

- Barbara, thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed. If you could just say and spell your name.
- Barbara Lund. B-A-R-B-A-R-A. L-U-N-D.
- Great, thank you so much. And are you lay or clergy?
- Clergy.
- And your denominational affiliation?
- ELCA.
- Great, thank you. Barbara, when and where were you born?
- I'm from Woodville, Wisconsin, born at the Baldwin Hospital.
- Oh, okay, great, and where did you go to school?
- Baldwin-Woodville High School and then, grade school, Woodville Middle School, Baldwin-Woodville High School and then Oxford College. And then onto some time off from further study, and then to Luther Seminary.
- Wonderful, great, Luther Seminary here in the Twin Cities? Yes, great. So, what were you doing at the Time of Reimagining, 1993?
- Yeah, I was actually on internship, going on internship from Luther Seminary, which would have been my third year of seminary. And that was, I was on internship in Iowa.
- Okay, great, good. And what work or ministry have you done after Reimagining?
- Since Reimagining, I served, I continued, I was ordained, and then served at an international English-speaking congregation in Tokyo, Japan. Tokyo Union Church, which had people from around the world, so English wasn't their first language, but it was a gathering community. Then I had, I worked in the countryside of France, in Île-aux-Moines, France, which was working with laypeople who didn't have clergies, so really working on encouraging laypeople, and that was through the ELCA Global Mission. So both of those assignments or calls were through the ELCA Global Mission. And then after France, I was within their church wide office in Chicago of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Global Mission Unit, where I worked in both designing and developing global mission education events, for people in the US, starting to stand what was happening with the church relationships around the world, and then moved

into a position which was working primarily in Asia as the director for Asia and the Pacific, which related to the ELC's historic relationships, and new relationships.

- Fascinating, wow! And what is your role now?

- I direct Wisdom Ways Center for Spirituality, which is a ecumenical inter religious ministry supported by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

- Wonderful, thank you. I realized, I don't think I asked you when you were born.

- 1964.

- Okay, great, great, good.

- And I'd love to know how and when you first became interested in feminist theology.

- Yeah, well, it probably is deep within my intuitive experience as a child, when I recognized I dressed up in my dad's clothing to play church. So something was functioning there that in my own body I had to do something different, and I'd have my friends in and then we'd play communion, and things like that, but, I had to be dressed in sort of a male presence.

- Interesting.

- And I remember in, church, seeing, growing up in a Lutheran church, my mom had a very strong role in women's organizations, and my parents were very involved in that way. I also found what I would delight in as a child, it was called Women of the, it was Women of the ELC, and they had quilt gatherings, and women would come together and make quilts, and those quilts would be given to what's known as Lutheran World Relief, so as a child, I recognized all of that. And those women, they put the sewing machines up in the basement of the church, and it was like a feast day for them, now working in the Catholic institution of feast days. This was a place where women could gather together and tell their stories, and I remember that experience of, oh, this is what women do. But also that it exposed me to the world, that these quilts were sent around to the world, and we'd hear where they would go, where it was in areas of conflict, areas of need, and it often was connected through women. So I think that was first and then getting to Oxford College, my first semester in religion class. Of course, required then. I wasn't going in as a religion major, but I quickly went into a religion major, with two key faculty there who introduced all of us. I mean, we were reading High-pain-tious Heritage, Her Story. We were reading all kinds of things, and it was just, thank goodness for these two female professors, because it changed everything for me. And I just couldn't get enough of it, and reading enough of it. And then it was a professor at, and what the enough was Women's Experience and it was, that was profound. And so, interpretation of text, and then also, reading liberation theologians. So it wasn't just limited to women, the gender essentialism. It was the wider experience of interpretation of text, of stories that I knew deep within my DNA and these stories then were like coming alive in all new ways.

- Is that what you mean when you said it changed everything?

- Right, it just, interpretation that's, suddenly, scripture was living and alive, and not static, not stories of 2,000 years ago, but stories that were alive today, and it also brought in the integration of justice informed by faith, so that really was crucial for me that, how do we give witness to this, that we all have a role, and we're story keepers, that these are stories that have been kept through time, and women's stories, even if they remain unnamed, we're all able to tell the story and to kind of break it open. That was very crucial for me. And then a professor there, in the religion department, obviously caught my interest in all of this, and then she introduced me to a local pastor, who, and that was my, I believe my third year, and this local pastor, Pastor Janet Tideman, was from Our Saviors Lutheran Church in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. And we met at St. Martin's Table. And Lynn said, "You two need to meet." And it was, like, Mary and Elizabeth. It was, that was it, it turned my world. And Janet then invited me to be the contextual ed student from Augsburg at Our Savior's, and they had a feminist gathering group there where they were looking at goddess rituals and how Christian traditions, kind of the overlay of where Diana was, where all these stories of power and myth, the overlay of the Christian tradition, and so all that came alive. So there was both critical reflection as well as how to engage that in a new way in the power of women's experience. And Janet introduced me to Judith Derrick's books, it was just much I was reading and then all of a sudden I begin hearing about Reimagining, so therein lies the connection and many women at Our Saviors Lutheran Church were a part of the planning and or engagement of it, so I was right in it, but then I was going off an internship, but I knew I had to be a part of it.

- That is fantastic! So you did attend the 1993 gathering--

- Yes.

- And I would love to hear what you remember about that.

- First is I can go to that place right now entering the room, and the emotion and the energy of strength, women, it was colorful, it was imaginative, it was, If I couldn't, if I wouldn't have words. It was filled, if I could hear anything is what I would say. It was absolute festival of the power, strength and so much coming together for about women. And then the music and the liturgy, because I was here, music is so important to me, I mean Lutheran hymn-aty, all of that, and liturgy, to me liturgy is, it's so much a part of my life and suddenly I was being opened up in to liturgy of the streets, liturgy of our experiences, in women's voices, in the experience of women's stories, and then how women do things. Setting the table, it was round, it was sensuous, it was, there was beauty, there was a length of time, it wasn't about something happens, you would stand in a line and something happens, it was opened up. It was like exactly how you have a gathering of family gathering for everyone.

- Had you ever experienced anything like that before?

- No.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah. Were there particular moments that stand out? That was a beautiful description of it--

- I think the opening ritual, it was like, it had a compelling sense of wanting to be there. And gathering together at tables and speaking, round tables speaking to one another, being present, so being brought in and having voice and music in litanies that were fresh in artistic language. Language that I would say we all knew deep within us. You didn't have to unpack it, what does this mean? It was real and then having the speakers, where so the experience connected and was intrical to the speakers and sort of the theory laying out what are these social constructs that have shackled us? What are these ways that we're being held back? So that, but I think what was so imperative for me is that the ritual and worship music pulled that together so there was a way to stay close to it, where it wasn't, it's difficult to know how women's lives have been held back for centuries.

- Yes.

- But to stay close to it, to be able to be strengthened, to give witness to it.

- Mhmm, that is wonderful! I know you know about the backlash. Did any of that affect you personally?

- For people I knew--

- Yeah.

- That is personal that it happened and on an existential level is when something is so profound that then there's such a negative impact, so I think there's that deep angst of, oh look at what can happen when something is so profoundly real. And to have it turned, that it wasn't believed, that it was turned into... Oh like lesbians gathering together! It was so far from that! It was just so far from that! But to have that turned, it shows the power of patriarchy. So I think that's an impact, a profound impact of always gaging, needing to remember, oh look at what can happen, and then the personal stories of women. And also as a student at Luther, it wasn't something I could talk about openly at my internship site. So it wasn't even that my internship site supervisor knew I was there.

- Wow.

- So that's unfortunate and sad.

- Mhmm, mhmm.

- Because I brought much of that experience through my year. To the internships--

- Oh interesting, how did you bring that? That's interesting.

- One in teaching confirmation, it's wide open. So bringing in, well knowing how far I could go, but bringing in the stories of women in scripture. They're often left out.

- Yes.

- Of confirmation programs and having each of the students write something of a ritual themselves. What they would do in shaping something, not thinking about what's given to them every Sunday. Sort of an a-canned experience. Having them write their prayers of how would they imagine a tender, one, a holy one who accompanies them. So just being conscious of language with them--

- Yes!

- Without saying you can't use father.

- Yes!

- That has a place. And then within the women's bible studies, so I kept that going in Tokyo as well at Tokyo Union Church. So there is--

- (mumbles)

- Mhmm. Yeah every Tuesday I taught a bible study--

- Wow--

- Loved it but was kept close.

- All the materials from Reimagining, carried them with me--

- Oh--

- Of when I would pack where I would go. It's still, it's in my office now--

- Wow!

- Really, really important. And then used some of the women theologians that I heard speak, use their work, kept close to what they were writing and doing, Jan Richardson was exposed to me then and used a lot of her work in the bible studies, Sacred Journey. So there were key things that I could use always, and then also in, as women, some women in Tokyo we had once a month Sunday night gathering of dinner and talking about (mumbles) women had did. Held women's worship together to support one another. In ways we couldn't live it out in our every day callings fully--

- How did that worship work?

- We gathered in home, we had a meal together and then we created a ritual, and it shaped, we would share the leadership--

- Yes.

- So it included components of, you know, music, ritual, it became, when I say liturgy, I don't mean that this is the way it is, but the liturgy of our hearts. What opens us up in prayer and then how that, so it's a gathering, a meal together, prayers together, songs together, so it had that shape.

- Yes. Oh, that is wonderful! So actually I have to ask, were you surprised at the backlash?

- That's a good question. Maybe I didn't know it, so surprised. I think I didn't know its power.

- Okay.

- Because I was in, typical and I worked with young people (mumbles) was probably these 18-19 year old first, when I was at Augsburg just like, oh, this is all the way it is, like everyone has to think this way, so I went through that and then working at Our Saviors being in such an inclusive congregation and creative thinking, I saw the power of a female pastor, in very important leadership and how she tapped people, but also was able to hold the fabric of a more conservative nature of women and men, how important their witness in life is to a faith. How to hold that together. So I saw tensions now and then, but I think I didn't for Reimagining anticipate its power of taking women down.

- Yeah.

- And the deceit and the lies.

- Mhmm, yeah.

- By sort of these strong men who weren't there and who were gonna save everybody back to what it could be.

- Yes, exactly. So Barbara, how would you define Reimagining?

- That's, maybe I would go to, I love scripture, maybe I would say it was my Magnificat.

- Oh, say some more about that!

- My world turned.

- Yes!

- It was really powerful. So, yeah I would say it's the Magnificat. That there's a structure and there was a power in place. And it took women coming together and others who were supporters, non women, but women coming together, trusting one another, believing their experience, and sharing ways they could become, sharing witness I guess. So that saying yes to something they didn't know what it would turn out to be. And that's what I mean by Magnificat. Addressing the powers, saying yes to what they didn't know and letting their imagination and ideas go forth.

- Wow.

- And that's what turned it!

- Yeah.

- I wouldn't know from the planners if there were limits, like, oh we can't do this, I'm sure they went through those tensions, but for me it felt like they were saying this is our tent, and let's open all of the, let's hook up all of the ends and let everything come and be and flow, there was fluidity, there were different contradictory ideas at times, and that's what I loved!

- Yeah, yeah!

- Mhmm, there were loads of books. I mean there was just, yeah, it was a feast.

- Oh, so many lovely images there! That was great! I think you've already said it in a certain sense, but can I ask it anyway just to see what you might say. What aspects of Reimagining were most significant to you and why?

- One from an experiential person, as a young woman that I saw women together naming, an experience that was deep within me. It was so deep within me, there was a sense of a deep beloved-ness to nature, there was a deep beloved-ness to all is sacred, and there is a deep beloved-ness to communion and a holiness that took on a new frame for me that small S, big S, sacred, small C, big C, communion that, it all was coming into fruition of kind of, this is what is known. So it's a very experiential level. And then a level of integrating my studies in seminary, and college, and my own interest in kind of the sociological make up of people and how things come together, and how things can be changed. The social constructs that can oppress or open up. I think that--

- And how did you see that in Reimagining?

- Addressing the structures--

- Yes, yes!

- Really clear of naming it like it is, not avoiding, not saying, oh, but women were always mentioned in the bible, isn't that... There was not a niceness or a safety to it. It was, there was a truthfulness and an illumination that was like, yes, yes, yes, yes.

- Mhmm.

- And that's what I mean by think we're liturgy in the worship, and the rituals, and the music were so important, because that truth was hard at times.

- Yeah.

- And that we could then sing together, I mean those songs still, I can hear everyone ♪ Sofia ♪ And that we can dream together. There was a vision, and if we didn't hold to that we would perish--

- Yes.

- There was a sensitivity to the, there was at times, the singing was deep and held, like almost in chant. So we could take in, it was like drinking the information that we were hearing, that I was hearing.

- Yes, yeah!

- So that's so important--

- Absolutely!

- That wasn't just throwing something at us.

- Yes, oh! That is great! When you think about it, did your involvement in Reimagining change your perspective on feminist theology and or the church?

- Well it only enhanced my understanding of feminist theology and then continued to broaden, where today I'm still learning like what is queer theology? I mean it's just, it's like the body of Christ was so big, and so inviting, and so free and also so difficult. Because it's so easy to draw territorial lines. And so the Christian household really expanded for me, growing up in a very Lutheran context, Lutheran college, Luther seminary, it's like wow, the Christian household was just, there are so many places, so many rooms, so many people, so that was powerful, the church whole. I think it's, it moves very slowly. And there's a pain to that, and there's also after Reimagining, what was really fortified within me, there's no giving up though. And that I love scripture, and it's about having, it's not static, I think I've said that. That honing in, there's so much for interpretation and reinterpretation and gathering many together for imagination of, what does this story mean? I just experienced a little Reimagining, I keep experiencing Reimagining, I think in small microcosm of ways, now with my work with Wisdom Ways. And I'm learning so much about the Catholic



feast days! And ways that women have been apart of the tradition, the four doctors of the church now. It's so powerful! Hilda Guard-a-bing and Catherine of Siena for example. But we just had July 22nd, a Mary Magdalene feast day.

- Oh!

- And this is every year here!

- I didn't know that!

- I wrote a friend who I was seminary with, sent an email that's like, imagine what we would of done with a Mary Magdalene feast day at seminary!

- Yes!

- So that's what I mean by widening the Christian household. We have so much to learn from our Catholic sisters who've held, I mean the first 1,000 years of leadership of women in the churches there, in the catacombs, in so much, those Protestants, the church didn't begin 500 years ago, and sometimes we focus so much on reformation, wow there's so much mist of the sisterhood. So, yeah we just had this Mary Magdalene feast day and almost 50 women gathering outside at 7:30 in the morning and we have a ritual, a worship of, for written by Future Church, Catholic women, of women in leadership, and we tell the gospel stories. Everyone hears a story from one teller of her perspective of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and that story of Mary Magdalene--

- Wow!

- So it's told in very contemporary ways or very ancient ways, and then we anoint each other in spices and go and remind each other, we go tell the story of the risen one. So you hear very, the language is very Christian oriented, less than Reimagining types of worship. Very Christian oriented, but that's the strength of that is so powerful, as women we gather and tell the stories about women--

- Yes!

- In scripture.

- And today in the church.

- Oh, sounds wonderful, just wonderful! So in the end, what do you think is the legacy of Reimagining?

- It's probably still evolving. Because I think it took probably some years to, you asked me the question of was I surprised at the backlash, it probably took some years to deconstruct that, it's like, wow, we got blown down. Some people lost employment, I mean, lost their regard of who they were in the life of the church. So

it probably took some years to deconstruct what happened, how to reconstruct then, building up again the body of Christ and then wider, the wider than that even, as women coming together from other faiths. So the legacy, I would say continues and evolves but it's about bringing women together, honoring and trusting so much unprocessed information about women through centuries, has to be listened to, understood, re-examined, thought through, or it's just like, half of human experiences not considered. So, all that unprocessed information continues to be thought through and broadened then, now as inter-faith, inter-religious. I think the legacy of reconstructing what happened, and then how we move forth, because these little things happen to women all over the place. Women might be in a small, rural congregation if they happen to use, I think mothering God or something, then there's a little re-examining of their role as a minister, which is an example of, it's still unfolds.

- Yes--

- But the profound legacy is bringing women together in women's voices, for and about women!

- Oh Barbara, that's wonderful! Is there anything we haven't discussed that you would like to add?

- No, I think this is great--

- Yes!

- In finding ways to support this project.

- Yes!

- But it's just again, I would say how it changed my life.

- Yes, that was wonderful!