

Win Freida Linda_12-2021

Interview with Win Tackett [WT], Freida Thompson [FT], Linda Ferreira [LF]

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Transcribed by Catherine Crouch

[LF] Win; tell us about when you first came to All Saints. When that was and how you got here.

[WT] Well I first found out about All Saints at a party. And Father Tom and Father Gordon were at the party. And I had been looking for an Episcopal Church in Indianapolis, and hadn't been... hadn't felt comfortable in any of the places that I had been and they said - and I didn't even know this was here - and they invited me and I came in and it was like instantly: this is what I've been looking for.

The rector at the time was Jack Eastwood. And it just fit and that was in 1978.

[LF] In 1978. And that was Gordon and - Father Gordon and Father Tom then, invited you.

[WT] That's right.

[LF] Well, take a minute and talk a little about what was not comfortable in the other churches - you don't have to name them.

[WT] Well, what was not comfortable was... the people were friendly but... you (I) tended to feel invisible. They didn't... it was like they were being polite but they weren't... they weren't... there wasn't a warm feeling about it... it just didn't feel like you were going to be part of the group.

[LF] So tell me how it was different when you came to All Saints.

[WT] Well it was different to begin with because I knew two people who were here. I didn't feel like a total stranger to everybody in the place. Plus, I met Father Eastwood and they were very welcoming and friendly. I mean I didn't feel like they were being polite to me.

And I was pleased because I looked around and it was a very integrated congregation at that point. And I thought, "This is really good". And as I kept coming back, I just... it felt more and more like a place where I belong. It's hard to put into words.

[LF] Have you been in an integrated congregation before?

WT] I had, in Kansas City. St Mary's which is... which is a downtown parish. It's very unusual because in Kansas City. Saint Mary's and the Cathedral are like six blocks apart. And I thought, well how did this happen that they're so close together? And St Mary's was a very old; it... and it was similar to this in architecture in that it had interior brick walls like this and that was before they moved the altar out.

And they had this gleaming white marble, huge altar that went up to the ceiling with lots of statues and was very ornate Against the brick, it just shone; it was really spectacular.

[FT] How integrated - was it 70/30? 50/50?

[WT] My memory is that it was probably 60/40.

[FT] That's... that is mixed, yes.

[WT] Yeah. More so than when I came here actually, which was more like 70/30 probably.

[FT] So when you came it was about 70/30?

[WT] I'm - now, who knows? But that's my recollection.

[FT] I would say... I came in 1987 and I would say that that's pretty close to what I... what I recall. And for me, this was totally different. I had never been to an integrated church. I'd only been to small African American Black Episcopal churches.

So for me it was a, you know, an eye opener. I kind of didn't know this existed. Like you, I had tried a couple of other Episcopal churches in town and I don't know that I would say I was invisible because it felt like everybody turned and looked at me.

So I don't know that I would say it was invisible because I was noticed but nobody said anything to me; they just stared at me. And I had my daughter Elizabeth which is why I was looking at churches - for her to be baptized.

And someone quickly - when I came into the church to sit in the back pew, somebody quickly said, "There's a nursery; there's a nursery." I said, "Well okay, " "Don't you want to look at it? Don't you want to look at it?" So I said, "Well, okay."

So I went over to look at it and this woman walked up to me and said, "There's the sign up list. And if you leave your child, when you leave your child here, then you sign up to do rotations."

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And I thought, well you don't even know who I am. You haven't said hello. Number one why would I leave my daughter in this nursery with someone I don't know and you don't know me...why? What is this? And I said, this is my first time. "Oh, oh, well." I'm like, "Move on." So I thought, "This is not going to work for me".

[LF] Wow... and how did you find this parish?

[FT] Uh...first of all it wasn't crowded; it was roomy; it's roomy because everything is tall so I felt like I wasn't looked at. I felt like I was welcomed. I sat in the back again. And I don't know if... I think the only person that really noticed me was Dona Young. I was in the back on the right, on the Michael north side and she was about a third of the way up on the north side right on the aisle.

When it came time for communion she scurried back and said, "Do you want me to hold the baby so you can go up?" And I thought, "That was kind. That was kind". And I thought, "That's a reasonable thing to ask". And I said, "No - I'll try to get us both blessed".

[LF] When you came in and saw the size and enough space, who were the congregants and how were they seated?

[FT] Everybody was mixed. So, they were black and white in all parts of the of the pews. Ahh... there was no pew for this person and for that person so nothing was delegated... so there was no pew delegation; people just scattered about. And people tended to kind of wander in and out...

[LF] Oh, you mean in the service?

[FT] Uh, huh. Some people would come in late and that was okay.

[WT] It was like... I remember that there were... it was always...it was always slow to get started as far as the number of people who were here. Because there were just some people never got here on time. It's just the way it was. Nobody cared or paid any attention that I can tell. And it was comfortable, yeah.

[FT] Yes, it was. Cause with the music and the incense and the Anglo Catholicism there was still room for people to come and to go.

[WT] And one of the things that I liked here that really impressed me which doesn't exist anymore (I'm sorry to say) was: before the service started, people came in and they were preparing for the mass. They did not sit down and start a conversation with somebody.

[LF] So you valued the solemnness?

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[WT] Yes, I did. It was like I'm winding down and getting ready for this. Because after driving here, you know all that, and it just... that was a valuable part of the experience for me. And over time that has just gone away gradually; now it's like going to a Protestant church.

[LF] And that solemn or quiet tended to be for the whole group?

[WT] It was the whole building, yeah. It was the norm. It was just what people did.

[LF] So tell me... I'm switching topics a little bit... but tell me about what happened across racial lines? Freida, you said in the pews people were mixed. What happened in coffee hour? What happened in social engagements in people's homes?

[WT] Well I can't speak too much about what happened in social engagements. Because I really didn't... the social engagements that I were involved with were with people who were on the same ministries that I was. Very likely in the beginning in the early days, the leaders of whatever group you would be in would be a black person actually. So, we would have social things back and forth basically.

[LF] You were on the vestry? At least one point.

[WT] Twice

[LF] So there might be a vestry evening together.

[WT] Exactly and we would go on retreat in those days we would go off the campus someplace. Often to Waycross. Yeah and that was a great experience because we would basically live together for the weekend. It was a good way to go on retreat.

[LF] So, there was significant Black leadership when you first came. Do you have any idea how that came into being?

[WT] I don't... well I heard stories, but I don't really know. I think that the kids came first for things that were being offered like after school tutoring and that sort of thing and then parents just sort of came along with them to see what the kids were up to, probably. If it would be in my family, that's what they would have done.

And I think the choir, at one point, the choir was affiliated with some organization, an Anglican organization, where they got recognition for being in the choir, and there the kids would come for that and it was a way to get some musical training as well as participate. I have forgotten who the choir director was.

[FT] So when I came in 1987 I remember Maurice Edelen and then Frank Lloyd being senior wardens and they were both African American so that was my

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experience over six years. Two or three years for each one so when I came that was my experience, that there were African Americans in leadership positions in the church.

[WT] That's right. And it wouldn't be just one person on the vestry who was Black either; it was not tokenism.

[FT] And you said thatm I believem Cliff Henderson was...

[WT] The whole time - well I don't know how many years – thirty years anyway, he was the treasurer of the church.

[FT] And he's Black

[WT] Ah, he's... yeah.

[LF] So we're talking about a pretty stably integrated church time here at All Saints, and you both came into that already established with black leadership. So I am taking an angle here:

I want you to think about what you learned from those black leaders (including Nan Peete who was the Rector while you were the senior warden) that were moments of racial stress or racial disappointment. You talked about one with Dr. Lloyd and not being asked...

[FT] Oh, we had some financial problems and there was a unilateral decision made. He may have been senior warden at the time. He hadn't been told about it and he could have intervened. He was a man revered in the community (as) a man of substance ,we may say. We were having trouble financially and that... that was a place where he could (have) stepped in and helped and somehow he got sidelined after years of what sounds like being front and center.

He was...he was a very active sub deacon and he was sorry that no one had come to talk to him because he could have taken care of this financial issue. And it would have - anyway -it would have changed the lives of several people for the better...for the better. He knew that and he was sorry but he had been bypassed.

[WT] Yeah, that's sad.

[LF] When you reflect on these comments, how did you feel about race?

[FT] Well you know it was in a period where we were beginning to lose Black congregants and I guess you could say in a way, this was the bellwether, the bell for whom the bell tolls.

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Because if he was ignored, the rest were going to just fizzle out. And that was... that would be too bad and I must add that as the exodus occurred, it wasn't only the Black congregants that left; the white congregants left too. But I would say that the Black parishioners left first.

[LF] Well, let's talk about that time... about what you perceive some of the issues to be in that exodus. And maybe we can locate in time what was happening in the neighborhood and in the parish.

[WT] I don't know. It didn't seem to me that it happened quickly; it was very gradual, at least in my perception.

[FT] Well I would disagree a little bit because it was during Wayne Hansen's tenure and he wasn't with us that long.

So it wasn't a 10 year exodus, I think it was (like) over three years that we went from a fairly large complement down to I believe Bethel Bose said at one point there were thirty people in the pews down from closer to one hundred with the active choir and then we had, I think, a four member choir and maybe thirty people in the pews.

So that's over in just a few years. So that's a fairly, quick, rapid decline.

[WT] There, you make a good point. Well, it seems to me that it started before then. And I think we lost a number of Black people because, basically, as they got older and had health problems and couldn't drive and so forth; they just couldn't get here and so they would go to wherever was closer to where they live.

[LF] So let me back up because my understanding of that era (and now we're talking before Wayne Hanson and before you came), we're talking about when the housing in the neighborhood was being condemned and people had to move out of the neighborhood.

[WT] I was never one... I don't think... I could be wrong, but I don't think there were very many Black people who actually lived in the neighborhood who came here. With the obvious exception.

[LF] Well yeah you mean Barbara Bingham's large family.

[FT] So she was a... the Bingham's... were a big portion of that, say, 40 percent. But there were still a number of people, as you said, who were in leadership roles, who had professional jobs, who were here and were fixtures.

[WT] I wish I had a better memory for the names.

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[FT] Those people I remember were here when Nan Peete left. And I do remember that because Frank Lloyd was on the search committee that brought Wayne Hansen... or on the vestry because he is clear about that. That he brought Wayne Hansen so he was front and center then. And then, thereafter, that's when I recall people leaving. So I know Cliff Henderson left then. I know the Edelens left and the Heights.

[LF] Oh, Jean Height's family? Okay, so what's your perception of what the issues were?

[FT] I assume that Wayne Hansen was too intense. There was something about his ministry that didn't work for them. It was... it was fairly focused - his ministry was fairly focused on AIDS to the exclusion of others and I think that was - that just didn't fit with the history. We've been pretty inclusive, except now; all the sudden it was exclusive in a different way. In a different way, but it was exclusive.

[WT] It ... I think it did...sort of went over my head that that was happening. Because I was... I was very involved emotionally with AIDS and all the people we were losing.

[LF] And what was happening for you?

[WT] People I knew were dying. And I thought we were doing a really good thing because a lot of people who had different religious traditions were being rejected by their families. And they could come here and some people who weren't religious at all - we actually we gave them a funeral.

[LF] I'm taken by what you're saying that that was an emotionally very potent time, both because of goodness, experiencing the goodness of a church actually opening its doors, but also potent because you were losing people. And so, this (place) had to feel sacred.

But I'm also taken by your knowing that you were focused...you were focused on grief...(not on the exodus of other members).

[WT] But at the time, I didn't know I was focused. I mean I just was.

[LF] So one of the things that makes me think about - with our task - our tasks to look at our complicity with racism. If we speak more broadly, (re) our complicity with exclusion, so we will talk more broadly.

I think you're saying you were in a situation where grief was dominant, (church) an extension to the most at risk and most exploited in your perception. This took up

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this much of your perception (big gesture) and it wasn't as clear who might have been outside your line of vision.

[WT] That's very true.

[LF] And even people that were deep within your respect.

[WT] Well, yeah. Yeah.

[LF] I'm thinking, well that might be one way for us to think about complicity is when the dominant focus excludes people that may need tending.

And, so, my hypothesis is that some folks were not necessarily more homophobic, but maybe were just unobserved or neglected in that time.

[WT] I could see that happen absolutely, yeah.

[LF] And then I was thinking, back to a conversation you and I had fairly recently. You were thinking about Father Wayne's style... and do you remember what you called that?

[WT] My- way- or- the- highway, basically.

[LF] I was thinking about my- way -or- the -highway and I said, "Well, what do you think that was like for the Black folks in the congregation? Do you remember what you said?"

[WT] No, I don't remember

[LF] Well, can I remind you? What you said is, "I think it was probably pretty similar for everyone; yeah, he was just authoritarian."

[WT] It was not focused on a group; that's just his style with everyone, not to give the impression that he was that way with some people and not with others.

[LF] And I raise the question: "Do you think the impact of an authoritarian white man might be different on you than on a Black congregant?"

[WT] Could be. I remember having the conversation with - and I don't even remember who it was -somebody who said they were going to leave because they just didn't feel comfortable anymore and I... and my response to them... this is terrible... my response to them was: "I will not do that because I was here before they got here and I'm going to be here after they're gone." And I was trying to encourage them to get that attitude - which didn't work, by the way.

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[LF] So you said, "I'm sorry to say or I'm embarrassed to say." I know when I say that it usually means I am experiencing some distress about my own line of vision.

[WT] Well, exactly.

[LF] Well what's your... what's your thought about that?

[WT] I think there's a... it's very easy to get focused on individuals rather than a group. And I tend to experience it on a personal basis rather than a group basis so I just react to each individual thing that happens.

[LF] But the sorry to say - I'm thinking you felt bad for that person.

[WT] I'm sorry to say that I had - how do I say it? I had no sense of race being an issue.

[FT] Or how difficult it was.

[WT] Exactly. And in my work life I tended to be in situations where there weren't very many Black people doing the same job. And I really didn't think about that. It didn't even come to my consciousness that that was true until looking back. But at the time it was just the way it was.

[LF] So in that moment you stayed with your agenda, which was: This person who has come to the church who looks different than me but is gay and died; I can extend myself. I'll be here after they are dead and why don't you? Why don't you do the same thing rather than: What is it like for you to watch this as a Black person?

[WT] I am... I think I said I'm sorry to say because I look back on what my attitudes at the time were more self-centered I guess, rather than thinking about how it affected the other person.

[FT] When, when you - first of all -I came in 87 and I think Nan Peete left 89ish and then Wayne Hanson came 90 - 91 probably ish so my experience was different from yours. Because first of all I came on Sundays; I worked and I took care of my child.

So there was not much socially that I did and I wasn't on any committees. I would just... I would come to church. So, what I would see was who was in the pews on Sunday and then as people left, well I missed them and I didn't know what had happened. And the grief that you had for your friends who were dying and I didn't know them, I didn't know the people in the pews, I didn't know who had AIDS or who didn't have AIDS.

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I can only tell when a new person came in who looked so seriously ill, I mean just terribly ill, I knew they had AIDS. But, otherwise, it just felt like the complexion so to speak of the church was changing. I didn't know for whom or why because I didn't know these people.

And I will ask you - first of all, I didn't come to any funerals either because I was working during this time. And I didn't know the people. So I never came to a funeral. The people who were buried - were they white or black?

[WT] Mostly white.

[FT] Yeah so, it's difficult. It's difficult.

[WT] My sense is that the Black gay community was totally separate. Totally segregated and they didn't know about us.

[LF] But you did - All Saints had some Black gay membership, didn't they?

[WT] Yes, we did. But they tended to socialize with us, not with the Black community.

[FT] If you're talking about 3 or 4 or 5...

[LF] That's all, yeah.

[FT] Then that's not that's not enough, that's not enough people that are going to pull the entire church together if one of them became ill. It's not going to keep the other Black congregants... it's not a community.

[WT] Well, when you said that it pops into my head - the community was the church, actually. Not some outside social group. So we were a community - as a gay community, we were integrated but we were most of the people I knew were either from work or from All Saints, yeah. It's just the way it was.

[LF] Well, I identify with your narrow vision and self-centeredness because my experience in a number of mixed race situations and especially when race is being talked about...and that's been here at All Saints several times ...you know one of those was the storytelling group.

[WT] Oh, I remember that; that was good. We should do that again.

[LF] Yeah, good and meaningful but... I was just telling Freida, one of things I'm aware of is that when it's flowing pretty well and I'm actually feeling pretty

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comfortable, I think without thought (without true reflection); I behave as though it's comfortable for everyone in the group.

And one of the things I fail to do is exactly what happened for you in that event. I will forget to ask, "How was this storytelling or how was this conversation for everyone including the people of color... more specifically the people of color?"

And I do that with you (Freida). I said, "There's times I forget to check. What was this like to be in the situation? To be in this conversation?" So it's my own... that's part of my confession about complicity. So I put it on my docket to check, and I still often have to be informed of my neglect.

[WT] Yeah, I relate to that because it's very easy to think that everyone else is on the same thought process that you're on, that if it went well for you it went well for them too.

[LF] It's going to go well for me almost every time: I am white, educated, often in charge. Well, you know: what's not to go well?

[FT] Well, in all of our conversations about church (and) race, I think that the whole idea of race including not only Black people (but also) people of color, indigenous people, gender; it's a bigger pot than just Black and white. In relation to that I looked up -

Let me back up - in the late 1890s my grandmother - my great grandmother lived in Cumberland Maryland and that's up in the mountains of Maryland and she- there is documentation by the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland that she was in a class of 25 confirmations of which 6 were C. colored.

So the priest of Emmanuel church, which was the Cumberland Episcopal Church, felt that there was a need to have a chapel for the Black people and there was also comment in this paragraph that they already had a mission church in Southern Cumberland. Now this town with 17,000 people, so they're talking about in South Cumberland up in the mountains. They already had another mission church for immigrants. So here they have Emmanuel, Holy Cross, the immigrants -

[WT] -they were doing a mission to keep their pure white congregation-

[FT] -and now they needed Saint Phillips, the chapel for Black people. So that's clear; that's just blatant racism. So that's clear that's how that worked out and actually St Philip's lasted until the 50s when it with was combined with the immigrants.

And then eventually that imploded so they kind of found their way back to Emmanuel and things were desegregated in Maryland. And my people still are

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buried in Cumberland out of at Emmanuel Episcopal but that's one of those clear cut... you know that's the way it is; they said... nada! No, not on my watch. Find your own.

[LF] That's like our Saint Phillips here in town was started by another church as a church for Black folks as I understand it. And it's different than here (in All Saints History). Because I was reading the (All Saints) history and before Jack Eastwood came, so all the way back to Carthy, I think this neighborhood had experienced white flight. And there were parishioners who stayed here. And the church was going to die.

So (with) the diocese's (help) and I think with some even national help,(they) hired a consultant who concluded that if this church did not respond to the needs of the neighborhood, it would die and that's when the urban center was started and Father Carthy was brought in. And our church was very poor so half of his wages were paid by the dioceses and that's when the urban center began. With legal services, daycare, kindergarten, the basketball court for the neighborhood... and that's what Barbara Bingham's family came into (the church).

The social worker Bonnie Harvey gathered people door to door and invited people to join the church and the urban center. And those (the church and Urban Center) were almost indistinguishable at that time. So that's how I understand the actual integration of All Saints happened. And it seems like usually when we tell our story - even when I helped to write a search profile - we wrote that as though we were responding to the needs of the neighborhood rather than that this little white congregation was trying to save its life and therefore responded to the needs of the congregation.

So that's what you came into: this a pretty established integrated-

[WT] -it had worked. Yeah, basically.

[LF] And then you eventually became either the first time or the second time you were Warden when Nan Peete came right? Nan Peete, an African American woman, early in the ordination of women.

[WT] Yes, it was Yeah.

[LF] So would you tell us the story of that. Being on the search committee and some things about what she faced being a black woman coming into this parish.

[WT] Well, we had a very active search committee and we ended up with three candidates. And in those days, we would go and interview them wherever they happen to be.

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And so since we had three finalists and there were nine people I think on the search committee member, right? So, we split up in teams and three people went one place and three for the and I was all I happened to be on the one committee that interviewed Nan. And she was in California and it was a very white suburban parish that she was in. And she was an associate. I'm not sure exactly what her role was there but she knew we were coming, obviously.

They had arranged for her to preach that Sunday so we got to hear her preach. And then we took her to dinner that night and had a conversation with her. We were very organized. We had specific questions that all three teams are supposed to ask the candidates so that we would have something to compare that it's comparable.

And, so, we came back there to debate this, all three of us working, all three teams, were convinced that ours was the one. They were all the number one candidate. So, we had to sell her to the other people who were believing in the ones they had interviewed. So that worked out what we did.

[LF] But what do you remember about why she impressed you so?

[WT] She impressed us with – well to begin with, she was really good with the children that Sunday morning when we interviewed her. We went to her service. That was impressive because we didn't have that many kids here at the time.

And we thought, well great, if she could be good with kids, and maybe we can get some families here because we need families.

[FT] May I interject? Always, we always need families and you are right about Nan Pete because my daughter was two; Elizabeth was about two. She was running around after - this is after mass - not disturbing anybody and I was running after her, "Come back, come back, come back".

And Mother Peete stood right up and said, "This is her house. You let her go into the kitchen and the dining room. You let her in the living room of your house. Why won't you let her be in the different houses of the church of God... which is your house? So she was clear about that.

[WT] Yes, she was.

[LF] So that's big for both of you.

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[WT] Yeah it was big. She was very... she just was a sort of a charismatic person. She had a great personality and she was well spoken. Her sermons were good.

[LF] In the life of the parish you told me that there were times ...there were things that were frightening and frightening for her.

[WT] Well she had - we had one of the most dramatic... it's almost like a-

[LF] You don't have to name the person.

[WT] No, no. It's almost like a television show or something. We had a person who started writing letters threatening her life.

[LF] And she told you.

[WT] Well, she showed me.

[LF] She showed you.

[WT] Showed the vestry in fact. And it was not just one time but multiple times from the same person, and who also sent letters to the Bishop threatening Nan. I found out at some point - this is when I was a Warden - so I was sort of involved with what was happening.

I found out that this person had actually been in prison for murdering someone in the past so it was really scary. But they eventually stopped. It went away basically.

[LF] But how? Do you know how?

[WT] Yes, I know how. Nan was worried about this, too, of course. She went to file a complaint, or whatever, with the police. And the police interviewed the person and told them that... basically... this is probably not legal but they did it anyway... they said if you go anywhere near her again, we're going to arrest you and put you in jail. With your past history, you're going to be in big trouble. And so, they disappeared, basically.

But before that happened, every time I would come to the church on Sunday morning and see them in the pew, it would be very scary.

[FT] Was it because she was Black or a woman or both?

[WT] I think both, actually. Course that's - I don't know.

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[LF] But, I was thinking about how frightening this had to be (for Mother Nan). And (I'm) thinking she did speak to the vestry, so she didn't leave herself entirely alone within the parish with this frightening issue.

[WT] Oh, no, no.

[LF] And were you aware it (when the threat) went away? Did it go out of the conversation? Or?

[WT] Pretty much, yeah. Once there was no sense of threat, it was like... I think... I feel like this is being handled; she is not in danger anymore; so it's okay.

[LF] You know we've had one other conversation about this (specific story) and it didn't occur to me then, but it occurs to me now that it was actually understood... maybe by her, but certainly by the vestry... that this was a frightening situation. Frightening over time. To some degree you carried it with her through that time and you certainly supported her solution and I hope she was grateful that the authorities would respond, you know, that she got support.

[WT] She did get support and that seems almost different from what I'm reading about all the time now. And I don't know if it's just not clear to me, if what I'm reading now is accurate or not that there is probably still... there are still people in the police department who would do that (intervene to support someone like Mother Nan) now. It's not just historical. But who knows?

[LF] Well that's what you're pointing out. We don't know. We don't know now. And I may not... I know. I'm not enquiring now (about) the police, about how these threats are handled and what the legal rights are. But what I was thinking was - it didn't - once it (Mother Nan's harassment) was settled, it was as though a bad person or a crazy person did this terrible thing and it was taken care of. But it wasn't treated as though racism or sexism (or both) was a clear and present danger and that maybe we should keep talking about it

[WT] No. That did not happen.

[LF] And like, I said, "He told that story once before and it didn't occur to me (to) wait a minute because she (Mother Nan) couldn't have dismissed the fear! And if it happened once, it might happen twenty times.

[WT] Well, I think it's that mentality that this was a crazy person and doesn't represent any group you know.

[LF] But if I think about this whole question that we are asked to address is: what is our complicity?, it occurs to me that maybe as white people... and you can say whether you would identify with this too or not... we might be tempted to see racial

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incidents that are this extreme and this threatening to life as a one off, as a crazy person, and not think about how is it supported by racism in general. Like, how does someone get away with this or not think about the broader implications?

[WT] Really! Except, at least, for my perception, this person who was getting support from no one.

[LF] Well except the support I was giving in the moment. In the moment to hearing the story. The support to racism is that I did not... I could think the racist people are people like him. That's what I meant. When I listen to you, it was as though it was settled and it was almost as if-

[WT] -Well it was. It was in that... was it was like this bad thing is over with and I don't want to think about it anymore.

[LF] And you could go to sleep and not think about it but I wonder (about Mother Nan).

[WT] You know if you look back on it you could think here was a teachable moment that we didn't take advantage of.

[LF] A ha- and also we didn't take advantage of it and did she get on -going help with whatever trauma she experienced?

[WT] See, I don't know, but I doubt it.

[FT] It was done.

[WT] It was done. And you know, I think we tended to look upon her as such a strong person that she didn't need us to support her, which if you realistically look back that would not be true. But I think that that was a feeling.

[LF] Well... and maybe as an individual she was unusually strong but that doesn't mean that she wasn't bearing the weight of a trauma and a racialized trauma and a sexualized trauma. I just hadn't... I hadn't thought about my participation as a listener that way.

[WT] It was a time in my perception of things... it was... it was: it's over with, basically. And I was glad it was over and it was cause for celebration and that was it, basically.

[FT] I think complicity when you're - I know it they were using the word "complicity"- which can be a difficult word to use because it implies you've done something wrong usually.

[WT] Yes it does.

[FT] And if you think that complicity on a continuum - so in 1891 when Maude Gates was confirmed and then was moved to the chapel of St Phillips, that was overt. That was clear. You can say, "They were complicit in racism about that. There's no doubt about that."

Okay when I was baptized at Saint Mark's in New Jersey which is a Black church, always had Black priests. My father had been baptized there. The priest you know married my parents.

When my father died, he was almost 90. One of the priests from Saint Mark's came to do his funeral because he was retired but he was still around and he knew him (my father) so this is all Black. So, whatever, you're not going to have complicity in racism so to speak in these kind of experiences.

So then I hear that Nan Pete was in a white church and I was surprised because I really didn't expect a Black priest to be in a white church particularly in a tony white church with influence. That's just beyond me because they're not that many Black priests to my knowledge. I mean they're more now. But then... you know, there's enough Black parishes that are looking for a priest.

So to hear that she was in a white parish; then she comes here to another predominately white parish - the complicity takes on a whole different tone. It's not going to be overt racism; it's just it's different. It's just different. It's just missing the point... missing opportunities... so the complicity is less egregious and harder to put your finger on.

Harder to recognize and I would say it as a Black person if I'm speaking to one of my friends who is white and I mention something that happened to me that I consider to be an affront, invariably I will be quizzed on why did I think that? Has it happened before? Where was it? When was it? And you can see what they're thinking, "Does this count?"

[LF] As an affront?

[WT] As an affront, yeah.

[FT] And then they'll mention somebody that they knew down the street and they may have had the same (experience)... but they didn't see it as affront. And then they'll need more evidence before they decide. So that's what the complicity is I would say, and having to have to explain and then having the other person decide is it true or not?

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Validate it and then help. Because if it's not validated then you don't get any help. If there's not a racist bone in my body, then you can just forget it. You're not going get help from that person, cause they don't have a racist bone in their body.

[LF] Then I'm going to speak up the next time this happens.

[FT] So I think as I hear you all talking that the whole notion of complicity, it gets more delicate [?]

[LF] So if I'm hearing you right, the line of complicity that you're talking about there is when someone - when you decide to act, you're actually speaking up about an affront and then you're questioned about its validity. That's a complicity.

And then, I was speaking of the complicity of when... when this affront to - this direct attack on Nan Pete was over it didn't even occur to me to think, "Well then, who took care of Nan after that?" This is like really the - I mean at the moment I was just a listener, but I was...like I could sink back into my comfort zone and behave like it was over?

[FT] So those are three complicities, those are three different complicities that - name them again - the actual establishing a church, the having to convince people. Nan fortunately did not have to convince you all that it was a problem. And then thinking once it's settled it's settled and its done, you can put it out of your mind.

[LF] I'm assuming that either this didn't happen with these threatening letters at the time that you were in the parish with Nan Pete or that it wasn't shared from the vestry to the congregation.

[WT] It was not shared to the congregation.

[FT] I didn't know that (the threats happened).

[LF] Hearing Win right now, what kinds of thoughts went through your mind? What hasn't been spoken that you might add?

[FT] Well I would say, of course it's shocking and it's so sad, so sad for her. You know that California has good things and if you didn't know Indiana, this is Indiana at its worst.

[WT] Yes. Yes. Yes.

[FT] So going from a white congregation to a white congregation here is just so, so sad and the fact that it (the threat) wasn't public knowledge is very unfortunate. Very unfortunate. You know the church should know. The church should know who

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it was. Why not? Because we're at danger too if he's threatening to kill her, why are you safe? Or why am I safe or what (of) the children we have?

[WT] Well, if we are right, that it was racial and sexist, that's why I'm not in danger.

[LF] But truly I mean that's an interesting... an important kind of policy decision about what the vestry and the rector chooses to share. And you're raising (this) because the direct threat could have been leveled at others.

And that it should have been shared and, yeah, frankly, I have no idea how our vestry would handle that now but it seems to me the kind of thing that we want to think about.

[FT] I think when these things happen that if it looks like it goes away, it's better then; nobody has to think about it, or... yeah, nobody has to think about it. And it's gone and we're all good people again.

[WT] Yeah exactly. Because we all want to be part of those good people.

[FT] You know, she's still alive. It makes me think about her. I don't know if she had twenty of these events or three, but I don't think you forget being stalked.

[WT] No, I don't think you would have.

[FT] And we don't know if she wanted to stand up and publicly announce it. We don't even know.

[WT] She didn't; I don't think.

[LF] Well, we don't know if she sought advice, either. Because I think that that's the kind of thing, if someone decided they were going to stand up and speak, they probably would (seek advice). If I was facing something that traumatic, I'd want to be talking to my spiritual advisor and my bishop.

[WT] I'm sure she spoke to the Bishop because he was involved already because he had received a letter himself. And I've always thought that he was a very - he was a pastor to his clergy.

[FT] Yes, I would say so.

[WT] And so I'm assuming she got some support there. Just based on my general knowledge of the way he operated.

[LF] And your comment makes me think even in pastoral situations these things maybe - maybe(it) has to be rethought. About, are there ways and times that this

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kind of danger could be shared? And are there ways to do it effectively? And we probably don't know much about how to do that.

[WT] How would you do that? It doesn't seem like you should go on a crusade against the person.

[LF] Well... and that might not even be the point. It maybe the point in terms of first level of basic safety. See I remember we had a priest who was assaulted by a parishioner and it seems to me I knew right away and I can't remember why I would have. But I doubt that meant that it was from the pulpit or in a e-blast or something like that.

[WT] No probably not.

[FT] No just word of mouth, yeah.

[WT] But of course Nan's situation was different because it was much more serious. Physically more serious.

[FT] But then it should have had more press.

[LF] You know I was thinking when I was still teaching at the seminary at C. T. S. there was a complaint about a professor. And the only reason I knew is that a student came to talk to me.

And legally it was all gag orders very quickly and I remember being so incredibly distressed about it. And so was the student. So, her need to its being addressed in terms of protecting the (other) students who had been thinking seriously about (what)she needed to be protected and acknowledged.

But I never managed well: the silencing of everything. I actually left the job.

[WT] Yeah I think institutions want to protect their reputation; they don't want the scandal.

[LF] You know but that gets us to think-

[WT] I'm not saying that's right-

[LF] I know you're not saying that's right and I don't know again; it's another I don't know. How to... how to do this... how to protect people's privacy to process... have enough privacy to process the distress. I don't have the solution. This conversation is making me aware of that we don't have the answer (now, in this conversation)

[WT] Right. Exactly. We don't.

[FT] And so... for again... for Nan Peete I would say that's a ten out of ten, and it really wasn't publicized and for the assault (on the All Saint's priest), I think I know what you mean. So, Nan Peete's a Black woman; the assault I believe you're talking about was a white male.

So everybody knew about that... everybody, everybody. And this person was not hurt-

[LF] and no injury...?

[FT] -no injury. But it was a, you know, blasphemous. So, for me that would fall into complicity - that his assault was (made to be) more important than hers.

[LF] Interesting, it never occurred to me to think like that-

[WT] -that's an interesting perspective what - I sort of had the opposite feeling that hers was so much more important.

[FT] Except nobody knew.

[WT] Well...

[LF] Those who knew, knew.

[WT] Those who knew, knew.

[LF] That's the point: those who knew, knew.
But you didn't know (speaking to FT).

[FT] No, I didn't

[WT] That's true. Most people didn't.

[FT] And I think with the clergy person; I think most of us even knew about their (the congregant's) repentance and reparation.

[LF] I'm sure that was public.

[FT] So I would say that's another complicity category.

[LF] Yeah that is - that bears a lot of thought.

[WT] Yes it does.

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[FT] It may come back to what I said about making a case for importance, you know, if I think an affront is an affront, then I have to make the case for the other person to-

[WT] -the very fact that you have to make it is complicit, yeah, yeah.

[FT] And I had one friend tell me after the fact - well they had called all of their family members and they just did not have that experience.

[LF] Oh was – that person was white, right?

[FT] Uh- huh. To let me know that whatever I was experiencing, at least, it wasn't her family because she had surveyed all of them

[WT] She made it a point to find out.

[FT] To make sure they were OK. That they were good people. And therefore, Oh well.

[WT] Therefore someone else's problem. Yeah... yeah, that's... it's normal I think to want it to be someone else's problem.

[LF] But let's think about that. About in what circumstances can you and I... I'm being white people right now ... can you and I get away with letting a problem go.

We hear something in the conversation that feels amiss across racial lines and when can we get away get away from it and when can a person of color not just release it?

[FT] Not just release it?

[LF] Yeah, "Oh well, doesn't matter"

[FT] Oh, when are we forced to speak? We just can't ignore it for the -to keep things peaceful, right.

[LF] And what happens when you speak and you described one thing that happens when you speak. And I'll confess one of the things that I am working on all the time, in my life with you... is: I often join in. As if I understand what she's going to say before you're done speaking. And inevitably I don't have the right slant. I feel like I respond like: I got it. I got it this time. Which is not helpful.

[WT] But it's sort of a nice thing that you want to be on it.

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[LF] Yes, but it would be a kinder thing and more respectful if I assumed I didn't get it.

[WT] You're setting yourself a very high standard however. It's just that it's not... it's not an instinctive response.

I think it's: I'm guilty myself of finishing somebody's sentences sometimes because I think I know what they're going to say and I think I can say it quicker than they can.

[FT] I think the adding in... I think it's because you're feeling good. You're feeling like you have your finger on the pulse of that experience when you're feeling good and you are a good person and therefore you are going to engage-

[LF] -and with you.

[FT] And then you forget that you don't have all the information.

[LF] And when I go- (I mean it never works out right away as you know) but when I go with the, "I think I got it." I am actually actively avoiding the discomfort of not knowing.

[WT] That's an interesting observation and I think that it applies to a lot of people in situations like this. There's a great - at least I experienced - there's a great need to avoid unpleasantness in confrontation. If just ignoring something will accomplish that, then what an easy way to get out of it.

[FT] In joining in and redirecting.

[LF] It does redirect it. And if I don't catch it or if you don't catch it for me, it's injury to Freida. This is especially if it's across racial issues. It's true all the time but it's especially about race. It's injury to Frieda and it's complicity for me. It's like I am keeping things intact the way I understand them. And this is one of those places that I actually think the Christian message of being the sinner message - I think it's actually very helpful. And I find it helpful to think of myself as inevitably back in the position of not getting it and over and over and over having to be kind of reawakened to it. You know, "I did it again", and I need to rest a while. And just listen. To confess but rest a while, just listen. Christianity does not do a bad job there.

[WT] I agree. That just listen thing, it's very important. It's very easy to fall into this feeling that I got to fix it instead of just listening.

[FT] And that's what you said Father Gordon...

[LF] You mean when he was talking about America's original sin - sins slavery and the massacre of the indigenous peoples. And what he said to the, "well what do we

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do?" Well, confess. Confess, repent and listen. Listen. Not that there wouldn't be action but that how would you know what it was going to be.

[WT] So in other words, you might eventually get to action but it wouldn't be the first thing, yeah.

[LF] Well, Father Charles' sermon today that part I love best about that sermon was he was talking about I'm keeping the practices of the holidays that say, "rejoice, rejoice," even if you're really down and out. And the point he made was that the good will come again. But he talked about a depression lasted like eighteen months. He didn't get to pick when it would lift and I thought that's a long listening, that's a long practicing of all the church practices.

[WT] Right.

[LF] So maybe the listenings are going to be long.

[WT] True. Maybe that's just a sign that they're important.

[FT] Then we would have to be better at discomfort.

[WT] Yeah, much better.

[LF] I'm going to take us back to our resolution that our task here is to really examine white supremacy and what that has to do with racism and complicity, with racism and one version of understanding white supremacy for me is that whiteness is the dominant cultural conversation and so that all of us who are white and identify with whiteness and are allowed to claim that have all kinds of privileges that we may be aware of and ones that we may not be aware of it all.

And so part of our task is to become more conscious of how we impact others or how we presume upon others. And I thought we might just spend a few minutes if things come to mind for any of us about where that privilege shows up in our life in the church.

I know I mentioned one earlier that I know that when I'm comfortable as a white and old white woman I, (so I even have that seniority) I assume that people are comfortable. I tend to assume that people are comfortable when I'm comfortable.

[WT] I think that's pretty human. Doesn't everyone think that really, unless they're intentional about analyzing themselves?

[LF] I don't know; do you think that's true.

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[FT] Yeah I would I would agree. I think that if a person is feeling good about what's happening mthey think everybody else is feeling good about it. Yes, I do believe that. And it's not until after the fact that somebody says, "Oh did you hear that?" does the person think-

[LF] -think, "Oh, woops. I forgot to check."

[FT] It went well you know, "Oh, that went well", my talk went well, the Q & A went well, I was able to execute well. So, therefore, it went well. I was able to answer my questions well; I was able to present well. I could push the computer slide remote button well, so it went well.

[LF] And there could be a lot of people left out of that...

[FT] Absolutely

[LF] That could cross racial lines? complex the topic or simple.

[FT] Yes absolutely. So that's... I think that's a hard one. You'd have to be able to notice who looked uncomfortable which means you have to be scanning the crowd.

[LF] You'd have to at least make a habit of scanning some of the time and think about what the task is... which is to see that what you do not see. Another one comes to mind for me which is I know that I have been in the coffee hour (and we've practically forgotten but you know the coffee hours with those huge spreads of food) and I have... within (sometimes not across racial lines) whoever's on the outside, I become the hostess and welcome people in, make sure they get the food, and I've done that with the person the black person who is a guest or even from the shelter and I assume that I can step in and host and welcome them, offer food. And I'm not saying that's a bad thing; I'm just saying I think it's... I think this is my place as a person... as a member... as a white person.

[WT] I see that is a really good thing because you are showing hospitality to this person and that needs to happen.

[LF] I do too but I also I'm just saying it's my privilege that is... it's my privilege... that's getting that to happen and-

[WT] -There's another way of looking at it though. Because it's, maybe, you should think of it as your obligation to do that. Because you're charged to be hospitable.

[LF] I think that's true and I think I'll continue to do it but here's another angle: do I ask myself: who does this help and who does it hurt? or do I ask myself when is this actually helpful and when isn't it? Because I know I've put people on the spot before; I know that.

[FT] I understand what you are saying and it I would say it's a better to be hospitable to show hospitality to the person than to ignore them and just leave them sitting .

[LF] I agree and I will continue.

[FT] But I suspect what you're doing - what you're feeling is that you see a person of color come in and there's a beeline.

[LF] That's what I'm talking about.

[FT] If there was a white person, it would not be a bee line - you might not notice because they're going to blend in and that's what makes you think, "Oh, is this the right thing to do?" because you zoom.

[WT] Yeah, are they going to feel singled out?

[LF] Yes, and so it's not, I'm not complaining about when I feel genuinely and I'm not complaining about having the privilege; I'm so glad I'm a member of the group; I'm glad that I am expected to step forward and that I'd do it

[FT] It's a reflex, (without waiting to) see if it may not come; it may not come from the heart first; it's a reflex first; then it comes from the heart.

[LF] See, that's a good point

[WT] It is a good point. That's an excellent reflex.

[LF] Please hear me. I'm not complaining about I'm just talking (hospitality but) about the how do I... how do we pay attention to the singling- out moments that may actually go awry. And (it is) certainly better to err (on the side of hospitality over doing nothing)... I am going to err over and over. I would... I just want to learn when I do (make that beeline).

[FT] I was in the front pew one time with four, five other people. They were guests from out of town, just a bunch of my friends that came in. And one was African American. And when it came time for the peace the priest came down and heading for the black one. I said, they're all my friends and all from out of town, okay?! Only that one counted.

[LF] Just think about what this conversation is like: because, you know, I feel awkward if I slide into Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa. You know, and which sometimes I genuinely do. I am distressed at other times - it's - I am aware this is something I

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need to pay attention to but it's so hard to... takes a lot of conversation to sort it out and I think it is the beeline to thoughtlessly single someone out. And, that it's okay to make errors but just to try to catch it, I guess.

[FT] I thought: please don't fall down the stairs.

[WT] It's that and on the other hand, ignoring people is not good either so it's not a clear-cut thing.

[FT] But it could be shaking hands with everybody. Four of us, four visitors.

[LF] Maybe requires slowing down?

So when I first came (here) (that was after I had met Freida). I didn't... I wasn't active in a church and I knew this is going to be just like the liturgy which it pretty much was. So I came with Frieda and her daughter and it had only been a couple of years after a pretty traumatic stretch in life.

So one of the earliest things I remember is talking to Gordon Chastian (who soon after I was here, he became the rector.) And we would sit over in this first or second row and when the music was beautiful. I would have tears running down my face almost every week. And he was very clear that we need more tears in church not fewer.

[WT] Yeah. He said that to me once, too.

[LF] Oh, really? And I have taken them seriously ever since. And I remember within a few years. Yeah, within a few years Elizabeth was old enough to say, "I want to join the choir." So I said I would take her. And that lasted about a month I think and I stayed in the choir thereafter and my oldest grandson who's just a year or two years younger than Elizabeth, couple years younger, and I would bring him sometimes on Sunday mornings he stayed the night and he would crawl around on the floor up there in the choir loft. And I think he felt very comfortable so this grandson is the child, oldest child of my daughter my daughter is African American.

Or – adopted, mother that was white and her father was African American and so Wesley was a mixed race child and I presume he was comfortable here and the same welcome but I look back on that time I don't remember asking that; I don't remember asking how this was for him.

[WT] You just assumed from his behavior, basically yeah.

[LF] And the, and people's kindness towards him and there still was Sunday school and it was a little handful of children but it was both black and white. So he wasn't alone or the lone child along with a Elizabeth. And, I think " I have found it.

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Confusing to know when and how to talk about my own mixed race family. I don't ...haven't found it confusing in my life with you but...

Adopting a black child in 1973, that was the same year that the social workers of Indiana supported the change in the basic policy that then stopped adopting black children to white families. And I remember here I was thinking I could do this well and learned quickly how difficult it was to cross racial lines. And then and understanding that in the context of people who knew a lot more than me had decided this was not a good idea. So I always had some conflict about what do I do with my own (child)-how do I gain full authority with my own child, on the one hand, and not promote it as proof of my liberalism ,on the other. And yet I'm sure (I am) behaving in that way at times; I'm not sure (when).

[FT] Well, you were saying that you came here and...

[LF] Well I loved the space. I love the space and I love the - what Win talked about as the quiet when you entered that this was not a chatty place and that it was okay to be solemn and reflective. And I love that there's still was mixed (race); (it was) actually more mixed then than it is now. And that Freida's Elizabeth was very attached across groups of people, black and white gay and straight so she was a wonderful link for me. And when Wessley came, he was also... because he... he was welcomed.

And I really valued that that there was a (probably me more than you) that there was a coffee hour so there was social conversation and even so I probably didn't begin to make friends until I joined the choir and I was working very hard at the time so I certainly wasn't on committees and things like that.

You know I still - probably what has been hardest is telling my own story here.

After my daughter had her little boy Wessley. She was late teens. She was planning to marry and. She was involved the she and her baby yeah, and her fiance were out one night and he was shot and killed.

And that that was the traumatic event before I came here that was so difficult. It's not that I don't reveal that this has happened it's that any time I return to that is hard and it's rife with racism.

And I remember telling the story that for the first time here I think with Tanya when she was doing our visioning. Tanya back when she was our interim and doing our mission and (using) small group, maybe just three of us. And part of the center of that story was saying. Was calling the police trying to find out what's happening days after and the police detective said to me -I'm trying to find out what actions were taken - and he said to me that, "No one cared." Now, did I make this up? You

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know, like this many years later I can actually wonder but basically, no action was ever taken.

And what is hard, when I tell this, is, at best. Anybody just responds with stunned silence. No one has ever said. ..that ... I have not gotten any comment. I always feel like I've - I don't tell the story very often - it always feels like I've just behaved in a histrionic way that I've probably been hard on that detective! Everybody, so I never get any confirmation for that.

I, and I've never had, I've never thought about it until today. I've never thought that's why it's so hard to tell that story. This is: not getting anything back. That it was terrible for these black children... to kill my... why is (the)child? It's... that's terrible, but that that isn't just insanity. But it isn't just insanity; you get my point that's not what was so terrible. And I hadn't thought about that; oh, that gets re-enacted if I ever told you.

[FT] That this young man was shot at the seven eleven with your daughter and her son in the car. He was shot and killed there and the police did nothing and said we don't care.

[LF] Right

[WT] They actually said that?

[LF] Yes. No - he said nobody cares.

It was - it just went away. I mean there's lots of trauma around that right. But that isn't- the lasting thing is the nothing done. And that it's un- what - this is the word: that it's unbearable for anybody I tell . So,that's that.

[WT] It's the sort of thing that people have a hard time relating to. It sounds like something I read about in the newspaper, not something that happens to someone I know.

[LF] But it's not in the newspaper. I mean, his death notice was. That's the point. It's not in the newspaper.

[WT] Yeah. The assumption that I'm making is that it happens to a lot of people that we don't know.

[LF] I don't even have a sense of the right response. I'm just... if this is me... you know. Think about. Well, think about his mother wailing. I watched her. Think about his mother wailing and who attended to her?

[WT] Good question.

[LF] Okay. So there's we've got to figure out something different to do in those moments, whether it's me or his mother. I'm just in a weird position of being the unusual white mother in this storyline.

Do you know that? The blessing in that funeral time. In the funeral for Herman, of course it was basically all black. And then just a sprinkling of my - a few of my people. And my, and some of my students.

And one of my white women students was standing in a group with African American young men that had come for Herman, you know, and one of them said "Who is that white lady" because I was in a prominent position with my daughter... who was holding the baby and she said, "Oh she's the grandmother." And it shifted the whole scene. So, I would wish for our congregation that we have more room for the unbearable. Not that I haven't been treated kindly. Anything like that just that there be more moving them towards it.

[WT] And I'm not I'm not seeing a clear vision of how that would happen. If they don't know the story they can't react

[LF] But I mean in the telling okay? That I mean sitting here well I could actually imagine what would've helped. I you know if Tanya had been in my little listening crew, I think she would have said... said "Oh my god my god. Your life must have frozen in the moment that that detective spoke to you like that." (Perhaps) spoken about these children. Or something more colorful... but that would have helped me so. This - or called it racism.

[WT] Well it is obvious to anyone. Including the person who said it.

[LF] But I felt almost as if I'd misbehaved by going too far by being too condemning. And when I talked about how dreadful it was and no one responds. No one speaks. About that same year there were a whole - a white family in Carmel was killed. I think stabbed to death.

It was thought that it might be drug related or whatever. Home invasion and that news never ended. I mean again and again: How could this happen? How could this happen? How could this happen?

[WT] In our wonderful place yes, yeah.

[LF] And those were, for me, those events were glued together because they were within months of each other.

Think about all the African American shootings. All the unarmed black men that are

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shot and. What we do? Or do we end up thinking that somehow those mothers are more used to suffering or something? It does feel to me like we have to end up getting better at moving towards the unbearable rather than away from and making noise of some kind! Speaking up or touching in some way.

[FT] So the complicity would be not saying anything. "I'm not saying anything," because you have to have a grand plan to fix it. If you don't have a grand plan to start with the federal government on down then you don't say anything at all. Not like "I'm sorry" or "You must be wounded"

[LF] Or, "You look terrorized" or "you look broken."

[FT] And you can't say, "Well if the person had been white would it be the same?" Because it would never be the same.

[LF] It would not.

[FT] It would never be the same.

[LF] It would not.

[FT] So I guess part of the complicity would be not acknowledging -

[LF] That it would never be the same? That was the point of not getting a response about the detective.

[FT] If it's not acknowledged, it didn't happen and it'll go away...

[LF] it isn't really that different...

[FT] ...and it's not that bad.

[WT] How could it be any worse?

[LF] I remember reading in one of these historical books about slavery that there was actually the promotion of the belief that slaves did not experience pain the way white people experience pain.

[WT] That's... I've read about that and I think that was just their way of making it possible for them to do it.

[LF] I understand that. And it works-

[WT] -and I think how horrible

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[LF] I think that is part of what let the detective speak the way he did.

[WT] Yeah, it is exactly the same thing.

[FT] Negligible

[LF] They're used to it, that kind of thinking.

[FT] Any other questions?

[CC] Yes, how did we miss the boat? On race relations at All Saints?

[LF] I don't think we at All Saints behave like racism is... that white supremacy thinking and racism is ubiquitous, that it everywhere; it's with us all the time. And that it's okay to for us to keep it in our attention all the time. Okay? A calling, or necessity. I think we bring it out on occasion.

[FT] Well I guess one would have to say what does "missing the boat" on racism mean? What's an example? Because there aren't -

[WT] -what are we not doing that we could be doing perhaps?

[FT] I would think that we are not: Anything that we ... anywhere we... where we... when we miss the boat, it's going to be passive. I doubt it's going to be active.

[LF] Well, here at All Saints

[WT] And passive can be very bad

[FT] Passive can be very, very bad. And it's going to be not seeing and assuming what we've talked about: that we're all good people here. And that we would not make mistakes because we're thoughtful and we read. And we're good people yet we've missed the boat based on what I hear about the (and I'm not a member of the book club) but the book clubs on racism how few people attend.

[FT] For their racism book clubs have few people attend the anti- racism group, how few people have signed up. That would be a missed- the -boat. I believe that the... probably, the assumption is - we're good people so... and I don't have a racist bone in my body. And the point... it's easy to think that the point of dismantling white supremacy is to have a fifty-fifty mix of African Americans and people of color in the pews. Like that would be... if we had that, then we would have dismantled racism. But that may not be the answer because there may not be 60 Black Episcopalians who want to fill up the pews in the city or the county or Indiana for that matter. We are in a hole(a mind set) that (includes) a lot of people, so I think

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that it's more getting all those who just want to see black faces in the pews to understand that (it) goes far beyond that. It goes far beyond.

It's more... it's needing to read all those books that the book club has read.

[WT] It's needing to change our behavior, not someone else's.

[FT] And to recognize that and not assume that we're right.

[LF] Well you're touching on we might miss the boat by not having brought enough participation. So that we can we can think about, well, what would set it up so that there's more participation? I have some ideas about that but we could think about what would set up more participation and anti racist activities. (aside: And then you're also - oops I lost my phone.)

[FT] I was I was saying that I would say we've missed the boat in assuming that if they're black people in the pews therefore we have dismantled white supremacy.

[LF] Right

[FT] And I was saying that I don't think that that is the case and I think everybody individually as Win was saying has to look internally (at) their blind spots. You know you said you learn everyday; I learn every day; we all learn every day. We have to be willing to to do that.

[LF] I know what I was going to say is I would think we'd have to think in terms of what changes in investment might need to happen from the top down within the parish too. Would there be changes in allotment of resources or policies or would committees or would each ministry in the church be invited to send someone to Sacred Ground? The investigation of racism that Cathy Scott is leading.

[FT] I was thinking more from the pulpit. I think some of Father Stichweh's sermons have been very good ...and they're so good and everybody loves them because he talks about his blind spots; he talks about the holes. And how he learns there's a hole and he fills it and he's a better person and he's helped somebody along the way and somehow, he can do that by using people and using examples.

And I guess he's - I know he's using scripture but it's so much more personal about how he got to where he's getting. And often times in the pulpit, it starts with a personal story but it ends up heavy in scripture.

And maybe there should be more pulpit sermons on blind spots, white supremacy. Here's an example and if you want to say that's not in the Bible, that's fine, but

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people have to hear exactly: here is an example to relate to it and they might say, "Oh I hadn't... I thought I was a good person... I didn't realize..."

If a Black person says I had an affront, did I ask ten questions so I could validate their affront?

[LF] or not?

[FT] or not?

[WT] or not?

[FT] or not. So something as specific as that.

[LF] So preaching, policies that might support participation or funding.

[WT] It's very hard and very difficult when you think about how do you know that you're doing anything that's going to make a difference?

[LF] But maybe that's the point. Maybe we have to step forward when we don't know whether it'll make a difference and whether it'll make it a good difference.

[WT] That's true too, yeah

[LF] Maybe that's part of Father Stichweh's sermon is the "Listen, be thoughtful, (unclear: whatever" protection anyway); go ahead and take the risk. Because certainly that's what I was asking for.

[WT] Yes, it is, yeah.

[FT] So the pulpit it can be used in that way. But I know there's always the concern like how many emails will they get after the sermon? That the preacher said too much about something that somebody didn't like. So, I know they think about that but maybe they need to think about it a little less.

[WT] Maybe that's a good thing because they should be thinking that's a good thing because they've made somebody think. And if someone says, "I didn't like that sermon because I haven't argued with anybody who was Black who was telling me about her friend," then the that preacher could say, "Have you talked to anybody Black "- "Well no." -"Never?"

[FT] I just read a piece which I think is relevant very relevant to our conversation about racism and white supremacy. Just read a piece today about the new West Side Story movie coming out. So, this is an updated version to the one back in the 60s.

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And, of course, that the whole premise is that they'll be Latinx singers and dancers as opposed to the white singers and dancers that they had in the 60s.

And even Rita Moreno who is Puerto Rican was forced to put brown make up on to make her look darker because that was better. They wanted her to look darker although she was Puerto Rican and (she said) if you tried to tell them, "well, we come in different colors"... well here it comes.

But the point is some of the songs are going to change a little but some of the power struggles are going to change a little bit. And the dynamic, the one song about America, where they sing it's America and then how is it in America?... how is it at Puerto Rico?

Well everything about Puerto Rico is terrible and the Puerto Rican said, "If we leave Puerto Rico, we're leaving because we have to for economic reasons; we love Puerto Rico so why does Puerto Rico have to be full of disease and hurricanes and these terrible things. Nothing good about it. I'm coming to the U.S. so that's going to be changed." But the sentence that really got me was that (Stephen Sondheim did the, I guess, the lyrics and music or part of it) and he changed it to make it white and Puerto Rican, because initially his vision was Jewish and Catholic down on the lower West Side but, he thought that's not going work so good. So he wanted Caucasians and Puerto Ricans, but he had to admit he had never met any Puerto Ricans and he wrote this whole play.

It was in C. N. N. news today. So it would be easy for someone who was writing an email to our preacher in the pulpit to say I've never done that and forget (never said something like that to a minority) and forget they don't have any friends like that. They've never talked to anybody or they-(only) when they're checking out their food at the grocery store (and) that person is invisible.

They don't even see them. If they walk out, you'd say was that person Black or white they would say, "who"? The person who took your money for your groceries. "I don't remember".

[LF] Anything else come to mind about...

[WT] No, I have no practical ideas but I'd / to make a real change; we have to somehow make this meaningful to people.

[FT] If you call this a moral mandate...I like that terminology. ..it's a moral mandate and we are Anglo Catholic; that's top down.

[LF] And Anglo Catholic is social concern.

[FT] It means we start at the top so we can't have ten little committees down here

if the top isn't engaged.

[LF] That's really important I think, and I do think we have a particular problem because we are now really relatively speaking pretty well to do.

[WT] Compared to what I remember yes.

[LF] So we're really not used to discomfort so we have to think about what makes the discomfort of investing time and energy and discomfort of, you know, not knowing and not knowing what to do stepping forward anyway. What makes that not so much (more) inviting as required, that the moral mandate idea and we know in history we've called ... most of us have some moments in history where we were called to do very uncomfortable things and we did actually do it. I mean you did it in regards to making space for the homeless in the church.

Because my memory of what you've talked about this, it was emotionally wrenching.

[WT] It's one thing to read about homeless people and it's another thing to be with them. Absolutely.

[LF] You stepped forward and that time even though it was uncomfortable, even though it took your time outside of work. Even though it made you cry.

[WT] I said then and I still think it's true that homelessness is creating terrorists...in the children. When I saw those kids, they were so angry. And you think - it's a kid.
The world supposed to be a safe place.

[LF] You're supposed to be able to gather the child up here.

[WT] And I'm thinking when they grow up, they're just not going to feel about society the way they need to.

[LF] So if you were to take that experience of discomfort do you have any closing thoughts about what would help any of us stick with these hard tasks even though it's terribly uncomfortable and sometimes frightening as you say.

[FT] I would say it gets back to the moral mandate. You just plain old have to do it.

[LF] And part of that in the Episcopal church is just listening to your priests and your bishops -

[WT] -Yes, somehow and the real challenge is to go from listening and reading to internalizing what you're reading and hearing. And then acting on it.

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[FT] You just have to do it, one foot from the other, and know you are putting one foot in front of the other.

[WT] And one of the things that I think prevents us from things is fear (of) failure. We're afraid that if we put such and such into action it won't work so we don't do it. Instead of, well let's try and see if it works if it doesn't we'll do something else. Because we're always wanting to measure our progress. Which is not going to work basically.

[LF] Other questions?

[CC] Mr. Tackett? When you were senior Warden do you remember any incidents of racial unrest or strife or just a problem that you all had to deal with?

[WT] It doesn't come to mind actually, because it was pretty integrated at that point and there was... I would love to see that now. But as somebody pointed out, how many Black faces you have in the pews is not the measure anyway, but the fact that we had Black leadership, I think made a huge difference.

[FT] Yeah I didn't know about Treasurer: Cliff Henderson? I didn't know he was the treasurer; I just - no- when he left there was an argument with Father Hansen and then he went to St Philip's. I didn't know he was treasurer and been here all those years because I wasn't in the in the governing... government (of the church).

[LF] Well, you know, let's think about that: was that a racial incident or not? Well maybe, maybe not... but the fact was that the argument between the white priest and the Black treasurer resulted in losing that person to our parish had been here for many, many years and (he) served. So, you have to think why didn't the parish rise up and-

[WT] -well, you, it's never as simple as... there was Cliff (and) Hansen; this was bound to happen, because they were both - they were two peas in a pod. They both had the same attitude that it - my way is the right way. So it wasn't like he picked on... he didn't he wasn't picking on Cliff

[LF] He picked on everybody

[WT] Cliff was probably the challenging him (Father Hansen) and he (Cliff) was saying, "You can't do that." Cause Cliff challenged everybody, basically. That was his personality too.

[LF] Well, see that's makes it interesting and complex.

[WT] I guess what I just wanted to point out that that may have more to do with personalities than racism.

[LF] And it can't be disentangled.

[WT] And that's often true, I think ;and I think it's easy it gives people who don't want to deal with it an out. To ignore the fact, that they're entangled.

[LF] Yeah because if Wayne had a mentor at the time that was focused on white supremacy and racism, that mentor might've been whispering in in his ear: "You need to do something different here to alter this conversation and there are ways to sidestep power struggles", or whatever. If dismantling white supremacy were the spoken mandate at the time and his mentor was regularly in conversation about the conflicts in the church, that mentor would have been coaching Wayne, and not Cliff... would have been coaching Wayne about how to step out of a power struggle even though that was his habit.

And my -way- is -the -right- way, he (the mentor) still would be coaching him not to not to push this to the nth degree. Because the goal would be how to a productive conversation across these lines-

[FT] Because it's going to blow up into racial.

[LF] Yeah. And you might lose a great leader.

[WT] I'm having a lot of trouble with bringing white supremacy down to the parish level basically. We cannot get rid of white supremacy at All Saints. We can only deal with what's happening in our community of All Saints.

[LF] We cannot change the dominant culture, but what I was proposing if that mentor was whispering in his ear, wouldn't that be a challenge.

[WT] I'm just - I'm -do you - I'm struggling here because I'm thinking, "Do we have white supremacy in All Saints parish?"

[LF] Sure we have it –

[WT] -define it for me. I guess that's the problem I'm having.

[LF] What I understand of white supremacy is the visible and invisible dominance of privilege that comes by my being defined as white by others and claimed by me: (It) means that I get the comfort zone and privilege the people of color don't get.

So I walk into a room expecting to be allowed, at least, a seat at the table, allowed the room to speak. And that's what I meant about the coffee hour. I might not even be in charge of the coffee hour yet I can be. Feeding new guests or whatever and get in line-

[WT] -that example really always bothers me because my vision of the way the coffee hour should be is that everybody should be doing that.

[LF] I agree. I'm just saying I have it. I have that sense of privilege. So you're thinking white supremacy is... I think you're thinking it is all... Active vicious /we are good and you are bad. And that leads to lynching etc, etc. rather than also being the invisible experience of comfort and privilege that I might not even acknowledge or notice. And Freida's reminding me all the time - the last time we were in Manhattan and I was out when it became dark. And her cousin who we were staying with, they were very anxious that I was still out and on the street. I had no sense of danger.

I walked all the time. I walked in on the city and not only was it worrisome but it was an offense because I was presuming my own security. When in fact, I probably wasn't secure and I was worrying people. That's what I'm talking about. See, I'm not talking about being a bad human being here although you can be a white supremacist and be pretty bad - and I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about: I have been privileged with this comfort zone. I've been privileged with parents who owned a home and had no trouble buying a home. Access to education, you know, that I just had so much privilege.

[WT] I know I tend to think I'm not privileged because I'm not rich you know, but I have the same thing as you just said. My parents had a house and I had schooling.

[FT] Well I think that the word choice is unfortunate. That the diocesan mandate is dismantling white supremacy because that - everybody thinks Ku Klux Klan. And I'm not that, so therefore this doesn't apply to me. Period. End of sentence. And that says "racism". That means Black people and I like Black people, so this doesn't apply to me either. And they forget all about Asians-

[WT] I was going to say racism isn't just black and white-

[FT] Yeah, but that's, that's where people go. Immediately they go Black and white and Ku Klux Klan and if that's not the case, then it doesn't apply to me. I think it was part of your question, "There's not white supremacy here?" - well that's true. I don't think anybody's in the clan here but we just talked about how Nan Peete; nobody (outside the vestry) heard her story but we know about the priest that was assaulted and not really injured. The entire place was just in an uproar. And hers was a thousand times worse. And that was the white privilege.

[WT] I never, never thought in those terms you know.

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[FT] So we might want to call it dismantling instead of white supremacy maybe dismantling white privilege? Or recognizing white privilege?

[WT] That would be easier to relate to yeah.

[LF] Maybe that's part of part of what we can do instead.

[WT] It is I think that's important, actually.

[LF] My operating metaphor for privilege in err... my not noticing my privilege is that standing in line, someone is coming in front of me, and so I take a step back and I step on somebody's feet.

[WT] They shouldn't be that close.

[LF] But I use that as the metaphor that I'm paying attention to what's in front of me and I step back without looking. And I almost always make an error when I do that. I step on someone or I trip. I'm just behaving as if the space is mine, I guess.

[FT] So this would ...if we recognize white privilege as a route to dismantling white supremacy for all people.

[LF] As a route to attending to, noticing and attending to those who do not have that same privilege.

[FT] Yeah that would take care of everybody.

[WT] I really think that more people would feel that it applies to them.

[FT] I agree. I've always thought the word complicity is such an accusatory word.

[WT] And white supremacy is too.

[FT] Yeah, that's a, that's a rough word.

[LF] That's why I tend to say I want to see that which I do not see. I want to go from being unconscious about some things to being conscious. And in doing that, to notice: who is helped and who is hurt? By whatever it is.

[FT] We've covered a lot of ground.

[LF] At All Saints I feel, certainly, I have felt welcome. I don't know how to think about the cross- race things.

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[FT:] I have not been asked here well I'm sure I have but, it hasn't been an ongoing, repetitive conversation about what am I. I must be black enough since I was introduced to someone on a cleaning crew.

Well, there was a meeting with lots of the congregants and one of the priests sought me out to introduce me to someone on the cleaning crew. And I thought - can I met Win? But that was, that was oh, I'm Black so I have to go talk to the Black person so that was that experience. And it didn't matter what we have in common. So it lets you know, who you - you always know who you are.

[WT] That you know how you're perceived, yeah.

[FT] And that never changes. And that's not necessarily a bad thing because you usually know then what's coming at you.

[LF] Yeah, you're clear about that. You'd much prefer to know what's coming.

[FT] I'd much rather know what's coming after me.

[LF] And I. You know I think for you and I... I would - I'm much more inclined to kind of do a round on the coffee hour than you are. And I don't think that specifically has to do with race but I think you have a whole life of : If you don't have a specific agenda, that you'll... you'll choose quiet and the quiet time.

And when you have a task to do, you're going to enter in and take leadership and take the risks and do the hospitality and all that, but that's somehow race related. I think that (it's) habit.

[FT] Just in general, I was with a friend of mine. This has nothing to do with All Saints; it's just an example of how it flows. And there was this conversation about people wearing hoods, young men white and Black and she said (she was Black) and she said to this this man, (he was white) well what if your son wore a hood... and he said well, I wouldn't be afraid of him but I would be afraid of a black person with a hood.

And it was a statement of fact, so she started to escalate a little bit and she's leaned over to me and she said "I think it's time to reel it back in." I said, "UhHuh." The educational moment passed...could... you can only go so far and this was going to go nowhere.

[LF] I do think we have conversations at times about: if such and such happens do you want me to speak up or do you want to take care of it yourself? In church and public and family situations we do talk about that - in white family situations.

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[FT] But I pretty much speak for myself.

[WT] Yeah, I would guess that.

[LF] But if it's my purview, I feel perfectly able to take on a fight and I want her to know, you know, if you want me to, I'll do that.