

John Crane:

So, today is May the 10th. This is John Crane. I'm representing Old Mandeville Historic Association. We have with us-

Adrian Calvin:

Adrian Calvin, Adrian Calvin.

John Crane:

... Adrian Calvin. And Adrian, this recording is going to be used as an oral history for the Old Mandeville Historic Association. Are you comfortable with that?

Adrian Calvin:

Absolutely.

John Crane:

And we don't know what we're going to use it for, but hopefully we'll use it. The one thing I can tell you is we've gotten into transcription now, and so within a period of time, this will be transcribed.

Adrian Calvin:

Is it working?

John Crane:

Yeah. I just want to make sure it's working. Yes it is. And we will give you a copy. We will also give you a thumb drive with it on it, because one of the things we found out is that for people to have their own oral history is really important for their families.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. Yeah.

John Crane:

So let me begin by talking about you a little bit. Tell me about yourself, how long you've lived in Mandeville. Is your family from Mandeville? What kind of history do you have here in Mandeville?

Adrian Calvin:

Okay. Well, I am a lifelong resident of Mandeville, born and raised. Grandmother came from Mississippi and had family here. I'm one of five children. I'm born to Liston Calvin Sr. and Lurline Robinson Calvin, which dad came from Mississippi. Mom was already here, lifelong resident of Mandeville. And so, in growing up here in Mandeville, kind of a little funny part to it is that my mother was Catholic and my dad was Methodist. And in knowing about the Catholic Church and the Methodist church, I mean, they're pretty much closely intertwined together because in our Apostles' Creed we do say that... Sorry.

John Crane:

So, sorry for the introduction. You were talking about your mom and your dad, and your mom grew up Catholic and your dad grew up Methodist.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. My mom was Catholic. My dad was Methodist. So, going to public schools, it was incumbent that we still followed the Catholic tradition. So, that's the walk that me and my brothers and my sister had to take. So, I did my first communion as a Catholic. I did my confirmation in the eighth grade as a Catholic. But John, in doing so with my grandmother and my dad being members of Newell Chapel, the Newell United Methodist Church, I shared. Some Sundays, I went to Newell Chapel. Other Sundays, I went to Our Lady of the Lake, but they wanted us in church.

So as time went on and growing up, I continued going to the Catholic Church more so than Newell, but a decision was made for me maybe back in the early nineties that Newell seemed more of what I was looking for spiritually and gave me a better insight growing up as a Christian here in Mandeville. So to get to, I guess, the heart and soul of it, it was my grandmother who played a very integral part.

John Crane:

What was your grandmother's name?

Adrian Calvin:

Loney McMorris. L-O-N-E-Y M-C-M-O-R-R-I-S. So, she played a very integral part when she came from Mississippi here.

John Crane:

Where did she come from in Mississippi? Do you know?

Adrian Calvin:

Columbia, Mississippi, Marion County, Mississippi. And again, that's where my father's family was brought up and raised until they moved here to Louisiana. And Newell being a family church, and when I say family church, it was maybe 15 or 20 families that was the congregation of the church. So, we pretty much knew everyone. And speaking with my grandmother, she said that it was just a perfect fit for her coming from Mississippi because she was a member of the United Methodist Church in Mississippi. So, she kind of just walked into the role at Newell, I want to say it had to be in the thirties, probably earlier than that, because she was born in 1918. I think she moved here when they were 13 or 14 years old, something along the way.

John Crane:

So 13 or 14 years old when she came to Newell.

Adrian Calvin:

That's what I'm guessing, but I could be wrong on that.

John Crane:

Did she ever talk about her family and their experience, how they became Methodists, and what kind of their path was?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. So, the Laurant's was a family name in the United Methodist Church. And so, my grandmother's mother, which was Eva Levy...

John Crane:

Her last name was Levy?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Levy. And then, her mother's name was Hannah Davis.

John Crane:

Davis. Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

But Hannah was a Laurant, if I stand correctly. And at that time, it was Hannah Davis. It was Harriet Laurant, Arthur Laurant. There was a Alice Alan, but she was originally a Laurant as well, and so Hannah was my grandmother's grandmother.

John Crane:

Now, those are all names here in Mandeville.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

The Laurants are a very prominent name here.

Adrian Calvin:

Absolutely.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And the Laurants made up a big part of Newell Chapel at that time. So, we as a family started attending Newell United Methodist Church, but not at the same time. Being the four boys in my family, my oldest brother's name was Liston, and then Jeffrey, Edmund, then myself, and then I have a sister.

Her name is Doreitha. And so at different times, the five of us joined Newell, not as a group, but it was an individual decision that we made whenever the time felt right for us. And I know that for myself. So why did that happen? I'm not sure. But when my dad passed away, he and my dad and my mom-

John Crane:

When did your dad pass away, roughly?

Adrian Calvin:

1976 maybe.

John Crane:

Okay. Roughly mid-seventies, something like that?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, I was 11 years old.

John Crane:

Oh, wow.

Adrian Calvin:

So.

John Crane:

Were you raised by your grandmother from that time?

Adrian Calvin:

Right. So, my mom and dad got divorced when I was five or six years old, and my dad took us in and we lived with my grandmother. So, that's how that evolved.

John Crane:

So up until that time, you were pretty much strictly going to Our Lady of the Lake. Then once you moved in with your grandmother, then it was back and forth a little bit.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. More committed to the Catholic Church, but would attend Newell on occasion.

John Crane:

On occasions. Where did the Laurants live? Where did your grandmother live, and was the family in one area, or were they scattered across the city?

Adrian Calvin:

Well, yeah. I mean, yeah. You could say that they were scattered across the city. Being that you're familiar with Mandeville, so over on Adair Street, as far as the city side, that is where Harriet Laurant lived and her brother also, can't think of his name right now, but it'll come back. It'll come back to me.

John Crane:

So Adair on this side of Florida?

Adrian Calvin:

On the south side of Florida.

John Crane:

South side of Florida.

Adrian Calvin:

But my great-great-grandmother and grandmother was on the north side-

John Crane:

Okay. Of Florida.

Adrian Calvin:

... of Florida on Adair Street. And then, there are some Laurents on Coffee Street, and to be more specific, Arthur Laurant, who was a mainstay, I would call the head of the church for Newell Chapel at the time. He was on Coffee Street, and Harold Laurant, that was another brother. He also lived on Coffee Street before moving over by his sister, Harriet Laurant. So with that, it seemed as though there was everyone within the church pretty much had a connection along the way through a Laurant.

John Crane:

Through a Laurant family.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. Through the Laurant family.

John Crane:

What is the history of the Laurant? Were they here in Mandeville?

Adrian Calvin:

I would say that they found their home-

John Crane:

Here.

Adrian Calvin:

... here, and I think that everyone else pretty much just migrated towards the Laurant family, spread in different little areas of the city of Mandeville.

John Crane:

So are there any family stories that you'd be willing to share that your grandmother told you or that maybe is particularly about your family or experiences that they had? Or I guess, this mostly in... Well, if your grandmother was born in.... My mom was born in 1918 also, so I kind of understand the time.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And that's the year that my grandmother... She was born in 1918 as well. Family stories or anything that I could have related to with the church was that, I do remember as a kid, this is something that they did every Sunday, not every Sunday, but every summer, they would load a bus that there was a Laurant who was a bus driver in Mandeville for the schools. And at the time, that was the Rosenwald School. So, he was a bus driver. But every summer, we would take a trip to Waveland over in Mississippi. And if you have any knowledge of why did they pick Waveland, it was because at the time, there was a home in Waveland that was pastors of the United Methodist Church, but they were obviously... It was men of color, so that's why the trip was taken there.

John Crane:

Was it a retreat house sort of thing?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. I would definitely say that it was a retreat home, but that gave the connection of Newell and why they took us to Waveland every year, which was a fun time.

John Crane:

Was this all the children from the Rosenwald School or was it just Newell related children, or was it a mixture of both?

Adrian Calvin:

So John, what I would say is us knowing that Newell was the first Black church in the city of Mandeville, and I don't want to say all of the churches... The rest of the churches in Mandeville were birthed out of Newell.

John Crane:

I've been actually saying that because I've had several people tell me that. Call it the mother church.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. The thing about it is that four Baptist churches were... Three Baptist churches were open. But when you look back on it, and in listening to my grandmother, the place that they worshiped was with Newell because, again, that was the only church. So, those three individual churches that came up and were birthed, some of the members were members that came directly from Newell.

John Crane:

Right. What I heard, and I don't know if it's actually true, but all those churches came about in the 1910. So, there was a forty-year history almost.

Adrian Calvin:

That was a forty-year. Yeah.

John Crane:

Of where it was Newell.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

And then I've never heard the story of why they separated.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Yeah. The only thing is my grandmother just said that different families that were part of Newell then became a part of opening First Free Mission Baptist Church, Morning Star Baptist Church, Goodwill Baptist Church, but they started out in houses. And then...

John Crane:

The other thing that I've been told, and again, I think this is anecdotal, but I suspect it's true, is that each one of those churches in a sense represent a family or a small group of families.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

So if you go to Morning Star-

Adrian Calvin:

Absolutely.

John Crane:

... you're going to run into a certain number of names. If you go to Free Mission, you're going to run into a different sort of names. Everybody's related, but it's kind of the core of each family.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. There is a family name that each one of those churches represents. And it's so funny growing up because you would hear people saying, "Where are you going?" "We're going over there by the Edgerton's Church."

John Crane:

Which was the Edgerton's church? Was that-

Adrian Calvin:

It was the First Free Mission.

John Crane:

First Free Mission. Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Baptist Church. And if you were going up to Goodwill, we're going over there by the Sam's Church, and there was the Sams and the Bivens, and that's how that came about. Morning Star was pretty much developed out of the Fairley family.

John Crane:

Fairley. Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Mr. Simi Fairley, who still lives today over on Kleber Street. His father was the mainstay and pretty much the creator of Morning Star Baptist Church. So yeah. You're right that that's the names that they would just throw out. But when they mentioned the Methodist Church, they could just say, "Well, we're going over to Newell Chapel," because it was just Newell Chapel Methodist Church at the time. And like I said, you did have about 15 or 20 families that made up Newell Chapel. And I'm sure way before I came, it may have been more than that, but as I grew up, I was able to identify those 10 to 15 families.

John Crane:

Do you remember the names of some of them?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, of course. You had the Laurants. The Andersons was another family name. There was a Rose Lee Cromedy, and I forgot her husband's name right off that. That was a name. There's a small part of a Johnson group that was a part of Newell at the time. You could pretty much lump us in with the Laurants, although I think we had our own identity outside of the Laurent name. I'm just trying to think of some of the names that were there.

John Crane:

Did you ever run into a name called Delaney? Is that...

Adrian Calvin:

No sir.

John Crane:

Not one that ever-

Adrian Calvin:

That's not a name-

John Crane:

... came up with-

Adrian Calvin:

... that I would be familiar with or that I ever heard through my grandmother.

John Crane:

Yes. Yes.

Adrian Calvin:

And I would be interested in knowing where that name...

John Crane:

Well, the association with that name is we're getting ready to put a program on. This is the 130th year of the Dew Drop up here.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. Right.

John Crane:

And so, we're putting a program on June the 8th, which is open to the public. And there's a fellow that's coming, and there was a musician that came from Mandeville with the last name of Delaney-

Adrian Calvin:

Okay. Okay.

John Crane:

... who apparently was very famous, but I haven't been able to find anybody-

Adrian Calvin:

Right. Right.

John Crane:

... who remembers him.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, no.

John Crane:

So it may have been a very early name that they moved on somewhere or something, or died out. You just never know.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

So, tell me about the Waveland trip. What was exciting and fun about that, or that you recollected? Was it a one-day trip?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes, it was a one-day trip and we loaded up on the bus. I can't tell you how many people were on that bus as a kid, but I think the biggest thing about it from me as being a little kid was the fact that we were getting out of Mandeville, number one for the day.

John Crane:

Make a road trip.

Adrian Calvin:

And we were going to the beach, and that was probably the most exciting thing about the Waveland trip. And I was very specific later asking my grandmother, "Why did we go to Waveland?" And she brought it to my attention that there was a retreat home for the Black ministers that were in the ministry and preaching in a Methodist church at the time.

John Crane:

So they could go there and spend a week or something like that, like a summer vacation or something like that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. That is what-

John Crane:

What it was for.

Adrian Calvin:

... she explained the purpose of that home being there, which is a big home. So, it gave us access to bathrooms, stuff like that.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

Food. Some of the food was out on the beach, that they would stretch out quilts and blankets out on the beach for us to be able to eat, and then at the same time, be in the sand, be in the water, beach ball all over the place. It was just a-

John Crane:

A fun day.

Adrian Calvin:

... fun trip. It was a really fun thing. And the thing about it is that it was open to anyone. It didn't matter what church you went to, but it was open to anyone that wanted to go and have permission to go on this trip. It was for the kids, but the parents as well I think made it a huge success.

John Crane:

So, tell me a little bit about the schools that you went to in Mandeville. Your entire schooling was here in Mandeville.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. Yeah. So I attended all of the Mandeville schools, which was Mandeville Elementary and then Mandeville Middle School. So, Mandeville Elementary for me was first through fourth grade, and then Mandeville Middle School is where Woodlake is now. It was grades fifth, sixth, and seventh, and then high school became eight through 12th during my time there. And what's ironic about it is that we had a homecoming parade every year. And so, the lower grade had to build the bonfire. And so as eighth graders, we had to build the bonfire down at the harbor because the parade would start from Mandeville. It was Mandeville High at the time. Start from there.

John Crane:

Right back here off of-

Adrian Calvin:

Carondelet.

John Crane:

... Carondelet Street.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And it came down to the lakefront. And then from the lakefront, it went down to the harbor, which was something really fun, but getting to where I was... How I can identify with it. So at the end of our eighth grade year, the new high school was built, which is up there off of West Causeway approach now.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

And so, we became freshmen. And being freshmen, we had to build a bonfire again. So, we're the only class in history of the school that had to build the bonfire as eighth graders and then turn around and have to do it again as ninth graders, because they left the eighth grade at what was Mandeville High, then became Mandeville Junior High.

John Crane:

Junior high. What year did you graduate from?

Adrian Calvin:

I graduated in 1983. And after graduating... I played baseball for Mandeville High. So after graduating, I went on to... It wasn't a scholarship, but my room and board was paid for and my books were paid for, for me to become a member of UNO's Privateer Baseball, which back then was very, very good. It was probably the best baseball team in the state. I can remember beating LSU was absolutely-

John Crane:

What you did.

Adrian Calvin:

... difficult for us to do.

John Crane:

But did you beat them?

Adrian Calvin:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Nationally, UNO won some big championships. So John, how this happened for me, is that my junior year...

John Crane:

There we go. Now it's started again.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. So my junior year...

John Crane:

I'll put it on airplane mode while I'm at it.

Adrian Calvin:

Got to see if it will record?

John Crane:

That's what I'm going to check real quick. Let's see here. Settings. Let's see. Airplane mode. And then, let's go back and look at it real quick. Sorry about this. Yes, it's still recording. Yeah. What position did you play?

Adrian Calvin:

In my junior year that I played, I was in right field. And then my senior year, I played center field, but in my junior year, we were district champs. And then, we went first round in playoffs, and we won. And then, we went to regionals, which was at our place that year playing Catholic of Baton Rouge. And at that time, I was pretty much headed to probably Texas Southern if I wanted to continue playing

baseball. And we lost to Catholic Baton Rouge my junior year, like two to one. But the funny thing about it was that Coach Maestri, his staff, which was coach at UNO, they were there to watch two kids from Catholic of Baton Rouge play.

And of course, after the game, like I said, we lost and we're crying because the seniors are crying because it's their last game. And then, my coach comes up to me and says, "You had to clean your face up real fast. UNO wants to talk to you." And I'm like, "UNO wants to talk to me." I mean, knowing the status of UNO now. I spoke to them, and they told me, "We're going to watch you. Stays healthy and do the things that you're doing, we may want you to become a part of us." And so my senior year, I was steady and improved. And then, that's how I arrived at UNO.

But the funny thing about it is once they got me there, they found out that I was pretty quick on the bases and I could run a fly ball down everywhere, but I had a weak arm. My on base percentage was always high because I could lay down a bunt, and beat it, and get to first base. But after two years of that, Coach Maestri was like, "I'm going to have to take part of this. And we got some incoming players that we need to help out." And I understood. I mean, I was just grateful that I had that opportunity thinking back then. It's such a great program to be a part of. So that's how that happened. After college, I came back to Mandeville and-

John Crane:

What did you study in college?

Adrian Calvin:

Communications Education at UNO, and came back. Graduate in '83, but I came back in '89 and joined the staff at Mandeville Junior High.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

In the special education department as a resource tutor teacher. And then, also boys basketball coach and the boys soccer coach. And just so many things developed after that. Started my own driving school with another coach, things like that transpired. It was in 1997 is when I knew that God was telling me to continue going to Newell. And those years, my brothers individually joined the church. But for me, it was in 1997 when God led me to being a full-time member of Newell United Methodist Church.

John Crane:

So this was Pastor Robertson?

Adrian Calvin:

This was under Pastor Robinson. He came, I want to say, in 1992. And the funny part about it... Am I close?

John Crane:

You're close.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

'92.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

'92 to 2014.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. So the funny part about it was Newell was a church, and you have the lineages right there of the pastors. And you can see, none of them were here for more than four or five years. There's a couple that were here longer than that. I think Pastor Augustine, probably Pastor O.W. Christopher. I remember them specifically. And then of course, all the ones from the, I guess, the '80s to current. Like I said, I would attend the church maybe twice a month, because like I said, that was where my grandmother was. And growing up in her house, you're going to go to church, whether you go to-

John Crane:

She didn't care where you went to church, you were going to church.

Adrian Calvin:

Our Lady of the Lake or here. And I'll never forget when they first got Pastor Robinson. I went to a service, and afterwards we got home because we all had breakfast at my grandmother's house, like 15, 20 people come over for breakfast after church. But I mentioned to them, I said, "Oh, my God." I said, "Y'all just let the conference give y'all anybody for a preacher." I said, Pastor Robinson cannot preach. He is not a good preacher."

So from that period for me and him '92, and then me joining in '97, Pastor Robinson took off. And it seemed as though all roads led to Newell United Methodist Church. The congregation was at its highest point when he became pastor at church. And I would say, at that time, we had over a hundred members. And on a bad Sunday, we still had 40 or 45 people attending church, and that's a lot.

John Crane:

That is a lot.

Adrian Calvin:

So on special occasions and events that we had, people were parking as far down as where you guys currently live.

John Crane:

All the way down the street.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes, and the side streets as well. And they had to open the windows of the church because people couldn't get in. Just like down at Dew Drop Hall right now, there's a ton of chairs out. Well, people would-

John Crane:

So you actually had chairs outside.

Adrian Calvin:

Outside. Yep.

John Crane:

Wow.

Adrian Calvin:

Under Pastor Robinson's leadership. And so let me get back to Brother Arthur Laurant, who I told you was... I'm going to call it the creator, because he was the head that the women looked up to and respected, and he was getting up in age. And after my joining, I want to say two years at the most, or maybe a year and a half, that I was participating on programs. And he got a feeling, that I don't know where. But after the service one Sunday, he said that, "I need to take you under my wings because somebody's going to have to step in because I'm up in age."

And so, that made me take a deep breath because it's an awesome responsibility and it's not a easy one. And a lot of prayer and with Pastor Robinson also being in favor of that with him, that's where my meat and potatoes began. And I could be on all the ins and outs of everything about Newell. And what I didn't know, I had the best resource at her house, and that was my grandmother. And she could tell me whatever it is that I needed to know or ask. Or any questions that I had, she was able to answer to the best of her ability, so.

John Crane:

So before we move directly to Newell, do you have family as well? Do you have-

Adrian Calvin:

I'm single.

John Crane:

Single. Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Never married. Still have the same genuine friend right now. She and I are close, but...

John Crane:

Always ask that ..

Adrian Calvin:

If it was someone to marry, she would be the one. And it's crazy to say nowadays, because she and I talk about it every single day that passes is here I am United Methodist, and she was Church of God in Christ. And I still had a lot of play going on with me. And Church of God in Christ is just like, it was women couldn't wear pants. I mean, it was just-

John Crane:

Very conservative.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. I'm going to tell you, at that time, I didn't mind still drinking a beer or drinking couple glasses of wine or what have you. But with her, it was not something that I would do out of respect for her. But there was a lot that took place inside of that as well because I was very consumed with my family being the one who had had success and growing up, so.

John Crane:

Was your entire career in the school system, basically?

Adrian Calvin:

Well, yeah.

John Crane:

But you had ancillary businesses.

Adrian Calvin:

Right, right.

John Crane:

But you were still employed at the school teaching.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

And-

Adrian Calvin:

Coaching.

John Crane:

Before we jump into Newell, tell me about schools in Mandeville. You talked about the schools you went to.

Adrian Calvin:

Mm-hmm.

John Crane:

We talked a little bit about the Rosenwald School.

Adrian Calvin:

Okay. Yeah.

John Crane:

Do you know who founded the Rosenwald?

Adrian Calvin:

No.

John Crane:

Who was involved in that?

Adrian Calvin:

Well, I know the history of the Rosenwalds, and I do have a little background on where the Tyler Thomas Park is, and I'm sure you've heard this.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

There was a Rosenwald School. I think it was three stories at the time. And I can't think of the lady's name right now, but she was the name for the Rosen. She was like the everything, the principal, the teacher, the whole nine yards. And what I want to also tell you, John, is that where Woodlake is, was a part of the Rosenwald School.

John Crane:

In fact, the old Mandeville Historic Association put a plaque on there.

Adrian Calvin:

Okay.

John Crane:

It was actually called Rosenwald up until 1971, I think.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, yeah.

John Crane:

Then, they closed it for a couple of years, and then it came back as Woodlake.

Adrian Calvin:

Mm-hmm.

John Crane:

And guess what? None of those people knew that.

Adrian Calvin:

Right, right.

John Crane:

They didn't have a clue.

Adrian Calvin:

The only other person that knows that information close to perfect would be Simi Fairley.

John Crane:

Okay. I mean, he was part of the plaque.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

And they had a ceremony with the mayor and everything. So I mean, it's documented.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

But up until that time, I think people that were involved in that school had lost.

Adrian Calvin:

So my understanding was when the Rosenwald School closed here, those students had to go to St. Tammany.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

Rosenwald.

John Crane:

Some of them went to Slidell and some of them went to Covington.

Adrian Calvin:

It was called St. Tammany.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

And then, some went to the Covington Rosenwald.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

But if I could think of the lady's name, but...

John Crane:

I think I've got it in another... Because I have several of the folks I've interviewed. I've done Simi Fairley and a number of other folks who were involved, and they all talk about this one woman.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

Who basically, she was it.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. She was it.

John Crane:

I think she lived in New Orleans, or she had family from New Orleans.

Adrian Calvin:

Mm-hmm, had family.

John Crane:

She would even take students to New Orleans.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

To work in her house. But then, she would take them on outings.

Adrian Calvin:

Exactly.

John Crane:

And things like that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. Yeah. And so, the only other school... I guess we'll get into that. But the only other school that existed prior to that for the Black children was Newell Chapel.

John Crane:

Really? Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

It was a two or three room place, and I think it existed where the parsonage is.

John Crane:

Just this last week, I came across aerial photo thing where they have historic. The earliest one they have is 1936. And you can clearly see Newell Chapel.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

But there's a building, not quite where the parsonage is, but kind of at an angle.

Adrian Calvin:

And I would say that that was-

John Crane:

That was the school building.

Adrian Calvin:

That was the school.

John Crane:

Wow.

Adrian Calvin:

That was a school.

John Crane:

I mean, it's close to where the current parsonage is, but it's a different orientation toward the street.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

And so, I was really interested in that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

I mean, was there something about Newell and education? Because I know in that article, the original Charter of Newell was education was a part of it. And when they sold the property to us, actually.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

We were told, and it was confirmed, that they took the money and went to Dillard.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

I mean, I think they almost gave a hundred percent of it, with the exception of maybe what they had to pay the broker or something like that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. So when the district superintendent, when we called her in... Well, I might be going... Because this is going to take you to the end of Newell.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

So.

John Crane:

Well, let's start early.

Adrian Calvin:

All right.

John Crane:

With what you know early, and then we'll move up to the end and kind of how that happened or whatever you want to bring to light about that.

Adrian Calvin:

So at the age of five or six, I can remember going to Newell Chapel and remember it being the little wooden church.

John Crane:

Okay. The brick hadn't been put on yet.

Adrian Calvin:

No, it hadn't been put on yet. So I do remember it as a kid of being that little. It was wooden. And then, I think somewhere along the way, they may have done some vinyl siding or something similar to it. And then, in 1971 is when I want to say that that's when they put the brick. And all they did was-

John Crane:

They just put a shell around.

Adrian Calvin:

It's where they hang the same thing. Yeah.

John Crane:

They just put a shell around.

Adrian Calvin:

Put a shell around it.

John Crane:

Do you remember when you went to Newell as a young child? Do you remember, was there one door or was there two doors?

Adrian Calvin:

One door.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Because when I was up in the attic above the entrance, I can see where the current door is.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

There was a narrower door.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

But it was taller.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. And I think from what my grandmother said was the unevenness about it, but they needed to have it, because funerals.

John Crane:

Was why they had the double doors?

Adrian Calvin:

They were having a hard time getting a casket-

John Crane:

Oh, that's why they opened it up.

Adrian Calvin:

... into the church.

John Crane:

Oh, okay.

Adrian Calvin:

So she said that they had to widen it in order for funeral homes to get the casket-

John Crane:

To be able to bring the casket in.

Adrian Calvin:

... into the church.

John Crane:
For the service.

Adrian Calvin:
Prior to that, it was-

John Crane:
Was it a single door or was it-

Adrian Calvin:
It was the double door. Yeah, you had one door that was bigger, as I remember. And then, I think it was like your standard size.

John Crane:
Okay.

Adrian Calvin:
And I don't know if that was in '71 when they did that or before that that they did the double doors.

John Crane:
Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:
And I'm sure it may have been before that. I'm just not a-

John Crane:
Right.

Adrian Calvin:
... hundred percent sure about it.

John Crane:
Just looking at the architecture. I mean, the thing I can tell is that the double doors were built into the brick facade.

Adrian Calvin:
Right.

John Crane:
Now, whether they had cut into the... Because the original building is barge board.

Adrian Calvin:
Oh, yeah. Yeah.

John Crane:

You know?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Big old thick, that thick, that line.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And you see the doors in the church were not standard doors. Like to go to the back of the church, there were narrow doors where now I see that, you know?

John Crane:

Yep.

Adrian Calvin:

Is it the standard size because-

John Crane:

Well, we did it for the handicap.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. The handicap.

John Crane:

It has to be 36 inches or whatever. Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

Right, right. So yeah, '71 is when I remembered the red brick going up around the church, which of course, like I said, my grandmother was involved in that.

John Crane:

Was there a bell tower in that original church, do you remember?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes, there was.

John Crane:

Where was it? Was it-

Adrian Calvin:

Wait. No. Do we have a steeple?

John Crane:

I mean, I think there was a steeple.

Adrian Calvin:

I want to say.

John Crane:

I think it was on the northern side of the church by the entrance.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

Amy Crane:

Did the aerial picture that you looked at show anything or you didn't really know?

Adrian Calvin:

I can remember a rope that came down in the little small foyer area where they could ring the bell.

Amy Crane:

But when we looked at that old picture-

Adrian Calvin:

It said no.

Amy Crane:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

Okay. And I'm going to tell you that the bell that's there right now is the bell that had been there for years and years and years. And what took place was that, a group was like, "Hey, we keeping this bell in the parsonage. We should be able to find a way to hang it out front the church." And that was done in the '90s. That was done in my time.

John Crane:

When it was put out there.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. When they put it back up, we were still under Pastor Robinson when it was done. But at some point, there was something that... Because I can remember. I remember if you walk into that foyer area, there's an opening. I don't know if y'all closed it in, but there was an opening.

Amy Crane:

I mean, there's one of those, get a ladder and climb up to the attic type of holes

Adrian Calvin:

Get a ladder. Yes.

Amy Crane:

You know?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. And I don't know why I want to think that that bell was up in there somewhere. I don't know.

Amy Crane:

It seemed like a place for it.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

Amy Crane:

The way it's all framed in and changed-

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

Amy Crane:

... and all that.

Adrian Calvin:

Because it was a bell that they rung, I know, for New Year's all the time is my true belief or remembrance of it. And that bell that's out there right now, that is the original bell.

John Crane:

So you can actually see it. So this is 1936. So this is Newell Chapel right here. This is that building I was telling you. It's got a little different orientation because-

Adrian Calvin:

I see it. Yeah.

John Crane:

... the parsonage. I mean, the parsonage is on exact line and the same orientation.

Adrian Calvin:

Mm-hmm.

John Crane:

But see how that one's aimed a little bit different?

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

But I can see if you look right there.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. That's a bell.

John Crane:

It looks like a bell tower.

Adrian Calvin:

It was a bell tower.

John Crane:

And I don't know why we got all this stuff on.

Adrian Calvin:

No, that's okay. I remember it coming down, the bell itself. I don't know everything about it, but I do know that it was there. And the bell that's there now-

John Crane:

It's the same bell.

Adrian Calvin:

John, it's the same bell.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

Because it has a manufacturer's name, and I bet we can actually figure out when it was actually made. I'm sure a lot of those records, because bells were important things.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

I mean, for you, this would've been like '67, '68, or even after that?

Adrian Calvin:

What's that?

John Crane:

When you were going there and it was still a white church, little country looking church.

Adrian Calvin:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was. Yeah.

John Crane:

So you attended it for several years when it was still a siding and all that sort of thing before they put the-

Adrian Calvin:

Like I said, just going to church there, because we went to church somewhere, so.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

I do remember it as the wooden church.

John Crane:

Right, right.

Adrian Calvin:

Because they didn't close it in until, like I said, '71.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

And I would've been what? I don't know, six, seven years old.

John Crane:

Right.

Adrian Calvin:

I would say.

John Crane:

So those would've been very early memories for you.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

In the late '60s, maybe '69 or '68, something like that.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

Wow.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

That's pretty fascinating.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. You know, I left out an important couple of names. The Butlers was a name that was in the church. Oh, gosh. I can't think of... Marie. It's Pastor Darlene Moore's family.

John Crane:

Okay. So the Moores went there also?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. And they were a very integral part. They played a big part in Newell success in those days. That name slipped me, but that was a very important group of people to the church as well.

John Crane:

And she went on to have a career as a pastor.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. She graduated a year before me in high school. We all sang in the choir down here. And she went on to Dillard, and then to the church out... I mean, a school out in Atlanta, and came back and became a pastor in the Louisiana Conference. And she spent, I think, all 25 years pastoring in the conference. We never got her, but she was still the only daughter birthed out of Newell Chapel to go in and be a pastor in the United Methodist Church.

But of course, she came back on as many occasions that we could get her to come and preach, and she would. She was just dynamic. You know, a wonderful, wonderful person, a wonderful pastor. And

obviously for me, a friend as well. But like I said, I was a year, maybe two years behind her. I'm not sure. But yeah, we fellowshiped in a lot of stuff as kids coming up in Newell Chapel.

John Crane:

So moving on into the '70s, you were attending, not regularly. You were going to Lady of the Lake sometime. You were coming to Newell Chapel sometime back and forth.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

Anything special in those years with regard to, that you remember about Newell? What was the congregation? Were you talking 25, 30 people at that time?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. I would say about 20, 25 people you would see on a Sunday. I was fascinated with the pastors, because they were sending them so frequent. And reason being, and this is really something that has a lot to do with it. In those early years, I would say in the '60s and the '70s, okay? Newell was a sister church to Hartzell Mount Zion United Methodist Church, which is in Slidell.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Okay. So my understanding that we joined, my grandmother said they joined into the United Methodist Church. The biggest reason for it was, that they knew that they would have a pastor assigned to their church. When the breakup went in somewhere in the era of the Methodist Episcopal, and here became the United Methodist. And they thought that this was the best way to go.

Anyway, with Hartzell being the bigger church, and Newell being the sister church, whomever the pastor that Hartzell wanted, Newell didn't have a choice. That was their pastor. Newell was the 8:00 service for that pastor. Hartzell Mt Zion in Slidell was the 11:00 service for that pastor.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Which also had his own parsonage down there.

John Crane:

So he lived in Slidell.

Adrian Calvin:

He lived in Slidell.

John Crane:

Okay

Adrian Calvin:

So that is a huge part in explaining when you see a lot of the quick, fast changes in those '60s through current to existed. No, not current, because at a point it stopped because we were on our own then. It was because we had to go.

John Crane:

With what they had.

Adrian Calvin:

Whatever Hartzell wanted. So just for example, we love Pastor O.W. Christopher, and I was a kid old enough to remember him, and if there was any conflict or if there was any dislike with Hartzell and the Pastor-

John Crane:

'71, '76.

Adrian Calvin:

And Hartzell requests a new pastor, he couldn't just stay with us. And this congregation was in love with Pastor Christopher, second to Pastor Robinson. So there was a pastor at Hartzell is what Newell received.

John Crane:

And at that time it wasn't, my brother-in-law is a Methodist minister and he's unusual because he stayed at churches for long period of times. But I think they used to do where every conference, every year, they didn't know where they were going from the conference. They used to say they would show up at the conference with their bags packed.

Adrian Calvin:

Because they didn't know where they were going.

John Crane:

Where they were going next.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Did that lead a certain instability to the church or did it mean that the local leadership had to take control and how did that work out?

Adrian Calvin:

It's pretty obvious to me and to everyone else when we were on our own doing the things that we needed to do is when Pastor Robinson got there. And right before him was Pastor Smith, but Pastor Smith was only there for 14 months because they just uprooted him in the middle. Now, we were no longer a part of Hartzell, but I mean, he was another great that they fell in love with. And I mean, after, I don't know, 16 months or however many months it was that Louis Smith was there.

John Crane:

Let's see, right there. There he is, there he is.

Adrian Calvin:

No no, Louis Smith. Yeah.

John Crane:

'89, '91.

Adrian Calvin:

So right. So when Louis Smith got uprooted, because at '89, two years at the most, not even quite two years, and I know the story behind it, but a pastor had to be removed up in Bogalusa where he's from. Him and Robinson are from Varnado area but something transpired with the pastor of two churches in Bogalusa, and they just uprooted Smith and there was no one-

John Crane:

To follow.

Adrian Calvin:

To send for us. And so they were like, Nolan hadn't even finished schooling yet. He hadn't even finished his schooling. And so they decided to just take him on because he would come almost every Sunday with Pastor Smith just learning the ropes, everything.

John Crane:

So he was sort of apprenticing with him.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. So stability came in.

John Crane:

But that was really the first time there was stability in the church.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. In the church. And that's why I say the '90s through the 2000s, I mean, those early 2000s were the greatest years from Newell, from what my grandmother said. And then from what we saw.

John Crane:

Let me ask you, so this is off the wall. Do you know where the name Newell comes from?

Adrian Calvin:

I do not know.

John Crane:

It's an important name because it's all over the place in churches.

Adrian Calvin:

I know.

John Crane:

But someday I'm going to find out who it is.

Adrian Calvin:

And I asked my grandmother, she couldn't recall where it came from. And she had talked to, as I told you, Arthur Laurent and I don't know, because he would've been the one to be able to tell us where it came from, but I don't know.

John Crane:

So moving on, so there was this constant overturn of pastors until you got to Pastor Robinson. Then when Pastor Robinson showed up, was there a different level of programming and that sort of thing that came into place because.

Adrian Calvin:

Absolutely.

John Crane:

So what was it like before him in terms of, I don't know, Sunday school, fellowship groups, whatever.

Adrian Calvin:

So prior to Pastor Robinson, like I told you, our pastor was a part of Hartzell. And so at the eight o'clock service, which he was there for, at the end of that, I mean he-

John Crane:

He's gone.

Adrian Calvin:

He's gone. He had to go to-

John Crane:

He had to drive 30, 40 miles.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, to Slidell. So you didn't see Sunday School, according to my grandmother. And you didn't see that midweek Bible study under any of those pastors prior to Nolan coming in. And slowly, he injected the Sunday school after church because he didn't have to go to another church at the time. He didn't have to go to another church. So he was able to develop that. Wednesday nights he would drive down and do Bible study, and a lot of us was just no part of that. He would probably have four people, five people, but he would drive those 91 miles round trip to come and do that. And so the elders in the church started pushing the young adults and telling us, "Hey, he's making a commitment, so we need to make some sort of a commitment." There was never, they did it, but it was not done on a level of Pastor Robinson, the vacation Bible School each summer.

They did it on a Thursday, Friday, and that Saturday they would have something, but it was never truly developed. And as the young adults came on, and this was the precious thing about Newell, the elders got behind us and said, "Look, we're getting older and we'll be patient, but we need you all to slowly step in and take on some of these responsibilities." So that's when things just broke, really open the doors to Newell where it was not unusual to have two or three families join Newell in a month, which was absolutely amazing. And that was under Robinson's leadership.

So there were very few programs that they had. I can always remember the Women in White, it was always done in August. And that was a program where the women stayed on that Sunday after service, and they covered all the pews with the white sheets. All the women that attended that program in the evening, was all dressed in white. And that was one of the biggest programs that Newell had. And everyone would brag on the Women in White program. And Pastor Robinson just took that to a whole another level as far as resources leading up prior to that, which just made it blossom. But then out of that..., well, so on his seventh year being with us is when we said that, we kind of were good with the fact that he was with us, but we looked at what we were paying him and which is really was pennies compared to-

John Crane:

Did he have his own, was he a, what do they call it, a tent maker where he had another job?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

As well.

Adrian Calvin:

He worked for the State.

John Crane:

So he worked for the State.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

But then he was a preacher as well.

Adrian Calvin:

He was a preacher as well.

John Crane:

Was that common to the preachers that you had, that they were bi-vocational?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. Right. Unless they were a full-time pastor. If you're a full-time pastor, then-

John Crane:

The church supports.

Adrian Calvin:

... the church was it, so Pastor Robinson was employed by the State, so yeah, he couldn't have lived off of what we were paying him. But after his seventh year being a year of completion as we related to with the Bible, that's when we decided that, behind his back, that we would do a pastor's appreciation on that seventh year. We told him that we were having some, we told a little lie, that we're having some type of program and he needed to dress up really well and his wife needed to dress up. She knew about it, but he didn't.

And so we pulled that off on him because like I told you, that was one of those programs that if you all were here in '97, well, you had cars parked all along the way and on the little side street there, and then going to the lakefront because he meant that much to us. And we didn't feel good about what we were having to pay him. And so that was probably the greatest gift to him, is the fact that we surprised him with a pastor's appreciation on his seventh year, and I think we were able to give him \$5,000.

John Crane:

Oh, wow.

Adrian Calvin:

It was, yeah.

John Crane:

Blew his mind.

Adrian Calvin:

So from that seventh year on, he had an appreciation every year after that. And I do remember being the lay leader with Pastor Robinson under his seventh year. And there was a couple times, I was a lay leader and a PPR chair, and there was a couple of times my district-

John Crane:

PPR chair, what is that?

Adrian Calvin:

Public, parish, public relations, which it's just something that was a part of church. I did not like it, to be honest with you, because that person pretty much controlled if we're going to keep our pastor or if we're going to request for another or if we want to meet with the district superintendent. And the chair of that committee had five members on it, so we did the evaluations. You had to do an evaluation of a pastor. I just thought that was-

John Crane:

Ridiculous.

Adrian Calvin:

Unheard of.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

But he received-

John Crane:

We don't lose our, Yeah, we're still good.

Adrian Calvin:

So there were two times within those seven years, I have to backtrack that this superintendent at the time, whomever it was, did call me and asked me to try to fill out the congregation and to fill out Pastor Robinson a little bit. Because now he has come in, he has finishes school, and this little church is growing by leaps and bounds. They're finally on their own. They're not attached to no other church. Matter of fact, he had a second church, which was in Springfield, but we were considered the big church. So we were on the go and the conference had other pastoral openings that they needed to fill for churches that had two and 300 member congregations. So a call would be put in to me and me having to speak with some of the key members in the church. And of course, they're all against it.

And my conversations with Pastor Robinson would always be, "You're growing. You're getting bigger. Wouldn't you want to consider?" And he said, "Absolutely not." He's like, "This is where I'm supposed to be." And I remember telling the congregation and the people that were there on his seventh year that, "Yes, when I first came to Newell with my grandmother to listen, I mean to serve as what Pastor Robinson had become the pastor." And I told them like, "That guy cannot preach. I don't know why they gave you all this man you all let him send you all anybody."

And on that seventh year, well, we appreciated him. And I remember telling people that I was the one who said this guy couldn't preach. And I said, now we're fighting like hell to keep him, because we've already gotten two calls from the conference wanting to move him. And of course, everybody laughed at that, but at the same time, we were very serious about it. Pastor Robinson brought the love to Newell United Methodist Church. Members out of Free Mission joined, member out of Morning Star joined, members like... And he started to feel as though, "Hey, I don't want these pastors thinking I'm trying to take their members." He was just a brighter star that had never been seen in this community.

And so he just grew by leaps and bounds here. And he brought the church a really long way. And like I said, he opened up more programs. We had a really true good church anniversary every year, a family and friends day service once a year. Of course, we had his appreciation. There was just several programs that he instituted. And let me not, I'd terribly be remiss if I didn't say this, that this is when we had the most youth attending Newell, because we offered a lot to the youth. And his vision through the elders and the elders supporting the young adults and pushing to involve the children made things so easy. You found Newell not being a half a church prior to him and just a well-rounded church that had something to offer for, it didn't matter.

John Crane:

So tell me a little bit about a typical Sunday at Newell. Did you all have communion, once a quarter, once a week? Did you have it every week or?

Adrian Calvin:

In the United Methodist Church, you have communion one Sunday out of the month. And the first Sunday was always our first communion, because Hartzell, that's when their first communion was. So we followed suit. So the pastor didn't have to prepare different messages for two congregations, but it was first Sunday of every month we had communion. And that was a very traditional service. I say traditional, it's just your regular United Methodist Church service. Your second Sunday was geared towards the teenagers more so. And third Sunday was more the Young Adults service. And then the fourth Sunday was your youth service. So whereas prior to him, all four Sundays was traditional. And although you had children coming, teenagers coming, they didn't get the message.

John Crane:

So did the musical style change.

Adrian Calvin:

Oh, wow yes.

John Crane:

So what did you have? What was the music in the early days? Was it more traditional hymns?

Adrian Calvin:

It was traditional hymns. I don't-

John Crane:

Were there organ or something?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. No, they had an organ at that time. But the music on first Sunday was same music on fourth Sunday. It did not change a lot.

John Crane:

There was no variation.

Adrian Calvin:

It wasn't music that, even with me going to my early ages that I could identify with, learn the hymns. But as far as identifying them in God, sometimes it was hard. As you grow older, you see different, because I'm now more in tune to the old hymns than I am with the more progressive and-

John Crane:

Contemporary stuff.

Adrian Calvin:

Contemporary music that they're singing today. But I think John, the reason why we grew, was under Pastor Robinson no doubt, but that he changed the style of the services, and it was welcomed by everyone. You didn't have the older people didn't say, "No, no, no." I mean, they fell in tune to it.

John Crane:

They got behind it.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And so we had different musicians. I think the church went through, let's see, one, two, three, four musicians just in Pastor Rob... No, not in Pastor Robinson's team, that's not right. But in the '70s, in the '60s and the '70s, they had a lady, her name was..., they called her Mickey Johnson. I forgot her real name. So she worked at Southeast Hospital as a registered nurse overnight, 11:00 to 07:00 on Sundays, Saturday into Sunday morning. But then she came and she was the musician, and she was awesome for my grandmother and them because they had choirs. And so-

John Crane:

Oh, wow. She came off of the graveyard shift-

Adrian Calvin:

Of the graveyard shift and-

John Crane:

... to led the choirs.

Adrian Calvin:

...getting that spirit on again, catching, that's tough, but you couldn't tell that she just came off of working-

John Crane:

12 hours.

Adrian Calvin:

Eight hours, 12 hours, whatever it was, especially at Southeast at the time, because-

John Crane:

It was stresses.

Adrian Calvin:

Right, it was stresses. And so after she left the daughter of Mr. Arthur Laurant, she became the musician, Rose Matile Laurant. And God, I don't know how to get in touch with her, but you would have some great pleasure in sitting down talking to her, because the Laurants didn't have kids of their own, so they had not adopted, but I forgot the name.

John Crane:

Like a foster child.

Adrian Calvin:

Foster parents. Yeah, they were foster parents for so many kids, but she was one of the ones that really stuck with them. So she would have a lot of history too. She became our musician and a choir start it back over developing again under her. And then we had, after her, after she left, we had Minister Barney, and he was throughout Reverend Robinson's tenure, so that made the music ministry even better. In the early days, how dare you bring a set of drums into that church? But then the older people adapted to it. And-

John Crane:

So it moved from an organ to guitars to-

Adrian Calvin:

An organ, from organ to drums and then-

John Crane:

So, the organ was still there, but then they added drums to the organ.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. The organ was always played, but they added drums to it, set of drums was brought in. And then even two guys came in and played guitar. We were kind of leery of that with the older people, but they found very good success in it.

John Crane:

So the organ, when you look at the front of the church off to the left, there's an insert. Was that where the organ was at?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Well, you know where the choir stand is, if you look up into the choir stand, there's an indenture there.

John Crane:

Right, right, right.

Adrian Calvin:

That's where the organ-

John Crane:

Okay, That's where it was.

Adrian Calvin:

... that's where it was. In later years they moved it down where you would've seen it facing the pulpit.

John Crane:

Okay, so she could play and lead the choir.

Adrian Calvin:

Right, and lead the choir as well. And then of course, we eventually got a choir director, which just brought a whole different atmosphere. And just the spirit of God was that much more powerful in those services, having such a young pastor that came on very strong.

John Crane:

What was his background? Was he born and raised in the Methodist church?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Pastor Robinson was born and raised in Varnado. He was a member of Mary's Chapel United Methodist Church in Varnado. And in my conversations with him, he was always a part of the choir, and then eventually was certified to teach Sunday School and Bible study. So to hear his calling, it's unique in itself, but he kept saying that God was tugging at him, but he couldn't figure out why. And his friends changed then where he went to changed and eventually he answered the call for God to be a pastor. And so as he grew up in Mary's Chapel United Methodist Church, he'll tell anyone that he got his true belonging to the United Methodist Church, being a pastor at Newell.

John Crane:

Okay. Tell me about relations with other, you've spoken about the relations with Hartzell and Slidell. Did you all have relationships like with St. Timothy or other Methodist churches around this area or?

Adrian Calvin:

You would find it funny because when St. Timothy's first started out, and it was extremely small, my grandmother told me, which I never paid attention to it, but that Newell, which all the churches do dinners to raise money. But that Newell had done several dinners-

John Crane:

To help raise money.

Adrian Calvin:

To help raise money for St Timothy's, and also went over and fellowship with St. Timothy's. And of course, as St. Timothy's, we would go and be a part of their service. And of course, the week of our

revival, St. Timothy's would bring their youth over one night. And you had kids everywhere and obviously sitting on the floor.

John Crane:

Because there wasn't enough room for everybody.

Adrian Calvin:

Just wasn't enough room. So the connection stayed there, and then they started a fellowship. The men started a Saturday's fellowship with us, and so we used to join them on Saturdays for breakfast and prayer and talk about a few things and just enjoy each other's company. So St. Timothy's believe it or not, we were able to give them some stuff and do not think for a second that they did not return the favor.

John Crane:

I know that the cross has a gift from the men's. Is that the men of St. Timothy?

Adrian Calvin:

Men of St. Timothy.

John Crane:

Okay. It doesn't actually say what church it is, it just says the men fellowship, men's fellowship or something.

Adrian Calvin:

Men of St. Timothy. But there were a couple years there where we struggled with being able to completely pay our apportionments every year. So I was telling Amy down at the church that all the monies that we raised, it was to pay for our apportionments and left little over to do any improving of the church. But that was-

John Crane:

So in the Methodist system, it's like, I'm going to say the word head tax, but based on the number of people we pay \$10 a person, whatever.

Adrian Calvin:

And it seemed like our costs always went up just because our congregation went up. We almost didn't want to send it in that we had 10 families join this year. I mean, it was just not something you want to do, but you had to.

John Crane:

So the annual conference did Newell send people to the annual conference?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes, they did. Matter of fact, as I was telling you, Rose Matile Laurant, which was Arthur Laurant's daughter. She was the representative for conference for us for many, many, many, many years. But she

was so happy to relinquish because she did enjoy it. But she had the church. Whoever goes to conference, the church pays for that person to go to conference. But then when Pastor Robinson, his wife came on and things were just going really, really good, and people didn't understand why we didn't send someone to go to conference.

It was because we paid for he and his wife to go to conference enough for them to drive, the hotel, the whole nine yards, and that they would give us a good report so we didn't have to send a third person because things are just going so well. And then eventually I was the first one that started. Pastor Robinson said that we needed to have a member instead of his wife being the one to come back and give us a report. That truly there needed to be a member. And so then that's when they started sending me to conference, which was just wonderful experiences to meet people from all over the state and to learn the different things and how the ministry works in what they do. But yeah.

John Crane:

So take me on, so Pastor Robinson's there. Y'all are getting into the early two thousands. Katrina comes along. What was the impact there?

Adrian Calvin:

Katrina wiped the church out.

John Crane:

In what respect?

Adrian Calvin:

The flooding inside the church. Of course, it ruined a lot of stuff. Now we went in and got stuff out prior to it, but stuff that was left behind had to go.

John Crane:

It was pretty much destroyed.

Adrian Calvin:

And it's amazing because of the pastor chairs that's in the ... I was telling Ms Amy. The pastor chairs in the church are still the ones that was there from when I was a kid. I mean, I know they replaced two, but they were there when I was a kid. I mean, I can vaguely remember, and they are still there now, but everything had to be replaced. It was like we had to sit back, take a deep breath and say, "Where do we go from here?"

John Crane:

Was there a thought at that time that maybe Newell should be closed or?

Adrian Calvin:

Not at all.

John Crane:

Not at all. You had a strong, you knew you were going forward.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Pastor Robinson envisioned that we can do this, but we can't do it alone. And there was a church, Batavia United Methodist Church up in Illinois. I'm not sure exactly where, but believe it or not, their congregation came down and provided resources. They provided us more resources than the Louisiana Conference did.

John Crane:

Just the one church?

Adrian Calvin:

Just this one church. And as a team went in and gutted everything out. Everything was paneling.

John Crane:

Was it like a plywood paneling?

Adrian Calvin:

Plywood paneling.

John Crane:

Okay. So it was all ruined.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. If you look at the windows in the church, the paneling that's left around there.

John Crane:

Okay. That's what it was.

Adrian Calvin:

That's what it was.

John Crane:

Wow. So that was a really dark paneling.

Adrian Calvin:

It was. It was. Which when the church was revitalized after Katrina, to walk in there, the place just brightened up.

John Crane:

Because it went to drywall from the dark panel.

Adrian Calvin:

And at the time, they couldn't afford sheetrock. That was the only way that ...

John Crane:

Is that when they put the acoustical tile up too? Or was that there before?

Adrian Calvin:

No, that was there before.

John Crane:

Okay. So maybe that was in the '71 era.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. That was not damaged or anything, but yeah. Why did they go that route with the acoutistic, I have no idea.

John Crane:

In terms of the lighting, was the lighting always the same when you grew up with a round?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, hanging.

John Crane:

Hanging in with the ceiling fans.

Adrian Calvin:

with the ceiling. Ceiling fans was probably put in the early nineties somewhere. Other than that, it was just two AC units, one on the right side there, and the other one was on the left.

John Crane:

They were window units, basically?

Adrian Calvin:

Window units. That's what they [inaudible 01:34:28].

John Crane:

Because I know they've got the plugs, the three-way plugs.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And so when they did the, okay, so the church was revitalized the best way we could.

John Crane:

Now a tree fell on the church, two tree fell on the church.

Adrian Calvin:

Two trees fell on the church.

John Crane:

So broke the roof, basically.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. Yeah.

John Crane:

So the roof had it collapsed into the church almost?

Adrian Calvin:

I don't think that it totally collapsed into the church because one of them was on an angle, I want to say in the back of the church.

John Crane:

Like a new addition kind of a thing.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. And I'm trying to think of the second one. What did it affect? I can't remember. Because just when you walked in, everything was just ruined.

John Crane:

That water had come down.

Adrian Calvin:

Water had come down, and the flooding inside the church was just, I mean, it didn't get above the windows, but it was up to your knees. So it was next to a miracle being able to get the church back up and running. Now, several churches offered us their facilities to carry on our services while we were trying to regroup. And this is the funniest thing. How do you explain this? I do not know, but the parsonage was not touched.

Amy Crane:

So there wasn't even water inside it?

Adrian Calvin:

No water, nothing. Nothing.

Amy Crane:

It doesn't seem higher.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, but it's lower.

John Crane:

Maybe it was like Noah's Ark or something.

Adrian Calvin:

It's hard to explain. I mean, no one can explain it. The floors had to be replaced. You're right. Okay. Yeah, the floors had to be replaced.

John Crane:

But the water didn't actually get in.

Adrian Calvin:

But you could still walk around and everything. I'm talking about a four-day job, and we had a new floors in the parsonage, and the majority of the congregation said, "No, we'd rather have services in the parsonage." And Pastor Robinson adapted to it. And of course we had that second side to the parsonage, thank God. And you had 20, 25 people that would ...

John Crane:

Would attend it.

Adrian Calvin:

Would attend. Although you may not be able to hear him, or you could hear him. I mean, you may not be able to see him, but ...

John Crane:

Some of them were in the old part of the building. Some of them were in the new.

Adrian Calvin:

Some of us was in the new part.

John Crane:

Yeah. How long did that go on? So Katrina was what, the 31st of August or something?

Adrian Calvin:

August, yeah. And I'm trying to think.

John Crane:

Or 29th of August, something like that.

Adrian Calvin:

It took ...

Amy Crane:

I think it was a year. [inaudible 01:37:45].

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. I'm thinking it took about 14 months we were out of the church. We got back in ...

John Crane:

Out of the sanctuary?

Adrian Calvin:

It was like a year and about four months.

John Crane:

Was the floors pre-Katrina carpeted as well?

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, it was. Let me tell you. The stories that was shared with me by my grandmother really made me upset in a lot of ways because, so there were the wooden floors in the church. I can't tell you what year they went with that indoor-outdoor carpet. Now they couldn't afford to do that, and they did not know any better. So I mean, they did not know any better. So the property directly across the street from the church was Newell's.

John Crane:

Oh, really?

Adrian Calvin:

And they were looking to, they needed something more than carpet, and there was a few other things that they needed for the church, and that was an exchange.

John Crane:

So they exchanged the property for?

Adrian Calvin:

For maybe 4,000 or \$5,000.

John Crane:

Oh my goodness.

Adrian Calvin:

Worth of help.

John Crane:

Oh my goodness. Somebody got a steal. It's interesting, when we put in that little ramp for the handicap, we cut through the platform and you could see there's two more floors underneath there. Well, there's plywood and then there's two wooden floors underneath. And I was just curious. And the other thing that's interesting too.

Adrian Calvin:

So I would think that in that process, whoever it was that promised no, not promised. Was in the deal that probably new flooring was put, one of those surfaces that ...

John Crane:

They just covered everything.

Adrian Calvin:

Just covered it but ...

John Crane:

I'm hoping that there's beautiful old floors under there.

Adrian Calvin:

And I really wish that because we had it at one time because we were walking around and there was more than just where Newell is that they own property too. And I just don't, right there in that area.

John Crane:

I think the original ownership, so 245, which is the house on the corner, I don't believe that was ever owned by Newell, but Newell owned ...

Adrian Calvin:

It wasn't.

John Crane:

Half of that whole block.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

And so the house to the south of me is on Newell property, which I think is where that school was. And then all the way to back to Foy Street, I think they owned everything.

Adrian Calvin:

They did. They did.

John Crane:

And I didn't realize they owned across the street too, but that would've been another piece that they owned. So they had substantial.

Adrian Calvin:

And my grandmother wasn't there at the time, but she was able to tell this story and explain it to us. But yeah.

John Crane:

Those are important stories to remember because they're usually not written down. But it's a history of what happened.

Adrian Calvin:

And I'll tell you who did most of the dealing with the church, because that's who Brother Arthur Laurant dealt with for most of his stuff was through the Deanos.

John Crane:

Okay. Okay.

Adrian Calvin:

So.

John Crane:

Yeah, they were the legal family. They were doing successions and things like that. And so who knows? But at the same time, you think that's just not right. That's just not right.

Adrian Calvin:

Right.

John Crane:

But part of this whole history thing, and I think there's a reluctance of people to talk about the good. I've had some people who say life in Mandeville was always perfect.

Adrian Calvin:

That's good.

John Crane:

And yeah, it was true. But there's good stuff and there's bad stuff in every perfect thing. And part of what I feel very strongly about is that we have to have a shared history. We have to hear the stories, and we have to together, white community, black community, purple community. I don't care what it is. We need to all own all of that stuff. And that's what will make us who we are in the future.

Adrian Calvin:

And so many people that over the years that have come through just does not, and did not understand how was this little, just this spot reserved and once being a school then turned into a church. And of course it was for African-American Studies school. It was school.

John Crane:

I think it was for white and black, originally white and black. But I think the whites, they went on, they never stepped up.

Adrian Calvin:

So we need to check the history on, because my grandmother was told that we got that property that they were, I don't know the guy who sold it.

John Crane:

Well, there was a person by the name of John Anderson who somehow was involved in giving or selling. I'm not sure whether he sold it, gave it, or what?

Adrian Calvin:

My grandmother says for a dollar.

John Crane:

But that name. And he's a very, very early way back, 1830's or something, I think.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. So we can read the Cornerstone, but there's history before that, even before that we don't.

John Crane:

That we don't know.

Adrian Calvin:

We don't know yet. We don't know.

John Crane:

I just think it's so fascinating that you have a church that on the cusp of the Civil War is founded. And I don't think our community appreciates how important that is to our country to know that because, and these people, I'm sure there were some of them that were probably free men of color, free women of color, but there were probably also people that were enslaved. And that's what they chose to do with their money when they came out. They formed a church.

Adrian Calvin:

And where did the blacks come into ownership of this was still kind of a mystery in effect. Who owned it before it was, I was told it was sold for a dollar but that it had to provide education for black children because it was before the Rosenwald schools were even built.

John Crane:

Right. That's the first time. I mean, I've always heard that about children, but I've never heard about a school building. And then when I see this picture, I'm wondering if this was the school building from 1867 to 1925 or whenever Rosenwald School.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Yeah.

John Crane:

That was where the black children were educated.

Adrian Calvin:

That's it.

John Crane:

Oh, that's really fascinating.

Adrian Calvin:

That's the history that I know behind it. That's what it was for. Because the Rosenwalds weren't even here yet.

John Crane:

Well, the Rosenwalds, they didn't come and until the 1920's. What did people do before then? And there had to be, the way Rosenwald worked, I'm sure you might be aware of this, but they didn't just give money. They had to have local. So there was a group of people here that was already interested in education. They were already educated, and they were looking for what better way for their children, is what was happening.

Adrian Calvin:

And so was this, my question, I'll never understand was where Newell sits today. Was that a slave quarters of someone who, like you said, after civil that was getting out of here or going wherever and saying, "This is what I want to leave and this," that's why I can't, I don't know.

John Crane:

Well, we know that there were free women of color at the very beginning who bought land in Mandeville. Don't know how many. But there were free people of color in the Antebellum period that owned property here. Now, whether that John Anderson was one of that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, I'm not.

John Crane:

People who are not. I don't know. I mean, we'll find out. We're going to dig till we find some of that. There's a wonderful story that I came up with. There's a 1986, the Congress of the United States decided to try to collect all the papers from the Civil War. It's called the Record of the War of Rebellion.

Adrian Calvin:

Record. Yeah.

John Crane:

Record. And you can go in, I use Ohio State. There's a portal through Ohio State University. You can go to their website and you plug that in and you can pop it up and you can put it in Mandeville, Louisiana. And it'll pop up.

Adrian Calvin:

It'll come up.

John Crane:

And there's a wonderful story. There's a story. It happened on January, I think, 15th, or maybe it was eighth. Anyway, eighth, 15th. There was group of Wisconsin soldiers and three colored troops on a boat. And they came across from New Orleans because New Orleans, of course was federal. And they came across, and this was Confederate over here. And they came over and they came to Mandeville, and they went down the lakefront. They went all the way to Madisonville, and they checked on some boat shipping or something.

They came about about six o'clock at night. And they came in front of Mandeville, and then they headed straight for New Orleans. At one o'clock in the morning they turned around, they came back to the Mandeville Pier, they tied their boat up. They met a black man on the pier who showed them where the headquarters of the lake district of the Confederate army was.

And all these soldiers got off. And they went around and they surrounded that house, and they captured all of them. And they put them on the boat, and they took them back. And there was even a guy by the name of Judge Bethune of Georgia who happened to be visiting. They took him too. And so we know there were three men of color on ...

Adrian Calvin:

Bethune.

John Crane:

Bethune. He was a white judge in Georgia, but he just happened to be passing through. He was staying with them. But he was one of them that they picked up and they picked up charts and all this kind of stuff. But for some reason, there were three colored troops on board on the vessel. So what was their involvement? And who was the man, I'll say, waiting on the dock for him at one o'clock in the morning?

Adrian Calvin:

Who was it?

John Crane:

And somewhere that, one of the interesting things, and we haven't gone there yet, but if you were a colored troop, you got a pension, and there's records of all the pensioners.

Adrian Calvin:

I didn't know that.

John Crane:

And so I think the wonderful thing about what's happening now is a lot of this stuff is being digitalized. And my gut feeling is that we start looking, one of the reasons I ask about names is because as we get these lists of names.

Adrian Calvin:

You see names, yeah.

John Crane:

Then we start, and I'm not probably going to be around. I'm going to kill myself. But somebody will have these names and they'll say, "Okay, well, here's an Arthur Luke Laurant, a twenty-one-year-old man. He's getting a pension from the United States for being a colored troop. Okay, well, he's from Mandeville." Well, now who were those three men? All of a sudden we find out that there was a Laurant on that boat. So all of a sudden, the whole, I mean, I'm not saying that's history, but there's something there. These things didn't happen up. They didn't happen out of the air. That somebody thought this whole thing through. It's clearly a planned operation. So anyway, that's just me on my soap box.

Adrian Calvin:

People always ask how a Methodist church, a black Methodist church in the middle of the white residential area, Lamarque Street was. They just don't, people were just like, how did this happen?

John Crane:

Well, I think we can get that data for sure. And we may have part of that already.

Adrian Calvin:

And my thoughts is because they just, like I told you, they did not know any better. And if someone offered any little help to the church, "Hey, if you give us this lot."

John Crane:

There was quite a bit of that that was going on. Because there was some, and we've heard stories about this of shop owners who had credit. And then, well, you got this big credit, you sign your property over.

Adrian Calvin:

The house on the corner where I'm sure y'all already know. I mean, it was a store.

John Crane:

Right. And there was another one up here, and they were all over the place because nobody had refrigeration. But that kind of stuff was happening. And that's the kind of stuff that I think it's important to document. Our children need to know, their grandchildren need to know that that kind of stuff was going on.

Adrian Calvin:

And over all of these years, and I have to say from the sixties, and they're bringing ... Newell stop existing, the church closed. From my understanding that there was only one, there was one white family that lived right next door. That became a house where it was being rented out constantly. But any type of threats or hatred towards Newell, there's only one family that moved in. And that was during my day, but we did not know it. I mean, they didn't tell. I'm talking about as my adult days, because we were being protected and didn't know about it. But it was a guy that [inaudible 01:53:04] belong to the church.

John Crane:

Do you know Beverly Sills?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

She told me that in that corner house, her elementary school teacher lived, who was a white woman.

Adrian Calvin:

Well, it could have been. [inaudible 01:53:20].

John Crane:

No, it was ...

Speaker 3:

[inaudible 01:53:22].

Adrian Calvin:

Oh, no, no, yes. Crennell. Crennell.

John Crane:

Right. She said, that was my teacher.

Adrian Calvin:

Miss Crennell was my first grade teacher.

John Crane:

That's what Ms. Sill said.

Adrian Calvin:

And they lived, yeah, they had the house on the corner and contributed books and books and other resources to Newell, because she taught at Mandeville Elementary, and she taught a good bit of black students.

John Crane:

That was after integration?

Adrian Calvin:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

John Crane:

Things had moved on. But clearly she was someone who cared about people.

Adrian Calvin:

Oh yeah. Big time. Huge. Yes. I'm glad you said that because I would've never thought to tell you that, that that's who lived on the corner and what they did to help out Newell throughout her years being there, because being a teacher at Mandeville Elementary School and then living right next door to Newell United Methodist Church, which was not just because hey, people could say that Newell was a black church, but under Pastor Robinson. God, I wish I knew y'all then, because y'all probably were still here.

John Crane:

Well, we didn't move here really until '15.

Amy Crane:

20.

John Crane:

2000. Okay. So it was just that was when he left. Well, we actually bought that house in 2012, and then we got Isaac came and we flooded, and then it took us 15 months to get it redone. And then when we finally moved here, that would've been November or December of '14. Is that right?

Amy Crane:

Started spending [inaudible 01:55:14].

John Crane:

In that time. It was around Christmas time. Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

So Pastor Robinson left in ...

John Crane:

'14.

Adrian Calvin:

2014. And how did this evolve? Being the PPR chair, he and I sat down, and ...

John Crane:

This was in 2014 you were the chair?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

Okay. Well, he wanted to go home, didn't he?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, but he never said it. So after a service, I asked him if we could talk for about an hour or so, and he was glad to. I said, "If you got to go to get home or whatever, after that service, it would've been fine. We would've rescheduled." But I had to ask the hard question because I felt it. I asked him, I said, "Do you feel like..." He's fine.

John Crane:

He's fine with you. He's bad with me.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, I know.

John Crane:

Sam, get out of here.

Adrian Calvin:

I mean, I simply asked him, I said, "Do you feel that your work has been completed here?" And that was the first time that it was hard for him to say yes, because he's getting older. He had done this for 22 years. And if you look at his pay for those 22 years, it was like, I'm like, "I need to help you get to a bigger church, or if not one church, two churches." Through cooperation and through planning between just he and I, I was able to sit down with the PPR Committee and share my time with Pastor Robinson. And that his tenure here between the two of us felt like it was complete.

For a minute there, people thought that I was running pastor off, but he and I had an awesome relationship. I mean, totally awesome. Problems that were going on in the church that no one else knew about that he and I had to-

John Crane:

Had to deal with.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. But I explained to them, to the committee, and with tears in their eyes, I said, "That we will get through this, but we need to honor Pastor Robinson's requests." It was devastating, especially for me. I

was the one who got up and made the announce... Well, so anyway, so I called the district superintendent because that's... Why Pastor Robinson couldn't call the district superintendent, I don't know, but they didn't. I mean, they had weird protocols.

I shared that with the district superintendent, and she was hurt by it because the first thing she said is, "Brother AC, I need to let you know that y'all will never get another one of these." I said, "Yeah, I'm aware of that." The other thing I'm aware of is that we're going to have a big decline as he departs to wherever... We're going to work on trying to get him. And it wasn't long after maybe two months or three months that the PPR Committee had to stay quiet about it. They couldn't share with the.

I'm sure some other members knew, but you really couldn't tell it because when the DS came in and talked to the PPR Committee gave us our instructions and telling Pastor Robinson, now you have to get up in front of his church and tell him that you ready to leave. You're ready to get out of here.

But after we got instructions from him along with me, and the PPR Committee sat down, Pastor Robinson and said, look, we're going to make this easy for you. Brother AC, why don't you get up after service before Pastor Robinson and give a little understanding so that what the district superintendent was trying to... because they didn't want Pastor... they wanted Pastor Robinson to stay there forever. And his pension would've been nothing.

You get up and you talk to the congregation first, and then let Pastor Robinson come in behind that. And that's what we did. And of course, it wasn't taken, I mean, people, it just broke our hearts. But at the same time we had to understand that being on a journey for 22 years, driving 91 miles on Sundays and on Wednesdays, and if they had special programs at our church or if we had to support these other churches, he was still driving. I'm sure they went through four or five cars with us. So he explained to us, and it was taken extremely well by everyone, just hearts broken. But the decline of the church was already being spoken of as soon as that happened.

John Crane:

So really, from 2014, y'all knew that the trajectory of the church had changed.

Adrian Calvin:

We told the district superintendent at the time, we told him once it was final and to go before the congregation. We specifically told him in that meeting and me, I was the more quiet one than the other four members, which were all females. We specifically told the district superintendent that we would like somebody younger, somebody young, preferably that's coming out of a seminary. We did not care what color, and we thought that we needed a man. And he said, on his way out, "All of that is relevant." And everything we asked for, we got the opposite.

John Crane:

Really?

Adrian Calvin:

We got the opposite. When she came in, we knew it was going to be hard because she already had another church over here. She was from New Orleans driving over first and third Sunday out to Franklinton, Hackley actually, out from Franklinton, and we were afraid that that's who we were going to get, and we did.

But we had a... She and I had a hard start, but the membership declined based on some of the decisions that she made, suggestions of stuff that she wanted to do was just so out of touch with-

John Crane:

Where y'all had been?

Adrian Calvin:

... where we had been. And her messages just was way over some people's head. But truly enough, when we knew that they were taking us, taking her from us, is when she did stabilize the church. We were on a good move, and they had to take her from us. We don't know why yet, one way or the other was fine. But we're like, well, "Finally, she's stabilizing the church. Why is this going on?" It was never explained to us. Well, it was told to us that they had to bring a pastor in, because then we had to become sister churches with a church out in Hackley called Hayes United Methodist Church.

But the pastor that they needed to bring in order to meet her salary, she had three of us. She had us, and then she had Hayes on first and third Sunday, and then she had Winan on second and fourth Sunday, which is in Franklinton, and that was Anice Moses.

When Moses came in, which I previously knew her, when she came in, I was telling everybody we're going to be okay. And when Moses came in, obviously the congregation started coming back up. Varnado raised. Yeah, born and raised Varnado. So you're looking at rock... so fast, Smith Varnado, Robinson Varnado.

John Crane:

Really?

Adrian Calvin:

Barbara was-

John Crane:

New Orleans.

Adrian Calvin:

... West Bank. West Bank, New Orleans. Moses Varnado. Spikes Varnado.

John Crane:

Really? Isn't that interesting?

Adrian Calvin:

How did that evolve? I don't know. So Moses brought them, people started coming back, and then of course, we all know what happened. COVID hit. And that was probably-

John Crane:

The death knell.

Adrian Calvin:

... the coma that the church was put in until its closure under Spikes in 2020.

John Crane:

'23.

Adrian Calvin:

2023. So-

John Crane:

Wow, real quick.

Adrian Calvin:

We were passing in a hurry. That's how that all happened. But all of our pastors, our last four pastors came from, well, four to five pastors came from Varnado. Amazing.

John Crane:

It's interesting. That's an interesting connection.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes.

John Crane:

And that was Pastor Robinson's home church.

Adrian Calvin:

That was his home.

John Crane:

So that one church sent out four pastors.

Adrian Calvin:

Four pastors.

John Crane:

All of whom ended up here.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. And the churches that they came from up in Varnado, it was a three charged church. So one pastor. And he had Wesley Ray, which is in Angie, Live Oak, which is in Angie and in Mary's Chapel, which is in Varnado. Smith came from Mary's Chapel. Robinson came from Mary's Chapel. Moses came from Live Oak. Spikes came from Live Oak.

John Crane:

Okay, interesting. Yeah. Interesting. That's a fascinating history.

Adrian Calvin:

It was hard for them to send someone here. But had we not had COVID, I think that the church would've survived. When the church opened back up, no one came. And when Moses left, I mean, we came back into the church under Moses, and it wasn't so bad.

John Crane:

It's interesting too, because COVID hit, and then there was a new pastor that nobody knew because you weren't having services.

Adrian Calvin:

Well, Moses was the pastor.

John Crane:

Oh, '20.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

But COVID was still going on when-

Adrian Calvin:

Spikes.

John Crane:

... Pastor Spikes came in. So he didn't really even have a shot.

Adrian Calvin:

No. And I told him, I sat down, told him, but we worked hard at it. I went with him on first Sundays to do communion for what you call a sick and shut in. And honestly, after doing it for me is two months. I mean, I sat down and told him that I couldn't do it, and he asked why? And I'm like, "If we went and served communion to five houses, four of those five houses was sitting in La-Z-Boy or sitting around the kitchen drinking coffee and healthy and doing well, if I can come to church to get communion, what's-"

John Crane:

Yeah, why can't they?

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, you're drinking coffee. And as a pastor, he had to look beyond that, which I couldn't. But he had to look beyond that. He had to continue doing it. But encouraging him to come to church was easy to do, but to get a positive-

John Crane:

Response.

Adrian Calvin:

... response, 2023 was the answer to that.

John Crane:

Adrian, this has been terrific.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah.

John Crane:

I'm starting to wear out with this shoulder.

Adrian Calvin:

No, I know. I cannot see it. I didn't know. Did you hit your face over here?

John Crane:

Did I? I might have. I went down. I hit on this side. So I mean, I've got road rash. My whole back has just tore up.

Amy Crane:

You're a little bruised in here.

John Crane:

Yeah.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, you need to... I hope they gave you something that-

John Crane:

She went and got something for me. But anyway. But I really appreciate this, and I hope we can continue to have a conversation about it.

Adrian Calvin:

Anytime you need me [inaudible 02:11:49]

John Crane:

I imagine Amy told you, I mean, we're committed to trying to figure out what the Lord is doing here in Mandeville, and we thought that it was important to have a place that would be open to people. They'd be open to a community that would be connected to the Black community. And that's really the goal. We've got a statement of faith that directs the parameters. We're not looking for Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses or something like that. We're looking for...

The reason we did that was because neither Amy or I are pastors. So we just need some way to say, how do we... and it is really something that we offer to the people that come in and say, this is what we do.

And if they say, I've had one that said, "They couldn't do it." We had another one that said, "Send it to me." And I never heard another word from them. That's fine. That's fine. I'm not judging them.

Adrian Calvin:

Right?

John Crane:

I'm not judging them. But it just gives us a parameter. But I really hope... Do you know Chris Callahan, do you know who that is?

Adrian Calvin:

I've heard of the name.

John Crane:

Anyway, he came and he's connected with-

Amy Crane:

JJ.

Adrian Calvin:

JJ King.

John Crane:

Well, no, not anymore, but he was. He's connected with, I can't even say anything, anyway, Morningstar. So his family members go there and-

Adrian Calvin:

Chris Callahan.

John Crane:

Right. And then I think his cousin is a preacher right now there or something.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. No, yeah, he's at Free Mission right here.

John Crane:

Oh, Free Mission. Yeah. Maybe that's Free Mission.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, Free Mission.

John Crane:

But anyway-

Adrian Calvin:

It's Mallory.

John Crane:

... he came down and prayed, and he's had this vision of water flowing out of Newell and covering the whole community. And I said, "Chris, man, you need to come and start us up." He's doing house... I think his experience at Church of the King burned him out on churches. So he's doing house churches now.

Adrian Calvin:

And that's what, I mean that-

John Crane:

Well, they had him leading 800 small groups. How do you lead 800 small groups?

Adrian Calvin:

At Church of the King? Yeah.

John Crane:

That's crazy. I mean, that's like saying you can't... I mean, that's an impossible job.

Adrian Calvin:

I can't get into Church of the King. I don't want to.

John Crane:

It's too entertainment focused.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. It's just a lot about it. But I am just now in the process of actually Pastor Robinson's nephew who used to come with his kids because he's younger than me, I call him a little brother. He was a pastor down in Slidell at Mount Olive. He was in the AME Church, and he was a pastor, and he decided to leave the AME Church. And he announced that his vision took him... it was like three or four months that God had a different vision for him. He is starting his own church down in Slidell, welcoming everyone. And so finally, I think this is going to be my church now.

John Crane:

Oh, cool. I was going to ask you, have you found a church home?

Adrian Calvin:

Not yet.

John Crane:

Yeah, see, that's a sad thing to me.

Adrian Calvin:

I was burned out. I'm not going to lie. And so of course, churches here were like-

John Crane:

Come on, come on in.

Adrian Calvin:

... tugging, tugging, tugging. It's like, "Yeah, okay. But this is the role I want to play for now, is that I come in, pay my tithes, be involved with the service, do whatever for the service, but you got to let me rest."

John Crane:

But I mean, the Lord has something planned for you.

Adrian Calvin:

Yes. God, yes.

John Crane:

So you just have to go with it. And sometimes maybe you needed a Sabbath.

Adrian Calvin:

Right. So I mean, I'm glad that you joined in with Pastor Buras on some of this, and you did mention for a second. They're still members that... Members of Newell, I mean, that were of Newell that have definitely joined other churches and stuff. But if there is a specific time and place, and she was saying something to me about fifth Sundays, but I need to help get a list together of those people-

John Crane:

To invite them?

Adrian Calvin:

... that were-

John Crane:

See, that's part of... I mean, I'm really thankful for Pastor Buras because he has energy and-

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, he does.

John Crane:

He wants to do things.

Adrian Calvin:

Great guy. Great guy.

John Crane:

And also, he's a minister of the word, and that's important, I'm not. And the challenge is how do we keep Newell connected with the African American community? And in a way, it's got to come from the African American community to a certain extent. And I think Pastor Buras is going to keep riding that horse. But I mean, I'd love to see a place in Mandeville where white and Black worship together. I'm so tired of us not being able to do that.

Adrian Calvin:

Under Pastor Robinson, we had five white families that were just with us. I mean, they joined in and very faithful, very dedicated. We were wanting more, but at the same time, his end got closer. So they started backing out because don't know who you're going to get. Don't know what the case is going to be. But we enjoyed it.

John Crane:

Well, one of the testimonies that we've heard is from people who live around here who would sit on their porches listening to Newell's music, and they miss it. And I would say that I've never heard anything negative about Newell from the community here. And even though it's all white now, but they still want a church there.

Adrian Calvin:

And they helped us. I mean, the houses right around us, they helped us and whatever it was, like I said, we did church dinners. That's something that the Black churches did. Fish fries and fried chicken dinners and stuff of that nature to raise money. The houses within the perimeter, it was nothing for each one of those houses to come in and buy 10 dinners that cost \$10 and leave a check for \$500.

John Crane:

Wow.

Adrian Calvin:

They loved us. We loved them. Anything they wanted us to do, no problem. When you have the fireworks show and stuff was going on, we would block that off. And there were special people that can come in and park in the back. But it was mostly these families. If they had families in town or whatever it was, "Hey, go use it." We had a good relationship with the community. We really did.

John Crane:

I think the legacy is there.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. So anyway, that's my 2 cents. If there's anything else I can add to or think about it.

John Crane:

No, thank you for taking the time, and I've really learned some interesting things from you, and that's really a joy.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. Rose Matile Laurant is somebody that I've got to look up because I would love for you to talk to her.

John Crane:

To do something like this?

Adrian Calvin:

She'll give you a perspective that I don't know. That I don't know, because she was raised up all the way through, so there's a lot more she could tell you than I could. So I'm going to try to reach out and find her and have her get connected with you.

John Crane:

Yeah. If you could connect us, I would really appreciate that.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. I've enjoyed it.

John Crane:

Yeah, me too. I'm glad to finally meet you after you're doing things. And I'm doing things, and man, when I flipped this morning, I thought, man, we've tried all this time. I told her, I said, I was in the emergency room. "I think I better call Adrian and tell him." And then you said, "Well, I'm kind of struggling." And I thought, well, here's an out. But then we didn't.

Adrian Calvin:

I did tell you about the [inaudible 02:21:21]

John Crane:

Yeah, yeah, you did.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah. So I was not feeling good last night. And-

John Crane:

Well, I don't think you talked about it on this. I think we talked about it before.

Adrian Calvin:

Yeah, we can turn it off.

John Crane:

Okay. Well, so this ends our meeting with-

Adrian Calvin:

Adrian.

John Crane:

... Adrian Calvin. And thank you Mr. Calvin, and we appreciate it.

Adrian Calvin:

No problem.

John Crane:

Let's see. Let's...