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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I am so happy to be here with you today.

Just a reminder, today is day two of Advent. We're going to talk more about it today. But it's not too late to join us in our Stay Tuned Advent series. You can still grab the full digital bundle right now and jump in. If you want to hear the first day, we put it right here on the That Sounds Fun feed. You can listen to it. It's sitting there for you yesterday. So you can go listen. And you can find everything you need over at AnnieFDowns.com/Advent.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1](#). You know by now that I am a big fan of AG1. We've been partnering with them for a long time. But it is starting my day off right for a long time as well. I truly love drinking it in the morning because it just makes me feel more clear-headed and ready for the day. In fact, this week I missed two days and I got back in the rhythm today and I feel different.

It is a lot to keep up with a ton of different vitamins and supplements to take, but I love that AG1 allows me to knock it all out with one scoop mixed in really cold water. And I like to add a little frozen lemon juice to it for something fun.

So as the new year gets closer, try AG1 for yourself. It's the perfect time to start a new healthy habit. AG1 is offering new subscribers a free \$76 gift when you sign up. That's awesome. You'll get a welcome kit, a bottle of D3K2, and five free travel packs in your first box.

So make sure to check out Drinkag1.com/SoundsFun to get this offer. That's Drinkag1.com/SoundsFun to start your new year on a healthy note.

Intro: Today on the show, I get to talk with a longtime friend, Lanier Ivester. I have known Lanier for over 30 years. I don't think I've talked publicly much about my grandmother's bookstore, but Lanier worked there growing up. So this conversation is so sacred to me to relive some of those memories, to get to talk about my grandmother, and then to get to talk about the Advent and Christmastide seasons, which y'all know are also really sacred to me.

Lanier's very first long-coming book, we have been dying for her to write a book, is called *Glad and Golden Hours: A Companion for Advent and Christmastide*. It's out now. We talk about why this book was what she wanted to write first, talk through some of the very best parts. I mean, the whole book is just beautiful, y'all. It is absolutely beautiful. I think you're really going to love getting to know her.

Also for our Single Purpose League friends, we recorded a little bonus for you as well that will be available on Single Purpose League feed.

I can't wait for you to hear this conversation. So let me introduce you to my longtime friend, Lanier Ivester.

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Annie: Here's the problem, Lanier. I have a thousand things we can start with. And so I'm like, Where do we start? Do we start with "we've been friends for 30 years"? Okay. So welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Lanier: Thank you.

Annie: I'm very glad you're here. Have you done a lot of podcasts around the book releasing?

Lanier: I have. I've done about... I think this is number 10.

Annie: Oh my gosh. Are you tired of talking about it yet?

Lanier: No.

Annie: No. I can't imagine. There is a sentence in this book. I'm going to open to it. It's page 100 for all of our friends at home who have their copy of *Glad and Golden Hours*. Page 100 you say, "As you can probably imagine by now, I was never content merely to read of something that captivated my fancy. My instinct was to give it form and substance amid the more prosaic realities of my late 20th-century suburban life." That could be your thesis statement of your life.

Lanier: Probably.

Annie: Do you feel that way? How did you know that was true about you? Did you know that was true about you when we were young?

Lanier: You know, I don't think I realized because it was so native, you know? I don't think I realized until I was older and, you know, I talked to different friends who would say, Oh, I can't subscribe to *Victoria Magazine* anymore because it makes me sad. And I was like, Why? I could never get my head around that because it just made me want to live a beautiful life, you know?

And I think I did the same thing with my Highlights Magazine as a child, you know? How can I make this part of my life? You know?

Annie: I had a subscription to Victoria Magazine because of you.

Lanier: No kidding.

Annie: Yes. Because I used to see it at your house and I loved it so much. 20 years ago, when I lived in Marietta. So we should back up and tell people our parents have known each other long before we were born. You worked at my grandmother's bookstore.

Lanier: I did.

Annie: When you were a teenager?

Lanier: Mm-hmm. In my early 20s.

Annie: And your sister did as well.

Lanier: She did.

Annie: I mean, literally, we were doing the math before we started. We have actually known each other for 30 something years.

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: 30. That is-

Lanier: I remember when your grandmother was looking for the first edition of Christie for your high school graduation gift. She was so excited.

Annie: It is one of the most treasured things I own too. You already got me crying.

Lanier: I'm sorry. I'm going to cry too. I loved your grandmother so much. So much.

Annie: It was so fun to read the book and see you talk about her. Because I've never talked about her in one of my books. So I'm like, You win for being the first person to put my grandmother in a book. I was thinking this morning when I was reading through the end of it, I read some of it over the weekend, and I was thinking this morning, like, I don't know that I've ever publicly talked about my grandmother on a bookstore that was open every Wednesday and Saturday. Were y'all homeschooled

in that? And did you work on Wednesdays as well or did you just work on Saturday?

Lanier: No, we worked on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Annie: What was it like? Tell me about working there.

Lanier: Oh my goodness. It was like stepping back in time. I mean, I will never forget the first time I discovered your grandmother's shop. I think it was Muriel Cash that took me there for the first time. But no, it was so lovely because just, you know, when there weren't customers in the shop, I would just sit in that green chair and talk to your grandmother. And she introduced me to so many authors that just really shaped my life.

When I was there alone, if she had gone to the Italian kitchen for lunch, I would just curl it with books or copy recipes out of the Cross Creek cookbook. I remember, you know, she always had some kind of homemade goodie in the top drawer of her desk.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Lanier: Do you remember she would save the boxes that checks came in?

Annie: Yes.

Lanier: And I just remember the postman like coming down and she'd always have a box of those little sausage rolls.

Annie: Yes. And a box from old checks.

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: Wild.

Lanier: And I remember the first time Phillip, my husband, came into the shop to visit me. This is before we were dating. He just happened to stop by. And your grandmother just loved him so much. There'd been other guys that had come by to visit me in the bookshop, whatever, but she was like that one. She just loved him. I was so happy that she got to meet him, you know? Because I remember her telling me, never marry someone that you don't respect more than anyone you've ever met in your life.

Annie: Really?

Lanier: And she said that was-

Annie: I mean, she passed away when I was 20. 20?

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: So we never really talked about grown-up stuff like that. We should tell people the bookstore was not like a Barnes and Noble. It was all used and rare books. So the shelves were just... the whole place had a smell that nothing else smells like.

Lanier: I know. I know.

Annie: Because it was just three rooms. It was only three rooms. And the middle room is barely a room. It was two and a half rooms.

Lanier: But I love that middle room, like sitting on that stool, like wrapping the books.

Annie: I mean, that is the thing I've learned how to do the most is wrap. I don't even know how to explain. Can you explain to people what we did?

Lanier: Putting a mylar cover over the dust jacket. So it protects it or you can kind of repair it.

Annie: That's when I remember working at the bookstore at the same time as you is on the Saturdays where I would come in — I was in late elementary, early middle school — and I would wrap the books while y'all actually sold them. It was such a great bookstore. My dad still has the sign. The bookstore sign hangs up in my dad's office.

Lanier: I love that. Down's Books. Open Wednesday and Saturday, 10 to 4, or by appointment. Or by chance.

Annie: Or by chance.

Lanier: Well, I have to tell you a quick funny story about working there. Your grandmother didn't use a calculator. So she told me that whenever my friends came in that I could give them 20% off any of the books, but that I needed to add 5% sales tax. I remember one time Philip coming in and I was just trying to be super charming and witty and maintain an ending stream of brilliant conversation with him while I am totaling up the stack of books that he was buying and trying to take off 20% and add 5% in my head. And I'm like, "He's an engineer. He's going to think I'm such an idiot."

Annie: But there was no calculator to use.

Lanier: There was no calculator.

Annie: And we did not have phones.

Lanier: No.

Annie: So no, not at all. Oh, my gosh. And he was probably just trying to like, "I'll impress this girl by buying smart books." And you're like, "I got to do this math."

Lanier: He was buying French poetry books.

Annie: Oh, my gosh. But probably actually reading them too, right?

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: I know. Will you talk about how y'all met?

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: I love that story.

Lanier: So we actually met... it was a mutual friend who had introduced us. But my friend group had gotten really into Scottish country dancing, which is like the Scottish version of the English country dancing. He's singing the *Pride and Prejudice* and all the bonnet dramas. But anyway, it's a little rowdier. It's very fun. But this is right about the time that all the Jane Austen movies were coming out. And so when we discovered this, my friends and I just lost our minds.

But Philip's class was on Thursday nights. And Philip's friends all went swing dancing on Thursday night.

Annie: Which was also very big at the time.

Lanier: Which was also very big.

Annie: We were all swing dancing a lot.

Lanier: Squirrel nut zippers and all that.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lanier: And so this friend brought him to the Scottish country dancing class before going swing dancing. And Philip just really loved Scottish dancing.

Annie: I remember when you told me that years and years ago. I was like, they met at a Scottish dancing class. Because y'all are one of the stories of like, sometimes God just makes two versions of a person. I mean, you are very different. But like two people who like so many of the same things and y'all find each other somehow. It's crazy.

Lanier: It is crazy. Like we grew up in the same county. We knew so many of the same people. We didn't meet until we were in our 20s.

Annie: Did y'all right away move into your house here and now?

Lanier: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Okay. Was it his house before?

Lanier: Yes. So he grew up there. He grew up in our house.

Annie: Got it. That was like his family home.

Lanier: That was his family home. And then when he was in high school, his parents moved to Alpharetta and they put it on the market. Long story. Tried to sell it. For whatever reason, couldn't. Didn't. But then when Phillip was at Tech, he started renting it from his parents and subletting it to his friends. So it was like a bachelor pad for like 10 years.

Annie: When you went to visit back then... I mean, you have turned it into just a... it's gorgeous. But back then, was it just a bunch of dudes? Was it like a frat house?

Lanier: Uh-huh.

Annie: Wow.

Lanier: Great guys. And they always had parties and they were so hospitable. And they would come and... like I remember the first time I went there, there was a... like in the den, they had some theater seats from the Roxy, like all lined up in the den, like facing the bookcase. There were four televisions in the bookcase with four different ball games going at the same time.

Annie: And then stadium seating. That is wild. That is wild. So you've always been a writer. That is like back when we were bloggers, you were one of the finest writers that we all got to read. I mean, it was just... I miss blogging a lot of days for one day. Do you ever miss it?

Lanier: I do. I really do.

Annie: Just that like daily practice-

Lanier: I know.

Annie: ...of getting words out was so helpful to me.

Lanier: Me too. It was a good discipline and I do miss it. And I miss the connections.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Because even if you and I didn't see each other for weeks back then, because I was living right in your town, we all knew exactly what was going on because we all read each other's blogs all the time.

Lanier: Right, right, right.

Annie: Okay. So when did blogging and writing turn into making an Advent Christmas-type book?

Lanier: Well, you know, I've always wanted to write a book.

Annie: I know.

Lanier: That's been the goal. Books. Not book. Books.

Annie: All of us who know you have always wanted you to write books too.

Lanier: And I've always wanted to write an Advent and Christmas book because it really is my favorite time of year. But in, you know, in my adult life, God has really helped me mine some of the riches in the dark places of this season.

I pretty much have had a file on my computer for about 15 years, you know, just dumping ideas into and "someday I'm going to do this". But I guess it was almost four years ago my friend Jennifer Trafton and I were sitting at my kitchen table. She'd come to visit me for a few days before Christmas. It was Christmas 2020, which is the weirdest, loneliest Christmas any of us, I think, in our lifetime.

Annie: Right. We'll ever know. God will.

Lanier: Please God. I know. But you know, there were so many things that I was doing anyway, you know, even though we weren't having like the large-scale Christmas that we normally did. And Jennifer and I just really were able to spend a lot of time talking about some of the whys behind the wherefore of it all. And by the end of her visit, I said one morning, "Hey, look..." And I need to clarify this. Jennifer Trafton is an incredibly gifted author and successful author. She's also my writing partner.

So for years, I mean, maybe 10 years or more, we've been meeting regularly over FaceTime and sharing our work and holding each other to self-imposed deadlines and things, you know? But anyway, she's also an incredibly accomplished artist and illustrator.

And I said, "Hey, if I write this book, will you..." And I didn't even get the question out of my mouth. She was like, "Absolutely, I will illustrate it." And so, you know, it would not have been the book that it is without her.

Annie: It's beautiful.

Lanier: It's beautiful.

Annie: She captured you incredibly.

Lanier: Well, and she captured the themes of the book. I mean, there's illustrations of my goats and my cats and my favorite teapot. She just really... It was a very, very personal... Just a delightful partnership.

Annie: When I think of Advent I think of you probably because you taught it to me first. Like you said, you have 12th night parties every year, which was, like we said, I think that's the last time we saw each other was before I moved to Nashville. The 12th night before I moved to Nashville. What is it about Advent Lanier? Why do you stretch Christmas not based on Christmas movies or based on, okay, I'm going to start decorating right now...? Because I do want to talk about the second greening because I think the second greening is so interesting. But what is it about Advent that has always stood out to you? And Christmastide, honestly.

Lanier: Well, I mean, simply I've always loved it. I mean, I grew up in a home that Christmas was a very, very special time of year. And I realized the older I've gotten that I don't take for granted the fact that I have happy Christmas memories as a child.

But as I grew older and started to engage with some of the disappointments of life and the challenges and the griefs, it was concurrent with the time that I discovered Advent as a season. Because I wasn't raised in that tradition. I was raised Baptist. And even though the whole Christmas season was very special and set apart, we didn't practice the four weeks of Advent.

But it was such a joy for me to discover that there was just this whole set-apart season leading up to Christmas and that Christmas traditionally was a 12-day feast. And you know, realizing that historically the church has set aside this time, not just to prepare for Christmas, but it's a season of contemplation, you know, it can be kind of penitential sometimes. It's a season of acknowledged waiting. That became very precious to me.

Advent is a safe space for our grief. And the fact that the church has this whole built-in season to acknowledge that was just profoundly life-altering for me. Because, like I said, Advent makes space for our grief. But the other side of it is the fact that Christmas makes room for our joy. We need ample space for both of them.

Annie: So, Lanier, as we are starting Advent right now, it's also a very short Advent this year, which makes me sad. I didn't know this could happen.

Lanier: I know.

Annie: I haven't quite loved Advent long enough to have had this happen before. And I was like, "Three weeks?"

Lanier: No. It's not right. It's not right.

Annie: It's not enough. Why is it too short? One of the things you said in the book that I thought was really profound is you said Advent felt more like Lent. So will you talk a little bit, and you've alluded to it a couple of times, the gifts and the darkness and how Advent... I've never heard anyone say Advent is a great place for holding grief. Will you talk about that? I've not... I don't know. I don't know about that.

Lanier: Well, I think that the expectations of the season that, you know, Christmas is supposed to be such a happy time. I mean, it is a happy time. It can be a happy time. But it also can be a really, really hard time. With every year that passes, it can kind of foreground another year has gone by with things not being the way we want them to be. And it can just really bring our disappointments into sharp relief. And it is very easy to look at the world around us and just feel our loss and our lack exacerbated by the merriment that we see everywhere.

And just realizing that Advent represents centuries of waiting on God's promise fulfillment that he gave us in Christ, but we're still living in a season of a partially fulfilled hope. I like to say like Holy Saturday is kind of the place that people say that we live, you know, between the cross and the resurrection, like between the now and the not yet. But Advent is that space too, you know? Advent is essentially where we live in between two perfect hopes, you know?

Annie: Wow. I think that's really interesting Lanier because this year and our Advent series we created... It's called *Stay Tuned: An Advent For Those Already Waiting*. And part of why I wrote it is I felt a little worn with Advent series that asked me to really have high anticipation. I was like, I wait all the time.

You're married. A lot of people automatically attribute that to my singleness is that I'm waiting on God to do this thing for me. But we all have 50 other ways that we are still waiting on the Lord to do something we've asked Him to do and hoped that He would do. I'm curious around how do you get yourself to where you love Christmas every year? Is it a fight? Is it a half-fight? I mean, you talk about in the book that your sweet mom Claudia, Miss Claudia, passed away two years ago and your dad judge passed away a while ago. What year was he?

Lanier: 2015.

Annie: 2015. I mean, your parents are so wonderful. I just think, what a gift to have known them. So wonderful. My dad loves your parents. My mom does too. I just remember my dad thinking so highly of your parents. And you don't have kids and you hoped to have kids. And you talk about infertility in the book.

So will you talk a little bit about like... for our friends listening who are like, I thought God would do this by now for a thousand different things: marriage, kids, a different job, a healthier body, someone getting healthier, someone else, not losing people that we love. How do you get yourself to where you hang up all the greenery again?

Lanier: Oh, that's such a great question. One of the things is the fact that God has given me through all of these seasons of loss and disappointment, He has given me a much larger vision of what home and family mean. Because when my husband and I moved into our old farmhouse, which is very much a character in the book-

Annie: Yes, no kidding.

Lanier: ...I really assumed that we were just going to fill it up with kids, you know? That was just like what I'd prepared for. It was a great shock for me to realize, Oh, hang on, God does not give us everything we want. Even good desires. And He doesn't

spare us from the sufferings in this world. But what He does is show up for us in the details of our personal stories in ways that are unmistakable in ways that no one else would even know that we needed. You know, that are so intimate and so precious.

And so through that, I have come to the... beyond conviction, I mean, just kind of my life mantra is that sorrow is not the enemy of joy. It is not. It totally has the potential to lead us into a deeper intimacy with Christ. And anything that facilitates that is precious to us.

That doesn't mean that we love the sorrow or the thorns. Of course. I'm not trying to be pious about it. But anything that pins us to His feet is ultimately is a beautiful thing. And yeah. So in terms of the whole decorating and doing all the greening and having people over and all the traditions, there have been years that it has been extremely hard. And of course, I've scaled back by necessity, just, you know, walking through seasons of grief.

But at the same time, I've found that the traditions that we have in place have really carried us and given me the ability to articulate my hope in the face of seeming hopelessness. You know, to say, no, here's what's true. Not out of some kind of enforced fault sense of merriment, but you know, no, I want an embodied hope. I want to look around at my house and look around at my table and see the people there that I've invited to come and celebrate as an embodiment of what I know is absolutely true.

The Christmas after my mother died, one of the sweetest gifts of that Christmas was realizing we don't really keep our traditions so much as they keep us. And just kind of falling into some of the things that had become so habitual over the years, it just kind of carried me.

But on Christmas night, and I write about this in the book, but it had just been such a dark year and a dark Advent. It just felt like the Xena Narnia, you know, like always wonder and never Christmas. But we'd invited all these friends for Christmas dinner and I just remember being assailed by joy that night as we sat around the table laughing and telling silly jokes and just celebrating our hope, you know, ages from 18 to 92, seriously. And just the joy that was in that room just absolutely caught my heart. And I was like, This is what it means for God to set a table for us in the presence of our enemies, because what greater enemy is there than death?

Annie: Yes. Yes. It is a beautiful thing to read about in the book and to hear you talk about, because so often... what I love you didn't do. So often what people do is I don't have everything I want, BUT God has given me the other things. You didn't say

"but". You said, "I don't have everything I want. I've grieved that. AND God has been really good. Like it's holding both of those things that in the holidays can feel profoundly difficult. It feels a lot easier to do that on like May 12th than it does on December 24th.

Lanier: It is so hard. But you know, the Lord is so tender. He is so tender. and He sees that. I just wouldn't give anything for what I've learned of Him.

[00:27:19] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [KiwiCo](#). Okay, attention shoppers. If you are trying to figure out a gift for a MiniBFF in your life that is both fun and helps them learn something, you've got to check out KiwiCo.

This year, they're offering KiwiCo Clubs to engage kids on a whole journey of seriously fun learning. So instead of just one KiwiCo crate to work on and learn from, they get to go on a comprehensive learning journey. Seriously, this would be such a fun gift. Your MiniBFFs will learn the fundamentals through hands-on projects that build on each other, and they'll progressively improve their skills with each new project they work on.

There are really cool projects too. It's everything from engineering their own robot to art and design. KiwiCo has five different clubs you can choose from with unique topics like science, technology, engineering, art, and math. So the cool thing is no matter what your kids are into, there will be a project they love. And when you're part of the KiwiCo club, it's more than just getting a crate. Members get really great perks like 10% off orders, free shipping in the U.S., and early access to new crates.

One of the best things about your crate is that KiwiCo does the legwork for you and provides you everything you need. Tinker, create, and innovate with awesome gifts from KiwiCo. Get up to 50% off your first crate at [KiwiCo.com](#), and the promo code is THATSOUNDSFUN. Again, that's up to 50% off your first crate at [KiwiCo.com](#), and the promo code is THATSOUNDSFUN.

Remember that link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for we put in the show notes below, or we will send them straight to you on Friday in our AFD Week in Review email, the email we hope is the best email of your week. If you're not getting that, you are missing out. Go sign up for that in the show notes as well.

Sponsor: I know it's confusing to go grocery shopping sometimes because you're trying to figure out if the marketing on the front of the label matches up with the actual ingredients on the back. Like, it may be marked as healthy, but is it?

I legitimately love [Thrive Market](#) because Certified Organic is always their first choice, and they study every label to search for the best wholesome ingredients that have been vetted for safety. This way, we don't have to spend hours reading the back of ingredient labels. They even restrict a thousand-plus ingredients that are found at the conventional grocery stores.

Plus, I save money every time I shop Thrive Market's site, and then it all gets shipped right to me, which is my preferred method of grocery shopping. Their mission is to make healthy and sustainable living easy and affordable for everyone, so they seek out brands and products that follow ethical practices.

Want to shop at a grocery store that actually cares for your health? Go to [ThriveMarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](#). You're going to get 30% off your first order, plus a free \$60 gift, you guys. That's [ThriveMarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](#).

Sponsor: Y'all, I recently got my new [Helix sleep mattress](#) and got my bed all set up. I actually posted a reel of it over on Instagram if you want to go see. But I am telling you, I cannot wake up in the mornings. I overslept every day the first week when I got it. I just sleep so hard, and it is so comfortable. And their dream pillows, y'all, okay, I got those too, and they are amazing.

And you know I love having some data. So in a Wesper sleep study using FDA-cleared, clinically validated devices, Helix measured the sleep performance of participants after switching from their old mattress to a Helix mattress. Here's what they found. 82% saw an increase in their deep sleep cycle. Participants on average achieved 39 more minutes of overall sleep per night. So add me to those stats because I am sleeping like a champ on my Helix mattress.

Hand to heaven, I've gotten multiple texts from friends saying, how much do you actually love that mattress because we need one? And I'm telling everyone to get yourself a Helix mattress. You can actually get 25% off site-wide and two free dream pillows with any mattress purchase. And get a free bedding bundle, which is two dream pillows, sheet set, and a mattress protector with any Lux or Elite mattress order.

Start shopping at [HelixSleep.com/ThatSoundsFun](#). That's [HelixSleep.com/ThatSoundsFun](#). You can thank me later.

Okay, now back to our conversation with Lanier.

[00:32:04] <music>

Annie: I spoke Saturday to a large group of NextGen leaders, and I was speaking about singleness of marriage and saying, these are both really reliable paths to an abundant life.

Lanier: Amen.

Annie: And I just kept thinking like, what a gift for them to hear that at 20. Because I think it might save some pain when you're 40. But even in the book, when you're writing about holiday traditions, going like, man, there is more than one path to finding joy in these holiday seasons. We think it's supposed to look like the movies where the whole family is supposed to get together and everyone's supposed to be doing this, this, and this. And the Downs family traditions don't look anything like that.

I stay in Nashville. I wake up in my house by myself on Christmas morning. And then, because we don't do Christmas till the 28th or something, we do Christmas Eve instead of Christmas, and so we are days after. And so I stay here and I do have totally different traditions that bring me joy and sadness, right, at the same time?

Lanier: Well, and we have to open our hearts to both. That's another thing I've learned. Like it is so tempting when we're hurting to just kind of steal our hearts against it and kind of shut down to the full range of sorrow. And not that we wallow in it, but, you know, opening ourselves to it.

And ultimately we're opening our hearts to the Lord. Like any defense mechanisms we throw up are against Him, you know?

Annie: Yes.

Lanier: But when we open ourselves to that process, our capacity for joy is exponential. But the flip side, if we resist it, it diminishes our capacity for joy. And we don't want to do that. That's tragic. Joy is what we're made for.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. And to say, I will protect myself from pain is actually to shut off both.

Lanier: Yeah, it is.

Annie: And it is. I did not know that until way into my 30s. Probably halfway into my 30s. So that means I got a good 70 years to live it out. But will you talk a little bit about when you had Rob and Katie over for Christmas and their family? Because I think

that is such a good example. There's a family here. I saw them yesterday and we talked about "I go to their house on Christmas morning." And so inviting people in... it's a beautiful thing. And y'all did that with Rob. But you got to tell about Rob and Katie who we know and love and they have a crazy life.

Lanier: Love them so, so much. And yeah, I mean, that to me was one of the first like realizations that, you know, the family Christmas dinner doesn't have to look the way that we expect it to. It was actually the Christmas that my dad was really sick and it was just going to be Phillip and my mom and me on Christmas. It's not that I just wanted bodies around my dinner table. I wanted to celebrate big. And I just felt the need.

And, you know, just to really, again, like kind of set up a defiance in the face of the darkness that just felt like it was closing in. And I was like, We need to just... and I was like, "Phillip, I just want to invite somebody. But I don't know who." And I just kept praying about it and praying about it. And then all of a sudden it just popped in my head, "Oh my goodness, invite Rob and Katie." They're some of our very best friends. They have eight children.

Annie: Eight children.

Lanier: Four of whom are adopted and have special needs kids. And they are just the most beautiful family. And we love them so much. And they're so much fun. But, you know, my instant assumption was like, they have plans of their own. Everybody has plans. Everybody's got plans. Everybody's got family. Everybody's got plans. Everybody's got traditions.

But it felt vulnerable, which is silly because she's one of my very best friends, but it felt vulnerable to just reach out and go, "Hey..." I mean, I texted her. I didn't even call her. And just like, "Hey, this is crazy but do y'all want to come for Christmas dinner?" And she texted me back. And I think at first she was like, "Are you crazy? But yes."

Annie: She's like, "We come as a pack of 10. Are you sure?"

Lanier: And we just couldn't believe it. We could not believe that they wanted to come, you know, that the kids would be willing to leave all their Christmas presents and come and have Christmas dinner with us.

Annie: Did you cook for everybody?

Lanier: I did. Yes. Yes. And it just gave me a lot of joy that year, you know? And I remember Katie's daughter, Clara, she had the sparkly sequined dress and she asked

if she could help. And I can't even remember how old she was at the time. She was probably 9, 10 maybe. Maybe not even that old. But I had some potatoes in a pot and I was like, "Could you just stir this little sauce?" And she took it and sat on the ground with her little spoon and like mash those potatoes with an inch of their life. And we were like stepping over, you know. And, oh my gosh, it was the happiest, most joyful Christmas.

And I remember just singing Christmas carols with all the kids and, you know, Elizabeth Jane, like stomping around with her little plastic horn that I'd given them and their Christmas crackers. It was great.

Annie: So talk for a minute, if you don't mind, from the place of a family who wanted children and does not have them. There are so many of our friends listening who wish they had kids on Christmas morning.

Lanier: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Annie: Even just thinking about this year, what can they do to find joy like that? Is it joyful being around other kids?

Lanier: You know, for us it is. And I think that that is-

Annie: Were there years that it wasn't?

Lanier: To be honest, Annie, no.

Annie: Same for me. I'm always up for it. But I know there's gotta be times for people where it's harder.

Lanier: Also we realize when everybody goes home, we're like, "Oh, it's pretty quiet around here. We can just kind of clean up and get some rest."

Annie: That's right.

Lanier: But no. I mean, I think that just really embracing the children in our life. So many of the things that we do at Christmas are for the kids. I mean, the Twelfth Night Party is 100% for the kids. We made that very plain.

Annie: It is so fun.

Lanier: The parents are welcome and we love them, but this is for the kids.

- Annie:** That's probably why I liked it so much. I was like, Let me go. This is my kind of party out here at the Ravel.
- Lanier:** I mean, that doesn't mean it's not hard, you know. And I think it's been really, really, really important for me to be able to differentiate between sadness and envy. Because envy is like drinking poison and we had to be really careful about that.
- Annie:** How did you differentiate? How do you know when it's that?
- Lanier:** I think it's just how it feels, you know?
- Annie:** Okay. You just kind of have to pause and go, Oh, this is actually...
- Lanier:** I think it's just really paying attention. And gosh, nobody's ever asked me that. I mean, envy just feels yucky.
- Annie:** I mean, it's making me think how often we talk about comparison on Instagram. I wonder if the truer thing is...
- Lanier:** I think it's at the heart.
- Annie:** ...envy on Instagram.
- Lanier:** I think it really is. And I don't want that to sound harsh when people are really hurting and suffering. But I think the quicker we cut to the chase and say, wait a minute, that has no place. You know, the Lord is near the brokenhearted, but, you know, envy is something we have to let Him read out of our hearts. We have to be real careful.
- Annie:** Easier to find joy without envy?
- Lanier:** Absolutely. I think it's possible to find it with envy. I mean, that's been my experience. And I haven't articulated that until this moment.
- Annie:** It's beautiful. I haven't thought about it at all. I'm the worst about considering jealousy a sin. I know it's a sin. I'm the worst about considering it in me and calling "that's jealous". You actually feel jealous of them and envious of them. So it's interesting you talk about that because that probably happens in me more than I realize because I don't know how to name it like I know how to name pride or like I know how to name lust. It is not as easy to name jealousy.
- Lanier:** Well, it's subtle because it is so close to something that's holier, you know, or that is holy. I mean, I guess there's a holy jealousy.

Annie: Okay, let's give people an example. We're sitting there on Christmas and we start feeling... we're watching maybe our sibling with their family and we don't have family or we are watching a movie and going like, "I'm not speaking to my family right now, and therefore I'm at my apartment in whatever city and I'm watching this family on TV while watching Best Christmas Pageant ever. And it's adorable." And so we go like, "Oh, I may be actually jealous." What do we do? What do we do next?

Lanier: I think we ask for help, I mean, from the Lord. And I think we repent.

Annie: I love we ask for help first.

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: It's so sweet. That's so much sweeter than... yeah, get forgiveness and then ask for help. You're like, No, ask for help and then repent. What does it look like on the other side of repenting of envy? What happens in you? I think that we tap into the resources of the Holy Spirit. It's not something that we can reduce. Our righteousness is of Christ, and it's something that we receive and participate in and allow ourselves to be conformed to. I'm not trying to over-spiritualize, but that's the fact.

Annie: Yeah. No. No. No.

Lanier: We can't do it.

Annie: Listen, I am so pro over-spiritualizing. I'm like, "I don't know how we can over-spiritualize because everything matters."

Lanier: Everything matters. Yes.

Annie: You know me. I'm like, Everything matters. The Lord is always talking. Will you talk a little bit about the house fire? I mean, that is such a memorable part of y'all's story to all of us who love you is just like this, you know, one of the pillars of Philip and Lanier. But tell the story. And then tell us a little bit about like, how do you... when you have built such deep roots in a home and around Advent and around Eastertide... I mean, you don't play around on Easter either. And so when so much of your rhythms are around this beautiful home and then there's a fire, what then?

Lanier: So, yeah, in 2017, we had just come home from a month-long camping trip and I was so looking forward to sleeping in my bed. I, anyway, threw some laundry in

and went outside and next thing we knew our house was on fire. And it was a contents fire. Like the dryer just combusted. We don't really know what happened. Anyway, thank the Lord we were home and the fire department got there within five minutes, but it was-

Annie: Did you just turn around and it was going up?

Lanier: Pretty much. We were in our camper because we had just gotten back from this long trip. Phillip was like, "Oh, let's kind of have a soft landing here." We had a frozen pizza and he's like, "Why don't we cook pizza in the camper and just kind of pretend for one night we're not quite home." I'm the one that's bustling in and putting everything away and doing all the laundry.

Anyway, he said, "Let's just make a pizza out in the airstream." And we were making or eating the pizza and had the air conditioning going and record player going. So we couldn't hear, but our dog was with us and she started barking. I opened the door and the house was on fire. I wish I could unsee it. I'll never not remember that moment.

But anyway, the upshot of it was that... I mean, that had always been one of our biggest fears because, you know, an old house it's built a part pine. Like it's like light or not. But the good thing is that it takes that old wood a long time to get going. And so by the time the fire department arrived, they-

Annie: You just had to stand there, watch it burn until the fire department got there.

Lanier: Pretty much. Yeah. Yeah. It was just a nightmare. It was an absolute nightmare. I mean, I will never, ever, ever forget that nightmare. The next day when we were able to go in and survey the damage, you know, we realized that the fire hoses and the water and the smoke actually did more damage than the fire. We had to take about a third of our house back to the studs. But we had to pull down all the ceilings, and we dumpster full of belongings out in the yard.

Anyway, it was a year-long restoration, which is a miracle. It should have been much longer. That's a whole nother story. We had a writer on our insurance policy that they would put us up in a property of comfortable size. And we're like, "No, no, no, no, we need to be here. We want to be..." So we convinced them to get us an RV. I remember. And they loved us.

Lanier: Uh-huh. I mean, our insurance company loved us. They were like, "Hey, if you want to take any trips or anything, we'll pay for it." But we didn't have time to take trips because we were up to our eyeballs and the restoration. Anyway.

So we lived in our backyard for a year. So it was a long time before I got to sleep in my bed again. But during that process, it was such a refining time because we had poured our heart and soul into that house. The fire... most of the damage occurred in the places that we had put our most love into, you know, and we were a lot younger when we had done it. We're like, "Oh gosh, I'm going to do this again."

But I remember one day I was sitting in the den and we were getting pretty close to things, you know. We were coming down the stretch for sure. The end was in sight. I have this... it's actually illustrated in the book. Jennifer illustrated. I didn't know she was going to do it. And it was the sweetest surprise. But I have this motto painted over my bookcase in the den and it says "the wilderness shall blossom as the rose."

And that is the theme of my life. Like God is always taking the most barren, impossible places of our lives and turning them into something beautiful. Not exchanging them, but transforming, you know? So I had that motto and I thought that when everything got pulled out and thrown in the dumpster that that motto had gone too. My husband actually found it in a pile of rubble.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lanier: I was like, "I can't believe this." Jennifer, my illustrator friend, she'd actually come for the weekend and she said, "Well, I want to help you do something. What can we do?" And I said, "Well, I've got this motto. Can we fix it? Like we need to paint over it, like paint over the lettering." And so that was really sweet. Like we got to recreate that.

But right before we hung it back up, I had always wanted... in the original one, I'd always wanted to recreate these Tudor-style roses, like on either side of the lettering. And I never had a chance to do it. Well, it's sitting on the ground now. It's much easier to paint it on the ground rather than- And so I was basically copying these Tudor roses from a William Morris print. And I was tracing it out by eye, but matching the colors.

Anyway, I was just sitting there painting like a child. Like I was just kind of like paint by number, you know, and I felt the Lord say, "This is the most creative thing you've ever done." And I was like, "Whoa, what? What does that even mean?" Because it had been such a.. like I couldn't write. I couldn't read. I felt like I couldn't create anything beautiful that year. Like everything was so hard. And here I am sitting on the floor copying somebody else's design. And I realized restoration is always what God is doing. It is an act that He's inviting us to participate with Him in.

And we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We just have to participate, like bring what we have. And even if it means bringing it again, like we'd already done all this, we're doing it again. You know, just beauty from ashes. That just really stuck with me. That was one of the treasures of that dark time.

Annie: Is that a Bible verse or is it a quote from a writer?

Lanier: So it comes from Isaiah 35, and it's the passage, if I can quote it correctly, it's the wilderness and the solitary place shall rejoice for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Annie: Wow.

Lanier: And so the wilderness shall blossom as a rose is kind of the condensed version of that but...

Annie: Gosh, that's beautiful.

[00:49:33] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Shopify](#). It is Cyber Monday so I know you're probably multitasking and online shopping while you listen to this podcast. Me too. You may not think much about the online checkout process when you're buying gifts for your family, but to businesses, small and large, it really matters.

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Sponsor: Okay, friends, I have to tell you about something that has seriously changed my hair game, [Prose](#). If you've been following along, you know, I recently went a little

darker in my hair color for fall and winter, but the real magic, the health of my hair, I don't have to stress about it because Prose has this custom care system that has totally transformed my routine.

Since 2017 Prose has been taking hair and skincare to a whole new level with custom formulas created just for you. We're talking about real personalization here. Prose uses smart AI and a team of cosmetic chemists to craft products that are based on over 80 unique factors specifically for you. Plus Prose is so confident you'll love their products that they offer the Prose promise. If you're not totally in love with your first order, they've got you covered. It's on Prose.

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Sponsor: This is the time of year where we start to tell ourselves we'll get back on track with our spiritual disciplines in the new year. And I get it. This month is so full of all the things, but I know when I feel disconnected from God, I feel disconnected in a lot of other areas of my life too. That is so profoundly true about me. So even the simplest thing that helps me spend some time with Him are so, so worth it.

And [Glorify](#) app is one of the resources that is just an easy way to help you kick off time with God. Glorify is the number one Christian daily devotional app. So when you open it up, you'll see they have a ton of great resources for you every day, a short amount of scripture to read a daily devotional, a song for the day, which I love, a guided meditation. Honestly, you can create your own adventure with it, but they've got you set up with tools to choose from each day to help you connect with God. I love it.

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And now back to finish up our conversation with Lanier.

[00:53:24] <music>

Annie: One of the things I love that you say in the book is that you and Philip kept saying to people, "We are not renovating this house. We're restoring and resurrecting this house." Like it is not a renovation. That little bit feels like the same thing,

wilderness, and ro... Like we are not making this into something that it isn't. So my question for you is how much technology do y'all have in your house? Because even when you say you texted Katie, I'm like, "Lanier is my one friend that I thought never would get a cell phone." So do y'all have like Alexa?

Lanier: No, we don't.

Annie: I can't imagine you do.

Lanier: My husband is a software engineer. So we have lots of like plugs and cords and wires and drawers and things that I don't know what they go to. But we don't have a television. We haven't had television really. We've never bought a television.

Annie: I've never known you to have a television.

Lanier: I got rid of four when we got married.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Lanier: But yeah, I remember when I got my smartphone, Philip was like, "Are you sure?"

Annie: I know.

Lanier: "Are you sure you really want this? Because it's going to change your life." And I was like, "Everybody's got one." So I think this sounds dumb. I think we have an Alexa in the barn just because Philip knows I won't have it in the house. But I don't think it really has ever really worked. Like Philip would be like, "Alexa, play some REM." Yeah. And then it starts playing, you know, Smashing Pumpkins or something.

Annie: As I was reading the book and you were talking about the restoration of the home, I was like, there's no way it is what a lot of us do have. Like now the speakers are all smart speakers. No world. No world. I think if I was a Benton woman, I think you'd pick candlelight over lights any day.

Lanier: Amen.

Annie: I know.

Annie: I know you would.

Lanier: In fact, I'm having a serious light bulb problem because all of our light bulbs are burning out and I can't find energy-efficient ones that are warm enough. Like our house is so dark.

Annie: And with the time changing now that it's going into winter, I know.

Lanier: It's crazy.

Annie: Okay. Let's spend a couple of minutes as we finish up. Well, I have a baked squash question. Can I ask you a baked squash question?

Lanier: Please do.

Annie: Because I want to make this recipe that you have on page three. All throughout the book, not only is it these stories of grief and joy and family and all that, there's also a lot of great recipes. You tell us how to set a table. I mean, the whole thing is such a joy. Really. This book is such a joy. But in the Christmastide section, you have a baked squash recipe. It has no cheese in it.

Lanier: No cheese.

Annie: Am I supposed to... can I add cheese or no...? Is it going to be better without cheese?

Lanier: Well.

Annie: I've never seen a Southern squash casserole without cheese.

Lanier: I want to say try it.

Annie: Okay. Okay.

Lanier: Try it.

Annie: I'm going to. It just is... Okay. We'll do it. I'm just telling you. I couldn't believe. I was like, "Oh, I'm going to use Lanier's recipe. That'll be so fun." Then I was like, "There's no cheese anywhere in this."

Lanier: Well, try it both ways. If you must add cheese, I would say two cups on top.

Annie: I must... Okay. Thank you for having that.

Lanier: Don't play around.

Annie: Do it. Make it a layer. I'll do it without that. I need to get that out. Also, you talk about in the book... you make this list on page 288, how to love yourself while you are loving others. And I think that's really interesting because a lot of our friends listening are the ones in charge of Christmas and they are doing... They've made recipe lists and grocery, wrapping the presents and they got to do the stockings and they... and I think a lot of time Advent is lost for the ones in charge.

Lanier: Absolutely. I've been there.

Annie: Right.

Lanier: That's why I made the list.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. So talk about why this matters. Why does it matter that we think about ourselves? Because it's great things. It's like, do a devotional, read it, keep the meals simple, but also like take your vitamins. He's like, take your vitamins. And so why does this matter? Talk a little bit to the people, women mostly who are in charge.

Lanier: So I mentioned early in the book that, you know, Christmas can be a place of rest. And I think a lot of people are like, what are you talking about?

Annie: Yeah, right.

Lanier: In our church, we're always talking about working from a place of rest. And of course that is our resting place in the beloved. You know, that is our acceptance. We don't have to do anything to earn God's favor and love. All we have to do is rest in it and accept it. And so bringing that mentality into our preparations for Christmas really gives us permission to not do it all and to... um, you know, to prioritize rest because without it, we're not going to have anything of real value to bring to our people. And, you know, just giving ourselves space and again just permission to jettison the things that are not contributing to our peace and to just make sure that we are giving from a place of replenishment.

Annie: Wow. Yeah.

Lanier: I think it's really important.

Annie: Even if it's just a 10-minute nap.

Lanier: Even if it's a 10-minute nap. It makes all the difference. And I really try to work that into my plans. I'm not the most efficient planner in the world. That's such an

understatement. But at Christmas I try to be super intentional about it because I want to be present. I don't want to be so tired that I can't enjoy it. I don't want to be in tears on Christmas night because it all went by so fast and I'm just incoherently tired. So, yeah, it is really important. And it's okay to care for ourselves. And I just really want to send that message out to women in particular, like, you know, who's going to take care of you.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Talk a little bit about Christmastide. How do we do the 12 days of Christmas? I mean, you give some great lists, and here's a whole section on Christmastide. Why do we need to keep observing Christmas for 12 days? Why don't we stop on December 25th and then just take a couple of weeks off?

Lanier: Well, because I think there's just not enough room for all the goodness, you know? We were talking earlier about how Christmastide as a season, you know, really makes me a joy.

Annie: I love Christmastide too.

Lanier: 50 days.

Annie: 50 days of celebration. It is longer than lent.

Lanier: Yes. Yes. And while Christmastide is not longer than Advent, I mean, we need both. We've gotten to this point, we've done the waiting and now we need to savor. We need anticipation and savoring.

Annie: Oh wow.

Lanier: We need-

Annie: That's what we get to do in the 12 days is really savor Christmas.

Lanier: Yeah, that's what it's about. I feel like it's getting a little more traction in our world just because people are tired of feeling so rushed.

Annie: It is one of the things I love about our rhythm is our Christmas is very long because we don't even see family for three days after Christmas.

Lanier: We usually have... I miss your Christmas on the 28th. Last year we had on January the 6th.

Annie: Oh my gosh, Epiphany.

Lanier: Epiphany. Yeah, which is another one of my favorite days. But you know, it's countercultural and I love that. I love countercultural. I love standing still a little bit and just saying, what's going to happen if I don't get carried along in the current? Nothing. Except goodness.

Philip and I have tried to work a few rhythms into the 12 days of Christmas, but I keep it very fluid. It's not a rigid thing. It's not like we have to do this on this day. We have to do this on this day. But here are the things that we like to do during the season, you know, put a puzzle together, you know, take a walk in the woods with the dogs or have people over for tea or... You know, one of the things that I don't think I've put this in the book, but one of the things I love to do Christmas week is have some of my best friends over just to sing.

Annie: Oh, fun.

Lanier: And we've been doing that for years. And we'll just have a cup of tea and like sing some of our favorite Christmas songs.

Annie: And you play the piano.

Lanier: I play the piano.

Annie: I know you do.

Lanier: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Annie: I can see the whole thing in my head. In the book, you give us 12 ways to keep the 12 days and actually talk about all these other feasts that I did not know about that happened in those 12 days. So there's just this invitation to do this little thing. Like fill up your bird feeder. I mean, it does slow everything down a little bit. And I think that when we're seeking to embody what we believe, the intention accomplishes that. Like we integrate what we do with what we believe. It does slow us down.

Annie: Okay. Finished with talking about Epiphany. I am a big Epiphany fan. It is my favorite day of the year. And I did not know the three reasons Epiphany exists. I always had the one, the three Kings. But in the book, as I'm reading, I was like, "Wait, there are like three really specific things in the Bible around Epiphany."

Lanier: Yeah.

Annie: Can you talk about that for a minute?

- Lanier:** Yeah. So the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan, the wedding at Cana, His first miracle, and-
- Annie:** Why are those all tied to Epiphany? We don't know. They all happened on January 6th.
- Lanier:** No, no, no, no. You know, traditionally the reason that these have been linked is because they're moments in which God has revealed Himself... His God had revealed in human form.
- Annie:** So what do you do on Epiphany?
- Lanier:** Our church usually has an Epiphany service, which we love. That's one of my favorite services of the year. I love getting to sing *We Three Kings* and *The First Noel*. That's very special. Sometimes I start taking my decorations down, but I usually wait till January the 7th.
- Annie:** Do you? You wait till after Epiphany?
- Lanier:** You know, as much as we have the 12th Night Party and like, okay, it's all good again. Like we've had 12th Night Parties where I'm like, everybody bring your Christmas greenery and we'll burn it. But they get to my house and all my greeners still up.
- Annie:** You're like, "Yeah, I said bring yours. I didn't say you were getting mine."
- Lanier:** You're not getting mine. But yeah, Epiphany is a quiet day. Typically it's a reflective day. It really feels more like New Year's Day to me than New Year's Day.
- Annie:** Yeah. I think there's this opportunity for believers to reevaluate the start of the year that January 1 is not. You do not have to have your year's goals set by January 1.
- Lanier:** It's too much pressure.
- Annie:** Especially this year we don't come back to work until Epiphany. The sixth is our first day back to work. I have so often... my team is hearing this for the first time. I've so often considered like, do we not come back until the seventh? Do we give everybody Epiphany as one more day? But I'm like, no, we need to get back to work. But it feels like this gift at the end of the holidays where we get to... it feels like a dark day, but it gives us from January one to January six to think.
- Lanier:** Yes. You know, that space between is when I really start asking the Lord to give me a word to name my year. And not like some super mystical thing, but just, you

know, something that He just keeps causing to rise to the surface and in my heart and mind that I just want to set as my intention for the year. And that takes time. And I don't want to rush that.

But usually by Epiphany, that's just kind of settled in my heart. Like, okay, this is my word for the year, which, you know, this year I named my year "margin", which is hilarious because this has been the most marginless year of my entire life. So it's exposed my need for margin. So that's one of my Epiphany traditions.

Annie: I love it. Well, this is such a gift. I'm so thankful for this book. I can't imagine... I would imagine everyone who knows you feels this. But this feels like Lanier in a book. I mean, it just is like, here's songs to sing, here's beautiful art, but here's like deep story and really beautiful essays. This just feels like I was so thankful that you've written it. Will you keep writing more books for us? Is that in your heart?

Lanier: Oh, yes, ma'am. Oh, yeah.

Annie: Thank you. I really hope so. Unless you're going to start blogging again, I'm going to need this. I'm going to need you to keep doing books or go back to blogging. Okay, let me ask you one final question. We only have three weeks this year and this book goes four weeks. What do we do?

Lanier: Start now.

Annie: Okay. Hey, there you go. Read fast. Is there anything we didn't say you want to make sure we cover?

Lanier: I don't think so.

Annie: Okay. Let me ask you this. Lanier, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what you do for fun.

Lanier: Well, my husband and I love to travel. We don't get to do it as much as... this is not a season that we get to do a lot of it. But what sounds fun to both of us is a little stone cottage in Southern South West of England. Probably Cornwall. Cornwall with an easy walk to the beach.

Annie: Very pull dark of you.

Lanier: Very pull dark. Easy access to the Southwest coast path and long walks and wayside picnics. That's my idea of fun.

Annie: Where in the world have y'all not been that you still want to see? Do you have places left?

Lanier: You know, to be honest, there are places that we just want to go back to you. I wouldn't mind seeing Greece one day, but I don't have to go there.

Annie: Like you got to get back to Cornwall.

Lanier: We've got to get back to Cornwall. We've promised ourselves.

Annie: I agree. I've never been there, but I agree. You need to get back and I just need to come. I need to see it. I love you. Thank you for doing this.

Lanier: Love you too.

Annie: So glad to see you. What a treat! I always get to have friends on. It's like one of the rules of guests. It is very rare that it's friends of 30 years. So I'm so thankful.

Lanier: It's been very special.

Annie: Thank you.

[01:07:52] <music>

Outro: Oh, y'all. Isn't she awesome? Okay. I am dying to hear what you think. She is just the most calming voice, right? Oh, it's so beautiful. Listen, go get you some copies of *Glad and Golden Hours*. I'm telling you, this is like a legacy book you're going to want to have every single Advent, every single Christmastide. And if you go ahead and order it today, it is going to hold your hand through this entire season and the 12 days of Christmas. I'm telling you, this is the book. This is the book. *Glad and Golden Hours* by Lanier Ivester. Go get it.

And go follow Lanier on social media. Tell her thank you so much for being on the show. If you enjoyed this episode, I think you'll also really love our episode with Tsh Oxenreider from our previous Advent series and Father Mike. Oh my gosh, I love Father Mike.

If you have any questions from this episode, you can drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app, if you're a Spotify listener like me. It's almost time for our wrapped at the end of the Spotify listening year. Or you can send the question straight to us on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. We'll try to answer them there. And make sure you are following us there. Next year is going to be wild. So you want to be @ThatSoundsFunPodcast.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find.
Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, Annie F. Downs TSF.
Anywhere you may need me, that's how you can find me.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that
sounds fun to you and I will do the same. Today what Sounds Fun to me while I'm
in New York for a couple of days and it sounds fun to me to see some friends
tonight up here. A little Christmas time in New York City. Y'all have a great week.
We'll see you back here on Thursday with one of your favorites and mine. It's our
friend Bob Goff. We'll see y'all Thursday.