Welcome, and Welcome Back!

By Linda Ekong, SWA President

Welcome to another year of life together as the 2012-2013 academic year begins. We’re so excited that you’re here to share in this time of new adventures! Whether you are returning or new, connecting with old friends or making new ones, sharing experiences from the past year or looking forward, SWA is excited to help you make connections this coming year. We pray that you will be able to join us! We have many fun things planned for this year: the rescheduled Field Day activities, Scavenger Hunt and Taste of St. Louis, Christmas Party, Winter Ball, and Vicarage Panel just to name a few.

As I reflect back on the past three years at the seminary, I’m overwhelmed by the amazing friendships we’ve been blessed with during our time here. And, there are new friendships being created right now; friendships that I know will last a lifetime. Friends that we may part from in the coming years but that will still be with us wherever God leads. Friends who will rejoice with us during our happy moments of life, and friends that we can call upon when we are struggling and need a “hug” from afar. These amazing friendships are the result of living together here in this Christian community sharing in the many new adventures together! I pray that each of you will find those lifelong friends during your time here as well.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to share in this time of new adventures, and find at least one way to become involved and get connected. There are so many opportunities for you here at Concordia Seminary to jump in and enjoy! The seminary offers Bible studies, community night dinners and Women’s classes taught by professors, the Fall Women’s Retreat, and monthly SWA events. There are also many ways to volunteer through the Re-Sell It Shop and Food Bank, joining a committee for some of our special events, being a host family to a single student for our Second Home program, babysitting for events on campus, or helping out by providing a meal for a family. Our campus gardens provide a great opportunity for fresh vegetables and can be found throughout the campus grounds. New friends abound as we all come together for BBQs in the Woods or watching children play on the playground while we enjoy some adult conversation.

If you have any questions over this next year please contact me or any of our SWA Board members at any time. We’re here to assist you and serve you in any way we can!

Stay Connected!

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

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

There are several methods of communication that we want to make sure you’re aware of.

Our most popular way to access lots of information is through the Facebook Groups. Search for:

- Women of Concordia Seminary STL
- CSL Food Bank
- CSL Re-Sell It Shop
- CSL BBS

The Yahoo group. Here’s the link to the sign-up instructions:

http://www.csl.edu/admissions/campus/swa/

Daily Announcements or “DAs”. To join this email group send an email to dailynn@csl.edu and request to be added to the distribution list. This email will have a listing of many different events and need-to-know information. DAs are sent Monday through Friday, directly to your inbox.
Calendar of Events

2012/2013

Sept. 16
Fall Welcome!
The Fall Welcome is meant to help you get acclimated, learn how you can get involved, and help you be a part of the community.

Oct. 12-13
Fall Retreat - Camp Wartburg

Oct. 20 - 1:00-3:00pm
Scavenger Hunt & Taste of St. Louis
Have fun scavenging the campus and following clues then meet up and try some of St. Louis’ many yummy treats! (Fitz’s, Toasted Ravioli, and more!)

Nov. 2 - 7:30pm
PMS Party
Pizza, Movie, and Sundaes!

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

Dec. 18 - 6:30-8:00pm
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!

March
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 Ephesians 3**

*By Kelsey Grulke, SWA Spiritual Growth Chair*

Ephesians 3:20-21: **Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.**

So there I was, sitting on an empty stage after the final drama of the season presented by Awaken Ministries, watching the cast and crew tear down our equipment. I wrote and directed the drama that Awaken took on tour to churches across the Midwest that year. The people involved with Awaken had become my best friends: the people who knew me inside and out and liked me anyway. As I sat on the empty stage, I thought about the changes happening in my life. I had a brand new baby, my job as a youth director was winding down, and my husband, new daughter, and I were preparing for our move to St. Louis to start at the seminary. My time with Awaken was coming to an end as well.

We’ve all heard that question “what would you do in life if you didn’t need to make money?” Up to that point, I had answered: tour with a ministry like Awaken, doing that particular kind of drama. What could God possibly have up his sleeve next? I was feeling pretty empty. Worn out. Unsure about the future. At that point, God gently placed on my heart the words of Ephesians 3:20-21, particularly that part about “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.”

God had given me a great gift in Awaken Ministries. I loved the ministry I was able to do. I loved the people I interacted with. To me, my experiences with Awaken were as good as it gets. I couldn’t possibly imagine something better, more fulfilling, or more life-giving than being involved with that ministry. God made his promise in Ephesians 3:20-21 real to me that night. He didn’t tell me where or how it would be fulfilled, but my heart was overwhelmed by the reality of God’s provision and goodness towards me.

I don’t have a grand, epic ending to this story, in which God shows me with all clarity the “immeasurably more” that he has planned for me. During our time at the seminary, I have struggled to continue trusting that God still has that plan. Somehow, changing diapers doesn’t feel anything like “immeasurably more.” I can, however, attest to the truth that God continues to gently remind me that he is trustworthy, and what he has planned will be above and beyond anything I could even think to ask him for. What a comforting thought!

I’d like to end this devotion with a little challenge for you. Find a piece of paper. Write three things on it. Three requests, petitions, or prayers to God. Let the first one be a request for you personally. Something wild, if you want. Don’t try to be too holy here. If you’ve been dreaming of a new Mustang, tell God you’d really love a new Mustang. Let the second request be something for your family, and the third request a prayer for the community of seminary women as a whole. Put this piece of paper in your Bible, right next to Ephesians 3. Look back at that paper after a while and see what God has done. He has promised immeasurably more than anything we could ask or imagine. He’s trustworthy. He has more and better in store than anything we can even dream of. Thanks be to God!

**Hellos and Goodbyes**

*By Darci Miller, SWA Newsletter Editor*

Over the last couple of months I’ve been reflecting on all of the goodbyes and hellos that we’ve said in the last few years, and the many more we’ll be saying in the next year.

Living at the seminary has been full of blessings since the moment we arrived over three years ago. We live in a community where everyone is so supportive of each other. We have friends literally surrounding us. Our kids always have lots of playmates nearby. My husband is able to learn about theology from brilliant professors who challenge and encourage him. I have a great job, we really enjoy our field work church, and there are always plenty of fun things to do. This life fits us like a glove.

In the midst of so much joy, there are the occasional sorrows. Lots of hellos and goodbyes go with the territory here. First, we had to say goodbye to our families when we left the home we knew. But, we have had lots of visitors, and it’s always so nice to say hello again.

We’ve made friends here at the seminary that are as special to us as family. But, since no one stays here forever, there has already come a time to say goodbye to many of them. We’re so excited to say “hello again!” to our 4th year classmates returning from vicarage, and to get to know new student families. The continual cycle of goodbyes and hellos is just part of seminary life.

There are many blessings in every hello, and in every goodbye. The best blessing is that as brothers and sisters in Christ, the goodbyes are always temporary, because we’re united as one body for eternity.

See you soon...
# 2012-2013 SWA Board

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