Episcopal Parish Network
Where the Church Gathers

Summary and Transcript
Sustaining Your Ministry: A Practical Guide to Preventing or Recovering Clergy Burnout
Originally presented September 16, 2025

Summary

This workshop, presented by EPN, included Dean Kate Moorhead Carrol in conversation with Callie Swanlund about on clergy burnout—its spiritual dimensions, practical causes, and strategies for prevention and recovery. Author Callie Swanlund shared insights from her book *From Weary to Wholehearted*, offering tools for resilience, boundary-setting, and self-care, with an emphasis on the importance of intentionality, vulnerability, and community support in clergy wellness.

Key takeaways:

- **Clergy wellness is a spiritual imperative, not a selfish or optional pursuit:** The discussion reframed self-care as a spiritual discipline, drawing on Jesus' example of intentional rest, boundary-setting, and seeking companionship, rather than constant self-denial or rescuing.
- **Burnout is a systemic and personal issue, requiring both internal and external solutions:** Participants named systemic factors (oppression, racism, patriarchy) as sources of weariness, but the workshop emphasized the importance of individual autonomy and agency in self-care, while acknowledging privilege and power dynamics.
- **Practical tools for resilience include boundary-setting, calendar rituals, and intentional rest:** Callie Swanlund described color-coded calendars, scheduling self-care as "appointments," and the importance of unitasking and analog activities

to counteract technological overload. The concept of "half rest"—neither productive nor restorative—was identified as a common pitfall.

- **Vulnerability and clear communication are essential for healthy boundaries:** Clergy often struggle to articulate needs due to codependent tendencies, fear of not being liked, or gendered expectations. The panel encouraged honest, solution-oriented communication with congregations and lay leaders, and the importance of modeling healthy self-care.
- **Technology is both a blessing and a challenge; intentional media diet is necessary**: The group discussed the impact of constant connectivity and information overload, recommending conscious limits, analog spaces, and intentional consumption of media to protect spiritual and emotional health.
- **Community support, including professional help and peer relationships, is vital**: The "pit crew" model (therapist, coach, spiritual director) was recommended, and the need for clergy to support one another in non-competitive, honest ways was highlighted. Diocesan and lay leadership have roles in supporting clergy wellness, including clear policies and accountability.
- **Recovery from burnout requires structural and relational change**: Returning to ministry after burnout involves renegotiating boundaries, clear communication of needs, and support from both the parish and the wider church hierarchy. Vulnerability, honesty, and proactive solutions are key.
- **Self-awareness of soul cravings and emotional indicators (like resentment) can guide self-care**: Paying attention to longings, cravings, and emotional signals helps clergy identify unmet needs and prevent incremental burnout.

Transcript

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

Welcome, friends. Welcome to today's webinar. I'm glad you all are getting here in the Zoom room. We will give it just a couple of minutes to make sure everybody gets in and logged in, and then we'll get started. In the meantime, welcome everyone.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

And as always, if you would like, we invite you to put your name in the chat and where you're coming from and what you're excited about. Introduce yourselves and welcome. Welcome Nancy. Welcome Michael. Anchorage, that's thrilling.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

Nita, Harry, welcome. Larry. Okay, y'all. I think we've about hit it. Let's go ahead and get started.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

Welcome. My name is mother Caitlyn Keith. I'm the associate rector at Saint Martin's in the Fields Episcopal Church in Columbia, South Carolina. And I am also a board member for EPN, the Episcopal Church Network, where the church gathers. We are so happy to welcome you today, welcome you all here to this workshop on examining and preventing or recovering from clergy burnout.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

Wherever you are on that spectrum, you are welcome here. We're so thankful you're here, and we hope that you'll take advantage of all that EPN has to offer in the church to each other, our multiple learning opportunities. Our biggest event, our biggest one is coming up soon, the annual conference. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet your colleagues face to face, to learn from one another, make new connections, and and hear a lot of really interesting stuff. You're gonna walk away chewing on a lot.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

We're happy to announce that the twenty twenty six annual conference coming up will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. My neck of the woods will be excited to welcome you all down south again and that'll be March. Early bird registration will open in the October, so keep your eyes open for that and we hope to see you then.

Just a couple of housekeeping procedural items before we get rolling and I turn everything over to, our panel and our presenter today. First of all, this session is being recorded.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

You will receive an email with a link to the recording and any other additional materials that might be shared, by the panelists today, and that link will also be posted to our website workshop library and will appear on our YouTube channel as well. You can access all of the archive of our workshops on our website and our YouTube channel, so check that out. Generally posted within twenty four to forty eight hours, like it takes a second to make sure that it's polished and ready to go. So be patient, but that'll be heading to you all soon. Also today, the question and answer function of Zoom is disabled for our workshops.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

We like to receive our questions in the chat. So please enter your questions in the chat just like you're all introducing yourselves to each other right now, and our panel will keep an eye on them during the workshop, and we'll either answer them right then or we'll address them at the end. And after the workshop, you'll also receive a transcript of the chat with your recording as well. Again, thank you all so much for being here today, and I am happy to introduce my friend, Kate Moorhead Carroll, Dean of St. John's Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida, and Secretary of the EPM Board.

Caitlyn Keith (EPN)

She's gonna start the discussion and introduce you to our guest today. Take it away, Kate.

SPEAKER 2

Thank you. So good to have you all today. We are really blessed to be with you to talk about something that is absolutely crucial to the life of the church, is the health and wellness of clergy and ministers in general. And I have with me today a woman who has devoted her life really to that calling to try and help clergy learn how to be well. Callie Swanlund is the author of this amazing book, From Weary to Wholehearted.

SPEAKER 2

I hope you will try to purchase a copy. You can do that at Jack's Cathedral Books or at Amazon or a lot of other places, I'm sure, Callie. Right? This is a book that is a toolkit for you if you're learning how to find balance in your life. And we're blessed to have Callie with us today.

SPEAKER 2

Callie, thanks thanks for joining me.

SPEAKER 3

I'm so glad. So glad for this conversation. It's such an important one.

SPEAKER 2

Well, let's begin by by creating a framework for our discussion. Callie, you and I talked about the absolute essential nature of clergy learning how to take care of themselves and that this is a spiritual battle. It really is a battle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness because if you're gonna bring a priest down, they're not gonna do damage to other people, at least probably, hopefully not most of them, but they can believe that they can rescue the whole world. I know I I have succumbed to that in my life. And we can literally run ourselves into the ground and and sin our sin against ourselves by not learning how to achieve balance in our lives.

SPEAKER 2

So can you begin by just talking a little bit about the spirituality of clergy wellness? Because I think some of us think of it as kind of a selfish thing or an optional thing. Put it into context for us.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. I was really glad when we talked before this. I was glad you used as strong a words you did as you did about the grace great force of darkness because I think there's still a message in the church that this is, are we, going to the gym, and are we getting our nails done? Those are incredibly important pieces of caring for ourselves, but there is a deeper, deeper issue. And that is, are we caring for our souls in a way that allows us to live into the fullness into which god invites each and every one of us?

SPEAKER 3

Each and every one of us. Are we living into that calling? And there are some, as as someone who companions a lot of clergy, as sort of a hybrid of coach and spiritual companion, I see the people who are thinking about not just leaving their church, but leaving ministry altogether because their, their sense of god, their sense of the church has been rocked. And that that is a huge problem. That is a huge problem.

SPEAKER 3

We're talking about people who are, getting sick more frequently. We're talking about people who are needing to take, emergency mental health leave. We've even had, a handful of clergy die by suicide in the last five years. That's a crisis. That's a crisis, especially in a vocation which I believe ascribes to Jesus' followings of being countercultural.

SPEAKER 2

Yes. Yes. Plus, steeped in the Let's start let's start with Jesus as our role model for a minute. I mean, I'm thinking about, like, the pool of Siloam. Jesus doesn't help everybody.

SPEAKER 2

He he chooses one person to help, and and we never think about all the other cripples at that pool that he didn't help, or the way that, you know, he's making his way to the cross to Jerusalem and going slowly. The idea of rushing to rescue is is not of God. Jesus did not rush. Talk to me a little bit more about Jesus' role modeling of of how he took care of himself. Yeah.

SPEAKER 2

I mean,

SPEAKER 3

you see many times where and and, of course, it's not not all written in. Right? But you see many times where Jesus tries to get away by himself, where he is resting in the boat. Even even this what we might think of as a harrowing experience in the desert, I love the trajectory. Jesus gets baptized and assured of his belovedness, and then he needs to go and retreat, which is literally mean means time set apart.

SPEAKER 3

Right? He needs to go and really figure things out for himself before all of the voices start coming in. And, Mary Oliver has a great poem, the journey of of people, like, pulling at you saying, mend my life. Mend my life. Right?

SPEAKER 3

Before he has all of these voices coming in with their own expectations of him, he gets really clear. And then I love the third part of that movement that we don't talk about as much is that the next thing that's written about is Jesus leaves the desert, and he goes and finds companions for the journey. He he does need that time alone. And then in that time alone, he also clarifies that he can't do this as a one man band.

SPEAKER 2

Yes. Yes. He needs to do it alone, and we need that we need people that we trust and love and can talk to to walk with us along the way. That's so important. I I do agree.

SPEAKER 2

We get the cross confused with constant sort of denying ourselves wellness and that is not what the cross was. The cross was a deliberate call of God that Jesus accepted that was very hard, but the whole of his ministry, he was taking care of himself. He was moving slowly, and he was not helping everyone. He was making choices about what is mine and what is not mine, which I think clergy have a hard time doing. So what brought you to want to write this book?

SPEAKER 2

Was it encountering your own weariness? Was it encountering the weariness of other clergy? How did you come about to to to tackle this this subject?

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. It was a conglomeration of things highlighted most by the Holy Spirit, and I knew for a few years I was supposed to write a book. I resisted it as many of us do

with various tuggings and calls because I didn't quite yet know which area it was supposed to be on. And so I said, when it becomes abundantly clear, I will write this book. And and so at the beginning of 2023, I had a couple of moments right before epiphany.

SPEAKER 3

And for epiphany for me is this season of dreaming because the magi do three things in my estimation. They follow their dreams, they share their gifts, and they journey together. And those are things that I strive to do. And in fact, that's what I thought the book was going to be about was the magi journey. And as I was writing well, as I had a couple of people approach me, both named Heidi, by the way, which I have to pay attention when when both are have share the same name, both approached me within a couple of days to ask me about writing a book and then asking me if I needed a publisher to work with.

SPEAKER 3

And I was like, okay, god. You're making it abundantly clear. So I started I started writing a proposal for a completely different project when my publisher reached out and said, would you be willing to write a resource for weary clergy? And those were those were the words that I had been using since 2020 to describe what I saw in my sibling clergy, this this idea of weary clergy. My my friend in the UCC church and I started, in 2020, we started doing, Zoom retreats for specifically for women clergy who were feeling just overwhelmed and burnt out, and we called it our love letter to fellow clergy.

SPEAKER 3

And it was so it was so god ordained and, spirit filled to see people coming together and just being vulnerable because they didn't have spaces to do that, especially when we were all isolated. And so through my work, short story, left a full time parish ministry in 2018 to pursue this more creative ministry to which I had felt called for

many, many years. And in doing so, a lot of my work has me working one on one with individuals. And, again, people are coming to me maybe self selecting and saying, I really would like some guidance in this season. But to see people burning out before I I even worked with some seminarians who said I'm in burnout, and I said, oh, oh, honey.

SPEAKER 2

Yeah. Yeah.

SPEAKER 3

Oh. No.

SPEAKER 2

I'm so glad that you've turned to this. So we live in a crazy, unhealthy society that is constantly barraging us, and we have to learn to create boundaries. Tell us some you give us a lot of wonderful practical tools for boundary setting. Give us just a few glimpses of your resources for resilience that you put in this book.

SPEAKER 3

Well, the first one goes back to goes back to when you were talking about the healing at the pool. When I was starting to write this book, I solicited opinions of others about what was their source of weariness. And a lot of people named really big systemic issues, oppression, racism, the patriarchy, which are indeed issues in our weariness and in our burnout. But this resource was meant to be for people who are actively, facing or trying to keep burnout at bay, and you can't tell someone who's experiencing those layers that they also have to go out and fight that thing. And so as I was talking with a friend about how do I, how do I tell people, yes.

SPEAKER 3

I know there are bigger factors, but, also, I believe that they have they have a role in their own care. My friend said, well, Jesus said, do you want to be made well? Mhmm. Jesus said to that man at the pool, and, of course, the man had valid excuses. He had valid reasons.

SPEAKER 3

No one has been able to take me down here. And Jesus says, take up your mat and walk. Mhmm. And so the first first thing when it comes to boundaries and tools for resilience is looking inside and realizing what autonomy we have. And that yes.

SPEAKER 3

It becomes easier with privilege and power, but everyone has some autonomy. Everyone has some step that they can take with god's help, with the help of professionals. Yes. All of these other things. But if we sit back and say, I I can't take care of these bigger things that are going on in the world right now, I just feel helpless and hopeless.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. That will make us feel helpless and hopeless. So what are because we can do sort

SPEAKER 2

of isn't it sort of ego driven? Either I can't do anything or I have to do everything. Both are ego driven. We're not saying, Jesus, what do you want me to do? Because he says to the man what the man should do.

SPEAKER 2

Take up your mat, but the man has his own thoughts about what needs to be done. I need to get into the pool, and people keep shoving me. And if we could just get our will out of the way, we're we're infinitely precious, but we're not all powerful.

SPEAKER 3

I'm gonna quote that. We're infinitely precious, but not all powerful. Absolutely. Absolutely. And the word the word boundaries that you used, I think a lot of people come into ministry.

SPEAKER 3

A lot of us have had or witnessed trauma in our lives. A lot of clergy have codependent tendencies.

SPEAKER 2

We're natural rescuers. Is that? Natural rescuers. Yes.

SPEAKER 3

That's us. Absolutely. Absolutely. So we go into a helping profession. God bless us all.

SPEAKER 3

I absolutely understand and, and identify with that. And that means that sometimes we aren't the group with the best boundaries. Yes. And one line that I like to use with my clients a lot is boundaries don't make friends. A lot of us like to be liked.

SPEAKER 3

We like to be liked. And so we try to figure out how to make a boundary that doesn't step on any toes, that doesn't ruffle any feathers, that doesn't upset anyone. I can cheer you on, Kate, if you are setting a boundary that doesn't impact me. But when your boundary impacts me, I might not react positively.

SPEAKER 2

Mhmm. Mhmm. One thing I find in parish ministry that's helpful is to be a little bit vulnerable, not not totally, but to say, I need some time to rest, but I'd love to get back to you, or I have an appointment even though the appointment's with myself, you know, or just something about reminding people that you're a human being. They do love you, and they want you to not get sick, but you have to remind them, you know what? I need to sit down.

SPEAKER 2

I remember being nine months pregnant, standing at the receiving line, and no one brought me a chair. But when I said, you know, I'm really pregnant and my legs hurt, someone rushed off and they were joyful to get me a chair, but I had to say, when? I need to sit down. But it was my my need, and setting a boundary that says this is what I need often is more often can be received better rather than you didn't get me a chair. You know?

SPEAKER 3

Absolutely. Absolutely. And I'd love to hear in the comments too why it is we don't ask for what we need, but I think there's an assumption that, sort of, you need to be this, like, or this blank slate. We're not bringing any any asks to other people. We are ready to absorb what they are asking of us, and that model just doesn't work.

SPEAKER 3

It doesn't work. Terrible. Be human is so important. Jesus was fully human and fully divine. We are not the divine part.

SPEAKER 3

We are fully human, and even Jesus, who also was fully divine, needed things as well.

SPEAKER 2

And, you know, Jesus didn't do a lot of nuts and bolts. He had someone bring him food. He he had someone, who was doing the purchasing of the groceries, and I think it's okay to say to someone, would you mind getting me a glass of water, right now? Or I've gotta go home and take a nap and let people realize that you are, in fact, a person who needs some rest. Absolutely.

SPEAKER 3

So being able to set boundaries is is good and helpful for you, period. I like to say, like, taking care of you is good for you, period, but a lot of us won't do it just for us. So if that sentence is not enough and we need another motivation, then we say, because it allows you to be your best self for other people, because it allows you to have energy for your ministry because it allows these other things. I'd like to be able to move people to just being able to say taking care of me is good for me and not have those external motivations. But I know how we work.

SPEAKER 3

I know how I work. And so if you can't get there just for you right now, how do you get there knowing that no one needs no one needs a dried up and burned out pastor? That is not

SPEAKER 2

There there's a brilliant question that just came in. Are there broad gender differences in the likelihood of admitting human needs? Wow. That's a big topic. I think across the board, priests stink at this no matter what their gender, but I wonder what you think, Kelly.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. I think I work with people of all genders, but I I work with a number of women who have have also faced this idea that they have to prove something because of their gender, and so they're sometimes less likely to show that they are human also because they've they've fought so many battles to be respected and seen as a full clergy person. And then, yet, on the other side, a lot of men have been socialized to, not, not have emotional needs. Right? Maybe maybe they might need.

SPEAKER 2

Right.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. It might be more open about physical needs. I don't know. But the emotional needs is not a thing that they're conditioned to share. And so, yeah, I think there there are differences.

SPEAKER 3

And I think, like you said, I don't need them.

SPEAKER 2

Yeah. Well, you know, the calendar, you've talked about when we were talking together about looking over your calendar for the week and praying over it. Your calendar is a holy document that shares with you what your days may be like. Of course, there are crises, but we think about our giving as a spiritual discipline, but our time is also spiritual discipline. Talk about how you look at your calendar, Callie.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. So I started this years ago when I was in full time parish ministry. Fridays were my day off. So Mondays, I was in the office, and I had what I called slow start Mondays. I didn't schedule any meetings before noon on Mondays because I wanted to get in the office and have some ritual.

SPEAKER 3

I would light a candle, and I had a space that looked out a window rather than looking at the stacks of to dos. And I would take out a physical planner. I'm someone who keeps my calendar on my phone, but I still do this on Sundays or Mondays. I take out a paper calendar or, in my case now, it's a it's a PDF calendar that I handwrite on. And I put it next to my phone, and I write out the week so that I can see, visualize, really, what's coming up.

SPEAKER 3

And it also helps me see what is missing. So

SPEAKER 2

I won't

SPEAKER 3

show you my whole calendar, but you can see that I have different colors here. Right? I have four different colors on my calendar. And for me, they're they are writing, home, work, body, and soul. And if I am looking at, work is blue.

SPEAKER 3

If I'm looking at a calendar that is full of blue and doesn't have much for body and soul nourishment, something's gotta shift. If I notice pockets, that are open, I actually try to put something in there, not adding more to dos. But, if I don't add something in there, then that time will get sucked up by something else. But if I write well, you said the appointments with yourself. When I was in the diocese of Spokane doing their clergy retreat this year, someone told me about writing something in your calendar because then you can say, oh, I can't do that right now.

SPEAKER 3

I've got something in my calendar. Literally, writing the word something. I've got something at that time. But what this practice allows me to do is it it helps me pray for my through my week. It helps me add in practices of nourishment when I notice that there are none or tomorrow is a day that is just it's full.

SPEAKER 2

Mhmm. So

SPEAKER 3

Thursday. What does Thursday look like? How can I make sure I'm taking some more time for myself on Thursday? The phrase I've been using lately is I would like to meet my week rather than my week happening to me. Let let me stop there for

SPEAKER 2

a minute because that's so important. And we do this with social media. We do this with time. We do it with money. We let it take control of us.

SPEAKER 2

We let this take control of us. We don't have to do that. We can wrestle it. It does belong to us. It is our servant, not the other way around.

SPEAKER 2

And it's very hard, though. I know I have a very full busy life, but I have written in every day quiet time in my office, and it is not to be scheduled upon. We have a question here about burnout stemming from process organizational issues. It has to start at the top that you have a very firm framework for your calendar where you are available for for appointments, but also time where you are not. This is my time where I'm gonna do yoga, or this is my and that time is considered sacrosanct by whoever is helping you with your calendar or by yourself no matter what size parish you're in.

SPEAKER 2

But we must create these pretty forceful boundaries around our time. Otherwise, again, the forces of darkness will drag us right down into the pit. Yeah.

SPEAKER 3

Absolutely. Absolutely. There's two questions that I'd love to respond to in that vein, and that that one from Leah, what, you know, what do I do when I ask for what I need and then I don't receive it? Asking for what we need is vulnerable. And when we've been vulnerable and it hasn't gone well, it makes us sort of retreat further and say, nope.

SPEAKER 3

Not gonna do that again. I was courageous, and I got burned. But that doesn't mean that doesn't mean you don't still need those things. And so there are many, many things that I would love to dig into personally with this particular comment and figure out, is it a lack of a supportive fester or a supervisor or, you know, what what are the issues? But some of this is my book says it's for clergy burnout.

SPEAKER 3

That was because my publisher said that's really important to say clergy burnout, but I said it's really for for all people in ministry and even in, you know, therapists and nurses and things like that. It would be really good if we were teaching these same things in our congregations.

SPEAKER 2

Yes.

SPEAKER 3

Both You

SPEAKER 2

need to keep your congregation with us. We all need to learn about self care. This needs to be something we're all learning together, and then you can refer to it with people. Absolutely.

SPEAKER 3

And and two points to that to to both for their own soul nourishment, and I do think they have a role in ensuring not ensuring, in in assisting with their clergy person's wellness. And so what what can they be doing? They the the other question I wanted to respond to is from Larry. It says, where does having a spiritual director fit into overall wellness? I have one of my coaching clients has what she calls a pit crew.

SPEAKER 3

She has a therapist, a coach, and spiritual director. And she says, you know, she needs, like, all these people around her. And I love it. I love it when you have the capacity to have all three. I recommend it.

SPEAKER 3

Having at least one is really, really necessary. I don't I there aren't many things that I say you have to or you should, but having a helping professional, having someone we are, as clergy, we are professional space holders. And so it is hard for us to have space held for us. And a friendship is wonderful, but it's a back and forth to have a space where you can have space held for you. I I think my, therapist and spiritual director are spectacular people, and I do care about them.

SPEAKER 3

But my session time is not to ask them how they're doing and to really get into that. They have other spaces for that. They have other spaces for that. That's really important.

SPEAKER 2

Yes. We absolutely have to have that undivided attention of someone at least once a month or hopefully more, plus people that we're praying with and are walking with us in our life. Think there's no no human being can see itself clearly. We just can't. We we have to have someone who who discerns with us.

SPEAKER 2

So, Kelly, tell us a bit about this bondage to technology. One of the great illnesses in our culture is how we have we're in a technological adolescence and technology has sort of it's like a bucking bronco. It's changing all the time, and we're catching up with it, and we're constantly overwhelmed, and people are texting us all the time, and we're trying to respond to emails, and and we feel constantly inadequate because we can't even ingest all the information coming at us. What are some of the tools that you have to liberate us from what I would call the bondage or slavery to technology?

SPEAKER 3

There is a bondage to technology, and I think sometimes I hear from older parishioners, well, you know, the priest I had growing up didn't didn't need as much time off or wasn't so busy. And I think, oh, wow. So much has changed

SPEAKER 2

Yes.

SPEAKER 3

In the last fifty to seventy five years since since the point they are referring to. It's often that golden era of the nineteen fifties. Right? But but there wasn't a constant news cycle then. There was email to pile up then.

SPEAKER 3

There were not a lot of those demands. Ministry has absolutely shifted and changed because of technology. And and and I'm the first to say so many wonderful things. The way I am able to connect with people around the world is by this technology around Zoom. The way that we're able to be here today is is because of that.

SPEAKER 3

The being beholden to it, though, we know we know scientifically what it does to us, and that is a a bunch of not great things for our health. But I also think we know what it does spiritually and emotionally. And I liken it to, like, eating eating one doughnut is, like, amazing and delicious. When I have scrolled for an hour mindlessly, I feel like I've eaten, a whole flat of doughnuts, and my my stomach hurts. Like, it's just that feeling of, like, oh, that doesn't feel good.

SPEAKER 2

That's perfect, Kelly. We talk about media diet. If you think about it, what should be your media diet? We think about eating healthy, but what about our intake of information? How do you take an information in what amount?

SPEAKER 2

You set it consciously before you get on the technology. You decide what time you wanna give. I find social media is good because, like, Facebook. I hate Facebook, but

people are telling me they're having surgery and stuff, and I can wish them happy birthday. So I go on to do pastoral loving kindness and hopefully post something hopeful, and then I leave, but I try to be very intentional about the time I'm on.

SPEAKER 2

Talk about immediate diet, and how would someone begin to to create that for themselves?

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. So there are a couple of clergy that I've talked to about consuming, and we tend to talk about consuming in terms of food. And then we think things like books and podcasts. We're like, oh, that's that's wonderful. Those are, you know, edifying.

SPEAKER 3

Consuming, constantly consuming even books and podcasts and things like that is not allowing for our own thoughts. It's not allowing for silence and time alone. It's not it's it's it's is another addiction. So several years ago, I started, during Lent, I started Facebook free Fridays. And every Lent, I would be off of Facebook on Fridays.

SPEAKER 3

And after a few Lent, I noticed in myself that I was I was like, oh, I can't wait for Lent again for this. And then it struck me, and I was like, oh oh, I I have control over that. Right? I think we do I think a lot of us do have a sense of what is good and right and healthy for us. We don't always have We

SPEAKER 2

can tell when we feel bad. We can tell. Yeah.

SPEAKER 3

We don't always have the wherewithal to implement it, but we do know that. And so this is this is just like the meeting your week rather than your week happening to you. The same thing happens with social media, and this is all about intentionality. In my book, I call it preparation. It's the mental mental aspect of, declaring how you want to spend your life, how you want to spend your day, how you wanna spend your hour.

SPEAKER 3

Yes. We are moving so quickly that we don't often pause and ask what it is we really, really need, what it is that fills our soul that would fill our soul. And sometimes sometimes that is for me to say, I would like to use this hour to mindlessly scroll. If that's an intention and I said that I do. Right.

SPEAKER 3

Right. Wonderful. Right.

SPEAKER 2

But it's when it happens to us that we feel hypnosis going where we're unconscious, and we are days and weeks and months are stolen from us, and that is the work of darkness. That is not we have the capacity to determine how to spend the precious time that God has given us. It is God's gift to us and to no one else. Doesn't belong to

SPEAKER 3

Meta. Yeah. And and be and right before this call too, we were talking about it because I'm in I'm in this beautiful sunroom that my spouse and I built in 2020 2021, you know, looking for a COVID project. And it has windows all around. It has, a record player.

SPEAKER 3

Sometimes I take meetings out here, but it's not, it's not a space where we allow clutter to accumulate or anything. And, Laura, before we started, Laura Manley was saying, oh, an analog room. And that was exactly that was my discipline in, I think it was 2023. I typically choose an anchor word for the year, to guide me, and the word I chose that year was analog. I wanted to do more things with my hands.

SPEAKER 3

I wanted to do more things listening to a record is perfect example of this because you have to stay present in the room that it's in. You don't have, you know, headphones. You're going around tasks. A record ends every, you know, 20 or so. You have to flip it to the other side.

SPEAKER 3

So it requires this sort of presence. And in my book, I call this unitasking. And I at retreats, I have asked people to come up with examples of unitasking. And I'd love to hear in the comments if you have an example of unitasking. Unitasking is the opposite of multitasking.

SPEAKER 3

So multitasking, for some reason, has become something that we uphold as a really good

SPEAKER 2

awesome. Right. And we don't do anything well. We just do a million things half half baked. Right?

SPEAKER 3

Exactly. So unitasking is something that requires our whole being. So, for me, paddleboarding is one of those. Because if you're out on the water, you can't be doing much else. If you're trying to balance on a paddleboard, you've got you've got the paddle.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. And and you unitasking for some people is gardening or weeding. Mhmm. Preparing vegetables is a perfect one. Because, again, when you're when you have a knife in hand, there's not much else that you can be doing at that time.

SPEAKER 3

Unitasking, or, or analog is so, so needed. And everyone's got a different method for it. I, you know, am off social media on Fridays. I'm increasingly off of Facebook. It's off of my phone, which helps me be off of it.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. The things that just weren't serving me, I I paid attention to.

SPEAKER 2

That's can I stop you there? That's a brilliant thought that you could take things off of here. Put them on your laptop, but they don't have to be constantly getting your attention here. You don't have to throw them away, but you're putting them in a lower priority. That's brilliant.

SPEAKER 3

And and I try to help people make the bridge because I'm I'm I'm someone who always has my phone with me. So for me to say, oh, just leave your phone somewhere else. I have kids. I have a preteen and a teenager, so I always have my phone on me. But if you're gonna pick up your phone anyway, download an app that is life giving.

SPEAKER 3

Listen to your book or get the pray as you go app or do something. If you if you know you're gonna be doing that, journal on your phone. I don't care. Like, I

SPEAKER 2

Or if if you're alone in a small parish, get a layperson that you trust to just be that emergency contact for you for your Sabbath day so that they can just be the triage, the the person that says, this is someone dying. We I do need to call you. And you take their call, but no one else's, and everyone knows to call them. So good for the community to think that you're doing a Sabbath because they all should be doing it too. These little tools are so helpful, but we have to be vulnerable and human with people and and share our needs with them.

SPEAKER 2

We no one no one should be twenty four seven on call. That's not healthy. Turning off notifications is healthy. There are so many different ways to slice the pie, but just

being conscious, like you said. Tell us you have so many wonderful tools in here, Kelly.

SPEAKER 2

Tell us about half rest and why half rest is isn't a good thing. You you talk about that term in your book.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. So that that relates to what we've just been talking about is I noticed it's particular particularly in the evenings when I'm already feeling tired, but I've got a task to complete. So I might have my laptop open. I might have my phone nearby. My family might be watching something in the background.

SPEAKER 3

I don't know. But what I what I find is that I get to the end of the evening, and I have neither rested nor have I been productive.

SPEAKER 2

Mhmm. If I

SPEAKER 3

wanted to do a task, then and if I really feel like I really need to do that task, I would I would really suggest everyone check that tendency to say, oh, I really need to get this done tonight. Do you do you really is this is this gonna change how someone perceives the gospel? Maybe then we need to do it. But, like, is this really life or

death? But if you do need to get something done, then then go and focus on that and wrap it up and get done.

SPEAKER 3

When you engage in half rest, which I don't think I'm the only one. I've talked to many people who feel this.

SPEAKER 2

Sometimes I do it too.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. It is you feel so disappointed at the end because you neither, neither got the thing done Nor did you rest.

SPEAKER 2

You just wasted time. And so it's

SPEAKER 3

so much better to just say, you know what? I'm gonna leave my laptop at home while I'm on vacation. You know what? I'm gonna leave that bible study resource in the other room right now. You know what?

SPEAKER 3

I'm gonna put my phone on do not disturb. And and really intent again, it comes back to intentionality. And really intentionally engage in rest.

SPEAKER 2

Rest is holy. Talk about the toddler day. I love that idea.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. So toddler day, this is where I think we get we judge ourselves a lot, and we judge our needs. So some sometimes we don't ask for what we need because we stop it before we even get to the level of asking for it because we say, oh, that's that's ridiculous, or I shouldn't have so many needs or whatever. A toddler doesn't think about those things. If a toddler needs to nap, a toddler falls asleep.

SPEAKER 3

Doesn't matter where. If a toddler needs a snack, a toddler will ask for a snack. If a toddler needs an emotional breakdown, they don't have to wait for another moment. A convenient time to do that. A toddler day is really just listening to your body and soul and saying, what is it I most need today?

SPEAKER 3

I've been using the term soul cravings with people lately, and it's really resonated. We have cravings for food, and sometimes we, shame ourselves for our cravings, but our cravings often tell us something. When I was pregnant with my youngest, I wanted to eat a lot of ground beef, and I realized that my body was craving iron. It really did iron during that pregnancy. A soul craving is, a thought we have.

SPEAKER 3

It might come across as, jealousy or envy, but it is an indicator that something is missing for us. So for example, we go on Instagram and we see someone's vacation photos, and we feel that pang, a longing, or, again, it might be jealousy even that that it comes across as. And what I think that is trying to tell us is something about our own needs. It might be telling us that we need a day off. It might be telling us we need time to reconnect with our spouse.

SPEAKER 3

It might be telling us any numerous number of things, but it's it's telling us something. When we notice that, we are longing for something, I think it's it's worth paying attention to what we're longing.

SPEAKER 2

And And our resentments. When we resent other people, we're often resenting them because there's something they have that we really need. Yeah. Maybe we do need that a vacation, or maybe we need whatever. But if we're very grumpy and very resentful, we're probably not caring for ourselves well.

SPEAKER 3

Absolutely. Resentment is one of those. So I do work in the school of Renee Brown, and Mhmm. It's one of those indicator lights, like, on your car when you get the little dashboard lights. Resentment is one of those lights that says something is amiss here.

SPEAKER 3

Something is amiss. The light doesn't always tell you what is amiss, but it tells you to pull over and check things out. Yes. When we are when we are facing burnout, we don't always realize it. I was thinking about this earlier that some people have a spectacular breakdown.

SPEAKER 3

Like, you you really know it's happening. It's like

SPEAKER 2

sort of You go speak with a secretary or whatever. Right? It's like, wow. Really doable.

SPEAKER 3

Thing that change and shift, and so my whole life imploded. I think for a lot of us, burnout is more akin to leaving a pot of water on the burner. And over time, it slowly evaporates until there's nothing left and it's burning. But we don't always notice that because it's happening incrementally. And that I think that's, really dangerous.

SPEAKER 3

A lot of people, like, when they know that I have been doing work on burnout, they're sort of like, avoid eye contact with me. I'm like, it's not catching. It's not Yes.

SPEAKER 2

Like I'll take them down.

SPEAKER 3

It is real. And even if you are not melting down right now, many of our clergy are feeling and experiencing some form of burnout as as if it were a spectrum. They might be somewhere along the line. But a lot of people are not fulfilled in their call,

are questioning whether, they're actually making a difference in the world, or, they say, this is not the ministry that I signed up for because so much has shifted in the last five years. And those are important.

SPEAKER 2

And And a lot of people may be questioning the existence of god, all of that. But if you're doing those things before you make a huge life change, try to take care of yourself and see if some of the awe and wonder doesn't seep back into your life. We had a wonderful question up here, Kelly, about how do you reenter parish work after burnout? So how do you come back after you've finally learned to care for yourself?

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. So Esther Perel is a is a relationship expert who talks about betrayal and other other things in marriage that have that cause a a relationship shift. And I've heard her say that most of us have two or three significant romantic relationships in our adult life, And then she says, sometimes to the same person. And what she means by that is that there are some people who get to a point in their marriage whether there was something terrible or not, they get to a point in their marriage where that marriage has ended, and they need to reconstruct. They they either need to go different ways or sometimes in within that marriage, sometimes people will reconstruct.

SPEAKER 3

And I think of that in in yeah. I think of that in ministry as well. If we have gotten to the point of burnout, something needs to shift and change, and it's not just on our part because there is a relationship there. And it it is possible. It's not possible in all parishes.

SPEAKER 3

It really depends on the makeup and if people are willing to put in the work. But I think healthily returning after burnout comes back to what you said, Kate, about how can you articulate your needs to your members. Mhmm. Will they be respectful of those needs? Will they as someone set up in the comments earlier, will the lay leadership step up?

SPEAKER 3

Because we really need actively leadership. It's good for not just us, but for the entire body. And I think some honesty and truth telling about no one gets your private details, of course, but Absolutely. It can really normalize things to say, yeah. I took a mental health leave.

SPEAKER 2

Absolutely. But, also, I think it's helpful for the parish for us to not we wanna be vulnerable but not needy. So if you come to your parish with the problem and the solution, you need to figure out what you need and give them a solution. Don't just say, I'm miserable. I'm unhappy.

SPEAKER 2

I'm overworked. Say, I need to take a Sabbath day, or I need to take a sabbatical, or I need to go on this silent retreat, or whatever. Put your solution together. Offer that to them. Because to come at them with all of your problems is not role modeling healthy living either.

SPEAKER 2

We need to care for ourselves, but we're the only ones who can do that. We need to ask others to join with us in that, but we don't wanna look to them to fulfill all of our needs either. So there's a balance there. Can you elaborate more on that too, Kelly?

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. I think that comes back to the pit crew and having other support systems in your life. Your your parish is not your support system, at least not your primary one. And so being able to cultivate that in other areas, I really do think there's a role that the bishop's office needs to take, and I've seen a lot of diocesan offices taking this. It makes me really glad that they are being proactive in helping helping support their clergy monetarily or stepping in and saying, oh, you know, I'm giving I'm giving leave to this person.

SPEAKER 3

Not it's not up to the best rate. This is this person is getting some much needed time off. Being able to come in and do that work from from because we are a high hierarchical church. Being able to have some of those supports in place is good too. Mhmm.

SPEAKER 3

And I think I lost lost the thread, but I think the

SPEAKER 2

Yeah. Training and holding your laypeople accountable, but also yourself accountable, verbalizing your needs, and and and and following through with them. And if you say you're gonna take a day off, you better take the day off.

SPEAKER 3

Right. That kind of stuff. I I I had a friend who started at a parish and said, you know, I don't know if I'm gonna take Mondays off here or Fridays off here, so I'm just gonna

I'm gonna work both for a few months and sort of see what I need. And I said, oh, no. Like, once they know once they know that you're available

SPEAKER 2

Be clear. Be clear. Yes. Yes. Yes.

SPEAKER 2

We have a great question here. Please say something about clergy supporting other clergy.

SPEAKER 3

I have so much to say about that, but I think I think one of the biggest things that I hear going from diocese to diocese, and this isn't just in our denomination. I work with people in other denominations as well, is some people don't like going to their local clergy gatherings because they find them to be places of complaining or comparison. Mhmm. And sometimes the comparison is not like, oh, I grew in attendance this much. Sometimes the comparison is in the negatives.

SPEAKER 3

Like, I, haven't had a day off in fourteen weeks. Right? This badge of, right? What kind of comparison is that? So there is definitely a need for clergy can be some of the people who most understand what we're going

SPEAKER 2

and support each other. Well, and to understand that parishes are very different. You can't compare a rural parish out in the hinterlands that doesn't have a lot of people.

The life of that sole priest doing everything as compared to this associate priest in a bit they compare each other, and it's like apples and oranges. They're in totally different situations, and we all work for the same team.

SPEAKER 2

Why are we competitive? If somebody goes from one church to another, who cares? That's not evangelism. That's just, I don't know, moving the marbles around the table or something. Yeah.

SPEAKER 2

We have to get better at loving each other, don't we? Yeah.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. I am I'm leading for the Methodists in Michigan. I'm leading a nine month cohort on my book, and they're doing they're doing clergy cohorts of the book together, which I think is so cool because

SPEAKER 2

What a great idea.

SPEAKER 3

Dives into some deep and vulnerable questions. And to be able to talk about those things among colleagues is is really, really beneficial and necessary because we stay we stay at the surface level even with colleagues sometimes. What's really going on? You know, we just see the the tip of the iceberg. I also the when we were talking about the returning to church after after burnout, I think there's also something about

asking for what you need, whether it be in the interview process or sometime later as you're with a parish and realize that you have some different sets of needs, people are scared to do that.

SPEAKER 3

And my my thought on it is if the answer is no, that is really telling. If we don't ask for what we need, we're not gonna get it met. If we ask for what we need and they mean it, great. If we ask for it and they say no, then we really need to do some deep soul searching about, is this the right call for

SPEAKER 2

me? Or is there a compromise that could be good? I mean, you don't know anything until you get more information. Absolutely. Absolutely.

SPEAKER 2

Yeah. So and, you know, one of the things about clergy wellness too is is keep keeping time, making sure when we say we're gonna do something for an hour that we don't go an hour and a half. You know? So in that light, Kelly, I wanna we're at 04:00, and I wanna say thank you. I hope those of you who have listened today that you will buy her book, call her up, email her.

SPEAKER 2

Tell us about how we can contact you, Kelly, if we want you to speak or or do something like that.

SPEAKER 3

Absolutely. So I'm putting in here in in the chat, caliSwanlund.com. If you can spell my name, you can find me. I'm the only Cali Swanlund out there. So, in the time that you're not taking Sabbath from your phones, find me on social media.

SPEAKER 3

Find me on my website, and that'll have a contact form. And I'd love to hear from people what's working and what's not working in in your local parish and diocese. And then I love coming in and doing parish retreats or diocesan clergy retreats or whatever it might be so that we can really be having these honest conversations with one another. Half of my ministry is on the road right now, and I love that. I love it.

SPEAKER 3

The the our topic is a little bit dismal, but I will say there's a lot of good going on out there. There's a lot of good ministry and gospel work happening. And when I get to be on the road and and travel to other places, I feel like I feel like Paul. I get to, like, return with the good news of what is happening. And so if you're someone on this call who's thriving in your ministry, we celebrate you, and we want you to continue doing the things that are helping you thrive.

SPEAKER 3

And we want you to have spaces to talk about that too because if you're keeping quiet, it's no good. Right. It's good.

SPEAKER 2

Thank you so much, Kelly. Would you close us out with a prayer?

SPEAKER 3

Absolutely. Absolutely. And in fact, I'm gonna just pull up one of my prayers from my book.

SPEAKER 2

Someone asked me to show the cover on the screen. So here's the cover of the book while she's looking for our closing prayer. Yeah. Published by Church Publishing, our own Episcopal publishers.

SPEAKER 3

Yeah. Yo, yeah. From weary to wholehearted. This is a prayer I call a prayer for rising. Let us pray.

SPEAKER 3

O bearer of despair and hope, be present with us in our breadth and depth of human experience. Help us cast down the mighty even when the mighty is us. May we not wait, but bring about change in our weary and broken world today and each new day for ourselves, for our siblings, for those souls with whom our paths will never cross. In tenderness and strength, we pray. Amen.

SPEAKER 2

Amen. Thank you to everyone. God bless you all, and thanks for joining us today. Thank you.

SPEAKER 3

Thank you, EPN. Yes.

SPEAKER 2

Thank you, EPN.