A Place to Belong
By Amy Krueger, SWA Vice President

The other day I was chatting with an older woman, one of my patients. As her audiologist, I wanted to understand how Dorothy was getting along with her new hearing aids. I asked her if she was able to hear conversations better. She was so excited to tell me that she could hear her new friend Mary. You see, Mary had moved into the nursing home a few weeks ago and was having a hard time adjusting. Dorothy could see that she was struggling with the new routine and the loss of the home she knew so well. Dorothy could identify with Mary, because she herself had moved in only a few months prior.

Dorothy and Mary had something in common. Although they came from different backgrounds, they never imagined they would find themselves in that place. Deep down, no one really expects that they will move into a nursing home one day! When Dorothy saw Mary walking back and forth in the hallway looking upset, she asked her what was wrong. Mary was out of sorts and didn’t know where to go or what to do. Dorothy invited her to sit down and just talk for a while. Dorothy did what she could to reassure her that things would seem better after she settled in to the new routine. The next thing Dorothy told her was quite simple: she said to Mary, you are looking better and better every day!

I really was touched to hear about the kindness of this woman. Dorothy was just learning to fit into this new place herself. Instead of grumbling, she was going out of her way to help someone else fit in.

How strikingly similar to our situation! Here we are - women of the seminary. We all have come from different places. Many of us never imagined we would find ourselves in this place. Yet now it seems that, after only a year or so, we are “seasoned” seminary women. We welcome in new women, many whom also never imagined that they would be here! Although I know that my family belongs here at seminary, there have been days when I have felt as lost as Mary did, wandering back and forth, wondering what will come next. How lucky I am to have found women who are in this same place, on a similar journey, only a few steps ahead of me! What a blessing to be in the presence of so many women who are willing to stop, listen, encourage and lift each other up!

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

Lifelines is the official newsletter of the Seminary Women’s Association, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. It is published bi-monthly.

Those interested in submitting an article may contact the SWA Newsletter Editor, Darci Miller, at: mrsdarcimiller@gmail.com.

Thank you, contributors!

I have had the privilege of serving SWA as the Lifelines Editor in both our second year and now in our fourth year. I’m so thankful that several seminary women have submitted wonderful contributions to the newsletter during both of my terms.

This year, we will be blessed by articles from women who are new to the seminary, women who have returned from vicarage, and even some advice from beyond the seminary.

For this issue, I want to extend a special thank you to Shayna Tews. Shayna was the SWA Lifelines editor during my first year, and I learned so much from her. Now, she has been gracious enough to provide us with some words of wisdom learned from her first two years as a pastor’s wife. Read on for the first installment, and look for more from Shayna in upcoming issues.

~Darci Miller
Calendar of Events
2012/2013

Dec. 7 - 8:00-9:00pm  Parents Christmas Shop
Parents join us to do some Christmas Shopping for your child(ren). Either Mom or Dad gets to shop for 1 gift for each of their children for FREE. Join us in Siech. If you can’t make it on Friday night the Parents Christmas Shop will be open on Saturday during the Children’s Christmas Party as well.

Dec. 8 - 9:00-11:00am  Children’s Christmas Party
Christmas Story, Children’s Christmas Shop, Games, Cookies, Presents & More

Dec. 18 - 6:30-8:30pm  Christmas Faculty Home Tour
Join us for a beautiful evening touring faculty wives’ homes, hearing their traditions and enjoy hot chocolate and christmas carols.

Jan. 20 - 5:00 pm  Taste of Home/Bake Off
Cook up one of your favorite dishes from home and come share in a ladies potluck!

Feb. 2 - 3:00pm  Craft Event
Have fun making things? Need some dedicated time to spend on a craft you are working on? Want to help make decorations for the Winter Ball? Join us for some crafting fun!

March 15 - 6:30-11:00pm  Winter Ball
Join us for a fun evening of dinner & dancing.

Mar. 23  Easter Egg Hunt
Join us in the Quad for a family friendly Egg-stravaganza!

Apr. 14  Spring Event

May  Vicarage Panel
Wonder what vicarage will be like? Have some questions? A panel of 4th year wives will gather to share their experiences and help ease some of your fears.
**Devotion on Revelation 21**

By Kelsey Grulke, SWA Spiritual Growth Chair

HOLD!!! HOOOLD!!! HOOOOOOOLD!!!

There’s a scene in the movie Braveheart when William Wallace and the underdog Scots are facing off against the British army. The British line is advancing quickly toward the Scots. William Wallace, though, tells his army to wait. They are not to attack until the perfect moment. The tension mounts as Wallace tells his men to HOLD! We are left holding our breath, hoping they don’t wait too long, wondering what Wallace’s plan could possibly be.

We are quickly approaching that time of year, when every ounce of our being wants to act, to move, to advance, and God tells us HOLD! Of course, we’re waiting to celebrate, not to attack. It’s so easy to rush through Thanksgiving and begin celebrating Christmas as soon as the Black Friday sales begin. Heck, head to Hobby Lobby and you could start celebrating shortly after the Fourth of July! The time before Christmas, Advent, is an essential part of our church year and our spiritual experience. Advent is a holy time when we wait. We just wait. We join with the angels and the saints and hold our breath in anticipation of the incarnation. We look back at the days when the Israelites mourned in lonely exile, waiting for their Messiah, Emmanuel. We join in their longing and groaning as we eagerly await the return of the Desire of Nations.

Advent, our season of waiting, holds the possibility of being a unique and unparalleled time in our spiritual lives. We wait, not to punish ourselves into growing closer to God by denying ourselves while the rest of the world is indulging, but to join with past, present, and future children of God in the longing for our savior. We wait in order that we might remember, or perhaps discover for the first time WHY we are eagerly awaiting the return of our Prince of Peace. In our culture especially, what better time could there be, among the rampant consumerism and endless greed to cry out “come Lord Jesus!”

This year, as you wait for Silent Night and Joy to the World, don’t just suffer through Advent, relish Advent. Take advantage of the time to long for your savior. Let yourself long for his return. Allow your heart to be carried away with thankfulness as you consider the incarnation—the Boundless choosing to become bound in human flesh—order that you might know God and be united with him. Be overwhelmed by the gift of Jesus. Remind yourself that his second coming will be even greater than the first. This Advent, HOLD! Wait on God’s perfect timing. Rejoice in the pause, the calm before the storm, the deep breath, before the rending of the heavens and the arrival of Emmanuel.

And I heard a loud voice saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:3-4

Come, Lord Jesus.

**Who Are You?**

By Marie Roth

Who are you? More often this question is posed to us as “What do you do?” Often we answer this question with our occupation or career. But what if we really answered with a description of ourselves instead of a title granted to us at our job?

In our Monday night Bible study we were talking about this concept. What if my go-to response for “What do you do?” was “I am a child of the most High Lord and am His servant. I do His work on Earth.” I bet I would get some pretty strange responses, but I also bet it would cause some people to start thinking.

This brings me to the question: Who is Marie? As some of you may know, I used to define myself as what I spent a majority of my time doing (i.e. student, teacher, retail peon, etc.). But my thinking is now shifting. In my mind, I’m not an office staff member or a receptionist or a membership manager (just some of the few hats I wear at work). I’m not defined by my personal relationships either. Although I am a wife, a daughter, an aunt and a pastor’s-wife-in-training, I wouldn’t consider any of those who I am. I am also a knitter, a violist, and a puzzle solver, but those are not my essence as a human being.

I would love to be at the point that I could say that “I am a child of the Lord and His servant.” While I believe that to be true, it’s not yet how I define myself. I think I need to delve deeper into servanthood to find what portion of Christ’s body I am. I think that will help me make this statement the truth about my soul. I am the hands and feet of God, but what exactly does that mean for me?

Now that I have bared a portion of my soul, consider how you define yourself. Who are you?
If you are coming along this seminary ride with me, you are going to find out that food is a major part of my life. It’s also how I find friends, how I show love to my family, how I get to know different people and their cultures, and how through the making, baking, cooking, and creating of food, I find my outlet. I’m not talking about an unhealthy obsession (some of you are snickering). No, I am talking about an appreciation for the beautiful gift of food I have access to, the amazing combinations I enjoy coming up with, and the miraculous benefits of bringing people together to eat.

One of my all-time, top-ten favorite foods is apple pie. Warm apple pie. Mmmmm… Say it again, slowly. Doesn’t it just make you feel happier inside? I love it so much that we served it at our wedding. It was the last thing I ate Tuesday night.

The wonderful thing about this particular Tuesday night apple pie was the events surrounding it. On the Saturday before, the kids had seminary soccer, which is a great opportunity for seminary children, ages three and up, to play organized soccer with coaches. It’s also great because it’s a chance to get to know other families at seminary.

One family, in particular, mentioned that they were going apple-picking later that day and invited us to come along. Our whole family joined them and had a wonderful time picking apples, eating snacks, and enjoying the sweet smells of a local fruit orchard. All while getting to know a wonderful (and experienced) seminary family. It was so good for our souls, and we came home with three bags of apples.

Fast forward three days. Those bags of luscious apples were staring at me all day as if to say, Make us into an apple pie! You know you want to. The boys went down for a nap; the older two were still in school. And ignoring the laundry and dishes that needed to be done, I set about to make my favorite recipe for apple pie.

But you can’t have apple pie without ice cream. Some of our other seminary friends had a big bucket of a vanilla ice cream. So we made a deal. We’ll bring the apple pie, you serve the ice cream. They agreed and those apples afforded us another chance to get to know some of our new friends.

And as if that weren’t enough, the two leftover slices of apple pie went to another couple. Later, I sliced an apple for my son Micah’s little friend to share, and there were still two bags full of apples to use.

That’s one of the reasons why I love food. It’s a platform to bring people together. It doesn’t have to be filet mignon or crème brûlée. It can be whatever you want it to be: a cup of coffee, a slice of blueberry cake and an open invitation, an extra chair at the table and a bowl of soup, or a ride to the country for a bag of apples. Just as long as it is shared together. And it’s at that point, the point where we come together, that food becomes a blessing, to the giver and to the receiver.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” ~Matthew 25:35

If you’re interested in trying out my favorite apple pie, follow the recipe below. (I recommend Jiffy pie crust for the crust.)

### Cooking Corner: Grandma’s Apple Pie

1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch double crust pie
1/2 cup unsalted butter
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup water
8 Granny Smith apples - peeled, cored and sliced

Melt butter in a sauce pan. Stir in flour to form a paste. Add white sugar, brown sugar and water; bring to a boil. Reduce temperature, and simmer 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the bottom crust in your pan. Fill with apples, mounded slightly. Cover with a lattice work crust. Gently pour the sugar and butter liquid over the crust. Pour slowly so that it does not run off.

Bake 15 minutes at 425 degrees. Reduce the temperature to 350 degrees and continue baking for 35 to 45 minutes.
A Pastor's Wife's Practical Wisdom
By Shayna Tews

In Shayna's first installment, she shares something she wishes she would have known before leaving the seminary. ~DM

Something I wasn't so aware of before coming to the parish is the amount of stress our husbands take on themselves to help other people. Being a pastor is much more than delivering Sunday sermons and leading Bible studies.

First of all, Advent and Lent will wear your husband down significantly, but in the best way. Both seasons still take their toll on your husband because they're such busy times. This is especially true if your husband is a sole pastor and tackling the burden of more services alone.

Secondly, your husband will take on many private prayer requests that add weight and stress, and he will accompany people at their last hour on this Earth. When people need to come talk to the pastor, it is often to unload their own burdens, to discuss their significant and sometimes terminal illnesses, to grieve with him, and even to plan their own funerals when they know their time is coming to a close. But where does your husband go to unload? Since most of these issues and burdens are confidential, he often will shoulder this alone, without even you, his wife, to help share the trouble.

Recognize that this will happen. Death is real, disease is real, troubled times do come... and your husband will be deeply affected by it when it hits. Many of the congregation members who pass on will have become close friends to your husband and probably you as well. Your husband will now be giving the funeral for his friend, not just a church member, and he'll be supporting the family while they grieve this loss.

Please remember to be understanding when your husband may be going through a particularly stressful time. It is very important for him to take time to be with other pastors, to share with them his concerns and shoulder the burdens together. This may be his only chance to really unload.

Also, plan nice treats for your husband to help him relieve his stress. For example, my husband has one day off each week, and during Advent and Lent, he is tempted to skip his day off to get extra work done. However, he really NEEDS that day of rest. So, one morning of one of these busy seasons, the kids and I had a lunch packed for my husband and a travel mug of coffee waiting. When he woke up in the morning, we handed him the lunch and coffee and told him to go fishing for the day... alone! He really just needed that time to relax, by himself, on the lake. When he came home that afternoon, he was so refreshed, I could see a more relaxed demeanor written all over his face. He was in a much better position to go back to work the next day and begin a whole new week.

On the downside, you may need your husband too during this time. After all, you are left shouldering the burden of the home by yourself during these very busy occasions, and it won't be easy. But stay strong. Just remember that we are servants of the Lord. We are servants to our husbands and children. Put them first, always, and let the Lord be your comfort and shelter. You and your husband and children can pick up the pieces when the busy ecclesiastical seasons are over! Plan something special to look forward to, like a getting away for a mini-vacation right after Easter! It will give you a special event to await your family and a chance to catch up with each other!
### 2012-2013 SWA Board

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