

Interviewer: Judy, first of all, thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this and if you could just say your full name and maybe spell it too.

Judy: Judith, J-U-D-I-T-H (coughs) Excuse me. A. Middle initial is A. Last name is a hyphenated name, Strausz-Clement. S-T-R-A-U-S as in Sam, Z as in Zebra hyphen, Clement, C-L-E-M-E-N-T.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Are you lay or clergy?

Judy: I am clergy. I am a Presbyterian clergy woman.

Interviewer: Thank you very... Thank you very much. And Judy, when and where were you born?

Judy: I was born in Yakima, Washington in 1940.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so you're back in Washington again?

Judy: Yes.

Interviewer: And where did you go to school? Graduate or divinity school?

Judy: I went to Washington State University and Paul Min as an undergraduate and I got my MDs from United Theological Seminary next to the city.

Interviewer: Okay, great, and what worker ministry were you doing at the time of re-imagining?

Judy: Um...let me see... I was newly married to John.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: I had just finished being an inner-city... No that's not right. I had just finished being an inner-city pastor in Minneapolis.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: And was living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and looking for a job as an interim pastor. I did have a job with Mt. Chestnut Presbyterian Church in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: Wonderful. Thank you. And what worker ministry did you do after re-imagining?

Judy: I continued to be an interim ministry specialist.

Interviewer: Mmm... And was that always in Pennsylvania? That area still?

Judy: No, I had a... I had that church, I was in Silver Spring, in Pennsylvania, and then I came to Milwaukee. I had another interim there and my largest church was in Geneva, Illinois, a 700 member church. I was the pastor head of staff and then I was there for a couple years and then I went on my last confrontation was in Willmette, Illinois which is the north shore of Chicago. I was there for a couple years and then I retired.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Thank you, that's... You've been several different places. That's great. Judy, do you remember how and when you first became aware of feminist theology?

Judy: As a matter of fact, I do. I had started seminary and I think one of the first or second days, one of the professors decided that he would read, I don't remember the passage or scripture, but he changed all of the male pronouns to female pronouns and he read the text with all female pronouns and I thought woo, isn't that interesting? I had never even thought of that before. (Interviewer laughing) So that was my first experience with it.

Interviewer: Interesting. So your first reaction was kind of, this is interesting? I mean it wasn't negative. It was sort of just...

Judy: Oh, never.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, okay. Well that's great. I mean you can point to a specific moment. That's pretty interesting. That's great. Um, and then I assume your knowledge and interest in it kinda grew during your seminary period?

Judy: Wait now, I didn't understand that.

Interviewer: Oh, I'm sorry. I assume your knowledge of and interest in feminist theology grew during your seminary time.

Judy: Oh, very much so. Very much so, yeah.

Interviewer: Good. Well, if we could move to re-imagining, could you talk about what led to your initial involvement in re-imagining?

Judy: I was a member of the Twin City Area of Presbytery and the executive, which was Bob Lucas, asked me to specifically be the delegate, the delegate from the Twin City Area of Presbytery to this group who was planning this ecumenical conference. So it was the ecumenical decade. Churches in solidarity with women and Sally Hill from the Metropolitan... Twin Cities Metropolitan Church Commission and she's deceased now, but she was gathering a group and I was asked to be the Presbytery representative to that.

Interviewer: So you were kinda in at the ground floor there. Could you talk about some of your memories you might have? I know it's been a long time, but what the process was like and how it evolved into the re-imagining conference?

Judy: I think the biggest one that I'm sure I think you probably have this from many, many people, the biggest, the most intense memory was when we named it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: We were all at a dinner meeting, dinner party and I don't remember where it was. Mary Ann Lindy was there and, you know, there were probably ten of us around the table and we were trying to figure out what we were gonna call this thing.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: And we came up with Timmy Gene and various words, but the scribe put the wrong name, put the wrong spelling of what we were saying on the whiteboard.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: And it turned out to "re-imagining" and we, so we looked at that and said, "Oh, what do you think about that?" And so we talked a lot about that and decided that it was the Holy Spirit moving us along. (Interviewer laughing) And here it was, re-imagining, and that's what it became.

Interviewer: I love it. That is great.

Judy: And then another one. I was part of the steering committee as we struggled with a logo and eventually the logo became a box with flames of... Except that they weren't red necessarily... But flames coming out of this box. Basically, you know, we had been in a box and pretty soon the box had an opening and everything, you know, poured out. New ideas, new concepts, et cetera.

Interviewer: And I think I might know, but what did the flame represent?

Judy: Well, the flame was... It wasn't a flame because it wasn't red.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, mhm.

Judy: But what was coming out of the box was all of this dodgy old, um... This dodgy old grease that didn't work for us anymore. Everything that was male, you know, nothing female, but here was this box with the open top and all of this coming forth. New ideas not locked up into a box anymore.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: So we put that on letterhead and we put it on T-shirts and we put it on cups. You know, we put it all over.

Interviewer: Mhm. And Judy, I'm wondering if you remember. It sounds like there was an evolution process to become kinda this theological colloquium and it kinda grew. Do you remember about how that process happened?

Judy: Uh, I'm not quite sure what you're asking.

Interviewer: Oh, sure.

Judy: It seems like the... Are you there?

Interviewer: I am there, sorry.

Judy: It seems like um... That the initial participants were always there.

Interviewer: Okay.

Judy: I don't think we added a whole lot. We might have added Randy.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: Later on.

Interviewer: Randy Nelson?

Judy: Randy Nelson, yes.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: Manley was there at the beginning. I was there at the beginning. I just... Just a lot of people were there at the beginning. I also left after I got married and I got married end of May in '93 and so I left. I don't know if anybody else left, but I was there through most of it except for the, you know, the very end of it.

Interviewer: Mhm. Well looking at the minutes, it looked like there were different ideas. They were gonna celebrate the ecumenical decade, but it looked like they weren't clear about what exactly you were gonna do and then it evolved into the global theological colloquium?

Judy: Yeah, that's true. I've written about this. We thought initially that we would invite women theologians

along with a few hundred others who would dialogue with each other about issues that were important to women. This was a good idea, but the funding wasn't out and so we couldn't do that. But after a while, Mary Anne somehow got the funding straightened out with the Presbyterian Church and we got the funding and we decided that we would try to have this big, big gathering.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: 2,000. We kept saying, "I think we'll invite the whole world". (Interviewer laughing) I said that many times. "I think we'll invite the whole world". Every single weekend, in the form of the speakers. Because they were from the whole world.

Interviewer: Yes. The other really interesting thing about this re-imagining was that it wasn't just a regular conference where you invited in speakers and I'm just wondering if you recall about the worship and the art and how that developed 'cause that was so amazing that it involved more than just speakers.

Judy: Right, right. The worship was phenomenal and I credit Sue Side Martin. You know, she is awfully busy, but she was an extraordinarily creative musician and artist, I guess, and she would come to the meetings with all of this, you know. She created new songs. You know, they got us into trouble too. The songs did.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: She created new songs. She created new liturgy. It was extraordinary. I had never been to anything that was quite as creative as that.

Interviewer: Mhm. Well I think that brings us to your experience at the '93 conference...gathering. Now, you mentioned you moved away and then came back for the gathering and I'm just curious what your experience was like at that gathering that you had helped to plan.

Judy: Oh well, I remember walking in the door and tears... I have to tell you this. Even talking about it, I get a little weepy about this. (Interviewer makes sympathetic sound) I stood in the general area of the auditorium and thought, "My gosh, we did it. We did it". It was overwhelming and we never stopped that and we walked into the gathering with all of these thousand women and 83 men. It was an overwhelming experience and when we were all in the big room. 2,000 others in this big room, that was pretty overwhelming too.

Interviewer: That is so moving to hear you say that. So powerful, after all these years, and it was for so many people.

Judy: Yes, it was. It... It freed up so many of us. You know, I was preaching regularly and, you know, many of us were and this conference freed us up in many ways. Although all the backlash that was happening also put a damper on it considerably. Especially those of us who were not in the Twin Cities and I'm very aware that my experience in Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, which is a very, very conservative area, was very much different than the experience of my steering committee friends in the Twin Cities. The Presbytery that

I was in in Western Pennsylvania which is Beaver Butler Presbytery they voted to condemn the conference at the same time that the Presbytery of the Twin Cities area was voting to affirm it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: So, I mean we were all called heretics in Pennsylvania about this and so I, you know, the experience was very much different, I think, depending on where you were.

Interviewer: Mhm, which is why it's important to get your story. Also, you wouldn't have had the same kind of support as people would have had in the Twin Cities, right?

Judy: True. Right. Correct.

Interviewer: Yeah. I wanna hear so much about this. I did wanna just ask when you said, "It freed us up", I just wonder if you could say a little bit more about that.

Judy: Well, I think it freed us up eventually.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: To be more... The conference freed us up eventually. At least, I speak for myself. I really did cower in a corner for a few weeks in Pennsylvania. I was afraid I was gonna lose my job. I was afraid I was going to be convicted of heresy.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: Oh, it was... Everywhere I went they spoke about re-imagining it was cold. Also the conference. And so I was not in a place where re-imagining was supported or affirmed in any way, shape, or form.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: John was facing that too, but eventually I could, you know, after a year went by and because I was still preaching regularly.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: My preaching would take the form of more justice feminist issues. I was thinking about this whole thing. Do you remember the whole business about the Clarence Thomas, Anita Hill?

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Judy: Awful.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: That happened before re-imagining and I preached on that in terms of justice issue. That because of, you know, text that I could use to deal with something like that, I became more free to use the text to talk about justice issues that I wouldn't have been if re-imagining had not happened. I mean that's kind of that... The flames or the streamers coming out of the box. I mean, we were not in the box anymore. Thank goodness.

Interviewer: Yes. I have to ask, that is so fascinating, do you remember what you said about the Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas thing? What biblical...? That's fascinating.

Judy: I probably have the service somewhere, but I don't remember. I do remember I was just aghast at the whole thing.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Well, I was wondering, you know, I do know that it affected you directly, the backlash, and you've already started talking some about that, but could you say more about how you were affected directly by it? Especially given your context.

Judy: Uh, yeah... Let me see, how do I say this? I can read you some of what I've written about this.

Interviewer: That would be great.

Judy: One of the things that just, I didn't understand it. Are you a Presbyterian?

Interviewer: No, United Methodist, actually.

Judy: Okay, the Presbyterian Church is a church of the reformation and our motto is "reformed, always reforming" and in our service of ordination in the installation of elders, speakers, eucharists, and ministers, there is a sentence that is asked of every single person. "Will you seek to serve the people "with energy, intelligence, and" here's the word, "imagination and love?" These words from our book of order. The word "imagined", "imagination", and "re-imagining" stunned many people and ignited a fire-storm of words, condemnation. Threats with charges of heresy. Threats of withdrawal of funds. Hate-mail and loss of jobs. That word, that word is in our ordination.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: Imagination.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: And yet, the word "re-imagining" for our conference just blew everything wide open and the threats

and the condemnation came from the religious right, conservative and fundamental men and a few women and we were in... John was in Pittsburgh Presbytery and I was in Butler, Pennsylvania which is, you know, close together. They're strongholds of conservative theology and vest any new possibilities for the interpretation of the scripture. Let me see, what else can I say about this? I was... Because I'd been on the steering committee and part of that very supportive group of men and women, when I left and after the backlash started, I was, I felt very alone in Pittsburgh and I needed the support desperately of other members of the steering committee and I had not made friends yet in Pittsburgh so I didn't have friends to talk about this with. I was shocked over the hysteria over the conference. Even though I was in, you know, conservative Western Pennsylvania, I was still shocked about it. Invoking this eminence for God was just out of peoples' realm of possibility. John and I were consumed daily by what the negative press was saying about re-imagining and every night we would compare notes about what people were saying about us and the conference and I wrote in my journal at the time that in order to survive, I had to be someone I was not. In order to survive with the put-down of women, my mouth was taped shut, my hands tied behind me, and my feet were shackled. That's what it felt like. It was horrid. And then Mary Anne Lindy was also being harangued and you have interviewed her, have you not?

Interviewer: I have, yes.

Judy: Good. She was harangued and verbally attacked by those who had decided that re-imagining was heresy and she was interviewed by Ted Koppel and you know that, probably.

Interviewer: Mhm, mhm.

Judy: Another... When I was voted into the Presbytery at Beaver Butler, which is a requirement, I got the nomination in order to work again at church. Nobody asked me about the conference. I mean, there wasn't a question entirely. Nobody asked me about the conference, but a woman got up to make a report about the Presbyterian women and she said and I quote, this is a quote, "Like it or not, what they say about "the re-imagining conference is true". And the woman was getting her information from the Layman. Presbyterian Layman which is a conservative newspaper. It's not connected with the church. You know, it's an addendum here. But it's very inflammatory.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: And what was interesting too that she did not go to the re-imagining conference. She realistically knew absolutely nothing about it and here she was criticizing it. I finally came to my senses and thought, "I cannot cower any longer", so I, when people would ask me to talk about it, I did and I spoke at another large Presbyterian meeting in the middle of the state and they wanted me to discuss the issues of re-imagining and I did and one person came up to me and said later that she was concerned about her daughter and what would happen if she had questioned the leadership of the church about the issues of re-imagining. She wouldn't be able to do that because there was so much criticism about it. At another Presbyterian meeting there were more negative comments about Mary Anne Lindy and a Presbytery member stood up and said that Mary Anne Lindy was "out to destroy the church" and I quote that. Because of the re-imagining



conference. I was prepared to stand up and counter that statement, but instead, the Reverend Jan Hall, he's a former moderator of the General Assembly, and he's a member of that Presbytery. He stood up and said that he had a different theology from Mary Anne Lindy, but he respected her and her theology and her faith stance and she was not out to destroy the church and that kind of accusation was just not appropriate on the floor of Presbytery and he sat down. And no more said. So he was able to counter that. Another thing, I had a governing body called the session during that time and every church has a session in our denomination and I put together a package of information supporting the conference and what the Layman was saying and the conference, the session, really didn't understand the lot of it. I would say that the mindset would be of the female and that I would really be raked over the coals, but I eventually, it turned out that my ministry there was a very positive ministry despite the fact that the re-imagining had taken place and that I was part of it. Let's see here... What else do I wanna say about this? The issue of inclusive language was such a big deal there at the re-imagining conference. I do remember there was one point. All of the women who are members of the Church of the Brethren, they stood up and got up on the rises and decided that they were not going to be members of the Church of the Brethren anymore. They were gonna rename them. Rename that church. (Judy laughing) I don't know what... Everybody just hooted and hollered about that because it was to see these few women, there were probably only six or eight of them, they decided of being Church of the Brethren.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: I do have to say that the creative... The creative theology that came out of re-imagining was just stunning. It was just... It was such a freeing for all of us, I think. And this is why I also tried to impress upon John Buchanan. We had had dinner together. I mean, he must have come to Pittsburgh Presbytery and so John and I were invited to a dinner party and I ended up sitting beside him and so we began to talk about re-imagining and I told him of my involvement in it and of what it meant to me and a whole lot of other women and then he went on to General Assembly and he was part of this task force that reviewed it and I believe eventually came out and they affirmed it. Boy. It was... Our language was about my husband, John. While I was dealing with the hysteria at the small church level, John was dealing with the fallout and the backlash at the executive level. He was under fire for just having gone to the conference. Generally, he was well-liked in the Presbytery, but now a small group of disgruntled pastors in the Presbytery were out to make waves for him and cast him in a negative light because of this conference. The small group wanted to fire him, even so his personnel evaluation was very high. Was very good. The stress that he was under was enormous, as was I. Eventually we decided that he would not be a victim and he would resign and so he did. He resigned from the Presbytery. My statement after his resignation was that if he had not resigned from his job, he probably would be dead soon and so in hind... His choosing to leave that position was a good decision for us and we moved on with our lives, but it's interesting too that we both struggled with difficult issues. We'd been married only for a year, and the people and the stress at the time was immense. John had intense back spasms for several weeks. I had a stroke in my eye because of high blood pressure that just was higher than a kite and it was triggered, all the stress on me. It was amazing that our marriage hung together during all of this time and we're still together and very happy.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: But it was awful. So, okay, that's enough of the backlash. (Interviewer laughing)

Interviewer: Oh, well Judy, that was really important and thank you for that. I did want to ask you one other thing about in your essay you wrote about how you also went to the clergywomen in the Presbytery, but you weren't supported by them.

Judy: Oh they were not... Oh that's right, I did. I went to... I went to gathering and one woman did. Oh no, don't give up. We're really going to find out what happened. That there was no... There was no support for me at that... At that gathering and, as I remember it, the women of Beaver Butlery Presbytery were afraid of me. They were afraid of anything I said might rub off on them, I think. That I come from a different mindset. I was a progressive as a theologian. They were stuck in Beaver Butler Presbytery and they could not be free themselves and so they did not talk to me and they didn't... It was awful. However, my one exception was a former Salvation Army person and she was so supportive and so... She understood what I was saying. She went with me to several of these gatherings where I was asked to speak. So, you know, I took her with me because I knew she was supportive. She didn't say anything. I knew she was supportive of me, so that was a very interesting situation because here she was. She used to be part of the Salvation Army.

Interviewer: That's amazing. And actually that brings me to the question, given everything that you and John were facing, how did you get through this? That was one place you got support. How else did you manage to get through this?

Judy: Well we talked a lot. I mean we were both going through it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: You know, they were after him. There would be things in the paper about John Clements, executive Presbytery and his wife, the Reverent Judith Strausz-Clement who was on the steering committee of re-imagining. So we were... The key was that we were both going through it. We exercised a lot during that time. I mean, we still do, but we were really doing a lot of exercising. You know, we prayed together. We just talked endlessly about this until we finally got through it. I think the fact that we did not stay in Pittsburgh. I mean John had basically had enough of it and although we didn't talk about this openly, he started, you know, to look a little bit for another job and, you know, not really but just keep his options open, but he... The fact that he did resign rather than take all of the stuff that was being hurled at him, that was good for him and me and us, that we weren't victims anymore. We were in charge. We decided that we've had enough of this.

Interviewer: Where did he go from there? What position did he go to from there?

Judy: He went to Carlisle Presbytery as an interim executive and from there he went, after Carlisle Presbytery he came to Blackhawk Presbytery which is Northern Illinois and he had an extraordinarily successful... Job there. We were there for, what, five or six years in Milwaukee and Geneva, Illinois, and

Wilmette, Illinois, But his... He had a very successful... He was the executive presbytery for Blackhawk Presbytery.

Interviewer: I'm glad to hear that. Judy, how do you account for this backlash?

Judy: How do I account? Well, boy... I think people grow up with... You know, conservative notions, conservative theology. They've never been around anything else. They've not been encouraged to question anything and if you did question you were a heretic and so you need to accept what was said, whether you liked it or not, or agreed with it or not, or if you had, you were not able to offer any other possibilities or suggestions. You know, you asked originally for my definition of re-imagining.

Interviewer: Yes, yes please.

Judy: My definition (Judy clears throat) I said a theological convocation by women for women and men held in Minneapolis in November of '93. This event gave women and men the courage to think new thoughts and discuss them as well as voicing thoughts that had long been in their hearts and minds, but perhaps never voiced. This was a convocation where all of us looked through different and/or new lenses which revealed new understandings regarding scripture and beliefs. Re-imagining was a life-giving history-making event. A watershed for the Presbyterian Church and other Christian denominations.

Interviewer: That's great. That is great.

Judy: John has always said, "We put on new lenses, new glasses "and we have never looked out of "these new glasses before "and we saw and heard some new things "and it was important to talk about them".

Interviewer: That's a good image. Before we move on, I did want to ask about, you were at the 1994 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and re-imagining was a big issue there. So I just wanted to know if you have any recollections from that assembly and from the report that was finally issued there.

Judy: I remember that we were on... Let me see... I did not speak at the assembly, but John did, my husband did, and he only had about 90 seconds. There were so many people who wanted to speak, but John had, you know, better credentials than I did. He was the executive for Pittsburgh. So he got up and he spoke to it. I remember sitting and being in prayer the whole time as I sat there and listened to the haranguing again and listened to people who were supporting it and praying that my conversation with John Buchanan would, he would recall that and he would understand how important this whole conference was to so many women and a few men. I do remember I was just on pins and needles about what in the world was gonna happen and we were so relieved when word came out that I think they affirmed the conference, you know, they didn't deny it, but we were so relieved when it happened.

Interviewer: Mhm, thank you, thank you. I wanted to ask you about now, almost 25 years later, what, when you look back on it, what aspects of re-imagining were most significant to you and why?

Judy: One of them was how important inclusive language was and I, you know, back in seminary, I made inclusive language a big deal for myself and vowed that I would use inclusive language in preaching and in my churches and in my liturgies and I did that and I didn't tell my congregation that I was doing it. I just did it and I figured they probably wouldn't know any different and it wouldn't occur to them that that's what I was doing. I think it...anyway...

Interviewer: And I assume that there wasn't a reaction against it. You didn't experience that.

Judy: No, no.

Interviewer: And just to be clear, you're probably using "God", you weren't using... Were you using feminine language or not using...?

Judy: Neutral. I was trying to be neutral.

Interviewer: Yes, right, yup.

Judy: I think what re-imagining did for me, it certainly fired me up again. (Interviewer laughing) You know, I mean, to be creative and it fired me up about my faith and what my faith meant to me. When I was in Butler, Pennsylvania I could hardly believe it. When I got there, now Butler, Pennsylvania is Western Pennsylvania and that was the church that I was in when re-imagining, everything blew up, but there was a woman there who had four little children and when I got there she stood in the background and watched me as I shook hands with all, you know, people that I had met, et cetera, and she finally came and introduced herself with her four kids hangin' on her. She just kept talking with me and talking and talking and talking. Came to my house and she was interested in my library and so she read some of the books and pretty soon, what do you know, she decided she would go back to college. So she went back to Westminster College and got her degree and in the meantime she took her four children to Northern Ireland and they spent a year there. She just wanted to have a religious experience and her husband was the principal and could afford to send her so she went. And then after that, she said okay I think I'm going to go to Pittsburgh because seminary. I said "oh, Gosh", but she did that too and she is now an ordained coregent person in Beaver Butler Presbytery which is, you know, very conservative place and she is not and she is also the moderator there.

Interviewer: Wow.

Judy: So "wow" is right. So you think about re-imagining certainly changed, changed me, I mean, changed her, I mean she didn't go, but the effects of re-imagining from me to her was immense. Was just immense. Re-imagining was, you know, something of new ideas, it was inspiring, it gave new possibilities for us. There were more women in campus I think because of re-imagining. It was amazing and for Connie to have done all of this and then, you know, a few years later I went back and I was part of her ordination.

Interviewer: Wow.

Judy: Yep.

Interviewer: That is great. So would you... How did your involvement in re-imagining change your perspective on feminist theology or the church, would you say?

Judy: It just increased it. It just increased it. It was, you know, I was... I was very open to it anyway. To inclusive language particularly and to hear about that because I didn't know anything about that and I didn't know about Sophia and about standing on the street corner and, you know, that was really important to me although Sophia is...it's hard to understand and you really need more instruction and more ideas about that. About her. That re-imagining also gave us, you know, so many of us new ideas about how to incorporate a text. How to interpret a text. Use scripture. Another thing that re-imagining did I think younger women tend to be sold on re-imagining went back to church because they had new ideas and they could counter all of this male hierarchical stuff. They could counter that and they were more clergywomen I think. The seminary that I went to the year that I was there was the first, I mean I started in 1982. Graduated in '87. When I started that was the first year that the women were 50 percent of the student body, but United Seminary in the Twin Cities is one of the... That was unusual for a seminary to have that many women, but we did.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: What else, let me see. More women in the church. More women in leadership. New insights. I mean, in the churches that I went to, I think none of them had had a female as the senior pastor or the head of staff.

Interviewer: Wow.

Judy: Until I got there.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Judy: I mean, the church in Wilmette, now I don't know if you know Wilmette is the north shore of Chicago. Very, very affluent. And I went and it's about 450 member church and I was the head of staff, the senior pastor, so I was preaching all the time. I did have an associate. But when I left there was a big party for me and there was a woman who came, an old woman who came walking across the body room to come to the microphone and I thought, oh I wonder what's gonna happen here, and what she did say was, "I was one of those women who didn't want a female. "Who did not want Judy as our pastor "and I can tell you that whoever we get "is as half as good as she is, "I'll be satisfied". (Interviewer laughing) Because of re-imagining, you know, women were more accepted. I mean, I think. We had a lot of difficulties because of the backlash, but eventually there were younger women, there were more women in churches' leadership. It was an interesting sort of progression which started out strongly with the backlash, but you know we got through it.

Interviewer: I missed the last part of it. The backlash and then what was the end of that?

Judy: Well, I mean, the backlash was pretty bad, you know, at the beginning.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: I said after we got through that, the result of re-imagining and the leadership of women that happened and more women in the pulpit and more women in other kinds of leadership, I mean it really did help us in terms of the women who were preaching and teaching in churches and the acceptance of...

Interviewer: That is great. I wanted to ask one follow-up question about something you said. That was all great. You mentioned something about Sophia and how language can be somewhat difficult. Could you say a word about that? What makes it somewhat difficult?

Judy: I don't know why it is. I mean, I got the book *She Who Is* and it's about Sophia and I think that that particular text is a really hard one. Let me see here... I can't say a lot about that.

Interviewer: That's fine. You've said a lot of good things. I know you've talked about many of the, a lot of the legacy of the re-imagining conference and community. Do you think, what is the greatest legacy of it?

Judy: The greatest legacy probably is... More women in church leadership.

Interviewer: Mhm.

Judy: Inclusive language.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: New... Looking at texts from new perspectives.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: I think that's probably...

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think that inclusive language is being used in churches today? Presbyterian churches?

Judy: Yeah, we belong to a UTC church here in Seattle and they are very strong on inclusive language.

Interviewer: Yes.

Judy: So it's... I think the more progressive churches are. They're very tuned in to inclusive language, but now, you know, there are other churches that are not. I mean Seattle Presbytery (Judy laughing) Well, I will

tell you this when the tape is off.

Interviewer: Sure, that's fine. We can have that conversation later. That sounds good, yes. So what does re-imagining mean today? And by that I don't just mean re-imagining in terms of the conference, but what needs to be re-imagined today in the church?

Judy: I think continuing where we left off before. It's not a perfect world. It's not a perfect Presbytery. It's not a perfect other denominations. I mean, we still have our issues. I mean, there's a whole lot of, you know, racial stuff, gay and lesbian transgendered people are still not welcomed in most churches and I think my denomination is one of those. It's not as good, as inclusive with gay and lesbian people, but the UTC church where we are now is very, very inclusive. It's just to me what it can be, and that's why we're here in this particular church. What else would I say about that? I guess I don't have anymore to say about that.

Interviewer: Well that's great. That is really good. I have one last very specific question and that is we're developing a re-imagining website and it's gonna be both archival, collecting materials, but also hopefully collecting resources for today for people to use and we're looking for ideas about what should be included in it, how to let people know about it. Any ideas you have would be really helpful.

Judy: Well, I thought about that and I don't know. I think it was disappointing to a lot of us who realized that re-imagining was not gonna last forever. I mean, we couldn't keep it going forever because it was such an inspiration for us, you know, for a number of years, but, you know, it finally did go by the wayside in terms of being on the website, on a website. So what it needs now. I don't know. It needs money.

Interviewer: Yes. (Interviewer laughing) True.

Judy: Needs money. That's always a big thing. As broad as you could make it, you know. Being careful not to limit it in terms of just mainline denominations because mainline denominations, you know, are struggling.

Interviewer: So when you say it's broad, would you mean broad in terms of Christianity? Broad in terms of interfaith? What are you thinking?

Judy: Both. Both. We have mainline denominations here in Seattle, but we've got some offshoots here that are really large churches and my guess is that the inclusive language is not pronounced in some of those churches and how you get that, I don't know. I think that's a toughie. You know, people writing, I suppose, some of these, some feminist, the old feminist preachers, I would think some of what they have written would be helpful on our website.

Interviewer: Yeah. And it's fine if you can't think of anyone specific. Is there anyone in particular you're thinking of?

Judy: Hmm...no. You know, I hadn't really thought of that. Hadn't really thought of it.

Interviewer: That's fine. Well Judy, this had been incredibly helpful. Is there anything we haven't discussed that you would like to add?

Judy: Oh, one of the things that I remember was Dolores, has anybody talked about Dolores Williams?

Interviewer: Little bit. Say some more about it. Tell me.

Judy: Dolores Williams was one of the speakers for re-imagining and she kept saying, you know, I wanna talk about what Jesus lived for, not what Jesus died for and then she talked about all the blood and guts that were hanging on the cross or something like that and the whole re-imagining just erupted with hoots and hollers and agreement with her. She's an African American professor, I think. Or was at that time at seminary, but for her to say that was just incredibly real, you know, for a lot of people.

Interviewer: Were you at that workshop, that session?

Judy: That was part of re-imagining. I mean, that was part. She was one of the speakers. The main re-imagining conference in '93. And when she said that, boy, she got a lot of flack from that.

Interviewer: Yes, she did, yep. Is there anything else? That was helpful too.

Judy: Um... Let me see, I gave you John Mild's name.

Interviewer: Yeah. And we're still recording now.

Judy: Yeah, okay. I don't think so. (Judy laughing) I've said a lot already.

Interviewer: You did, and it was wonderful. Thank you. I'm gonna turn off the recording now if that's okay with you?

Judy: Yes.

Interviewer: Great, great, thank you.