

Making Our Way



A McMAHON / CHEYNE PODCAST

#74 • Season 3 • Episode 13

12/10/2025

More Traditions

Our Hosts

Janet Cheyne McMahon is a lover of family, dogs, nature, travel, books, and music. Born south of the Mason-Dixon line, she left after 9 months for parts north, landing eventually in Michigan, which will always be “where I’m from.”

Love of learning led Jan to a Bachelor of Arts (History, Political Science) at the University of Michigan-Dearborn (Go Blue), and a Master of Arts (Library and Information Science) at the University of South Florida. Amid all that, studied for a time with Rob at Colorado State University, a pivotal time in their lives.

Worked at the U of M-Dearborn Library, and then The Salvation Army Florida Divisional Headquarters, with the greatest reward being in serving as the Divisional Librarian. A librarian is who Jan is “in my soul.”

Jan and Rob have made our home in Florida since 1983, and live now in retirement with their dog, Skye, who makes it all the best adventure. They travel as much as possible, spending time in nature and in diverse places on this amazing planet. It has all been, and continues to be a fascinating journey, with hope of making a difference, in small ways, by being brave enough to speak and act on behalf of others.

Rob McMahon is a native Michigander, born in Saginaw and raised in the suburbs of Detroit. Rob attended Michigan State University, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He did graduate studies at the University of Michigan and the University of South Florida. Rob is retired, having spent 36 years in public education teaching both high school chemistry and biology and middle school science. He worked as a total quality management trainer for the Pinellas County School District and served four years as the president of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association. Rob cofounded a non-profit total quality management training center, The Learning Co-op, for Teacher Unions interested in applying the W. Edwards Deming continuous improvement principles to their day-to-day operations. He worked with teacher unions in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, North Dakota, Texas and Michigan. He also worked in a similar capacity with Jim Shipley & Associates. In retirement Rob has written a series of science related children’s books, and enjoys traveling with his wife, Jan, and their Black Labrador Retriever, Skye.

Deanna Cheyne, born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Toronto (1996), studying with such luminaries as Elmer Eisler, Doreen Rao, Greta Kraus, Lois Marshall, and Rosemarie Landry.

Dee taught music at Mississauga Christian Academy, served as music director for Meadowvale Bible Baptist Church (Mississauga, Ontario), served as Assistant Divisional Music Director for The Salvation Army in Florida, is a former member of Tampa’s Master Chorale, and, for the past 18 years, has been a public school teacher.

Dee has visit 36 of the 50 U.S. states, and 12 countries. Her favorite destinations include France, Prague, New Orleans, National Parks, & Hawaii.

Dee & Jim live in Florida with Brigus (Golden Retriever) and Pip (Teacup Yorkie).

James Cheyne, born in Galesburg, Illinois, earned a Bachelor of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from Michigan State University (1978); and a Master of Music degree (Theory and Composition) from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign (1981), studying with David Liptak, Salvatore Martirano, and Ben Johnston.

Jim has served as music director for The Salvation Army in Central Illinois & Eastern Iowa, Orlando Area Command, and the Florida Division, served as a pastor with The Salvation Army, and was a public school teacher for 17 years.

In travel so far, Jim has visited 50 states and 27 countries. His favorite travel destinations include National Parks, New Orleans, Newfoundland, Argentina, Prague, & France.

Jim continues to write music and support Dee’s musical endeavors, and cooks whenever absolutely necessary. Jim & Dee live in Florida with their dogs Brigus & Pip.



L-R: Brigus, Jim, Deanna, Skye, Jan, Rob.
Inset: Pip

More Traditions

#74 - Season 3; Episode 13

12/10/2025

Hosts: Jan, Rob, Dee & Jim.

The crew discuss more of their seasonal traditions, including Canadian Thanksgiving, standing kettles for The Salvation Army, The Marks Family Thanksgiving, Advent, and Rob's Village.

JAN: We've been talking a lot - Rob and I have been - about this time of year, and how meaningful it is to us, how the number of years we've lived have increased the meaning for us, because we have layers and layers and layers on top of the memories that we are creating. This time of year really for us in our family begins with Dee, and with Thanksgiving in Canada. I was really not very aware of Canadian Thanksgiving, obviously in our growing up. I had written down the traditions Dee has brought. And I call them poppers. Not - that's not what they are, right? They're called...

DEE: Christmas crackers.

JAN: Crackers. That's it. So because now I have to go buy them for Christmas dinner because it's this cool thing we do, and then we all wear the crowns and it's become so meaningful, and then up until you and your introduction of that to us, I was oblivious to that whole thing. Now I see it in other, you know, especially English...

DEE: Yeah, it is a very British thing.

JAN: ...uh, celebrations. Faith and Ian do this.

DEE: Yeah, yeah, they do.

JAN: So how is Canadian Thanksgiving the same or different?

DEE: It's very different. I mean the thing that's similar or the same is turkey. Canadian Thanksgiving isn't a big deal like it is in the States, because in the States it's a month later and it's kicks off the Christmas season. You get a longer time to celebrate. In Canada, it's a long weekend. There isn't so much history to it like it is in the States with the pilgrims and all that stuff. In Canada, it's just the harvest time, because obviously it's a month earlier because we harvest earlier. So it's just being thankful for the harvest. In my family, it's not typical in all of Canada, but we always did our Thanksgiving meal on Sunday, like after church. You know, that was our main thing. But a lot of families would celebrate on the Monday, which is the second Monday in October.

ROB: Is that the official date?

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: Monday.

JIM: So you don't have like a Macy's parade?

DEE: No.

JIM: Santa?

DEE: Nothing like that.

ROB: No parades or...

DEE: No, and and we have enough time between our Thanksgiving and Christmas that then you have a Christmas turkey. Because that was a huge adjustment for me, because Thanksgiving here is in November, so close to Christmas. Like you don't wanna have turkey again Christmas Day. You're just getting over the leftovers from Thanksgiving. That really affected me. I was thrown for a loop.

JAN: That just kind of reinforces the idea that food is such an important part of the traditions that we have. It is partly the familiarity of the food that adds so much meaning...

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: ...to the celebration.

DEE: Yeah.

JAN: We have these certain things every year and when one of them's missing you're very aware of that.

DEE: Yes.

ROB: So Thanksgiving you do turkey in Canada.

JAN: Oh gosh, yes.

ROB: Anything else? Because I know you guys - your mom likes to do a lot of other things.

DEE: Well my mom whenever she cooks has to have, like, she'll cook a roast, a ham and a turkey, 'cause she's crazy.

ROB: Any different sides that we don't have here in States.

DEE: Well, in Newfoundland, so our stuffing, which we call dressing, has Newfoundland savory, which is not typical of when you guys know savoury. Newfoundland savory is an herb grown in Mount Sinai [Mt. Scio Farms], Newfoundland, which is one of the things I usually get from my mom for Christmas so I can replenish my savoury packages. Then we have something called salt meat, which is beef that's salted. That is uniquely Newfoundland, and every Newfoundlander loves their salt meat. I inherited my love from my grandfather Drover, who always had to have salt meat, which is probably why he died of a stroke.

ROB: We we had salt meat at Christmas last year when your - when everybody was here.

DEE: Yes, my mom brought down salt meat. And...

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: Bacon on steroids.

DEE: ...salt meat came out of necessity because before refrigeration, the meat would be

salted to preserve it.

JIM: There's another connection with our Thanksgivings that I just found out getting ready for this. Do you know the the native Squanto?

DEE: Oh, yeah, you...

JIM: Tisquantum. Tisquantum. So pilgrims, let's say, are first meeting the Native Americans. What does that conversation sound like? They're all done in English because the natives had already been working with British sailors, you know, all along the Maine coast and that. So they they would pick up some English. The man known as Squanto, he had been a slave, been taken over to Spain, then he's back in Britain with his master, and they come back to America by way of Newfoundland. And he learns something in Newfoundland that he then goes on to teach the pilgrims about how to plant corn.

ROB: Oh.

DEE: You need to fertilize the earth with fish.

JIM: With fish because in Newfoundland...

DEE: Which I grew up doing in the summertime when the capelin would roll in on the beach, we would collect large pails of capelin and then, in our vegetable garden, we would put the capelin along the rows and just put a little bit of dirt over it. And um yeah, that's what would act as fertilizer. So that's something that Newfoundlanders have done forever.

JAN: How about dessert? Was pumpkin pie a thing or is that an American staple?

DEE: That's American. We always had a Christmas pudding which had a sauce. And this particular Christmas, we've got our turkey, all of the sides and everything, and then here comes the Christmas pudding. And so we start eating the Christmas pudding. And I'm thinking, "This this tastes really weird." And so we're not eating it. And my grandmother said, "Nobody likes the Christmas pudding." We're like, "No, it's fine." And my brother being my brother, "No, Nan, this is delicious. Give me more." My mom, she would want the house to smell really good. She had liquid potpourri and she would put it on the stove in a pan. And then mom says, "What pot did you use to make the sauce in?" And my grandmother says, "Well, the pot that was on the stove." My brother is finishing his second helping, and mom goes, "That's the pot I used for the liquid potpourri." Darryl starts spitting out the Christmas pudding. My mom gets on the phone to poison control, and they all start laughing. And they say, "We've never had this one come in before." And they're like, "No, you'll be fine, it'll pass." My brother was freaking out for the rest of the day. But this is the, um, Christmas where we all joke that my grandmother tried to poison all of us. So...

JAN: Growing up, our Thanksgivings were incredibly busy. In Detroit, you grew up with the Christmas parade. And some of us played in that parade.

ROB: That was the Hudson's Parade at that point. Yeah.

JAN: The Hudson's Parade, which is no longer longer, but it's called something else. It's called the Thanksgiving Parade.

ROB: Detroit Citadel, for years and years, I mean, Jan talked about the parade. Again, for the

McMahons growing up, it was going to Saginaw. Thanksgiving dinner. See all the cousins and the aunts and uncles and the grandparents. And then we would come back in order to be at the the Corps, that Detroit Citadel, downtown Detroit, in time for the Thanksgiving concert, which was a big deal...

JIM: Huge.

ROB: ...when we were growing up.

JIM: Yeah.

JAN: That concert that we had every year at the Corps lasted a hundred years. It is no more. It does not happen anymore. But it was a hundred-year tradition. And back in the day when we were influenced by it, it was a very big deal. Eric Ball came to our Thanksgiving concert. You know, it was that kind of level of affair.

JIM: Eric Ball, Leslie Condon.

JAN: Yeah.

JIM: I think Ray Bowes did one year. I know Ken Bloomquist did one year.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: But that was when we were already at Dearborn Heights. And I don't remember all the other...

ROB: Jim and - Jim and Deanna Cheyne. Yeah.

JIM: I remember that.

DEE: Actually, we still have the program from that.

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: Yeah.

JIM: That's what ended it, I think. They said, "Oh, this is the level now. Oh, let's just pack it in."

ROB: Speaking of ended, that's what happened this year with the Marks family reunion at Thanksgiving.

JIM: This must have hit hard.

ROB: It was. It did hit hard a lot of us. All my life that I can remember, and my mom's before that, before we were even born, and she was - there were four kids and Grandpa and Grandma Marks. They always celebrated Thanksgiving and then when their families started to grow we got together for Thanksgiving. I had thirteen cousins, first cousins, that we saw once - at least once a year. Some of them, that's the only time we would see them. Decades and decades of getting together like that. And it moved from place to place. It started in Saginaw. It moved to Southgate, Michigan, the downriver Detroit area. And then finally out to I don't remember w...

JIM: I thought with that size family you would have rented Cobo Hall or something.

ROB: Well, one of the things when my cousin Alan moved to a new home and and it agreed to take the Thanksgiving. It had to have a basement that was large enough to handle at least fifty people 'cause that's, you know, we we could get that many. It expanded from just Marks to in-laws and and outlaws and things like that that became part of it all. It was a great time. Sad to see it end. I mean we all knew it was going to end one day. It it ended kind of suddenly this year. But, um, now when Jan and I got married we moved to Florida at first both of us working, she didn't get the time off, and I didn't get the week. And then we started to go back every other year. And then finally we just said, "This is important. We're gonna do it every year."

JIM: I was there just once for the...

DEE: Yeah, I was with you. Yeah, I was with.

JIM: Okay, all right, that was more recent. So I was there twice.

DEE: Oh, okay.

JIM: Because I was there when Grandpa Marks made the best apple pie I've ever had. And I don't know what it was about it, but it was, uh, it was also laced with tryptophan.

ROB: Everything was.

JIM: I was on the outside of the circle, but you could still sense this was a generational event. Very meaningful.

ROB: Yeah.

JAN: There was a brief for it. There's a notebook with all the instructions, every recipe. How - we had Potato Day when we would go two days before Thanksgiving and peel potatoes. It was a tradition. The family accumulated all the, um - what do I want to say? - the pans and...

ROB: The equipment, the tables. Yeah.

JAN: ...all the equipment necessary to make a dinner for fifty people. So these are the things, and the memories that come with that, the tradition and memories that come with that experience. Adds, again, it adds meaning every year.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: Do you have one of these books?

JAN: No, but I've seen it.

JIM: Oh...

ROB: I wonder...

JIM: I thought it was something distributed to everybody.

JAN: No no no. It was there - it was that it was at Alan's place. So he had all the times, how much turkey, and then we would all contribute to the cost of the turkey...

ROB: Right.

JAN: ...and we all brought sides. It was...

JIM: So there's there's one room and this book is open on a pedestal...

JAN: Like the Bible. It's a...

JIM: ...there's a light above it, and you walk in...

JAN: From heaven.

JIM: ...there's music...

JAN: Angels are singing.

ROB: That's right.

JIM: ...and you go and you say. "Oh, Potato Day!"

JAN: Yeah. So it was a, you know, big deal. So Rob just finished a video where he brought together, as many as he could, pictures from over the years to send to all the cousins, remembering, to Amy Grant's, um...

ROB: "Heirlooms."

JAN: Oh gosh, just ruin - talk about ruining you.

JIM: Rats.

JAN: Anyway, it's one of the first ways I felt a part of the family was to get to be part of that Thanksgiving because everybody welcomed me easily.

ROB: Your mom, she went a couple of times. Val Dobney was at the last one with my mom just just before she passed.

JAN: One of the last pictures we have... [breaks off]

ROB: Yeah. She wasn't crazy about going that last year. She just would have preferred to stay at home, but we thought, "No, this is gonna be it, Mom. You need to say goodbye to people," or, "They need to see you."

JAN: There's this great piece of video of her sitting with Stan, and it was his last time, too. So Rob's Uncle Stan is the oldest of the four siblings, and his mom was the youngest, and they were the two remaining siblings at this last Thanksgiving, and we've got this video of them talking to each other side by side. And it's just - that's what it was.

ROB: Stan, he's a hundred and five now and they they don't travel anymore. So they they stopped coming up couple of years ago.

JIM: He lives here in Florida, right?

ROB: Yeah, on the West Coast...

JIM: On the other...

ROB: On the East Coast.

JIM: ...the other side.

JAN: Anyway, that part of that family tradition, which is generational and large and inclusive, was probably the most important Thanksgiving tradition that we shared in our married lives.

ROB: And that, like Dee said, Thanksgiving here kicks off the Christmas season, which for Jan and I has become the Advent season. Something that we never really - I, I can't remember growing up in The Salvation Army that we paid a whole lot of attention...

DEE: Right, yeah.

ROB: ...to Advent.

JIM: No.

ROB: Might've had a Advent wreath.

JIM: Yeah, I remember when the Advent Wreath became like, "Oh, we're doing churchy things now."

JAN: Churchy. It was churchy.

JIM: Yeah.

JAN: It was almost that whole anti- - it was anti-Catholic, is what it was. It's a reaction to liturgy and - which is why we never did. the Advent stuff or the Lent stuff. We never did that growing up.

DEE: Right.

JAN: And you're younger....

ROB: Did you...

JAN: ...and that may be a difference, too, Dee.

ROB: Did you in Canada?

DEE: Yeah...

ROB: Did the Army have it?

DEE: ...we had an Advent wreath.

ROB: But...

JAN: At home?

DEE: Yeah, at home. At the Citadel.

ROB: Oh, at home. Okay. At the Citadel?

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: Yeah. But now when you get away from The Salvation Army, you find yourself in the Episcopal Church. And you guys follow the church year. So where are we in our church year?

ROB: We're in Advent.

JIM: But Advent - I like Advent because I'll see sometime online: "According to my chocolate advent calendar, we have three days left till Christmas." I like that one. Do you guys have an Advent calendar?

ROB: No.

JAN: We have an Advent Wreath.

JIM: Right. So Advent is the beginning of the church year, is that right?

JAN: Yeah, it is. It's really cool to me. I didn't know that until recently, that really the church year starts now.

JIM: Starts now.

JAN: And it this has become an important part of our lives is acknowledging Advent and having readings. It's interesting because when we first went to the Episcopal Church we noted that you don't sing Christmas carols in Advent.

JIM: Right.

JAN: You sing Advent songs. "He's Coming," but not "Joy to the World," which all happens from Christmas on through Epiphany instead of before Christmas. Anyway, all that to say, Advent is a separate season in liturgical churches, and it's preparation for something.

JIM: So with Advent on top of you, can you still watch Christmas related things before Christmas Day?

ROB: We do, yeah. We've - that hasn't changed for us. At church, we don't sing Christmas carols until the time between Christmas and Epiphany and even beyond that, there's there's several Christmas, there's several Sundays after Christmas, right Jan?

JAN: Yeah.

ROB: Yeah. Remember Hudson's?

JIM: Let's talk about kettles. Hudson's was on Woodward Avenue.

ROB: Yep.

JIM: Woodward and Gratiot. And they would have kettles at the South and the North. If it was your good day, you were going to be standing at Hudson's South. If somehow you were on someone's naughty list, you ended up behind it over at Crowley's which was the windiest, most miserable place to stand, but Hudson's South, the Salvation Army could stand a little recessed back from the wind, right on the corner. You would time your music by when the light changed for pedestrians and you could see pedestrians coming across Woodward. You'd strike up your best Jingle Bells or whatever it is, they'd pass by the kettle, put money in there, and then go into the warmth of of Hudson's.

There was one year, I still can't believe he did this, Lance Duguay was in charge of kettles down there. So I remember the day I went down and we were at some place other than at the Corps, and I barely knew how to get there. And at the end of the day, when Lance is coming around to pick up kettles, he told me to take the kettles and to walk them over to this place. Okay, fine. I've got the North Hudson's kettle and the South Hudson's kettle. So I

put my horn away. I'm carrying my horn. I'm carrying these two kettles. And I'm going through some rather sketchy backroads to find this place. And I realize here's this kid, teenager...

DEE: Carrying two kettles.

JIM: ...carrying two kettles that obviously are full of money. And I'm carrying my horn and I'm a little bit lost. I'm thinking, "I think the building's over here." And I remember going down one alley. The number of things that could have gone wrong.

DEE: But you had weapons, your horn and the kettles.

JIM: You've heard me play? Kettles downtown Detroit was amazing. The 11th floor of Hudson's had a cafeteria.

ROB: Do you remember the floor for - just for kids to shop?

JIM: The 12th floor.

DEE: Oh, cool.

ROB: Yes.

JIM: That was the 12th floor. And I remember having money in an envelope pinned to my sleeve and I could go through. You know that paperweight? The clear one?

DEE: Yes.

JIM: That round one?

DEE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JIM: That's where I bought that.

DEE: Yeah, I rememeber you...

JIM: For mom. So we - but the 11th floor had the most amazing chicken pot pie.

ROB: Oh yeah.

JIM: Simply amazing.

ROB: We buy our Christmas tree the Monday after Thanksgiving.

JIM: Where do you buy it?

ROB: In the last several years, we bought from a family-owned Christmas farm in Wisconsin who come down and they set up right on the corner of 580 and McMullen Booth at...

JAN: Countryside High School.

ROB: ...Countryside High School. And we've been purchasing from them for ten, fifteen years probably.

JAN: It costs us way too much money...

ROB: Too much.

JAN: ...but you know, we're investing in their farm.

ROB: Yeah, it's a family farm, and that's where we get our tree, and we decorate almost exclusively with ornaments we've collected from places we've been. We've got some sports ones and we've got some Disney ones too, but most of them are from national parks that we visited or countries that we visited or cities around the world, around the United States that we've been to.

JIM: The big question.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: Do you have a red plastic Santa? Yes, we do.

JAN: Christmas 1956.

JIM: How do you know that?

JAN: It says it on the bottom. Mom made a tag.

JIM: Did she?

JAN: Mm-hmm.

ROB: Really!?

JIM: Oh, man, that's great. The other tradition that is for me so meaningful is when Rob creates this village. How long does it take you to put it up?

ROB: Uh three days.

JIM: Three days?

ROB: Three good days.

JIM: And it...

ROB: I mean we're talking eight hours a day.

JIM: And it - the the village is, you have one railroad.

ROB: Yeah.

JIM: You have a - a lift, what's it called?

ROB: A, a...

DEE: Gondola?

ROB: ...gondola.

JIM: Gondola thing.

ROB: Ski lift, yeah.

JIM: You'll have some little ponds where skaters are. You have little stores, little houses, and every year is a different design. Now this year looks rather symmetrical.

ROB: Mm-Hmm.

JIM: So you come out from...

ROB: Did it for Jan.

JIM: ...from your French stores and you're looking at it and it kind of builds up towards the mountain area.

ROB: Right.

JIM: How long have you been doing that?

ROB: All our marriage.

JAN: Pretty much.

ROB: We started with a couple of buildings. It's a Snow Village, which is Department 56...

JIM: Okay.

ROB: ...the company. And I started collecting those and it started under our Christmas tree. Every year, at Thanksgiving, we'd go up to Frankenmuth. That was another tradition. After...

JAN: I was gonna say this connects to Thanksgiving Day.

ROB: ...yeah, after Thanksgiving Day, if we hadn't eaten enough, we would go up to Frankenmuth for the chicken dinner, all you can eat, chicken dinners. But then we'd go to to Bronner's, which is the largest Christmas store in the world. I'd buy one or two more houses.

JIM: From that series.

ROB: From that series.

JIM: The Snow Village series from Department 56. Okay.

ROB: And it grew and grew and grew and grew. So now it's on the porch. Takes up about six tables right now. Nobody wants it when I'm dead.

DEE: That's crazy.

ROB: It's fun and and I do try and do something different every year.

JIM: Mm-Hmm.

ROB: It's not the same setup ever.

JAN: Well no, the whole town is arranged differently pretty much every year.

JIM: Well the thing it's - it's evocative. I'll get mystic about it. It doesn't exist until Rob creates it, but once he creates it, it feels like it's always been there. Like it is somehow, in miniature, a reflection of a real place. You can imagine the people that live there. Everyone knows about and cares about or is irritated about everyone around them. It's like a small village. I have a little imagination that runs with it that reminds me very much of Greenfield Village.

ROB: Oh.

JIM: Because as a kid I used to do this. You know, you go there and you have what's there? Noah Webster's house, you have uh Edison's Menlo Park, you have a courthouse where

Lincoln practiced. It's a village, and all these historic buildings have been brought there by Henry Ford to make this idyllic village. And I would think once that closes, every night when that closes and everyone leaves, that the residents there would say, "Okay, they're all gone. We can go about our lives again," and the blacksmith is doing that, the candlemaker is doing that, the mill is working, the train is running. Just imagining that the people that are in your village have a certain sort of mystic reality. Because once it's made, you can see it as an organic place. It's a beautiful expression of Christmas that I look forward to every year.

ROB: You know what we noticed this year? Jan brought it to my attention, and I hadn't really thought about it. All the little...

JAN: Oh.

ROB: ...figurines that I have, there's no variety, I mean...

JAN: Diversity.

ROB: There's no diversity.

DEE: Oh, they're all Caucasian?

ROB: They're all Caucasian. So...

DEE: Maybe you just need to get some paint.

ROB: Well, yeah, maybe we could do that. Jan has ordered me some...

JAN: We'll have more diversity this year.

ROB: ...more diverse figurines to use.

JAN: It's a very New England-looking village.

DEE: Mm-Hmm.

JAN: So it's got that quality about it, but it's a little disturbing. It's a celebration Disney-esque in a way. And so I found some more diverse people to put in his village. I'm feeling better about it now.

ROB: Me too.

JAN: I want to go back to what Dee said about the week, the Christmas to New Year's week, because that experience adds meaning to that week that I don't have in my life. Which is why Rob said the anticipation that there's a letdown. But for you that wouldn't have been the case. You would have been - every day is like another day of Christmas during that time where you're with family. And I have this void. after Christmas. With the only with the exception that I get as a kid I remember thinking it was pretty cool that my birth - it never bothered me, like everybody thinks it does, that your birthday is close to Christmas, because for me, it was it gave me the next thing to be excited about as a kid. Um, but for you, you had that daily experience of family that extends the holiday...

ROB: That's cool.

JAN: ...in a way I didn't have.

DEE: Yeah, and as you're talking then I remembered New Year's Day was skating day. They would have hockey games, like the Citadel versus the Temple, and they would rent the rink for the day and then after the hockey game, then it was free skating. And I just remember, you know, New Year's Day was, "Oh we're going skating." That was fun and then after that we would go to my grandparents where all my cousins and that were, so, it was, the whole week was jam-packed with stuff

ROB: I really like what Jim said about time being circular rather than linear. And I think that's what traditions help us see. Because they come around every year, because they're traditions.

DEE: Yeah, that's why it's so disappointing when they're gone.

ROB: When they're gone.

DEE: Yeah.

ROB: But then there's another tradition somewhere down the line to look forward to.

JAN: This year we're reading about the liturgical year with Diana Butler Bass, and the circular nature of it. And I think it's what draws me to that church calendar cycle. It's, you know, it's - we look at calendars in in our Western world in a very linear way, and the church world doesn't. It looks at it in a circular way. Which in a way is how we live with holidays, with these holidays. It's a circle, it's a cycle. And we come back to it. That to me is what creates the meaning of it is that repetition that's come back again. I like that.

ROB: I like it a lot.

JAN: There's another thing that Diana Butler Bass does in this new book she's got and it's about linear time being more, um, empire-oriented, more Roman in its observation, versus the liturgical year, which is more - she's gonna almost call it uh revolutionary, counter-revolutionary - um, more cyclical and away from the empire perspective, which is sort of militaristic in how we name and how we acknowledge what's happening, versus the church in a cycle. So I think if you have a circle and you can come into that circle and you keep going, the circle may get bigger, but it's still that cycle that comes back around every year now with a new maybe wider circumference.

[Music begins]

This is a great quote from Gustav Mahler. "Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire." And I liked that. I liked the imagery of that, that it's what keeps it alive. It's not what represents the death of something, but the life of it.

[Music ends]