler.

Annie: Oh, yeah. That too. That too. Michael, if you knew how many times I said to people, "One of my friends who worked in the White House said the thing that sounds fun to him is a water park, you guys." I love it. I absolutely love it. Is there anything we didn't say about the podcast that you want to make sure we say?

Melissa: I don't know. What do you think?

Michael: I think we've covered it. I would just say, you know, we're really excited for the way the audience will feed into how the podcast changes and evolves. I think we're interested in doing sort of... we haven't had the opportunity yet to do sort of listener questions and that kind of thing. But we really see this, especially as we move

toward the midterms. And then I'm sorry to say the presidential election will be starting pretty soon after.

We're really looking forward to building up a community where we could walk through all of this together. So that's just one, I think, aspect of this, though. I think it'll be a beautiful thing.

Annie: How can we communicate with you? What will be the way that as listeners we can say back like, "Hey, I have a big question about what just happened in the Alaska primaries?" Or "What's going on with... Is Biden going to even get a chance to run again?" I mean, how do we ask these questions back to you?

Michael: So the best way right now is through the Substack. So we'll continue to run the Substack. And that's at reclaiminghope.substack.com. Folks can send in questions there. We post regular content throughout the week that sort of syncs up with the podcast. So that's one good way for folks to be in touch with us.

Melissa: Yeah, that's a great community. There's a comment section where you can comment. I'm the one who gets the email alert.

Annie: Yes, girl.

Melissa: It always emails me directly. Also, you can contact us on social media. There's at [@MichaelWear](https://twitter.com/MichaelWear), [@MelissaMWear](https://twitter.com/MelissaMWear) on Twitter, but Substack will be the best spot.

Annie: Okay. Great. That's good. Because I mean, there are gonna be episodes where you're like, "Here's the 170 questions that people have that we need to answer."

Okay, well, you know, the last question we always ask. Melissa, you've never gotten to answer this before. I'm thrilled about hearing both your answers. Because the show and the network that you just joined is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Melissa: Well, lately, I have been so thrilled with the James Webb Space Telescope images because I love astronomy.

Annie: They're beautiful. I cried real American tears when I saw that first picture. Oh my gosh.

Melissa: I know. It's astounding. So I love astronomy. What sounds like a good time to me is I want to invest in a telescope and I want to buy a telescope one of these days, and with our daughters start looking up at stuff and getting real into it. So that sounds fun to me right now at this point in time.

Annie: I mean, those pictures! It blows my mind. I'm listening to another podcast that's really funny and weird and talks about all sorts of supernatural things, and I'm like, There is so much we don't know.

Melissa: Yes. You zoomed in on the main image of that little in the universe that we can see and I was looking at the stuff and I was like, "What is that? What is that? Look at that." Anyways! There are so many scientists on Twitter who have been so generous with their time like explaining to people too. It stirs curiosity. It stirs the wonder. I just love astronomy.

Annie: So my experience is when... I would have told you, I don't know, a bunch of years ago that if you stir my curiosity and my wonder about what I don't know that it would make me more afraid. And it has actually made me love God more. I've found that when you see, "Oh, there's so much I don't know," it's like drawn me closer to God. I don't know. It's really something.

Melissa: I've had the same experience, Annie, where Michael when we... because we've been together for a very long time-

Annie: High school sweethearts, right?

Melissa: We're high school sweethearts. So we've been together 17 years now. And he would say, "Oh, look at that. Look at the sky. Look at the cloud," and I'd be like, "Yeah, sure. It's like red. Okay." But now I look at these things and honestly, yes, there has been that sort of spiritual opening as well for me in terms of when I'm looking at things now.

I don't know if it's because I'm getting older. I'm just learning lessons of the Holy Spirit is working. I'm not sure what. But you know, staring at stuff like this, yeah, you just kind of wonder about every single atom and cells that God has made. It's just an enormous amount. It's just an enormous amount of art and work. It's unbelievable.

Annie: It's unbelievable. Good answer. Okay, Michael Wear, that's challenging. Your wife had a good answer. What do you bring? You've had to answer this like four times.

Michael: The cosmos.

Annie: The cosmos. Whatcha got? Waterpark?

Michael: Football. I'm very excited about the Buffalo Bills this season. But I think I'll stick with the nature theme. We have a park right across the street. And Ilaria, our

youngest just started walking like two weeks ago, so I think further exploration of what Saoirse calls the forest-

Annie: The forest.

Michael: ...sounds like fun to me. The forest. "Dada can we go to the forest?"

Annie: Oh. You're like, "Yes, we can."

Michael: You're like, "Okay. Okay. Yeah, we can."

Annie: I mean, that is amazing what y'all are... Y'all are experiencing the biggest in the smallest of what God's made, right?

Michael: Yes.

Melissa: That's right.

Annie: Like learning to walk and space.

Melissa: Yeah, no, that's right.

Annie: That's amazing.

Michael: That's life.

Annie: Oh, that's life. That's right.

Michael: Absolutely.

Annie: Well, I can't wait for people to get on board with Where We Are. I'm so honored. Like when The Snack Show added on, I was like, "This is gonna be a trip. People are gonna love it."

Melissa: I love that show.

Annie: It's so good. I know. But for y'all, I just want you to hear me say I feel so honored that you would trust us with the sacred work because helping us balance this and do this well feels really sacred to me. So thank y'all for trusting our team with that.

Michael: Well, Annie, I just want to say like it's been one of the highlights of my professional sort of life over the last five years that you've trusted me to speak with your audience. I was thinking back before the call today like all of the crazy stuff

we've walked through together, and all the wonderful responses from those who know and trust you, Annie. So I just think this is a great partnership. I'm excited to see where it goes, Annie.

Melissa: And we're honored.

Michael: Yes!

Annie: Well, this is gonna be fun. Thank you, guys. Here's to lowering the temperature as elections come around. That's our job.

Michael: Indeed.

[00:42:41] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love them? It just feels like, like Melissa said, we're just bringing the temperature down. I hope that you feel similar that I feel about Michael and Melissa is whether you agree with them totally, politically or not, whether you agree with how much they love Italian food and water parks, and whether you agree with me all the time that this is such a good, helpful show as we navigate the political future of our country and world. And I'm just so thankful.

And we have been dying to have a daily show on the network. So we are so happy, not only about the Sunday shows where we can sit and listen to their conversation, but also The Morning Five Monday through Thursday.

So be sure to follow and subscribe to Where We Are wherever you love to listen to podcasts. Follow them on social media, tell them thanks and welcome to the network, and to this awesome group of friends. You can go ahead and rate and review their show if you get a chance, share it with friends that you know are going to love it, and sign up for their Substack. That's where you can also ask questions and get more involved. The links will be in the show notes.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm excited and embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. What a good Tuesday! What a good Tuesday!

Y'all go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me... Oh, it sounds fun to me today. I'm eating dinner with a family that I really love getting to spend time with tonight. So that sounds really fun to me is hanging out with that family tonight. So that's what I will do as we celebrate the launch of Where We Are.

Y'all have a great couple of days. We'll see you back here on Thursday with the CEO of Ancestry and just an incredible businesswoman. Y'all are gonna love this conversation with Deb Liu. We'll see y'all then.